In analyzing employee militancy expressed through employee unions, the various employee attachments to work were examined. The established attachments were then used as a basis in building a model illustrating the relationship between the individual attachments to work and the collective action of workers in union-management relations. From analysis of the model, it was concluded that: (1) the development of modern managerial paternalism may be a significant means by which to minimize union militancy; (2) most managerial practice, as it relates to workers, is designed to broaden the number of sources of attachment to work; (3) the degree of union militancy in unions with collective bargaining functions is dependent upon their limited concentration on features of the collective agreement; (4) only a limited number of issues can effectively be the object of militant action, and (5) union militancy declines when collective bargaining is institutionalized. This approach, whereby the nature and sources of participant attachment to organizations is examined as a feature of organizational theory relevant to the bargaining process, supplements other kinds of analysis of collective bargaining and union militancy. (AG)
**REPORT TITLE**

ORGANIZATIONAL BONDS AND UNION MILITANCY

**AUTHOR**

Robert Dubin

**REPORT DATE**

July, 1972

**TOTAL NO. OF PAGES**

22

**NO. OF REFS**

23

**PROJECT NO**

NO0014-69-A-0200-9001 NR151-315

**ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)**

Technical Report #14

**OTHER REPORT NO(S)**

None

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Personnel and Training Research Programs Office, Office of Naval Research

**ABSTRACT**

A theoretical paper presenting an analysis of employee militancy expressed through their union, as it derives from individual employee attachment to work.
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ORGANIZATIONAL BONDS AND UNION MILITANCY

ROBERT DUBIN

University of California, Irvine

Technical Report No. 14

July, 1972

INDIVIDUAL-ORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGES

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Prepared under ONR Contract N00014-69-A-0200-9001

NR Number 151-315

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There have been few serious attempts to characterize union militancy according to the features of the work milieu. Isolation of work setting combined with danger and a shared work-living culture have been indicated as sources of militancy among miners and dock workers. But union militancy is also found under other conditions of work. Capitalistic exploitation has been alleged to be the stimulus for militant worker responses in the dialectic of the class struggle. There are, however, many genuine unions in capitalist economies that are not militant. The militancy of unions has been attributed to the quality of union leadership, but again this factor is insufficient to account for variability in militancy. Finally, the balance of loyalty given to union or employer has been considered a source of worker militancy in union-management relations.

None of these approaches has produced a reasonably satisfactory theory of union militancy in collective bargaining. It seems worthwhile to try again. The discussion will be in three parts: (1) stating the theoretical model; (2) illustrating features of the model; and (3) drawing out general implications of the theory.
Model of Union Militancy

I start with a conclusion that persons select features of all their regular milieux to which they become affectively attached. Work is a standard daily milieu and has within it sources of attachment for workers. Attachment to features of an environment involves two steps: (1) attention to such features, and (2) assignment of some affective importance to them. Attachment may be distinguished from commitment since the latter requires positive affect, while attachment is independent of whether the affect is positive or negative. Attachment may also be distinguished from what is loosely called motivation for work. Motivation, like commitment, implies a positive affect.

The environment of work has unlimited features that may become sources of attachment to work. Large categories of work environment features to which attachment may develop include: the work itself; the people who are working colleagues; the quality of human relations found in the workplace; the products of labor; the technology and equipment used in getting work done; the employing organization and managerial behaviors in it; and the broad range of payoffs for working. Each of these categories may, in turn, be subdivided into specific individual features. For example, the work itself may provide sources of individual attachment to variety, skill, routine, challenge, attention, interdependence with others, and autonomy as more detailed characteristics of the work performed.

An individual in a working environment pays attention, often selectively,
to features of that environment. Indeed, it is perfectly clear that individual differences will manifest themselves among workers in the particular combinations of sources of attachment to work that each develops. Indeed, skilled workers will have attachments to work distinguishable from unskilled; male workers will differ from female workers; white collar workers will be unlike blue collar workers, etc. Thus, in any work force, there will be many sources of attachment to work, and variability among individual workers in their particular sources of work attachment.

