

UNION DEMOCRACY

**A CASE STUDY OF THE MANITOBA FOOD
AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS, LOCAL 832**

BY: Shirley Van Schie

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts**

Interdisciplinary Studies

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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SHIRLEY VAN SCHIE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

The thesis addresses the issue of whether the nature and extent of democracy within a trade union organization is related to the degree of membership support for the union's policies. The thesis also postulates that the objectives of a trade union shape the nature and extent of internal union democracy. This study attempts to ascertain that greater union democracy would improve a union's strength vis a vis the employers with which it deals, and would consequently improve members' working conditions and benefits.

An extensive evaluation of the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers', Local 832 was undertaken to test the above hypotheses.

The relationship between the level of internal democracy and the extent of membership support for union policies and actions was relatively strong, both in the correlation procedures and the regression analysis. The qualitative analysis of specific incidents in the bargaining relationship between the MFCW and Safeway and Westfair also supported the hypothesis that the level of union democracy is related to the degree of support for the union's policies.

The hypothesis that greater union democracy would improve members' working conditions and benefits was indirectly supported by the quantitative relationship discovered between the level of democracy and support for union policies. Increased membership support for union policies would aid the Local in attaining the best possible negotiated benefits and working conditions for the members.

Finally, some support was found for the hypothesis that trade union objectives and the economic environment shape the nature and extent of internal union democracy. The history of the MFCW's bargaining relationship with Safeway and Westfair lends some support to this hypothesis.

The strength of the analysis rests in the comprehensive examination of the organization under study. The major weakness is the lack of comparison between different trade union organizations. A time-series analysis would also have been useful in determining whether initiatives to increase membership support actually influence support levels for union policies.

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CHAPTER I

(i) Introduction

The objective of the thesis is to determine whether membership support for union policies is affected by the degree of internal democracy within a trade union organization. Specifically, does the members' role in the decision-making process, and the leaders' willingness to incorporate rank-and-file ideas and initiatives into its policies, affect the membership's willingness to actively support the union's goals and objectives, particularly on the picket line.

As a member of the MFCW, I witnessed the inability of the union to gather support from its Safeway members for the striking Westfair workers in the summer of 1987. It was also apparent that the union had failed to gather optimum levels of support from its Westfair members. This thesis addresses the question of whether the membership might have been more supportive of the union's struggle if they had been more involved with the day-to-day operations of the union over the past several years. It is hoped that the report provides some insight into this question, and that the findings will be of use to the organization under study for practical purposes.

The thesis involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Interviews with staff representatives, shop stewards and elected officials of the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' Local 832, as well as examinations of the Constitution and By-Laws, recent contracts and ACTION magazines provided the information required to describe

the structure and activities of the Local, as well as programs implemented within the past few years which have dealt with membership participation.

The quantitative research centred around the survey of Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' members working at Safeway and Westfair in Winnipeg. The response rate was relatively good, and the resulting sample provided a fairly accurate representation of the population under study.

The first section of the thesis will consist of a discussion of past works on union democracy, concluding with the specific hypotheses of the study, and the methodology undertaken to test the hypotheses. Chapter II includes a description of market conditions over the past ten years and a discussion of the bargaining relationship between Local 832 and Safeway and Westfair within this period. Chapter III deals with the structure, activities and objectives of Local 832, and programs and policies implemented within the past ten years dealing with membership involvement. Chapter IV summarizes the findings of the qualitative research.

Chapters V and VI contain the results of the quantitative research, while Chapter VII compares the results of two recent studies on union democracy with those of the present study. Chapter VIII summarizes the findings of the quantitative research. The summary and conclusions of the study form the final chapter of the study.

(ii) Review of the Literature

The subject of union democracy has received ample attention over the years. Researchers have examined the nature of union government, the goals of union democracy, and the criteria necessary for an adequate measure of the phenomenon. Not surprisingly, there has developed a wide array of viewpoints, largely the result of the types of unions under consideration and the varying assumptions authors have made about union objectives. As well, depending on the criteria used in the measurement process, different standards of union democracy have emerged. This section will discuss some of the debates in the current literature regarding the measurement and goals of union democracy.

Participation, meeting attendance and voting in elections have been considered traditional indicators of union democracy. (Whyte, Strauss and Sayles, Edelstein and Warner, Ginsberg, Taft, Lipset, Trow and Coleman, Faunce). (J. Anderson, 1979, p.433) John Anderson believes the key issue in union democracy is the "manner in which influence is obtained and exercised." (J. Anderson, 1979, p.433) He notes, however, the general lack of evaluation of members' behaviour or impact on the decision-making processes of unions which go beyond traditional methods of participation. (Spinrad, Perline and Lorenz, Tannenbaum and Kahn, Kovner and Lahne)

Anderson states that informal modes of membership participation must also be analyzed in order to determine the extent of membership influence over union decisions, since "the involvement of members in decision-making appears to have been displaced by behavioral involvement in union activities." (J. Anderson, 1979, p.433) Especially with the increase in the size of unions, the 'shop society' in the United Kingdom has emerged in which members "gain information and provide input into the formal decision-making process." (J. Anderson, 1979, p.435) However, since only representatives from the shop society attend the formal union meetings, an important aspect of membership participation is inadvertently left out of the measurement of union democracy.

Another indicator of union democracy involves leadership responsiveness, although the validity of this measurement has been questioned. "The fact that the union hierarchy meets the goals of members without their formal participation, no matter how their interests were determined may not be considered democratic." (J. Anderson, 1979, p.435) Michels, for example, has argued that over time, leaders are more concerned with maintaining their own positions and control over the organization than with their members' interests. As well, leaders may manipulate members to a point where an analysis of certain criterion may only be measuring the influence of union officials. (Marcus) In terms of measurement criteria, Anderson concludes that future research on union democracy must consider combined approaches (including measurement of formal and informal methods of participation) since no single measure can adequately represent the degree of internal union democracy.

Herman Benson argues that in reality, unions are not constitutional democracies ruled from the bottom up, but are in fact, "oligarchies, some more absolute, some more limited, ruled from the top down by an administrative team dominated by national officers." (Benson, 1986, p.324) According to Benson, the 'tone' of union government is set by: (1) its power structure; (2) the electorate and (3) the active cadre outside the union, including critics, oppositionists and dissenters. Benson is convinced of the presence of an "official family" in most union bureaucracies, which is "permanently organized, disciplined and solidified by the common adherents in holding power." (Benson: 1986, p.328) Oppositional forces have no permanent base in the union structure, while the 'regime' holds full legislative, executive and judicial power. (Benson: 1986, p.328) The national leaders surround themselves with a host of professional staff, whose interests lie with the administration, and who are employed to protect the administration if threatened by opposition at election time. The administration also monopolizes the press:

The effect of the monopolization of the press by the officialdom is not that it convinces the membership, but that it creates an aura of leadership omnipotence, obliterates the notion that some alternative leadership might be possible, and demoralizes potential opposition among the union cadres. (Benson: 1986, p.336)

Finally, the national convention, "so touted as the embodiment of democracy", is "normally a politically manipulated body easily controlled by the national officialdom." (Benson: 1986, p.339)

Benson maintains, however, that the state of democracy in the American labour movement is healthier and more encouraging today than at any time in the forty

years since the end of World War II." (Benson: 1986, p.329) The official power of the national leadership is limited by checks from within and without the union. Insurgent movements within unions have attempted to bring the officialdom under control, while external forces (such as the union reform movement resulting in legislation such as the Labour Management Reporting and Disclosures Act of 1959) have sought to protect the rights of members within their unions, and to provide tools for democratic reform.

Membership apathy, Benson declares, "is often not the cause of the bureaucracy's triumph, but its result." (Benson: 1986, p.356) Measures of union democracy must therefore focus on insurgent movements within unions, and external forces pressuring for democratic reform. The counterposing of interests between members and leaders provides the stimulus for internal union democracy, which in turn is a "necessary weapon in the interests of members vis-a-vis their own representatives." (Benson: 1986, p.369)

Benson's argument is noteworthy in that it emphasizes the need to go beyond the analysis of traditional indicators of union democracy. Opposition to the elected leadership need not be formally entrenched to have an effective democratic organization. As well, public opinion may have a larger effect on the structure of a union's government than its own formal constitution. However, Benson does not elaborate on how internal insurgent movements actually result in progressive changes to the oligarchic structures of the American

unions he is describing. Do revolts from below result in leadership turnover and a subsequent mobilization of the new faction's political power within the organization, or do they produce a reorganization of the union's government to prevent the reemergence of a politically oppressive oligarchy? Although the presence of oppositional currents within a union are a "healthy" sign of democracy, the actual structures and policies of the union, specifically with respect to the degree of membership influence in union affairs, are the key elements in the discussion of internal union democracy. How internal and external oppositional forces affect these structures and activities might be a useful supplement to the central discussion.

Freeman and Medoff write "union democracy depends on the extent to which members have a voice in choosing leaders and in determining union policy." (Freeman and Medoff, 1984, p.220) In their analysis of American unions (involving criteria such as meeting attendance, voting, holding an office position, filing of grievances, turnover of leadership and election conduct) they conclude that "there is a great deal of democracy ... throughout the labour movement, particularly at the local union level." (Freeman and Medoff, 1984, p.220) According to their research, a large proportion of members participate in union activities, there is a reasonable degree of leadership turnover, particularly at the local level, and election conduct, for the most part, suffers "very few breaches of internal democracy." (Freeman and Medoff: 1984, p.211) As well, surveys of members indicate that "while some blue-collar private sector union members felt that there were some problems with the management of their union..., only a bare 3 percent in each year specifically mentioned a lack of democracy as the difficulty." (Freeman and Medoff: 1984, p.209)

Freeman and Medoff argue that the opportunity to voice opinions, and to participate in union activities are readily available to most union members, and a large number of the members take advantage of these opportunities. The exact nature of membership influence over the decision-making process is not examined in any detail. What types of meetings do members attend? Does formal participation in union activities result in the incorporation of members' views and demands into the union's policies and objectives? What is the relationship between the nature of membership participation and the objectives of the union's activities? Freeman and Medoff offer a description of membership behaviour in union activities. However, they do not illustrate how the members actually determine union policy, one of the criteria they noted as an important indicator of the extent of internal union democracy.

Richard Hyman emphasizes the need to analyze the power and control of unions within the whole structure of society, since unions can become a part of, what he terms, the control system of management. (Hyman, 1975, p.74) In its fight for internal democracy, the union must also fight employers and state officials who would like to influence union decisions, especially in matters of control over the membership.

Hyman outlines the efficiency versus participation argument which has emerged in the discussion of union democracy. The Webbs were among the first to argue that rank and file members lack the skill, knowledge, experience or interest to control trade union affairs. (S. Webb and B. Webb, 1897) (Hyman, 1975, p.74) Others have since argued that leaders and full-time officials act as "guardians of organizational efficiency; the role of leaders as such can be inhibited or

obstructed by democratic control from below. (Hyman, 1975, p.74) "Coherent and consistent policy, they insisted, was impossible within the framework of 'primitive democracy'." (Hyman, 1986, p.74) H.A. Clegg maintained that the "machinery of democratic control, the various processes of rank-and-file involvement in decision-making, deter officials from initiatives which might provoke opposition; thus they constitute 'obstacles to effective leadership' (Clegg, 1970, p.112-8). (Hyman, 1975, p.74) According to Hyman

some draw the conclusion that 'the hazards of the electoral system' must be as far as possible eliminated in order to strengthen the powers of decision-making in unions' (Hooberman, 1970: 29); or that 'the unions are going to have to attract careerists as well as idealists if they are to survive.' (Shanks, 1961: 100) (Hyman, 1975, p.74)

Hyman believes these arguments inspire proposals to further limit rank and file control over the leadership, resulting in even narrower definitions of democracy.

Hyman links the concept of union democracy to the notion of control in the workplace. Unions are restricted by employers, governments, and full-time union officials primarily to functions which "exclude any serious challenge to the existing social order and the structure of control in industry." (Hyman, 1975, pp. 86-87) Within a capitalist economy, trade unions can only protect their members "against the more extreme consequences of their subordination to capital; the fact of this subordination they are not entitled to challenge." (Hyman, 1975, p. 87) Labour-management conflict has been stabilized through the grievance and collective bargaining processes, where 'reasonable demands' are appreciated, and often rewarded by management. "Evidently, then, the central role of collective bargaining in

union policy should be interpreted as an accomodation to external power."

(Hyman, 1975, p. 89) Hyman believes greater worker control within unions (ie. greater democracy) would entail a larger degree of control over working conditions and the outcome of work, resulting in decreased power of management over such activities.

According to Hyman, there is a strong relationship between the nature of a union's objectives, and the degree of internal democracy within the organization. He argues that the more limited a union's objectives, the less inclined members are to become involved.