The affective response to sources of attachment to work run the full gamut. We can define affective responses as either positive or negative. Positive affect of "liking," "preferring," "appreciating," etc. seem obviously to be associated with "attachment to." Negative affect of "disliking," "rejection," "disparaging," etc. are not so obviously associated with "attachment to." Consider, however, that a work feature generating dislike may be converted into a source of liking by changing its context or condition. In a simple example, dislike for features of a newly introduced technology may transform into liking for the identical technical features, as we have learned from several studies.

The affective condition of indifference is the accurate indicator of non-attachment. There is undoubtedly much in working environments about which workers are indifferent. This is one of the saving graces of modern industrial work, since if its entire environment was affectively potent, it would be almost impossible so to design work environments as to make them reasonably habitable. The research dealing with alienation from industrial work has lumped together the
negative affective response and the indifferent response. As a result, we have vastly overestimated the quantity of alienation from work ascribed to modern industrial workers. Dissatisfaction and alienation are not the same. The sooner we recognize this, the sooner we will be able to make more and better sense in our analyses of work.21

The idea of union militancy emphasizes the aggressiveness with which a union pursues its goals in collective bargaining. The militancy of a union is measured by the willingness to use, and the actual employment of economic and physical force in gaining collective bargaining ends. Unions as organizations are for bargaining with employers. There are other forms of work organizations ranging from mutual aid societies to producers' co-operatives that are not properly designated "unions." Militancy is therefore relevant to the union-management relationship. This contrasts with other avenues within which militancy may be expressed by workers' organizations. For example, in relation to government, as a political pressure group pushing for legislative advantage, or as a defiant group countervailing the police powers of the state.10/

Since a union represents the collective will of the workers within its jurisdiction, we may proceed to build a model of the relationship between individual attachments to work and the collective action of workers in union-management relations. We will sum up the individual attachments to work and suggest their relationship to the amount of militancy in union action.

A union, being a collectivity, gains and holds its following by representing the issues of concern to its members. These concerns are the individual workers'
attachments to work. Thus, the union program in collective bargaining is a summary of the collective interests (or sources of work attachment) of its members. The broader the sources of work attachment shared among union members, the broader is the range of collective bargaining concerns for their union. As the number of subjects of bargaining increases, the amount of linkage of the union with its employer bargaining partner also increases.

The union, by generalizing the sources of worker attachment to work and bargaining about them, becomes involved in the institution of work itself. A principle underlies the relationship between involvement and the willingness to threaten the source of involvement. The dynamic is: the more the sources of involvement, the less is the propensity to threaten the institution of involvement. For example, a ruling elite, being fully involved (i.e., in many behavioral areas of the social system it dominates) is the least likely source of challenge to that social system, while the disadvantaged class of a society (having fewer sources of attachment to it) is more likely militantly to challenge its present features.

We may now express the relationship between sources of attachment to work and union militancy. The law of interaction is: the greater the number of sources of attachment to work among a group of workers, the less is the militancy with which their union will act in collective bargaining. Graphically, this may be represented as in Figure 1.

---

Figure 1 about here

This formulation of the relationship between number of sources of attachment
to work and union militancy is grounded, first of all, in the social psychological law that the greater the involvement, the less likelihood there is to attack the source of the involvement. The relationship is also grounded in the conclusion that a labor union expresses in its policies the collected expectations of its members, which, for our analytical purposes is their attachments to work.

Features of the Model

We can further elucidate the model by ordering the sources of attachment to work so that they have an historically accurate structure that at the same time bears a relationship to union militancy. Consider that a very low level of attachment to work can be expressed in the classic American phrase that unions bargain for "wages, hours, and working conditions." This means that one payoff for working—wages; one demand of work—hours invested by workers; and one broad environmental feature—working conditions, constitute three principal sources of attachment to work. When these alone are what attach workers to their jobs, we can expect that union militancy will be very high in seeking their optimal realization.