For the more limited the objectives pursued, the less central to the worker's life interests is his union, and the less, therefore, his incentive to become actively involved in the machinery of internal decision-making. The more exclusive the focus on collective bargaining, then, the less likely it is that most members will seek control either the means or ends of union action. At the same time, the pressures on the official to maintain control over the rank and file in order to support stable and orderly industrial relations are further corrosive of internal democracy.
(Hyman, 1975: p.92)

Furthermore, workers have, like their elected and paid officials, undergone a socialization process in which 'radical' demands are considered subversive and detrimental to the health of the economy, and systematically

repressed. The 'socialization process' has resulted in trade union objectives that have been narrowed to gaining moderate improvements in wages and working conditions, working with the state and management to control the workers' aspirations and maintaining their own existence through job security clauses.

Central to Hyman's argument is the contention that within a capitalist society, external influences shape the objectives of a trade union organization; these objectives in turn limit membership participation, and hence, internal union democracy. (Hyman, 1975: pp.92-3) Although Hyman discusses the objectives of trade unions in some detail, he provides little insight into the purpose of greater democracy. Hyman implies that broader objectives necessitate a strong and cohesive rank and file in order to back 'radical' demands, but does not elaborate on how internal union democracy would facilitate the attainment of these demands.

Richard Herding makes several insightful comments concerning the issue of union democracy, using the phenomenon of job control as an illustration of his general theories. "The state of democracy within a trade union has an obvious and crucial impact on the job-control rights the union will demand in the bargaining process, and on the distribution and meaning of these rights for its members." (Herding, 1972, p. 14) In his study of various industries in Germany and the United States, Herding found that job control fosters aspirations toward resisting management domination and towards workers' self-determination at the workplace. (Herding, 1972, p. 347) "They put a limit and pose a virtual

challenge to attempts by bureaucracies of either side to sacrifice job control to cooperation and industrial harmony at workers' expense." (Herding, 1972, p. 347).

The purpose of union democracy, Herding believes, is to ensure that members' interests be the guiding force of union decisions; the accommodation of unions to the capitalist system must not threaten these interests. Thus workers become militant when they believe the union is 'selling out' to the employer. To survive, and retain membership support, the union must pursue policies in the best interests of its members; they must be visibly in favour of supporting membership demands: "What counts to the union members is not just the results that might as well have been conceded by 'benevolent' autocrats, but the way of accomplishment by labor representatives accountable in a visible manner to shop-floor grievances and demands." (Herding, 1972, p. 347)

According to Herding's analysis, then, there appears to be some relationship between trade union objectives, internal union democracy and shop floor militancy and support. Workers have a degree of influence over control in the shop, or view this as an important objective. Both leaders and management come under attack when these objectives are sacrificed. Herding's results seem to support Hyman's claim that wider objectives, in this case job control, increase worker's interest in their union's functions. Representatives are required to be more visibly accountable to the rank and file at the shop floor level. This phenomenon would in turn appear to indicate a greater degree of democracy within the organization.

Perry Anderson discusses union democracy as it relates to an increasingly militant working class in Britain. He notes that the "lack of democracy in trade unions is to be understood in terms of the nature of the system into which they are inserted: that is, capitalism." (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 275) In a capitalist society, any institution created for or by the working class can be used as a weapon against it, and pressure for this type of weapon to be used is exerted by the dominant class. (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 275) Working class unity requires disciplined organization; these organizations in turn become "the natural objective(s) of capitalism to appropriate it (them) for the stabilization of the system." (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 275) In this manner, many British trade unions "serve the objective function of subordinating the working class to capitalism." (P. Anderson, 1967, p.275) However, Anderson also argues that due to the 'paradoxical nature' of trade unionism, "-a component of capitalism that is also by its nature antagonistic to it-", trade unions are not only "organizations of adaptation to the status quo", (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 275) since they would lose members if they failed to make any gains at all. "They perform a dual role, both shackling their members to the system and bringing home limited benefits within it." (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 275)

Anderson believes that the enhanced role of shop stewards in the class struggle in Britain is the result of the lack of democracy apparent in the major unions: "Bureaucratic repression in the union- a consequence of its capture from above by the environment of capitalism- tends to lead to a revolt from below which acts as a restoration of the status quo ante-the natural situation of struggle inherent in the capitalist organization of industry. (P. Anderson, 1967, p. 277)

The fight for more militant unions is a fight for greater democracy in the unions, Anderson believes, and greater freedom of debate inside the union movement would create a more self-reliant and militant working class; a phenomenon which would improve the lot of the working class. "For it is obvious that militancy is industrially more effective in achieving wage increases than class collaboration." (P. Anderson, p.277) Anderson links the state of militancy to the degree of internal democracy. Increased democracy would increase militancy and would thus be instrumental in improving the workers' position in relation to management.

Albert Rees states that while the interests of the membership and the leaders in seeking gains in collective bargaining may not be diverse, the leadership's views on bargaining demands and strategy are usually more moderate than those of the rank-and-file. (Rees, 1977, p. 168) "Increasing union democracy is therefore likely to lead unions to make larger economic demands and to press for grievances that have little merit." (Rees, 1977, p. 168) This statement implies that moderate demands will have more merit, at least in the eyes of the employer. This position was argued by both Perry Anderson and Richard Hyman, who noted that a union's relationship with an employer is less volatile when reasonable demands are put forth. However, Rees implies that larger demands would jeopardize the interests of the members, and must therefore be contained by the leadership. Unlike Hyman and Anderson, he does not believe greater union democracy might enable the leadership to make more progressive demands.

Rees goes on to claim that even though union government is not as democratic as civil government, "as long as a union does a good job of protecting the economic and job interests of the members, they will almost always give it full and warm support." (Rees, 1977, p. 168) Rees does not predict what will occur when the leadership fails to deliver the goods, or when economic slumps force unions to fight concessions on wages and benefits as well as working conditions. How does the level of union democracy affect the union's strategy in these instances? Will a replacement of leaders be enough to mobilize the membership support necessary to fight these concessions? In Rees' analysis, union democracy is reduced to some apparent commonality of interests between the leaders and the members; how this relationship is affected by the environment surrounding collective bargaining is not examined in any great detail.

The literature review has revealed a variety of important issues concerning union democracy. Some major themes which emerge concern the nature of membership participation in union activities, including the debate as to whether greater union democracy would in fact serve the interests of the members. One major component of this debate is whether the leader's interests reflect those of the members. Many authors have argued that oligarchic prevent meaningful democracy, and often result with the leaders' interests predominating over those of the members.

Another theme involves the measurement of union democracy; different authors and researchers have stressed different criteria as valid indicators of this phenomenon. Finally, some discussion has involved the goals and objectives of

trade unions. With the exception of Perry Anderson, the major drawback of most recent studies on union democracy is the lack of analysis concerning the relationship between trade union objectives, the degree of internal democracy, and the rank-and-file militancy required to attain the union's objectives.

It is essential to determine whether increased democracy would in fact improve working conditions and benefits for the members involved, and more specifically, if it would help maintain and improve these benefits during periods of economic recession. It is easy to demonstrate a union's ability to secure good packages for the members during times of economic prosperity without enlisting membership participation at all. However, in 'tougher' times, the leaders are faced with concessions, or minimal increases in benefits, and the relationship between the leaders and the members becomes much different. Thus, the present study will focus on the objectives of a specific trade union, how these have determined the level of internal union democracy, and how the entire relationship has been shaped by the specific economic context in which it occurred.

The second issue to be considered involves a comparison of the nature of the decision-making process in the day-to-day activities of the union and that which develops during a time of crisis, for example, during a strike. The relationship between the extent of democracy and the nature of the decision-making process in the latter scenario has not been analyzed in any great detail. The theory postulated in this study is that a lack of membership participation in day-to-day union affairs may lead to a lack of membership support for the union during these crisis periods. It is hoped that

some relationship between union democracy and the nature and extent of collective membership militancy will be discovered.

Unfortunately, the effect of job control aspirations on the extent of internal union democracy cannot be addressed in the study due to limitations on the instrument used. Determining membership views on job control would involve a more in-depth questionnaire supplemented by interviews with employees in the units, research beyond the scope of the present analysis.

(iii) Objectives of the Study - Specific Hypotheses

The objective of the present study is to broaden the analytical framework developed in past works concerning union democracy to include the dynamic nature of union-management relations in today's society. This particular case study approach will attempt to test some general hypotheses about union democracy, while focussing on specific issues a union faces during periods of economic recession. The study will discuss the objectives of a trade union organization, the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers, Local 832, the economic climate surrounding the relationship between this union and two employers, Canada Safeway and Westfair, the level of internal democracy within the union, the nature and extent of membership support for union policies and actions, and the types of benefits secured for the membership over the past ten years. The general proposition of the study is that increased union democracy would strengthen the union in relation to management, and would thus be instrumental in increasing or at least maintaining benefits for the members.

The specific hypotheses to be explored in the study include:

- (1) The level of internal union democracy is related to the nature and extent of membership support for union policies and actions.
- (2) The objectives of trade unions shape the nature and extent of internal union democracy, the relationship being shaped by the economic context in which it occurs.
- (3) Greater union democracy would improve union strength, and consequently members' working conditions and benefits.

(iv) Population Studied

The population under study is the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' Union, Local 832, specifically those who work for Safeway and Westfair in Winnipeg. As well, the study will examine a number of incidents which have occurred in the bargaining relationship between the MFCW and the above companies.

Local 832, chartered by the United Food and Commercial Workers of America, was founded May 2, 1938. The Local administers roughly seventy contracts in its Manitoba jurisdiction, covering a total of approximately 7000 members. Safeway is the largest employer, with 3000 unionized members in Winnipeg, Selkirk, Carman, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin and Thompson. Westfair Foods (SuperValu, EconoMart and ShopEasy) is the second largest employer, with 1600 unionized members in Winnipeg, Brandon, Dauphin and Thompson.

(v) Methodology

To examine the state of union democracy within the population under study, qualitative and quantitative research were undertaken. Specifically, the following qualitative research was undertaken.

In-depth personal interviews were conducted with union representatives, shop stewards, Executive Board members, negotiating committee members, the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 832 and the President and Chief Executive Officer.

A review of the content of the union's official publication was completed. This involved reading through publications from the last ten years to determine the type of information relayed to the members, and activities in which members were invited to participate.

An examination of contracts reached by the union and Safeway and Westfair over the past several years was conducted. The purpose of this exercise was to monitor improvements/concessions to wages and working conditions agreed to between the parties.

This phase of the research also included a brief summary of the province's economic conditions over the past decade, with a specific focus on the local food industry. Information was gathered from newspaper and magazine articles, trade journals, and interviews with the Local's representatives.

The quantitative research involved a survey of Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers members working at Safeway and Westfair in Winnipeg. Members were invited to express their views on the Local's structure and activities, and to indicate the extent of their involvement in the union's affairs.

The following section begins the qualitative research undertaken for the study, with a description of the general market conditions in Manitoba and the bargaining history of the Local and the two major food retailers in the last decade.

CHAPTER II

(i) Market Conditions and Bargaining History 1978-1988

The economic climate surrounding the bargaining relationship between a union and the companies it must deal with is of considerable importance in the discussion of union democracy. Factors such as the degree of competition within a particular industry, profit levels of companies in the industry and unemployment rates in the area will affect the types of collective agreements negotiated between a union and a specific company or group of companies over a given period of time.

Beginning in 1980, and lasting well into 1983, Canada experienced a general recession, part of a long wave of economic crisis which first became evident in the mid 1970's. Unemployment rates in Canada rose to a high of 11.9% in 1983 while real growth in Gross National Product declined to a low of -4.4% in 1982. The unemployment rate in Manitoba increased steadily from 1978 and peaked at 9.4% in 1983. Unemployment levels in Winnipeg reached a high of 10.7% in 1983 and have since decreased steadily. (See Table 1)

TABLE 1
 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES - CANADA, MANITOBA AND WINNIPEG
 1978 - 1987
 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED FIGURES

	Canada	Manitoba	Winnipeg
	(x)	(x)	(x)
1978	8.3	6.5	
1979	7.4	5.3	
1980	7.5	5.5	
1981	7.5	5.9	
1982	11.0	8.5	9.2
1983	11.9	9.4	10.7
1984	11.3	8.3	9.3
1985	10.5	8.1	8.8
1986	9.6	7.7	8.5
January 1987	10.6	7.9	9.9
August 1987	8.1	7.4	7.8

Data Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 71-001
Manitoba Statistical Review
 2nd Quarter 1987, p.6

The value of retail trade of grocery and other food stores in Manitoba declined significantly in 1982 and 1983, although 1976 and 1977 displayed relatively low increases in value fo retail trade as well. After the recession began, the value of retail trade increased by only 9.3% in 1982, and 2.7% in 1983. The rate increased considerably in 1984 and 1985, and dropped significantly once again in 1986. (Table Here).

The figures in table 2 indicate that the provincial retail food market did not escape the effects of the recession, clearly a concern for the major food retailers who control much of the provincial market.

During the recessionary period, the degree of competition in the Manitoba food industry increased dramatically with the introduction of 'Superstores' in the early 1980's. Loblaw Companies Ltd. Consolidated, which includes EconoMart, ShopEasy, Westfair Foods, SuperValu and Loblaws would change the face of the entire retail food industry in Manitoba.

Loblaws Companies through Westfair Foods (a division of Kelly, Douglas) continues its expansion in the Prairies and beyond mainly at the expense of Canada Safeway. In just over three years, Loblaws stores have captured an estimated 25% of the Manitoba food market. Its state-of-the-art, no frills Super Valu outlets have cut deeply into the profit margins of competitors.

(Financial Post, April 13, 1985, p.13)

TABLE 2

VALUE OF RETAIL TRADE, GROCERY AND
OTHER FOOD STORES
1972 - 1986
Manitoba (Thousands of Dollars)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Manitoba</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1972	343,162	11.7
1973	383,479	11.7
1974	442,440	15.4
1975	498,061	12.6
1976	543,821	9.1
1977	577,049	6.1
1978	654,025	13.3
1979	731,041	11.7
1980	806,796	10.4
1981	916,599	13.6
1982	1,002,917	9.3
1983	1,030,163	2.7
1984	1,166,721	13.3
1985	1,347,908	15.5
1986	1,434,534	6.4

Source: Manitoba Statistical Review, 1st
Quarter, 1979
pp. 73,74 1st Quarter, 1987, pp. 57,58

Canada Safeway's share of the Manitoba retail food market dropped from 34.3% in 1983 to 32.4% in 1985, and decreased even further to 30.8% in 1986. Fierce competition and price wars forced twenty-two Dominion stores in Western Canada to close down. (Financial Post, March 19, 1983 p.6) By 1986, Loblaw's Companies Ltd. had captured 24.8% of the Manitoba retail food market. This represented a phenomenal increase of 11.2% in just over three years, with SuperValu accounting for 20.2%, and EconoMart possessing 4.6% of the total market. (See Table 3)

Profit levels of the two corporations in Manitoba over the last ten years are unavailable. Loblaw Companies Ltd. published its net earnings for its Western Division up to 1983, while Canada Safeway Ltd. figures are for the entire Canadian division of the corporation. Published figures indicate that sales in Loblaw's Western Division decreased significantly in 1982 and 1983, recovering in 1984 and 1985, and decreasing again in 1986 and 1987. Net earnings in 1982 for the Western Division only increased by 2.0% over the previous year. Based on the sales figures for the Western Division from 1983 to 1987, and on the corporation's total net earnings for these years, the net earnings for the Western Division decreased even further in 1983, with recovery beginning in 1984. (See Table 4)

Sales and profit figures for Canada Safeway Ltd. show similar trends, although the data include the entire Canadian division of the corporation. Table 5 reveals that increases in sales were relatively high until 1982. In 1983, sales increased by only 4.4%. By 1985, sales has decreased by 1%. Increases in gross profit levels of the corporation were reasonably stable until 1983,

TABLE 3

PROVINCIAL MARKET SHARES - MANITOBA
 'RETAIL OUTLETS' SHARE OF TRADE
 1983 - 1986

	1983	1984	July 1985	1986
Safeway	34.3	37.0	32.4	30.8
SuperValu	13.6	15.5	18.9	(20.2)
(The Real Canadian Superstore Co-op)	10.1	9.2	8.8	8.2
IGA	6.7	6.4	8.5	6.0
Family Fare	N/A	N/A	3.6	N/A
Economart	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.6

* Chart Identifies volume by individual Store Banners.

Source: Canadian Grocer, December, 1985, p.20, May, 1987,
p.38

TABLE 4

LOBLAW COMPANIES LTD. CANADA AND WESTERN DIVISION
 SALES AND NET EARNINGS 1978 - 1987
 (\$ Millions)

	Western Division				
	Canada Sales	Sales	% Change	Net Earnings	% Change
1978	2,645	1,171	14.0	10.6	11.8
1979	2,857	1,324	13.1	11.3	6.4
1980	3,198	1,424	7.5	13.1	15.9
1981	3,513	1,598	12.3	16.7	26.9
1982	3,847	1,714	7.3	17.0	2.0
1983	4,121	1,583	-7.6	N/A	N/A
1984	4,394	1,702	7.5	N/A	N/A
1985	4,668	1,888	10.9	N/A	N/A
1986	5,098	2,030	7.6	N/A	N/A
1987	5,689	2,090	2.8	N/A	N/A

Source: Annual Reports, Loblaw Ltd., selected years.

NET EARNINGS (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)
 LOBLAW COMPANIES LTD.,
 1978 - 1987

Year	Net Earnings	% Change
1978	26	N/A
1979	35	34.6
1980	46	31.4
1981	53	15.2
1982	39	-35.9
1983	53	35.9
1984	64	20.8
1985	67	4.7
1986	74	10.4
1987	74	0.0

* Includes earnings from Loblaw Companies in Canada and the United States.

Source: Loblaw Companies Ltd., Annual Report, 1987

TABLE 5

CANADA SAFEWAY LTD. - SALES AND PROFITS
1977 - 1985
(Dollars in Thousands)

Year	Sales	% Change	Profit	Net Income
1977	1,652,190	-	328,358	32,549
1978*	1,895,795	14.7	379,159	N/A
1979*	2,216,849	16.9	443,369	N/A
1980	2,562,980	15.6	525,494	61,450
1981	2,881,618	12.4	604,015	67,410
1982	3,176,804	10.2	676,616	63,507
1983	3,317,955	4.4	727,916	70,274
1984	3,425,338	3.2	741,327	60,639
1985	3,391,414	-1.0	751,980	63,424

* Figures for 1978 and 1979 included foreign sales for Canada Safeway Ltd. The figures in the table are estimates of Canadian division sales, based on ratios of foreign sales to Canadian sales for the years where data on both divisions was available. Foreign sales were estimated to account for 4.5% of total sales in 1978 and 1979.

when the increase over the previous year's gross profit was only 7.6%. This figure dipped further in 1984 to an increase of only 1.8%. Canada Safeway Ltd. has not published figures on sales, gross profit or net income since 1985.

The redistribution of market power in the retail food industry, coupled with the economic recession, necessitated new management directives for the large food retailers in Manitoba. The closures of small stores and expansion into superstores has constituted one response to the increased competition and lower profit levels. Another major response has been a harder line at the bargaining table, where both of the major competitors have attempted to gain concessions in wages and working conditions.

Loblaw Companies opened a number of SuperValu stores in 1981 in its bid for increased shares in the Manitoban retail food market. Smaller outlets were closed to make way for the new superstores, which carried a whole new line of products for the cost conscientious consumer. An important aspect of Loblaw's renewed entry into the Manitoba retail food industry was a lucrative settlement with the MFCW, Local 832 in 1981. In return for the signing of Westfair workers as members of Local 832, the union agreed to a six-year, no-strike agreement with the corporation which would mirror the contracts concluded between the local and Canada Safeway Ltd. and Dominion Food Stores Ltd. Westfair Foods was thus guaranteed a period of industrial peace during which it could focus on its expansion into the Manitoba retail food industry.

Safeway has also been concerned with its decreasing share of the provincial retail food market and losses resulting from the economic recession. Several small stores have been closed in order that larger superstores could be opened. A new line of generic products was introduced to compete with the low-priced no-name products on Westfair's shelves. As well, the company has attempted to undercut Super Valu's profit levels through the imposition of collective agreements that would raise Westfair's labour costs, and enable Safeway to compete more effectively with the expanding corporation.

Since 1981, one of Westfair Foods Ltd.'s main objectives has been to minimize labour costs; a major component of this strategy has included the maintenance of a large workforce comprised mainly of young, new part-time employees. Prior to 1981, 70% of the workforce at Westfair was full-time. According to one union representative, SuperValu has hired many "restricted" employees to "fit its schedule"; individuals who do not expect more than a few hours each week are hired. The employees receive minimal hours each week, making it difficult for most to accrue benefits outlined in the collective agreement. A high turnover of employees has not been a problem, since the unemployment situation in Manitoba has guaranteed a steady flow of new employees.

The policy of maintaining a predominantly part-time workforce was threatened when, in 1985, Canada Safeway Ltd. agreed to a guaranteed ratio of twenty-five percent full-time employees in the bargaining unit. According to the 1981

collective agreement between Westfair Foods and Local 832, Westfair was obliged to adopt a similar ratio of full-time and part-time employees. This condition of work would undermine one of the strategies that had increased Westfair's profits so dramatically within a few short years.

Prior to negotiations, the union sent a list of proposals and the Safeway agreement to Westfair. The proposals were drafted after meetings with the Westfair membership, who were aware and supportive of the union's demand for the full-time/part-time ratio. The union explained that the ratio would be achieved gradually through attrition, and would not result in lay-offs of present employees.

Before the union could meet with Westfair to discuss the proposals, the company drew up and distributed mock schedules which 'illustrated' the effect the full-time ratio would have on current employees. At the same time, Westfair announced that the clause would entail the loss of seven hundred part-time jobs in Manitoba. This announcement caused an uproar among Westfair employees. The union called a meeting in order to explain its position more clearly and to settle the members' concerns.

The meeting was volatile, although the leadership managed to convince a significant number of workers that the company was grossly exaggerating the effects of the clause. The meeting did not end on a good note, however, with a noticeable gap emerging between the full-time and senior part-timer workers and the less senior part-time employees. The understanding at the end of the meeting was that the union would attempt to gain more full-time positions in the bargaining unit, and more hours for the part-time employees.

In spite of the Local's attempts to convince its Westfair membership that the company was employing scare tactics to renege on its original agreement, and that the guaranteed ratio would not threaten present jobs, the clause was not included in the 1985 - 1987 Westfair collective agreement. In its place, the Company agreed to add an additional fifteen full-time positions to the bargaining unit, and to reinstate full-time employees who had been reduced to part-time since May, 1985 to their full-time positions. The net result was that, in the future, 16.56% of total hours worked would be full-time hours.

The rank-and-file clearly dictated the union's actions during the 1985 - 1986 contract negotiations with Westfair Foods Ltd. Although the Local had a mandate from the membership to pursue the 25% full-time ratio, the company's tactics were successful in dividing the membership, and undermining the union's position at the bargaining table on this particular issue. However, the union responded to its members, who felt that the guaranteed full-time ratio was not in their best interests. In this case, Westfair's appeal to the employees was stronger than the Local's, resulting in a contract that reflected the interests of the employer, rather than the long-term interests of the members.

Did the incident reveal a lack of democracy within Local 832? In fact, the union kept members informed of the consequences of the proposal for more full-time positions, and responded to their demands that the ratio be dropped from the list of proposals. As well, for the first time, the Westfair negotiating committee consisted of elected representatives from SuperValu and Econo Mart stores. Unfortunately, two of the negotiating committee members were company "spies" who jeopardized the union's bargaining position throughout the

negotiations by briefing management on the union's strategies. In summary, the Local displayed democratic behaviour throughout the negotiations, but was unable, in light of the circumstances, to succeed in keeping its membership completely on side. The resulting contract, although an improvement over previous contracts in terms of language concerning the number of full-time workers and group guarantees for senior part-time workers, was less than the Local had hoped for.

Over the last decade, bargaining has become much more complex and the struggle for improved wages and working conditions more intense. Although Local 832 has not relinquished most of the benefits secured in past agreements, since 1985, both companies have demanded clauses that potentially undermine the job security of all MFCW members at Safeway and Westfair. The union has managed, at the same time, to secure clauses protecting more senior employees from the adverse effects of the new classifications and policies. However, the trend in management policies in the last five years has been to introduce cheaper job classifications and increase the number of part-time employees in the units.

From 1978 to 1983, Local 832 secured relatively good wage increases from Canada Safeway. Wages rose particularly fast in the period from April 1980 to July 1983. The union also secured increases in company contributions to the Dental and Pension plans, while a Long-Term Disability Plan, to be introduced by the company, was established in the collective agreement effective August 9, 1982. Improvements to employee benefits were negotiated from 1978 to 1983, in particular with respect to coverage extending to part-time employees. Night stocking and Night Shopping premiums also gradually increased during these years.

In terms of contract language, only minor changes occurred in the agreements between 1978 and 1983. The weekly number of hours for full-time employees decreased from 39 in 1975 to 37 in 1983 (with no corresponding decrease in pay). Meat and Bakery department managers hired or promoted after April 28, 1980 were included in the bargaining unit. Improved language on overtime pay rules, granting of vacations to part-time employees, better seniority rules for part-time workers, improved sick leave provisions, increased weekly indemnity payments and a Prescription Drug Plan (the Company would pay \$25.00 deductible effective in the agreement commencing May 10, 1981) were benefits secured by the union from 1978 to 1983.

The contract negotiated between Canada Safeway and Local 832 commencing in May of 1983 had very few changes. Noteworthy, however, is the fact, while the wage increases were relatively substantial, the changes represented steps backward for the union in terms of language. One first assistant manager per unit would henceforth be excluded from the bargaining unit. In stores where the non-food department was open for business on Sunday, part-time employees would work at straight time, rather than at time and one-half as had been the case in previous contracts.

Since 1985, there have been many significant concessions to Canada Safeway, both in wages and contract language. Hourly rates have increased by less than one-dollar since 1985 for most classifications, and members have settled for lump-sum payments or credited hours in lieu of wage increases in recent agreements. Employer contributions to the Dental and Pension Plan have increased since 1985.