If we now add to that list another stratum of sources of attachment to work, like health and welfare protection afforded through collective bargaining; job bidding; union hiring hall; checkoff of union dues; exclusive bargaining rights; guaranteed annual wages; and paid holidays and vacations, we extend the sources of attachment to work, and according to the model, will reduce the union militancy in collective bargaining. Finally, if we add another layer of sources of attach-
ment to work on top of the first two, including such features as: availability of housing and/or subsidized housing; day care nurseries for children of female workers; recreation facilities; consumer purchasing facilities; consultative intervention in the work processes; we extend the sources of attachment to work even further and reduce the tendency of unions to be aggressive in collective bargaining. Indeed, when on top of these sources of attachment to work management ceases to be so distinctive in its functions from workers that it no longer represents a permanent class, then we can perceive the possibility that the sources of attachment to work are so large in number that unionism is no longer relevant to the work situation and militancy of the work force vis à vis itself as management approaches zero.\[13/\]

In Figure 2 we have graphically suggested the more detailed relationship between number of sources of attachment to work and union militancy.

In international comparisons of the relative militancy of labor unions it seems clear that there is an apparent negative correlation with the number of sources of attachment to work over which unions bargain, or are involved, in the work institution. For example, in the Scandinavian countries and West Germany, as well as in the socialist bloc countries, there is a relatively high involvement of the unions in bargaining over or administering a broad range of sources of work attachments of their members. There is also a relatively low level of union militancy. For the Scandinavian countries, this has been attributed to industry-wide
collective bargaining and joint actions with management that has been characterized as the "middle way." For the socialist countries, this has been attributed to the reduction of antagonism between managers and workers produced by the state ownership of enterprises. Perhaps the reason we get two similar outcomes lies in the common feature characterizing both kinds of societies—that unions, or worker organizations, are heavily involved in dealing with an extended range of work attachments. This has increased their organizational commitment to the work organization and thereby lower their militancy and propensity to attack it.

In countries where union involvement in bargaining over the sources of work attachment of their members is not extensive, the level of union militancy is somewhat higher than in the Scandinavian and socialist countries. This seems to be the case in the United Kingdom and in Italy, and probably in the United States, as well.

In the historical development of a single country, the relationship between union militancy and the range of member work attachments over which it bargains is very clearly revealed. Thus, the labor movement in the United States has reduced its level of militancy as the arena of collective bargaining has been widened to encompass a large number of member work attachments. This is not to assert, of course, that unions have been less successful because of their declining militancy. On the contrary, the very fact that they become more involved in the work institution may heighten their chances of success in bargaining. This is true for a variety of reasons including: the greater understanding of work organizations on the part of union bargainers; the acceptance of the role of unions by management; the willingness to shift the costs of union-won bargains to consumers; and
the legitimation of the bargaining process as the means for distributing productivity gains to the employed work force. 16/

It may be realistic to conclude that the model proposed in this paper makes sense of some of the existing knowledge about variability in union militancy among different countries, different kinds of economies, and through the historical period of union development in a single country. The results are promising enough to warrant further exploration of the theory.

Implications of the Model

We may draw several interesting implications and conclusions from this analysis.

(1) The development of modern managerial paternalism may be a significant means by which to minimize union militancy. This is especially true under conditions where the paternalism is carried out by broadening the areas of worker attachment to work. This would include, for example, providing housing and recreational facilities as well as medical facilities and other services in the job setting and directly tied to working in the particular organization. As the number of sources of attachment to work is increased, the militancy of the unions representing workers will be diminished since unions will be less able to mobilize attacks on the work organization that run counter to attachments workers feel toward it.

It should be recognized that modern managerial paternalism is often objective and enlightened in its goals. The objective is not so much exploitation but rather to maximize cooperation in a collusive sense against the consumer. 17/
The paternalism is designed to provide inducements for continued effective work that will harness commitment of individual workers to their performance in the organization. Over all, probably the most widely practiced paternalism will be found in governmental units under capitalism and in state enterprises under socialism. The ultimate development of modern managerial paternalism is in socialist states where there is a relative shortage of consumer products, and especially of housing. The withering away of labor unions in their traditional collective bargaining functions in socialist economies, and especially the near disappearance of militancy in union behavior (the recent Polish strikes were, after all, "wildcat" and an expression of union militancy; but note that they were directed at the consumer interests of workers) can be attributed to the fact that the work institution becomes the central organizing institution for allocating housing assignments, vacation opportunities, purchasing privileges, etc., thereby increasing the range of sources of attachment to work.