The agreement commencing in 1985 contained new provisions governing Sunday work, since Safeway had decided to open many of its stores on Sunday and could not afford to pay the previously negotiated double or time and one-half rates. Premium for Sunday work would be \$1.00 in addition to the regular hourly rate of the employee. Some conditions of work with respect to Sunday opening were secured by the Local; most notably, work would be on a primarily voluntary basis.

The 1985 agreement saw the introduction of the classification of Courtesy Bagger. Employees in this classification would perform duties previously assigned to Service and Food clerks, thus effectively undermining the long-term job security of most of the present employees. Although a number of provisions would limit the use of Courtesy Baggers, and present employees were granted a certain degree of job security (in terms of the numbers of hours worked), the agreement to the use of Courtesy Baggers represented a major concession by the union.

The introduction of Courtesy Baggers was a very contentious issue for Safeway employees. The Local stated on numerous occasions during negotiations in 1985 that it would not agree to a settlement which included the new classification. However, it eventually agreed in return for a number of items, most notably the guaranteed full-time ratio. Selling the agreement to the Safeway membership was not an easy task. Much heated debate occurred, not only about the introduction of baggers, but about the union's apparent sell-out to the company on an issue it vowed it would not lose. Unlike the Westfair employees, however, the Local's leaders were able to persuade the Safeway employees to

accept the new collective agreement, arguing that the company was prepared to weather a strike to win its demand. The union knew of these intentions at the start of negotiations; its position of refusal till the last hour was a ploy to win demands in other areas of the collective agreement. These arguments sufficed to provide membership acceptance of the agreement commencing in 1985.

New classifications effective June 29, 1987 included Sales/Service Clerk, and Floral/Variety/Pharmacy Tech/Refreshment Centre/Store Records-Clerk. New wage scales, with lower starting and top rates were established for these classifications. The company could also hire up to six baggers per store, while the duties of baggers were extended.

Collective agreements negotiated between the MFCW and Westfair Foods Ltd. were also examined, beginning in 1981. Prior to 1983, Canada Safeway, Loblaws and Dominion Stores jointly negotiated with the MFCW; from 1978 to 1981 the monetary and non-monetary settlement, as well as any retroactive provisions secured by Safeway employees would apply to Loblaws' employees as well. In 1981, Westfair negotiated the no-strike agreement with the MFCW. The contract included a Final Offer Selection process to be in effect for a period of six years, expiring December 31, 1987. It was agreed that the terms of the agreements of Safeway and Dominion would form the basis of the offer between Westfair and Local 832 for Final Offer Selection.

Since 1983, some improvements, mirroring those in the Safeway agreement, were negotiated for Westfair employees. The work week was decreased with no loss of pay, guarantees of hours for some part-time were introduced, and employer contributions to the Dental and Pension Plans increased. Greater flexibility was granted to the Company in hiring or replacing workers in the following classifications: non-professional assistants, cosmeticians, kitchen shop attendants, photo sales persons, houseware clerks, hardware clerks and leisure clerks. Greater flexibility would entail that the positions would be "filled by individuals hired or selected on the basis of their skills and seniority as determined by management."

As mentioned, the collective agreement commencing in 1985 contained language pertaining to the ratio of full-time to part-time workers. The company agreed that full-time workers reduced to part-time since May 5, 1985 would be reinstated to full-time, and an additional 15 full-time positions would be added to the bargaining unit. Westfair agreed to maintain the resulting percentage of full-time hours, (16.56%) for the duration of the agreement.

The Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' Education and Training Trust Fund was established in 1985. Effective December 2, 1985, the Company would contribute \$.03 per hour into the newly established fund.

The May 1985 Collective Agreement between Westfair Foods Ltd. and Local 832 did not reflect Safeway and Dominion agreements in terms of monetary and non-monetary provisions. A wage scale was included in the agreement. Also deleted was the Final Offer Selection Process; after the expiration date the

Agreement would continue until a new agreement was signed, or a strike or lock-out occurred. As well, new classifications of Ice Decorator, Doughnut Fryer/Bakery Clean-Up, and Courtesy Bagger were established in the agreement commencing in 1985.

The 1987 negotiations between Westfair Foods Ltd. and the MCFW resulted in a four-month long summer strike. At issue were job security of present employees, and the inclusion of the Final Offer Selection process in the collective agreement. The strike illustrated the Company's confidence in its ability to maintain its new-found market power for the duration of the strike. After four months of picketing, the union accepted a contract which introduced a new, lower paid classification of employees. The new employees, classified as Departmental Assistants, would essentially be performing work of present employees, but at much lower hourly wage rates. The Company could hire up to four hundred Departmental Assistants within the bargaining unit. These employees would not receive the guaranteed hours which the company had agreed to for other part-time employees. The company agreed to the reinstatement of Final Offer Selection to the collective agreement.

The 1987-1990 agreement also included a "Return to Work Agreement" in which it was resolved that the Union and the Company would not discipline, harass or discriminate against those who had shopped, picketed or worked during the strike, "and in particular the Union shall not discipline or treat in any adverse way any employees for working during the strike/lock-out or for any other related activity during the strike." All employees were reinstated with the exception of sixteen employees who had been dismissed for alleged misconduct.

The examination of contracts indicates that major concessions did not appear until the 1985 contracts when new, lower paid classifications of employees were introduced and wage increases were less than in previous years. The companies were consciously addressing the problem of lower profit levels resulting from the recession, and fighting a fierce battle to gain or retain shares in the provincial retail food market.

Management's response to the economic crisis and increased competition in the local retail food industry have implications with respect to the discussion of internal union democracy within Local 832.

One result of the emergence of Westfair Food Ltd. as a major competitor has been a dichotomy in the membership of Local 832 who work for the large food retailers in Manitoba. The relationships each enjoys with the Local are much different. Westfair's membership was given to the local in a deal which would enable the corporation to expand and compete in the Manitoban market. The process of organizing the employees, a time when a union establishes personal contact with the members and makes its goals and objectives known, was eliminated. Safeway employees, on the other hand, underwent the initial process of organizing over thirty years ago, underwent a strike in 1978, and have developed a better understanding of the Local's objectives, goals and strategies. There is more trust of the union among Safeway's membership. Although the length of time Safeway members have been unionized is longer than most Westfair employees, the manner in which the groups were organized has affected their impressions of, and relationship with the Local.

Westfair members have also had to contend with a much more aggressive employer in the last six years. Westfair management has defied the collective agreement on many occasions; a large number of grievances were filed soon after the 1981 collective agreement came into effect. Westfair employees continue to file more grievances than their Safeway counterparts, and the recent strike at Westfair Foods Ltd. indicates that the nature of labour/management relations within the last several years has been less than harmonious.

For its part, the Local has not adopted policies to address the different circumstances and attitudes of workers at Westfair Foods. Although the strike may have produced a bonding between the workers and the Local, several estimates of membership behaviour during the strike indicate that for the most part, Westfair workers were unwilling to actively support the union in its dealings with management. Although precise figures are not available, estimates of strike activity indicate that one-third of the workers crossed the picket line, one-third actively picketed, while one-third chose to stay at home.

The union failed to gather support for the Westfair strikers among its Safeway membership. Very few Safeway members actively picketed, or became involved in some other matter. Many were unsympathetic to the strikers' cause, and resented the increase in dues they paid for the duration of the strike. The union sent at least two letters to the Safeway members in an appeal for their active support on the Westfair picket line. As well, union representatives and shop stewards were encouraged to drum up support at the store level. Many Safeway members, however, stated that in 1978, support from Loblaws workers was

minimal, and were thus not inclined to offer support to the Westfair workers. In spite of its attempts, the Local was unable to harness active support for the Westfair strike from its Safeway members.

This lack of unity among the Local's retail food membership, in terms of supporting fellow members during periods of labour strife, is a serious consequence of the type of information provided by the Local to its members. More specifically, groups of members at the MFCW are treated as separate entities and the Local spends few resources on educating its members about the commonality of their situation. Issues affecting Westfair workers are very similar to those facing Safeway employees; both companies are attempting to introduce lower paid employee classifications and more part-time help. Each company is trying to win back concessions gained by the union in previous negotiations. Most importantly, however, is the fact that since the two companies are the major competitors in the provincial retail food industry, concessions to one company will almost certainly result in the other company demanding, for competitive reasons, similar concessions.

The Westfair strike should have been a strike against the general policies of management in the retail food industry. Had the Local pursued a policy of educating its entire membership with respect to issues common to the separate units over the years, they may have been able to mobilize a larger amount of support from each unit. The incident illustrates that a lack of a consistent informative and educational process on a day-to-day basis can result in misunderstanding and confusion during periods of strife, with less than ideal militancy and support as a result.

Another implication of the economic recession and management's response to the increasingly competitive local market has been the general weakening of labour's position at the bargaining table. The contracts negotiated since 1985 indicate several major concessions to the large food retailers, particularly in the area of new, lower-paid employee classifications. Finally, one staff representative noted that the number of arbitrations has increased steadily in the last few years. The companies have become more aggressive in the literal interpretation of the collective agreements, and are enforcing their (management) rights to a greater extent.

Market conditions have undoubtedly affected the relationship between Local 832 and the two major retail food companies in Manitoba. What are the implications of these findings in the discussion of union democracy? Has the Local introduced any policies or programs which have sought to increase membership input into the union's activities? Has the Local's structure altered in the last decade to incorporate members' input and involvement? Has it attempted to inform members on a continuous basis of issues which might affect its bargaining position with the companies? Have the objectives, goals and strategies of the Local been explained to members on an ongoing basis, so that during periods of labour strife the membership is aware and supportive of the Local's position? These questions will be examined before turning to the results of the survey of Safeway and Westfair members.

CHAPTER III

(i) Structure and Activities of Local 832

The constitution of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union overrides all operations and by-laws of the MFCW. The Local pays money each month for every member in order to remain affiliated with the international union. Local 832 is bound by the constitution of the international union and can be penalized if these laws are not adhered to.

The by-laws of the MFCW contain additional conditions concerning the Local's internal operation. These by-laws were originally voted on by the membership; to amend them, a meeting must be called by the Executive, in which a two-thirds majority vote of the active members present and voting is in favour of the amendments. The by-laws outline members' and officers' duties, jurisdiction of the union, initiation fees and dues, appeals of members from the union's disposition of grievances, meetings to be conducted by the union, and election procedures.

Article V of the by-laws states that regular monthly membership meetings are to be held in February, May, September and October; at these, seven or more active members constitute a quorum. The article also stipulates that special meetings must be held if requested by ten percent of the membership, or if called by the Executive Council or President. Meetings involving only segments of the membership may also be held on an occasional or regular basis, depending on the Local. Those meetings might involve part of the membership voting on the terms of a collective agreement. Adequate notice is to be given for all meetings in

order to give the members a reasonable opportunity to attend. In those meetings involving a vote, the matter is decided by a majority of the active members present.

The by-laws of Local 832 also stipulate the makeup of the union's leadership; these include the president, secretary-treasurer, recorder and thirteen vice-presidents. The duties and responsibilities of these officers is outlined, as well as the manner in which they are selected. All officers, executive board members and members of the Executive Board Advisory Committee must be elected by secret ballot. Once elected, the president and the secretary-treasurer occupy their respective offices for a term of four years, while the other elected members occupy their positions for two years. All members can stand for election providing they have been active members for at least one year prior to the election. All active members are entitled to vote, and elections are to be held at times and places which will give members a reasonable opportunity to vote. As well, challenges to elections must be heard within fifteen days, otherwise election results are declared final. Elected officers are subject to disciplinary action if they fail to abide by the Local or International Constitution, and must vacate their position if they fail to attend three successive meetings without satisfactory cause.

The president is the Chief Executive Officer of the union, and is a delegate or representative to any convention or meeting in which the union participates. If more than one delegate is sent, the secretary-treasurer accompanies the president. All other delegates are to be elected by the general membership.

(This condition is stipulated in the International's Constitution.) The president has a host of duties and responsibilities, ranging from the appointment of special committees to the disbursement of union funds. Decisions of the president are usually subject to the approval of the Executive Board of Directors, and also to the membership, especially when financial matters are involved.

The manner in which proposals for the purpose of collective bargaining are to be determined is set out in the International's Constitution, Article 23.

- (D) 1. The affected membership may submit initial proposals for a collective bargaining contract or renewal of such a contract to the President of their Local Union, to a representative or committee designated by such President, prior to the commencement of negotiations. Initial proposals shall be referred to the affected membership for approval, as directed by the President of the Local Union.

After the proposals have been approved, the President or Committee designated for collective bargaining must meet with the employer and attempt to arrive at an agreement. The International by-laws state that the status of negotiation meetings must be reported to the membership as regularly as practical. The employer's final proposal is subject to approval by the membership, where a majority vote of the members present and voting is needed to accept or reject the proposal. No strike or any other economic action can be taken by a local unless the affected membership has approved such action by a two-thirds majority vote. If the members reject the employer's final offer, but also reject the option to strike, the Local Union Executive Board (after notifying the International

President) has authority to accept or reject the final offer. Local unions must receive authorization for strike action from the International Union. Disbursements for strikes, lock-outs or "defense purposes" are made from the strike fund or from the general funds of the International Union after authorization from the International Executive Committee. Conditions of payment of these funds are outlined in the International's Constitution.

No mention is made, in either the International Constitution or the MFCW's by-laws, of the manner in which shop stewards are to be selected. The president may employ or retain assistants or personnel necessary to conduct the affairs of the Local Union, but this may not include shop stewards. The practise of the MFCW has been to hold elections within units for the purpose of selecting shop stewards. Shop stewards may also be appointed by a union representative if only one person in a unit is willing to perform the duties, or if no persons volunteer their services.

The manner in which negotiating committee members are selected is also not specifically set out in the by-laws governing the International or Local union. In practise, Executive Board members are automatically part of the bargaining committee. The remainder of the negotiating committee is chosen through a combination of election and appointment, the latter presumably by the Executive Council of the Local.

Policy formulation is evidently a prerogative of the union's elected officers, and no formal channel of direct membership input exists. Policy

conferences are held once each year, and are attended by union staff, the Executive Board and the Advisory Board, which consists of representatives from each of the Local's units. Policies normally include the budget for the following year, negotiating strategies and various other union duties.

In summary, the constitution of the International Food and Commercial Workers and the by-laws of Local 832 outline the formal operation of the union, from its dealings with employers to the role of the membership in union affairs. Members can vote in elections, stand for nomination or election, attend meetings, and suggest contract proposals. The International Constitution and the Local's by-laws do not stipulate any membership involvement beyond these activities. It is left to the elected and staff representatives to invite members to be involved as shop stewards or negotiating committee members. Members are not formally invited to participate in the policy formulation procedures of the Local, but can approve decisions (by vote) if they attend general membership meetings. The leaders and staff representatives are ultimately responsible to the members and in theory, final decision-making power rests with the rank-and-file. However, the limited channels of participation outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws leave the union's officials with a great deal of control over the nature and extent of membership involvement in the running of the Local's affairs.

The Local's actual activities and structure are based on the By-Laws and Constitution discussed above. The following outlines in greater detail the duties of the union staff, and the input of members and staff into the decision-making process.

Union representatives are hired by the Local to service the membership, assist in or carry out negotiations, police the collective agreements and aid in organizing campaigns. Shop stewards are volunteers in individual units who agree to act as a liaison between the union and the members. They represent the employees' interests in the event of a dispute between management and an employee within a particular unit. These individuals are the day-to-day contacts employees have with the union with respect to disputes, questions concerning the collective agreement, meetings, or any other union affair. The number of shop stewards in a unit depends on the size of that unit. Most Westfair and Safeway stores (each is a unit) have one to three shop stewards, usually one chief shop steward and one or two alternates. Negotiating committee members are individuals chosen or elected to participate in negotiations for a particular bargaining unit. Many are shop stewards, members of the Executive Board, or active members in the Local.

The Advisory Board consists of elected representatives from all communities in which the MFCW Local 832 has members. The Executive Board, the largest faction of the Advisory Board, includes representatives from the largest units within the Local; this Board meets once every three or four months for an all-day session. Members of the Advisory Board hold their position for two years; the Board meets once each year at the Policy Conference.

In terms of specific decision and activities, union representatives have a great deal of influence over the drafting of contract proposals. These drafts are formulated after the reps have reviewed past contracts, identified weak language, and analyzed grievances based on these contracts. The list of proposals is then presented to the affected membership at a contract proposal meeting, where each proposal is discussed or debated, and new suggestions by the members added. The final set of proposals is then voted on and sent to the company in the initial stages of negotiations. Shop stewards are also invited to suggest contract proposals; often a union representative will meet with the stewards of a particular unit to elicit proposals to be included in the upcoming round of negotiations. Finally, the affected membership might be surveyed prior to the commencement of negotiations to determine priorities and special concerns which should be addressed.

The Secretary-Treasurer and the President are generally responsible for the day-to-day financial activities of the Local, although the Executive Board must approve funds for special projects such as political donations, charity donations, building costs, and other such undertakings. The

yearly budget is drafted by the Secretary-Treasurer, with input from full-time union representatives as to how funds might be spent. The final draft is presented to the Advisory Board for approval, usually at the annual Policy Conference. Final approval must be obtained from the Local's membership at a General Membership meeting.

The annual Policy Conference is attended by Advisory Board Members and full-time staff representatives. All aspects of union policy are discussed in great detail, and a Policy Manual is adopted for the subsequent year to guide the staff's activities. Topics at the Conference include organizing, servicing, arbitrations, finances, educational programs, shop stewards' programs, communication, negotiations, special projects (income tax service, community based projects) the budget, public relations, political action, staff benefits, health and welfare, legal matters and conventions and conferences. Each resolution is discussed and then voted on. (Union reps facilitate at the conference but do not vote.) Most of the Local's major decisions on the above topics are made at this time.

The President has the most influence over the hiring of union staff, although if a full-time representative is to be hired, the existing representatives meet the final panel of applicants and make recommendations to the President. As well, the Advisory Board is consulted as to whether it is financially feasible to hire another full-time representative.

The Board also must approve the recommendations of the President in these matters.

The President has the authorization to begin organizing drives. However, it is typically the union representatives who are approached by individuals of a unit that wishes to be organized. The Advisory Board has no power to veto a decision to organize, but may advise as to the feasibility of such activities. Board members act as voluntary organizers throughout these initiatives.

Decisions concerning strike policies are made by the negotiating committee members and the President, with final approval coming from the affected membership. Union representatives of the unit undergoing negotiations, as well as shop stewards, are contacts for the negotiating committee in terms of how the membership feels about certain issues and whether strike support could be harnessed. If a strike is undertaken, the Advisory Board must approve strike pay.

Union representatives have a significant amount of influence over the decision-making process. Although their influence is not formally entrenched, they are the contacts for the elected representatives, and the sources of information required for many of the decisions made. Reps have a great deal of input into contract proposals, strike policies, organizing campaigns and negotiations, and play a large advisory role in most of the discussion at the Policy Conference. As well, the full-time union representatives, the Secretary-Treasurer and the President meet

weekly to discuss day-to-day strategies and policies dealing with all aspects of the union's operations. This is an important aspect of the decision-making process of the Local in which the full-time representatives play a large part.

Shop stewards do not have a great deal of influence on decisions made by the Local. Their role is purely advisory; they participate in the same manner as other members when policies are put to a vote. Stewards might have more input into policy formation or contract proposals if invited to do so by the Local, or if they are more active in union activities.

Members' formal input into the decision-making process is confined to voting in union elections and voting on the decisions made at the Policy Conference (including the budget). Members do not participate in conferences or meetings where union policy is formulated aside from contract proposal meetings. Members do not attend the annual Policy Conference.

As for the Local's contact with the membership, the official publication ACTION is budgeted to be released six times each year. Some of the consistent features of the magazine have included negotiation news, grievance news, expenditures of moneys, editorials, notification of meetings, identification of union representatives, policy conference summaries and notification of special services offered by the Local. Less frequent features include highlights of meetings and social events, notes on shop steward training, special features columns and various other

articles dealing with the people involved in union activities, summaries of surveys of the membership, notes on union dues, and discussions of contract proposals and settlements.

Perhaps one of the most important functions of ACTION has been to keep members informed of the state of negotiations between the Union and the various companies with which it deals. "Communication, whether at meetings, verbally or in writing, will continue to play a major role and it is essential for our members to keep in touch with what the Negotiating Committee is doing." (November 1984, p.8). The Local publishes its goals and intentions for upcoming negotiations, and informs members of possible outcomes, issues at stake, and other matters related to the negotiations.

Recently, another newsletter, InterACTION, has been published as a short report to the members between the issues of ACTION. InterACTION focuses primarily on responding to frequently asked question of the membership concerning the collective agreement. During negotiations, 'update' letters are sent to members of the units affected to keep them informed of meetings held and developments in negotiations. Finally, surveys are carried out periodically to elicit membership opinions about the union and views on what the union should be focussing on during negotiations.

Shop stewards are contacted more often than general members; at least once per month by mail, and usually more often since the union representatives visit each unit once every two or three weeks. The nature of the information usually centres around developments arising out of

interpretation of the collective agreement which may be useful to the steward. More contact with stewards occurs when problems arise in the unit.

This discussion of the Local's activities illustrates that the President and Secretary-Treasurer, along with the full-time staff representatives, have the greatest influence over the union's operations, while membership involvement has not been extended beyond those formal channels of participation outlined in the International's Constitution or the Local's By-Laws. Members are invited to approve decisions made at the Policy Conference, but are not invited to participate in the formulation of policies governing either the Local's operations, or its relationship with the various employers. Membership involvement in the Local's decision-making process is further limited by the fact that few members attend general membership meetings, where policies and objectives are discussed and approved. In short, the analysis of the Local's operations indicates that the decisions made at Local 832 are undertaken by the leaders and staff representatives, with little input or approval from the rank-and-file members.

The union's structure seems to require only minimal involvement of the rank and file, with the elected officials and staff representatives performing the major decision-making functions. The observation seems to validate Benson's argument that unions are "oligarchies ... ruled from the top down by an administrative team." (Benson, 1986, p. 324.)

Indeed, one of the union staff interviewed described Local 832 as "top

heavy"; decisions filter down from the top in spite of input from below. However, the literature review revealed that researchers must go beyond formal modes of participation to examine the real dynamics of membership behaviour and their input into the union's decisions and policies. In particular, what are the attitudes of those in charge regarding greater membership involvement. Is the leadership manipulating the structure to prevent meaningful membership involvement?

Lack of membership involvement in union activities was a concern expressed by most staff representatives, elected officials and voluntary stewards. These individuals were invited to comment on the degree of membership participation and whether the Local's structure provided enough opportunity for the members' voices to be heard. Most representatives felt that as much involvement as possible is desired in order to gather ideas and feedback about what the Local is doing right or wrong.

In terms of informal participation, many representatives stated that the MFCW administers a widely dispersed membership and cannot wait for the members to drop by the office to find out their needs and concerns. The representatives must canvass the members, going to each unit to speak to the workers, since the Local is not located within the workplace.

Although members can contact the union at any time, many have not done so and it is up to the staff to ensure that the union is communicating with its members and drawing out their opinions on various subjects. However, one individual noted that full-time representatives are responsible for approximately 1700 members each whereas six years ago, the figure was roughly 550 for each representative. The Local has recently attempted to

distribute some of the representatives workload to voluntary stewards within the individual units.

The Shop Steward system has been a particular area of concern for the Local. The President of Local 832 stated that few shop stewards are knowledgeable enough about the collective agreement to be able to provide the proper information or help to individuals at the stores. Shop stewards who were interviewed were generally satisfied that the system was a success in terms of gathering members' concerns and relaying them to the union, and in dispersing information from the union to the separate units. However, the experience of employees, including the author, is that many shop stewards are often invisible, unapproachable or ill-equipped to deal with employee problems. Perhaps the stewards are exaggerating their importance, or believe even the most minor advice constitutes meaningful assistance.

More in-depth research must be undertaken in the future to address the precise role and purpose of shop stewards; clearly there is some confusion if the stewards are satisfied with the system while representatives are concerned about the stewards' usefulness.

Executive Board members also expressed concern at the low level of membership participation in union activities, although most were inclined to state that the channels of membership input were sufficient. That is, members can contact the Local at any time, and can attend meetings if they wish to voice their opinions and concerns. As well, committees have been established over the years to deal with specific concerns of units, or groups of employees within units.

The comments of individuals most involved in the Local's operations indicate that while membership participation is low, the opportunities for involvement are plentiful. The structure of the Local's activities is, apparently, not preventing meaningful membership involvement; members can exercise their rights to participate in the decision-making process by attending general membership meetings and voting in the Local's elections. Finally, many stated that membership interest in negotiations has peaked. The increased communication between the Local and the affected members, and the importance of negotiations were cited as explanations for this interest.

The above discussion concerning the union's structure revealed that, while there are areas of concern, particularly with respect to the Shop steward system, membership involvement in union activities is not inhibited by a lack of opportunity to participate in union activities and to voice opinions and concerns. That is, the structure of the Local, in the view of those who are responsible for its operation, is not inhibiting popular involvement. The following section will address the second element of this issue: what types of programs and policies have been implemented to elicit membership involvement? Has the leadership manipulated the formal structure to prevent increased membership involvement in, and influence over, the decision-making process? An examination of specific programs and policies adopted by the Local over the last decade was undertaken to determine the extent to which popular involvement is encouraged, and incorporated into the union's daily operations.

(ii) **Programs and Policies**

Many programs have been implemented over the years in an attempt to elicit membership involvement in union activities and to try and make the union's staff more accessible to the members. Initiatives have included better servicing of the membership, a greater and more meaningful role for shop stewards in cooperation with union representatives, greater membership participation through committees, and more information to the members with respect to their Local's functions and their collective agreement.