At the other extreme from socialist economies is the case of Japan. Again we can note the very special attention given in the Japanese culture to maximizing attachment to work through the use of the work organization as the allocating social agency for many social services including especially housing and continuity of employment and promotion. Even the special Japanese cultural pattern of consultation has, in the industrial organization, become a significant additional source of attachment to work. Thus, the Japanese culture, by making the work setting the focal institution of the society under industrialization has provided the environment for maximizing sources of attachment to work. It is not surprising to find that Japanese labor unions display a characteristic low
level of success. The Japanese unions are relatively militant precisely because of the limited range of worker attachments to work over which they can bargain, since so many sources of attachment to the work institution have already been preempted by employer actions.

(2) Most of what is now considered enlightened managerial practice vis à vis workers is designed to broaden the number of sources of attachment to work. Stemming from the Lewinian conclusions relating participation to commitment, great efforts have been bent toward providing employee participation at all levels in ongoing work decisions. This certainly adds a significant source of work attachment. Job enlargement and job enrichment are designed to bring more of the skills and aptitudes of the worker into play and therefore use the self, through self-actualization, as a potent added source of work attachment. The relaxation of rigid requirements regarding demeanor, dress, talking while working, are additional practices that increase the sense of individual autonomy at work, making autonomy another source of work attachment. Especially in Europe, including the socialist countries, where housing, social services, and recreation opportunities are in short supply, they have been made available largely through participation of individuals in the work institution, using these payoffs as still other sources of work attachment. In immigrant-receiving countries, like Israel (but also including the European countries that supplement their national labor supply by importing millions of temporary laborers from Southern and Eastern European countries), there is a notable lack of labor union militancy, and even of organized labor unions, which may be attributed to the fact that the work institution is utilized as the principal institution through which the immigrant is linked to the receiving society.
and, therefore, it is the one institution to which attachment is maximized.  

(3) In any society where labor unions have developed collective bargaining functions, the degree of their militancy is dependent upon their limited concentration on features of the collective agreement. The more broadly the union becomes entangled with the entire operation of a company, the less is it likely to be militant in pursuing the collective will of its members precisely because they and the union have multiple sources of attachment to work and the company providing it. Thus, the union goals in collective bargaining move in two directions: to limit the range of bargaining issues so as not to become entangled with the company by becoming involved in additional sources of attachment to work; and to gain at least joint control, if not exclusive control, over those additional sources of attachment to work into which the union concern expands. Refusal to establish joint work measurement or time study operations would be a union move to achieve the first goal. A union demand that a health and welfare program negotiated through collective bargaining be controlled exclusively by union officers is a move to satisfy the second goal.

Where unions have broadened their concern with and bargaining over sources of attachment to work, they have increased the amount of their commitment to the work organization at the expense of their militancy. This finds expression in the development of statesmanship in bargaining with employers; the entry of top union officials into the power elite of the political and economic structure; the extension of the period of labor contracts so as to guarantee labor peace for ever longer periods of time; the policing of an industry to insure that no
single competitor can gain market advantage of the "good" companies that bar-
gain peacefully with the union; joint action with employers to protect against
the import of goods produced by low wage foreign labor; and cooperation on
productivity under the limited circumstances of threat to the employer's economic
health.\textsuperscript{24} The ultimate involvement in all aspects of work attachment by unions
occurs when the union literally takes over the productive enterprise, as in the
current situation on the Clyde among Scottish shipyards, or when a union estab-
lishes or becomes a producers' cooperative. Clearly militancy against the enter-
prise approaches zero under these circumstances.

(4) In the tactics of collective bargaining a union can mobilize its mem-
bers to militant action only by focusing attention upon a limited number of
issues, like wage levels. When the union focuses upon one or only a few sources
of attachment to work in order to utilize discontent to rouse workers to economic
action, it does so with the clear recognition that such a tactic is most likely
to produce the desired willingness to be militant among its members. This does
not mean, once a strike has been threatened or called, that the union bargainers
deal only with the rallying issues that raised the militancy of the members. In-
deed, it is usually the case that a wider range of issues is taken to the bar-
gaining table which tactically cannot be given public focus among members since
the scope of the issues will produce recognition that workers are tied to the
company by many sources of attachment to work.