Programs to improve servicing have included more visits by the reps to the individual units of the Local, calls to be returned within 24 hours, and each union representative to meet each employee personally at least once each year. The union has also attempted to establish an "Officer of the Day Program" in which, on a daily rotation basis, one full-time union representative would remain in the office to respond to members' calls.

The impetus for improved servicing has come from a variety of sources. Members have requested more frequent visits by the reps to their individual units. As well, the staff and policy conferences of the last several years have focussed on improving the quality and quantity of servicing and communication with the members. The "Officer of the Day Program" was adopted after the members complained that it was difficult to obtain quick information from the Union. A similar program had been established in one of the UFCW's Locals in the United States.

Unfortunately, the program was dropped due to the inability of most representatives to remain in the office for a full day. On their scheduled day to act as Officer of the Day, many were required to attend arbitration hearings or meetings with the employers. The Local plans to hire an individual who would be solely responsible for responding to membership queries, and referring them to their union representatives if the matter requires further attention.

Finally, in November of 1986, it was decided that in order to further improve communication with the membership, the Local would hire a communications/public relations specialist. The individual would coordinate communication with the members, provide information to individual units, keep members better informed about problems within units, improve the image of the Local,, and help to establish an improved two-way communication system. The first individual hired for the position "did not work out". However, the Local is committed to the idea, and is simply waiting for its financial position to stabilize before hiring another individual.

The commitment to create a greater and more meaningful role for shop stewards began over ten years ago, when it was announced that Educational Seminars and Shop Stewards' meetings would be conducted. February 27, 1978 marked the beginning of the Shop Stewards' Education Program, with the goal of educating present shop stewards, while ensuring that one is appointed in each unit, location or store. A new Shop Stewards Program was announced in 1984: shop stewards would in future be responsible for filing Shop Steward monthly reports, handling all problems and/or grievances at Stage I, and introducing themselves to new members. A Shop Steward Contract Interpretation Manual was to be

provided to assist the stewards in the interpretation and enforcement of the collective agreement.

The decision to enhance the role of shop stewards was based on staff discussion, as well as noted experiences of other locals. Local 832 realizes that to improve the shop steward system, a number of conditions must be met. These include the recruitment of committed individuals, proper training, the opportunity for the stewards to utilize their knowledge, and some form of recognition by the company, union and fellow employees of the importance of these individuals. Local 832 has undertaken a new shop steward system within the St. Boniface Hospital unit, and is in the process of evaluating the new system before integrating these initiatives in other units as well.

Membership surveys have been commissioned within the last several years in an attempt to make the Union "more responsive to, and more in tune with [our] members' wishes." (ACTION, November, 1979, p.3) In 1976, a survey of all MFCW members was undertaken to obtain an objective picture of the membership's views about the union and its functions. The decision to begin membership surveys was a staff decision, although the final decision was approved at the annual Policy Conference.

Surveys have also been commissioned to identify membership priorities and outstanding issues prior to the commencement of negotiations with the various employers. Surveys of this nature were carried out in 1980, 1982, 1984 and 1988.

In order to prepare for the 1985 negotiations with Canada Safeway, the union held a series of in-store meetings with Safeway members, who were invited to express their views on company/union relations, and to discuss the negotiator and the members' role in the negotiating process. Tough negotiations were foreseen, and the leadership felt that the complex issues required discussion and education beyond the regular means of informing the members of contentious issues. The smaller in-store meetings would enable members to ask questions and to participate more fully in the negotiating process. Issues were discussed more fully, and members were made more conscious of the union's bargaining strategies, and their own role in the process.

A total of sixty-six in-store meetings were held in 1985. The President and Union Representative met with employees of each of the thirty-three Safeway stores on two occasions to give all workers equal opportunity to attend.

In-store meetings were held in 1986 as well, although on a much smaller scale. The union met once with employees of three to five stores to explain issues in the next round of negotiations, and to gather feedback from the members about the union's activities. The Local felt that the Safeway membership was satisfactorily aware of their role in the negotiating process, and a repeat of the extensive orientation procedure of 1985 would not be required. In 1987, the Local's attention switched to the Westfair situation which had become increasingly problematic within a few short years. In-store meetings were held with SuperValu members prior to the beginning of the 1987 negotiations, although due to the size of the stores, meetings were held on a departmental level.

One of the Executive Board members stated that, in addition to meeting attendance, voting in elections, and suggesting contract proposals, members can participate in committees which have been established to address particular group concerns. The decision to implement such committees rests with the staff and elected officials, and is, once again, finalized at the annual Policy Conference. The purpose of the committees is to indicate to the members that the Local is responding to their special needs and concerns. It is a means of keeping the various factions "on side" during negotiations and strike vote situations. Committees formed in the past have included the Women's Committee, (later referred to as the Equal Rights/Political Action Committee), the Student/Part-Timers' Council, and the recent committee formed to administer the Education and Training Trust Fund established in 1985.

Some committees have met with considerable success while others have been disbanded after only a few meetings. The decision to abandon a committee is taken at the semi-annual Staff Conference, or the annual Policy Conference. The Student/Part-Timers Council was formed too "give students greater voice and participation in the affairs of the Local Union and to enable them to have a better understanding of the Union." (ACTION, Sept/October 1984) Issues of special concern to part-time workers and students were discussed, and one of the members of the Council was elected to the union's negotiating committee in the 1985 negotiations with Canada Safeway. Unfortunately, interest in the Council deteriorated, and after only one or two individuals attended the final few meetings, the leadership resolved to disband the Council.

New membership orientation has been a problem for Local 832. A commitment to begin orientation meetings for new employees was announced in 1979. A new orientation program was undertaken a few years ago; three or four meetings were planned, an agenda was set, and refreshments were offered. Approximately 250 to 300 people were invited to attend; fewer than 10 individuals attended the meetings. The Local evaluated the program to determine the cause of the failure and concluded that asking for members' free time to attend these functions was unrealistic. It was decided that a more effective orientation could occur at the worksite, on the company's time, in which a shop steward could meet with the employee for fifteen minutes to explain briefly the contract and the union's function. The union has revamped its strategy of new member orientation to focus on negotiating the orientation time into the various collective agreements.

Finally, the Local's official publication, ACTION has been an important vehicle of communication between the Local and its members. In addition to providing practical information with respect to meeting times and services offered by the union (such as legal assistance), the publication has been utilized to explain the union's functions, the decisions made by the Local's leadership, (including financial matters) and the members' role in the Local's operations.

The magazine has also been employed as a means of familiarizing the membership with individuals most involved in its operation. Special features on the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, members of the Executive and Advisory Boards have appeared regularly over the last ten years.

In summary, the policies and programs of the MFCW over the last ten years have focussed on informing members of the union's activities (with particular emphasis on negotiation news), gathering feedback from the members through surveys and special committees, and developing a more responsive team of elected officials and staff representatives to deal with members' concerns and demands. There appears to be a genuine commitment to servicing the membership and including them in the Local's operations. Many programs have been implemented in a response to concerns and demands of specific factions within the Local's membership.

The failure of the programs to incorporate meaningful membership involvement in union activities is due to a number of factors. Faulty design has been cited in a number of instances, while lack of membership interest has been the problem with other programs. Nevertheless, the union is committed to increasing membership involvement; whether this in turn has resulted in a diffusion of decision-making power will be addressed in the concluding remarks of this chapter.

(iii) The Local's Objectives

One of the hypotheses of the present study is that the nature of a union's objectives affect the degree of internal union democracy. The objectives of Local 832, according to those most involved in the union's activities, include

servicing the membership, gaining and maintaining decent wages and working conditions, enforcing the collective agreement, and ensuring the fair treatment of the members. Organizing, lobbying for progressive labour legislation and public education were also viewed as important objectives. Items such as greater control over the job or a voice in management policies, such as the implementation of new technology in the workplace, were not mentioned as central to the union's objectives.

Authors of past studies on union democracy have argued that the more limited a union's objectives, and the greater the emphasis on goals achieved through collective bargaining, the less members will be inclined to become involved in the local's activities.

The objectives of the MFCW are relatively narrow; whether they have limited the involvement of members in the decision-making process will be examined following the quantitative summary of membership behaviour in union activities.

CHAPTER IV

(i) Synthesis of Qualitative Research

Market conditions in the provincial retail food industry have changed dramatically within the last ten years. The economic recession and increased competition have resulted in new management directives for Canada Safeway Ltd. and Westfair Foods Ltd. in Manitoba. These have included the closure of small, unprofitable stores, expansion into large supermarkets with a greater variety of products, and demands for concessions to wages and working conditions from their unionized members.

Contracts negotiated from 1978 to 1983 revealed many improvements in wages and working conditions for Safeway and Westfair workers. For both companies, these lucrative agreements became a major obstacle to sustained or greater profit levels in light of the economic recession and the increasingly competitive market. When the impact of the market conditions became apparent, demands for concessions appeared. The contracts from 1983 to 1987 reveal a number of concessions, most notably in the introduction of lower paid employee classifications.

The increased struggle over wages and working conditions in the past several years should have altered the relationship between the MFCW's leadership and its rank-and-file membership. In order to maintain or gain improvements to the collective agreement, and to withstand employer demands for concessions, the union would increasingly have to rely on a mobilized membership willing to support the Local's position. After years of securing relatively decent contracts without much active involvement of the rank-and-file, the leadership has come to depend on its members' unwavering support during periods of economic crisis. The level of internal democracy has a great effect on the leadership's ability to do so. The development of an informed and involved membership is essential for the mobilization of support required during these times of hardship. What is the recent history of the MFCW in these endeavors?

During the last decade, the Local has attempted to keep its members informed of issues affecting them at the bargaining table. Some initiatives have also been taken to elicit membership views on the running of the Local, and to increase participation in formal activities such as meeting attendance and committee involvement.

However, the Local's emphasis has been on gathering feedback from its members; the leaders are interested in knowing how the members view the job the union is doing. They seem to be less interested in having members participate in the actual formulation and deliverance of these policies. The "top heavy" structure of Local 832 has prevented any meaningful diffusion of decision-making power. Committees are simply another means of gathering feedback; involved members make suggestions, but do not decide on final policies or strategies. This limited degree of influence causes members to lose interest in such involvement, and consequently, committees are disbanded.

The decisions to begin programs and committees, or to call special meetings, rest with the leadership and representatives of the Local. In practise, such activities have developed in response to membership demands for greater say in the local's activities. The increasing use of part-time help at Safeway and Westfair necessitated the formation of the Part-Timers' (Student) Council in 1984.

Attempts at developing membership input into the negotiation process have been more successful. The in-store meetings have been instrumental in synthesizing the interests of the membership with those of the leaders. They have been a valuable tool in increasing membership support during crucial periods.

The staff and representatives of Local 832 believe the formal channels of membership participation in union activities are satisfactory, and the opportunities for members to voice their opinions and concerns abundant. However, most of those interviewed agreed that membership participation was at a very low level. The programs and policies initiated by the local over the past several years have not succeeded in raising membership input into the day-to-day activities of the local, although participation in activities surrounding negotiations seems to have increased.

ACTION is the most important vehicle of communication between Local 832 and its dispersed membership. It is a means of informing and updating members of union activities, explaining the union's position on various issues, and "selling" the union's objectives to the membership. Members, however, are not invited to publicly express their views in the magazine. No opportunity exists for feedback in the form of letters to the editor, and dissenting views are not published.

In summary, the qualitative research reveals that the local's decision-making process is dominated by the elected leaders and staff representatives, while membership influence in this area is limited to the election of representatives, the acceptance or rejection of contracts, and meeting attendance. Membership feedback on various issues and policies is desired, while direct input into the formulation of these policies has not been encouraged in a systematic manner. The implications of these findings will be discussed in connection with the quantitative research describing membership behaviour in union activities, and their views on the local's structure and policies.

CHAPTER V

(i) The Instrument

The survey instrument utilized to carry out the quantitative research was designed as a self-administered questionnaire. Following the initial design, the questionnaire underwent a number of pretesting stages before being mailed to individuals selected in the sampling procedure. Individuals working at a Safeway unit were asked to fill out an initial draft, and were invited to express their opinions concerning the applicability of the questions. A number of professors were also invited to comment on initial drafts. The President of the MFCW also examined the questionnaire and suggested revisions. Finally, individuals of a survey research operation suggested revisions involving the format and logic of the questionnaire. Revisions made prior to the fielding of the questionnaire reflected the suggestions of many individuals. (The survey instrument is appended.)

The questionnaire involved a number of items relating to members' participation in union activities, support for union policies, the role of members in the decision-making process, communication levels, and members' views on changes they would like to see in the structure of union activities. For the purposes of the regression analysis, and to determine whether the original hypotheses could be supported, many of the items were combined to form the dependent and independent variables.

(ii) The Sample

Prior to the mail-out survey, a systematic sample of 600 individuals was taken from the MFCW's membership list of Westfair and Safeway employees belonging to the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' Union Local 832 and working in Winnipeg. (There was a separate list for each company) Every eighth member on the list was chosen to be in the sample. The list consisted of the names of these individuals in alphabetical order.

Certain levels of management, specifically those not covered by the collective agreement, were not included in the sample. The sample was also stratified, such that the number of people in the sample working for a particular company was in proportion to the actual number of Winnipeg members who work for that particular company.

Individuals were phoned prior to the mail-out to determine whether they would participate in the survey. The original sample list was reduced as a result of wrong or unlisted numbers, individuals who no longer worked for Safeway or Westfair, and those who did not wish to participate in the survey. From the original sample of 600, 383 members agreed to participate. Of the 383 members who were mailed a questionnaire, 229 completed it and mailed it back, a response rate of 60 percent.

The resulting sample is closely representative of the population's actual composition in terms of those descriptors for which comparative data are available. With respect to company employed by, 158 (69%) worked at Safeway

TABLE 6
SURVEY SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

TOTAL SAMPLE = 229

	Number of Respondents ----- (#)	Percent ----- (%)
Company:		
Safeway	158	69
Westfair	71	31
Status:		
Full-Time	41	18
Part-Time	181	80
Tenure:		
Less than 2 years	90	40
2 - 5 years	48	21
5 - 9 years	32	14
Over 9 years	54	24
Sex:		
Men	108	47
Women	120	53
Age:		
16 to 25 years	123	55
26 to 35 years	49	22
36 to 45 years	30	13
Over 45 years	22	10
Department:		
Front End	20	9
Cashier	37	16
Bagger	19	8
Grocery/Dairy/Stocker	55	25
Other Food	67	29
General Merchandise	15	7

Education:

Less than High School	67	29
High School	90	40
Some Technical/University	62	28
Complete University	7	3

Marital Status:

Single	125	56
Married	82	36
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	7	3

Income Reliance:

Sole earner	31	14
A primary earner	84	36
Not a major earner in household	107	47

Previously Unionized:

Safeway	26	17
Westfair	15	20

and 71 (31%) worked at Westfair. As of October 8, 1987, a total of 4660 employees worked at Safeway and Westfair in Winnipeg; 1470 at Westfair (31%) and 3190 at Safeway (69%). Twenty percent of the individuals in the sample who worked for Safeway were full-time, 77 percent part-time. (3% did not answer). This compares to 28 percent and 72 percent respectively in the actual population. Eight Westfair employees in the sample worked full-time (11%) 61 worked part-time (87%). (2% did not answer). This compares to 15 percent and 85 percent in the population under study. More women than men participated in the survey, reflecting the overall union membership ratio of 60 percent female, 40 percent male.

Table 6 describes the general makeup of the sample obtained for the study.

(iii) Definitions of Variables

The independent variables of the study include formal and informal participation of members in union activities, the level of communication between the members and the local, leadership responsiveness, and membership influence over the decision-making process. The dependent variable is membership support for union policies. Intervening variables include membership views on management and labour union activities. Each of the variables is briefly described below.

Formal participation of members in union activities includes meeting attendance, involvement as a union representative, shop steward or elected official, suggesting contract proposals or filing a grievance.

Informal participation involves contact with union representatives and shop stewards, voicing disagreement with union policy, contact with the President and Chief Executive Officer of Local 832, and inclination to contact the union about a problem at work.

Level of communication consists of the degree to which members read the official union newsletter, as well as if they believe they are satisfactorily notified of meetings. Members views on whether the level of communication is satisfactory, and whether they are kept well-informed about union business was also included in this variable.

The responsiveness of the leader, union representatives and shop stewards to members' needs and concerns, as perceived by the respondents, comprised the leadership responsiveness variable.

Views on management were determined by asking members the degree of cooperation management exhibited if a problem arose at work.

Members' were asked to state if they would prefer to be non-unionized as a measure of their views on labour union activities.

The role of the members in the decision-making process included their influence over decisions made during a strike and in the day-to-day operations of the Local, influence over a number of specific decisions and activities, their opinions on the state of democracy within the union, and the perceived ease with which established union positions could be altered.

Support for union policies entails degree of agreement with the MFCW's leaders' policies, contentment with the job the union is doing and accordance with the goals the union is pursuing.

(iv) Frequency Results

In the following section, frequencies of responses to the questions utilized in the formulation of the combined variables are discussed.

Formal Participation

Formal participation in union activities was arrived at by looking at whether members had ever been nominated for, run for, elected to or applied for a union office position, whether they had filed a grievance, if they had ever suggested contract proposals, and meeting attendance. (Table 7)

Of the respondents, eight percent had been elected to, or applied for a union office position. Full-timers were more likely to have been involved in this manner, as well as those with more tenure.

Ten percent of the respondents stated they had filed a grievance. Of these, workers at Westfair were more likely to have filed a grievance, as were full-timers. People with less than 2 years service are highly unlikely to have filed a grievance within their working experience.

Relatively few members (14%) have suggested contract proposals, although full-timers, older workers and those with more tenure are much more likely to have suggested proposals.

TABLE 7

FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN UNION ACTIVITIES
SINCE BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE UNION

Nominated for, run for, elected to or applied for a union office position:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Yes	8%	7%	11%
No	91%	92%	89%

Filed a grievance:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Yes	10%	6%	18%
No	88%	92%	79%

Suggested contract proposals:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Yes	14%	14%	14%
No	85%	85%	86%

Sixty-three percent of the individuals in the sample have attended a union meeting since becoming a member of the MFCW. Thirty-nine percent have attended a meeting in the last year. Eighty-seven percent of Westfair employees have attended union meetings (77% have attended in the last year) while 52% of Safeway workers have attended a union meeting (22% have attended in the last year.) Clearly the recent strike at Super Valu provided Westfair members with an incentive to attend meetings, particularly in the last year. The Safeway figures may thus be more representative of typical membership behaviour.

Table 8 displays the figures for membership attendance at specific union meetings while outlining the differences in attendance behaviour between Safeway and Westfair workers.

Relatively low levels of attendance can be observed for general membership and election meetings, medium levels for negotiation update meetings, and high levels for contract proposal and strike vote meetings. Again, however, Westfair figures are consistently higher than Safeway figures, and typical attendance may in fact be closer to that registered for Safeway employees. Also, the data do illustrate that members are far more likely to attend meetings concerning negotiations than meetings where officers are elected or general union affairs are discussed. Full-time workers, older workers and those with more tenure were once again more likely than their counterparts to attend union meetings.

TABLE 8

MEETING ATTENDANCE SINCE BECOMING A MEMBER
OF THE UNION

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Any Meeting	63%	52%	87%
General Membership	21%	16%	31%
Negotiation Update	34%	24%	56%
Contract Proposal	51%	41%	73%
Election	10%	8%	14%
Strike Vote	53%	40%	83%
Other	1%	1%	1%

Of the members who have been to meetings, 31 percent have been to 1 to 5 meetings, 17 percent to 6 to 10 meetings, 7 percent to 11 to 20 meetings, and 2 percent over 21 meetings. (8% did not know or state how many meetings they had attended.) The average number of meetings attended by employees since becoming a member of the MFCW is 4.02; the average number of meetings attended in the last year is 1.12.

The frequency crosstabulations indicate that meeting attendance is the only means of formal participation MFCW members seem to engage in, even though other forms of participation are also encouraged. Even with meeting attendance, members are likely to attend only those meetings which involve negotiations, (contract proposal, strike vote, negotiation update or ratification meeting). Members do not attend general membership meetings, where day-to-day business is discussed and decided upon, or election meetings, when those representing the members' interests in union affairs are elected.

Respondents were asked to state their reasons for not becoming involved in the union as a shop steward, a member of the Executive Board or a union representative. Seventy-two percent of the respondents answered the question. The most frequent responses were: (1) not interested/not a priority (30%); (2) other commitments/too busy (17%); (3) not qualified (12%). Other reasons included: uninformed of meetings or activities, never nominated, too young and not enough seniority. Less sympathetic reasons were: the union is a farce and a waste of money, not devoted enough to the union, the union is not beneficial to the average worker, do not agree with the union's policies and shop steward's do not receive adequate support.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents stated why they had not yet filed a grievance. The most important responses were that there was no reason (60%) or that the situation had been resolved (6%). A few respondents felt that filing a grievance would entail management harrassment or punishment, or filing a complaint would not allow them to "stay in good with management." A small number stated they did not know the procedure or what they could file about. (2%) Finally, some members felt that filing a grievance is ineffective since the union is "gutless" and "always settles for less."

Members were also invited to state why they do not attend union meetings. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed responded to this query. The most frequent responses were: (1) busy/prior commitments (37%); (2) not interested/not a priority (31%); (3) not enough notice/do not know about them (10%).

A number of members (33) were not happy with the meetings they had attended; there was much arguing and they did not enjoy the company, their questions and concerns were evaded or ignored, meetings were too long, their presence would not make a difference, or they do not agree with the union's policies. A few people stated that they were not well educated about union matters, and that more outspoken individuals were usually present. Only a couple of individuals stated they could not attend because it was inconvenient (no transportation, could not find a sitter, health reasons). Clearly members are not attending meetings because union matters are not a priority in their life. As well, many members stop attending after one or two meetings, indicating perhaps, that they

are unhappy with the content or format of meetings, or that involvement in this fashion has not been beneficial to their interests.

Informal Participation

The informal participation of members in union activities was operationalized by asking those surveyed whether they would voice their disagreement if they did not agree with a union policy, whether they have ever contacted a union representative or a shop steward about a problem at work, whether they have ever contacted the president of Local 832, or if they were hesitant about contacting the union. (Table 9)

Many respondents indicated they would be hesitant to voice their disagreement if they did not agree with a union policy. Forty-four percent stated they would sometimes voice their disagreement while 15 percent stated they never would. However, a significant percentage (25) indicated they would "often" voice disagreement, while fourteen percent were convinced they would "always" voice their disagreement.

When asked if they were hesitant about contacting the union, 20 percent stated they were always or often hesitant, while a large majority (75%) stated they were sometimes or never hesitant about contacting the union (31% and 44%). Westfair employees, older workers, workers with more tenure, and full-time workers were more inclined than their counterparts to state they were never hesitant about contacting the union.

Of the total sample, forty-four percent have contacted a union representative about a problem at work since becoming a member of the union. Thirty-two percent of the members had contacted a union representative within the last year. Westfair members were only slightly more inclined to have contacted a union representative. More full-time than part-time members have contacted a rep (52% and 41% respectively) while fewer members (29%) with length of service less than 2 years have contacted a rep. This trend is reflected across the age groupings, where thirty-seven percent of workers between the ages of 16 and 25 have contacted a union representative about a problem at work.

Fewer members have contacted a shop steward about a problem at work. Thirty-five percent of the individuals surveyed have contacted a shop steward since becoming a member of the union. In the last year, twenty-four percent of the members have contacted a shop steward. At least half of the full-time workers had contacted a shop steward at some time compared to one-third of part-timers. Of the workers with less than two years service, twenty-one percent had contacted a shop steward since becoming a member of the union.

Relatively few of the members surveyed (18%) have tried to contact or have spoken with the President of Local 832. Those who have done so are more likely to be Westfair members, full-time workers, members who have worked for either company for more than five years, and members over the age of twenty-five.

The survey results indicate that members are more inclined to voice their disagreement with union policies than not. As well, they are generally not hesitant about contacting the union about a problem at work, although a

TABLE 9

INFORMAL PARTICIPATION IN UNION ACTIVITIES

Have Contacted a Representative:

	<u>Since Becoming a Member</u>	<u>In Last Year</u>
Total	44%	32%
Safeway	43%	30%
Westfair	46%	37%

Have Contacted a Shop Steward:

	<u>Since Becoming a Member</u>	<u>In Last Year</u>
Total	34%	24%
Safeway	38%	25%
Westfair	27%	21%

Have Contacted Christophe:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Yes	17%	15%	24%
No	80%	84%	73%

Types of Contact:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Telephoning Office	31%	30%	33%
Sending Letter	7%	5%	9%
Speaking to Rep in Store	31%	31%	31%
Visiting Office	8%	6%	12%
Other	1%	1%	3%

Would Voice Disagreement:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Always	14	12	20
Often	25	24	27
Sometimes	44	47	35
Never	15	13	17

Hesitant About Contacting Union:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Always	10	10	11
Often	10	9	10
Sometimes	31	35	23
Never	44	42	49

significant number of Safeway employees (35%) stated they were sometimes hesitant. In both companies, one-fifth of the members surveyed said they were always or often hesitant about contacting the union. Half of those surveyed have contacted a union representative, while a third have contacted a shop steward.

Members were asked to state why they had not contacted these individuals. Of the forty-eight percent who responded to this query, most stated that they had never needed to contact a rep and were happy on the job. However, a significant number (10%) said they do not know who the union representative is. Smaller numbers said: it was not necessary to cause trouble, it was a "waste of time" since issues were not reported past store level, and management and the union representatives were "buddy-buddy". One individual reported he/she did not know the procedure for contacting a representative.