The tactics on the company side are to seek to gain worker recognition
that they have many sources of attachment to work and by so doing to reduce their
willingness to be militant. Public statements issued by management proceeding
and during a strike are directed at this end. The more management is able to convince its employees that they have many sources of attachment to work, some of whose payoffs may be interrupted by a strike, the greater is the probability that the workers will weigh off their commitment to work against their commitment to the union's tactical goals.

It is therefore suggested that attachment to work may become a useful concept with which to gain a greater understanding of tactics employed by both sides in collective bargaining. Indeed, we might even extend the utility of the idea to include the possibility that management and unions claim the loyalty of the workers who are their employees-members by asserting their respective control over the payoffs received from the sources of attachment to work. Loyalty will flow to the management if it can convince workers that management willingly pays off its employees in their sources of attachment to work (i.e., is paternalistic). Loyalty will attach to the union if it convinces its members that only through union action will they be able to achieve adequate payoffs in their valued sources of attachment to work. We should be careful to distinguish, however, between loyalty to, and militancy by unions. A union like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America has generated high membership loyalty in its history, but by virtue of deep involvement in a great number of sources of attachment to work of its members, has not been, for many years, a militant union.25/

(5) Finally, I want to draw out the conclusion that an interesting false issue has characterized managerial claims in collective bargaining. This is the issue of management rights. In the course of the development of American collec-
tive bargaining, as well as in capitalist countries of Europe, it was held that the bargaining rights of unions should be limited since to extend the subjects of the collective agreement was to permit unions to invade areas of managerial prerogatives. The management stance was to fight union demands to broaden the issues over which bargains could be negotiated on the grounds that to manage required freedom of decision in as many areas as possible. The obvious result, when the managerial tactic succeeded, was to exacerbate union militancy since the union was indeed limited to only a few sources of attachment to work over which it has bargaining rights. Thus, the insistence on managerial prerogatives sustained and fortified union militancy because of the special linkage between number of sources of attachment to work and union militancy.

When it was finally recognized that collective bargaining could be more rapidly institutionalized by making the union an active partner in managing the sources of attachment to work, and union participation was encouraged by managers discarding their concern with managerial prerogatives, the militancy of unions measurably declined. This has been the history in the USA and in West Germany.

Militancy and Commitment

We may summarize the argument very simply. Organizational commitment has as its social psychological dimension the positive affect of the individual for the organization. Commitment also has as its objective dimension the sources of attachment to the organization. There are very many sources of attachment to work, the work milieu, and the work organization. The more of these that are
activated, and generate positive affect, the more the individual is com-
mitted to the setting from which they arise.

When a union represents employees of a work organization, union policies
and tactics summarize the collective will of its members. The union is more
militant in its relations with employers, the narrower is the range of sources
of work attachment of its members over which it bargains for them. For it is
only under such circumstances that the positive affect of its members toward
the work organization is minimized, permitting them to engage in temporarily
hostile actions toward it.

It might be speculated that in advanced capitalist economies, and in
economically developed socialist societies, the militancy of labor unions will
decline. Unions' expanding involvement in bargaining over sources of attachment
to work will draw them into higher levels of commitment to the objects of work
attachment—the work organization and its working environment. Ultimately, the
degree of involvement in decision making about the sources of attachment to work
will reach a point where it will become difficult to distinguish on functional
grounds between management and union. This may very well lead to the development
comparable to the Yugoslav Workers Councils where at least the form exists of
joint executive-worker direction of the enterprise. Obviously the union as a
separate organization withers away and militancy of the worker representatives
in the Councils is no greater than that of the executives in the bargaining that
takes place within the Councils.

There have been significant developments in organizational theory that must
surely have a bearing on the relationships between two organizations—unions, and
companies--as they bargain with each other. This analysis has taken the nature and sources of participant's attachment to organizations as a feature of organizational theory that is relevant to the bargaining process. It appears this is a promising approach that supplements but does not supplant other kinds of analyses of collective bargaining and union militancy.
Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences and Professor of Administration, Graduate School of Administration, University of California-Irvine. This is a revision of a paper presented at the First International Industrial and Labor Relations Conference, Tel Aviv, Israel, January, 1972. This paper was prepared in conjunction with ONR Contract Number: N00014-69-A-0200-9001 (NR 151-315). Reproduction in whole or in part is permitted for any purpose of the United States Government.


2The socialist position was given prominence in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and has been frequently restated since.


6The vast literature on motivation for work was put into focus by the writings of Fredrick Herzberg (Fredrick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner and Barbara B.

Underlying all models of motivation for work is the assumption that motivation to work is a positive affective state. The emphasis on attachment to work is parallel to Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity", the social linkages among persons and groups performing interdependent work. "Attachment" includes interdependence in the Durkheimian sense, but in addition encompasses self-conscious attention to any feature of an environment considered important by the individual.

7 This has been amply demonstrated in unpublished studies by the author of 3,000 British industrial workers and two additional studies of American industrial workers.


9 There seems to be a genuine unwillingness among analysts to give up their own commitment to the Protestant ethic about work and to project similar orientations onto workers. The consequence is a reluctance to distinguish between indifference and alienation. The break away from this tradition will be found in, for example, Robert Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) and Robert Dubin, "Industrial Workers' Worlds: A Study of the "Central

10 There have been numerous acts of union militancy directed at governmental policies, such as wages policies, that have exerted considerable force on governmental policy makers.


13 As in the Workers Councils of Yugoslavian industry.

14 The trend has been analyzed in somewhat different terms as a product of broad institutionalization of industrial relations in Robert Dubin, "Industrial Conflict: The Power of Prediction," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 19:352-363 in which predictions made twelve years earlier are evaluated.


16 Clearly a feature of the national labor policies in Great Britain and the United States where limits on negotiated wage increases have been set in relation to the increases in labor productivity.

17 Negotiated wage increases and welfare benefits become the objective and logical justification for increasing charges to consumers as many examples make clear (building industry and trucking; are obvious U.S. examples).

18 Revealed indirectly when the questions asked in research on worker orientations in Soviet social science are examined. For example, A.A. Zvorikine, "Theoretical Foundations of the Social Processes Control," paper presented at the
VII World Congress of Sociology, Varna, Bulgaria, 1976, lists worker response to questions about: "satisfaction with canteen function," "satisfaction with work of kindergartens," "satisfaction with the cultural activities," "satisfaction with the flat [apartment] accommodation," and "satisfaction with the medical service at the enterprise."


21 Lewin, op. cit.


23 Histadrut, the labor federation of Israel, is a fascinating example where the total work institution is organized within a single organization, Histadrut being the employer of about 25% of the work force in its own enterprises. The labor union side of Histadrut may occasionally pursue strictly trade union goals with some militancy. The extensive number of sources of attachment to the work institution, including the functions of Histadrut to promote national growth and survival, makes militancy by members against it generally, unlikely.
The classic instances of union-management cooperation are to be found in circumstances where work or the work organization itself is threatened and the union is driven into cooperation in order to preserve jobs. There are many cases reported in American literature going back to union-company cooperation in the repair shops of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and covering a series of fifteen case studies published by the National Planning Association starting in 1949.

Richard A. Lester, has suggested: "...the Amalgamated Clothing and the International Ladies' Garment Workers, have been most conservative in their demand and behavior in the 1940's and 1950's. Both unions have been practically strike free since World War II and have foregone wage increases for periods of two or three years." As Unions Mature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 52. This kind of conclusion is all the more remarkable since both unions had origins in the socialist movement.

This conclusion regarding the impact of institutionalization on union militancy because of joint involvement in sources of attachment to work was elaborated in Robert Dubin, Working Union Management Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1953), ch. 7.

Cf. The entire issue of Industrial Relations, vol. 9, no. 2 (February, 1973) which is devoted to a symposium on workers' participation in management.
FIGURE 1. WORK ATTACHMENT AND UNION MILITANCY

[Graph showing a negative correlation between work attachment and union militancy]
FIGURE 1. WORK ATTACHMENT AND UNION MILITANCY

Low
High

NO. OF WORK ATTACHMENTS

HIGH

UNION MILITANCY
FIGURE 2. STRUCTURE OF WORK ATTACHMENTS AND UNION MILITANCY

- Consultative participation
- Housing; Nurseries; Recreation
- Health & Welfare; Job bidding; Paid vacation; Guaranteed wages; Union hiring help
- Wages, Hours, Working Conditions
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