As for contacting a shop steward, a large number of respondents stated again that there was no need to or that problems had been worked out (37%). Other reasons were similar to those stated above: members do not know who the shop steward is, there is no steward, they do not wish to cause trouble, they do not know the procedure, issues stay at store level, or it is not worth it since shop stewards are "poor", "do not know much" and do not "come around often". Finally, a number of members stated it was more effective to simply go to the union representative, or contact the union office.

Few members have contacted the President and Chief Executive Officer of Local 832, although Westfair workers were more inclined to have done so.

Communication

The level of communication involves whether members are informed about meetings, whether they read ACTION magazine, whether they feel the level of communication is satisfactory, and how informed they believe they are about union business. (Table 10)

Fourteen percent of the members felt they were never sufficiently informed about union meetings. Twenty-nine percent of Safeway members felt this way; no Westfair members gave this response. Part-time workers, those with less than two years tenure and, correspondingly, those in the youngest age group (16 to 25) were most likely to report that they feel they are never sufficiently informed about union meetings. One in three (34%) felt they were always sufficiently informed about the times and places of union meetings. There were significant differences between Safeway and Westfair staff (27% and 48%) and full-time and part-time workers (61% and 28%).

Of the total sample, twelve percent of the members do not read ACTION. Fifty-five percent read the magazine sometimes or often, while 34 percent of those surveyed said they read it all the time. Again, older members and those with more tenure tend to read the magazine frequently while younger people and those with the least tenure read it less often.

TABLE 10

LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION

Members Are Informed about Meetings:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Always	34%	27%	49%
Often	28%	27%	32%
Sometimes	24%	25%	20%
Never	14%	29%	0

Read ACTION:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Always	34%	33%	35%
Often	21%	17%	30%
Sometimes	34%	37%	27%
Never	12%	13%	8%

Level of Communication from Union is Satisfactory:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Always	15%	11%	24%
Often	39%	40%	37%
Sometimes	39%	41%	37%
Never	4%	6%	1%

Members Kept Well Informed About Union Business:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>
Strongly Agree	8%	4%	19%
Agree	44%	44%	43%
No Opinion	15%	17%	10%
Disagree	24%	26%	20%
Strongly Disagree	8%	8%	7%

Of the members who participated in the survey, fifty-two percent agreed that members are kept well informed about union business, while thirty-two percent disagreed. Westfair employees were more likely to agree that members are kept well informed, as were older employees.

Most of the members would describe the level of communication as often or sometimes satisfactory (78%). No significant differences among the groups was discerned. Fifteen percent of the members feel the level of communication is always satisfactory; a higher percentage of Westfair employees (24% versus 11% of Safeway members) believe this is the case. Only four percent of the members interviewed believe the level of communication is never satisfactory.

This series of results indicates that, overall, the membership surveyed seem to think the level of communication between the union and the membership is good, and most of them read the official publication at least sometimes. Safeway members are slightly less enthusiastic about the level of communication, with relatively equal distribution between positive and negative responses, whereas Westfair workers register strong distributions in the positive responses.

Members were invited to suggest how they believed better communication could be established. Forty-eight percent of those surveyed offered suggestions. The most frequent were: (1) more direct contact with members/informing members (9%); (2) more communication between union representatives and members (8%); (3) not so generalized, more information on local people, more personal (4%).

Some of the other suggestions included: more information in ACTION, contact by the shop steward so members know who he/she is, new members told of union functions, store meetings, in-store bulletins, more meetings more often, surveys and questionnaires, encouragement to attend meetings and get more involved, more notification of meetings, returning calls, a new president, simpler contract language, and a series of suggestions regarding letters of updates of negotiations, grievances, and general problems experienced at the stores.

Leadership Responsiveness

Leadership responsiveness consisted of members' perceptions about the job their elected and appointed officials were doing. Respondents were invited to answer some questions concerning the responsiveness of union officials in terms of the members' needs, ideas and concerns. These questions asked members whether shop stewards and union representatives were helpful in dealing with concerns they have raised, and whether they feel the union is responsive to members' ideas and concerns. The frequency tables include members who voiced an opinion on the issue of shop steward and union representative "helpfulness", even if they had not recorded that they had contacted any of these individuals. (Table 11)

Nineteen percent of those who responded felt shop stewards were very helpful in dealing with concerns they had raised; 30 percent believed they were somewhat helpful, while 19 percent stated the stewards were not helpful. Female workers were more likely than male workers to find the shop stewards helpful (27% and 10% respectively). Again, younger, part-time workers, and those with less

TABLE 11

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIVENESS

"How helpful are these individuals in dealing with concerns you have raised?"

	SHOP STEWARDS			REPRESENTATIVES		
	Total	Safeway	Westfair	Total	Safeway	Westfair
Very Helpful	19%	19%	18%	21%	19%	24%
Somewhat Helpful	30%	30%	30%	26%	25%	28%
Not Helpful	19%	17%	23%	20%	18%	24%

"The leaders are unresponsive to members' ideas and concerns."

	TOTAL	SAFEWAY	WESTFAIR
Strongly Agree	7%	8%	6%
Agree	20%	20%	20%
No Opinion	32%	37%	21%
Disagree	33%	31%	37%
Strongly Disagree	7%	3%	15%

Of the total sample, forty-four percent have contacted a union representative about a problem at work since becoming a member of the union. Thirty-two percent of the members had contacted a union representative within the last year. Westfair members were only slightly more inclined to have contacted a union representative. More full-time than part-time members have contacted a rep (52% and 41% respectively) while fewer members (29%) with length of service less than 2 years have contacted a rep. This trend is reflected across the age groupings, where thirty-seven percent of workers between the ages of 16 and 25 have contacted a union representative about a problem at work.

Fewer members have contacted a shop steward about a problem at work. Thirty-five percent of the individuals surveyed have contacted a shop steward since becoming a member of the union. In the last year, twenty-four percent of the members have contacted a shop steward. At least half of the full-time workers had contacted a shop steward at some time compared to one-third of part-timers. Of the workers with less than two years service, twenty-one percent had contacted a shop steward since becoming a member of the union.

Relatively few of the members surveyed (18%) have tried to contact or have spoken with the President of Local 832. Those who have done so are more likely to be Westfair members, full-time workers, members who have worked for either company for more than five years, and members over the age of twenty-five.

The survey results indicate that members are more inclined to voice their disagreement with union policies than not. As well, they are generally not hesitant about contacting the union about a problem at work, although a

seniority were more inclined to state the stewards were somewhat or not helpful.

Of those who responded to the same query about union representatives (153), twenty-one percent believed they were very helpful, twenty-six percent stated they were somewhat helpful, while twenty percent recorded they were not helpful. Similar trends were found in the data, with younger workers, part-timers and newer workers more likely to state the representatives were not helpful in dealing with concerns members have raised.

Of the total membership, twenty-seven percent either agree or strongly agree that the leaders are unresponsive to members' ideas and concerns. (20% and 7% respectively) Forty percent of those surveyed disagree (33%) or strongly disagree (7%) with this statement. Westfair workers were much more inclined to disagree than their counterparts employed at Safeway.

Leadership responsiveness has been cited in several studies as a good measure of union democracy. The group who participated in the survey was rather ambivalent when asked directly if the leaders are responsive to the members' ideas and concerns, although a significant number (27%) do not feel the leaders are responsive. As for shop stewards and union representatives, those who responded were not overly enthusiastic about the effectiveness of these individuals in helping them with their problems at work. The pattern in members' responses seems to indicate that union representatives and shop stewards are not dealing with concerns in a manner satisfactory to the members.

Members' Role in the Decision-Making Process

Several questions were analyzed to determine how much influence the members feel they have over the decision-making process of the union. (Table 12)

Most of the members did not feel they had a significant amount of power to influence the decisions of the leaders during a strike. Only ten percent felt they had a lot of power. Forty-two percent felt they had some power, twenty-nine percent stated they had hardly any power, and fourteen percent believed they had no power at all.

A majority of the members interviewed (54%) also did not believe they had much say over how the union's decisions are made. Only twenty-two percent disagreed with the statement "Members don't have much say over how the union decision's are made." Full-timers were more likely to disagree with the statement.

Again, older workers and those with more tenure were also more likely to disagree.

Members were asked to state how much influence they felt they had over a variety of decisions made by the union and over union policy in general.

Figures 1 and 2 summarize these findings. Most of the members consistently stated they had little or no influence over the decisions outlined in the questionnaire. The exception to this concerned accepting and rejecting contracts, where the members were split between some or very strong influence (48%) and little or no influence (49%).

TABLE 12

INFLUENCE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Power to Influence Decisions of Leaders During Strike:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
A Lot of Power	10%	10%	10%
Some Power	42%	44%	38%
Hardly any Power	29%	29%	30%
No Power	14%	11%	18%

Members' Don't Have Much Say Over How Union's Decisions are Made:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	19%	19%	18%
Agree	35%	36%	34%
No Opinion	21%	22%	20%
Disagree	19%	19%	20%
Strongly Disagree	3%	2%	7%

It is Easy to Change Union's Position:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	2%	21%	4%
Agree	7%	6%	11%
No Opinion	35%	39%	28%
Disagree	37%	37%	37%
Strongly Disagree	16%	16%	17%

The MFCW is a Democratic Union:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Yes	35%	32%	41%
No	30%	26%	39%
Not Stated	31%	37%	16%

FIGURE 1

MEMBERS' VIEWS AS TO WHAT LEVEL OF INFLUENCE THEY HAVE OVER VARIOUS AREAS OF UNION ACTIVITY

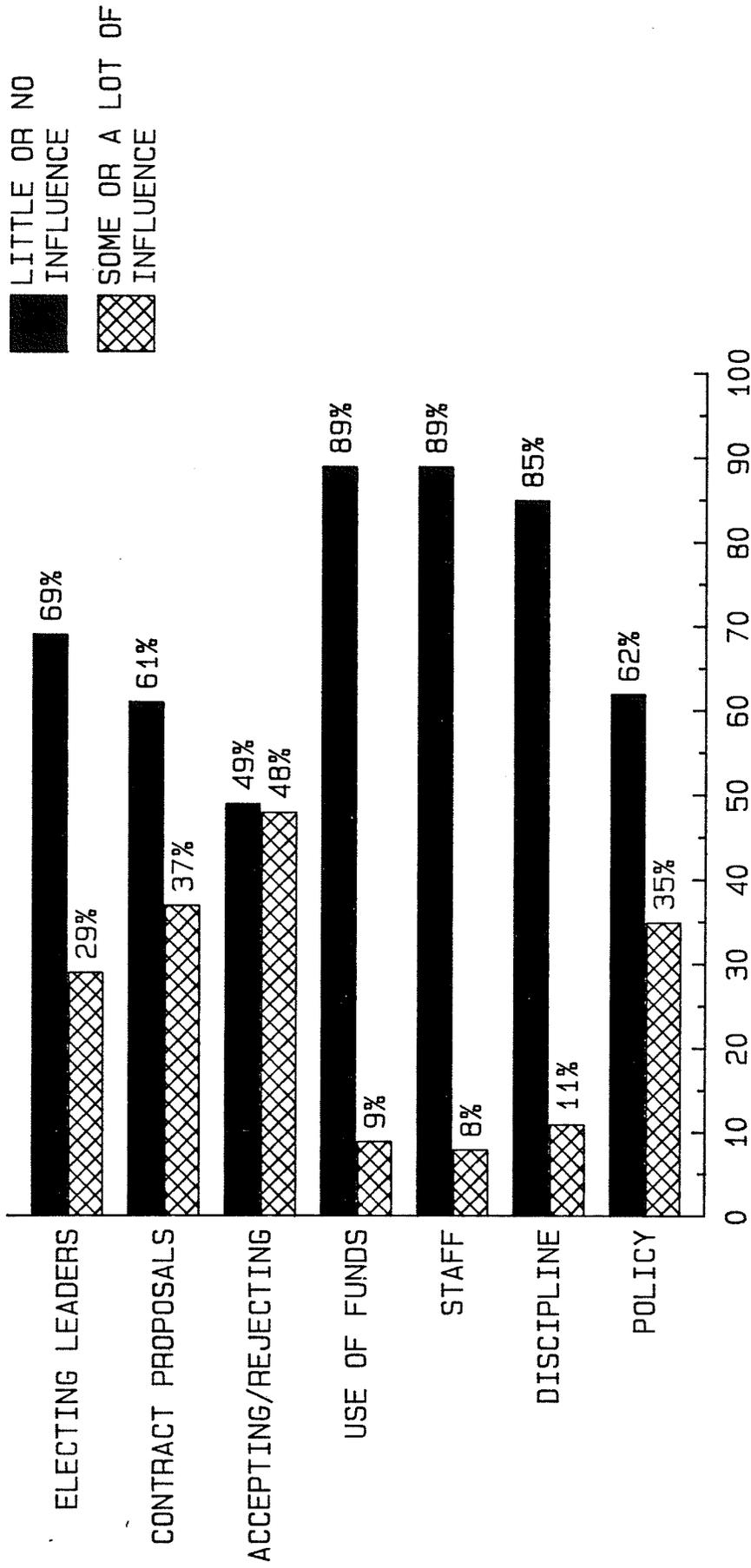
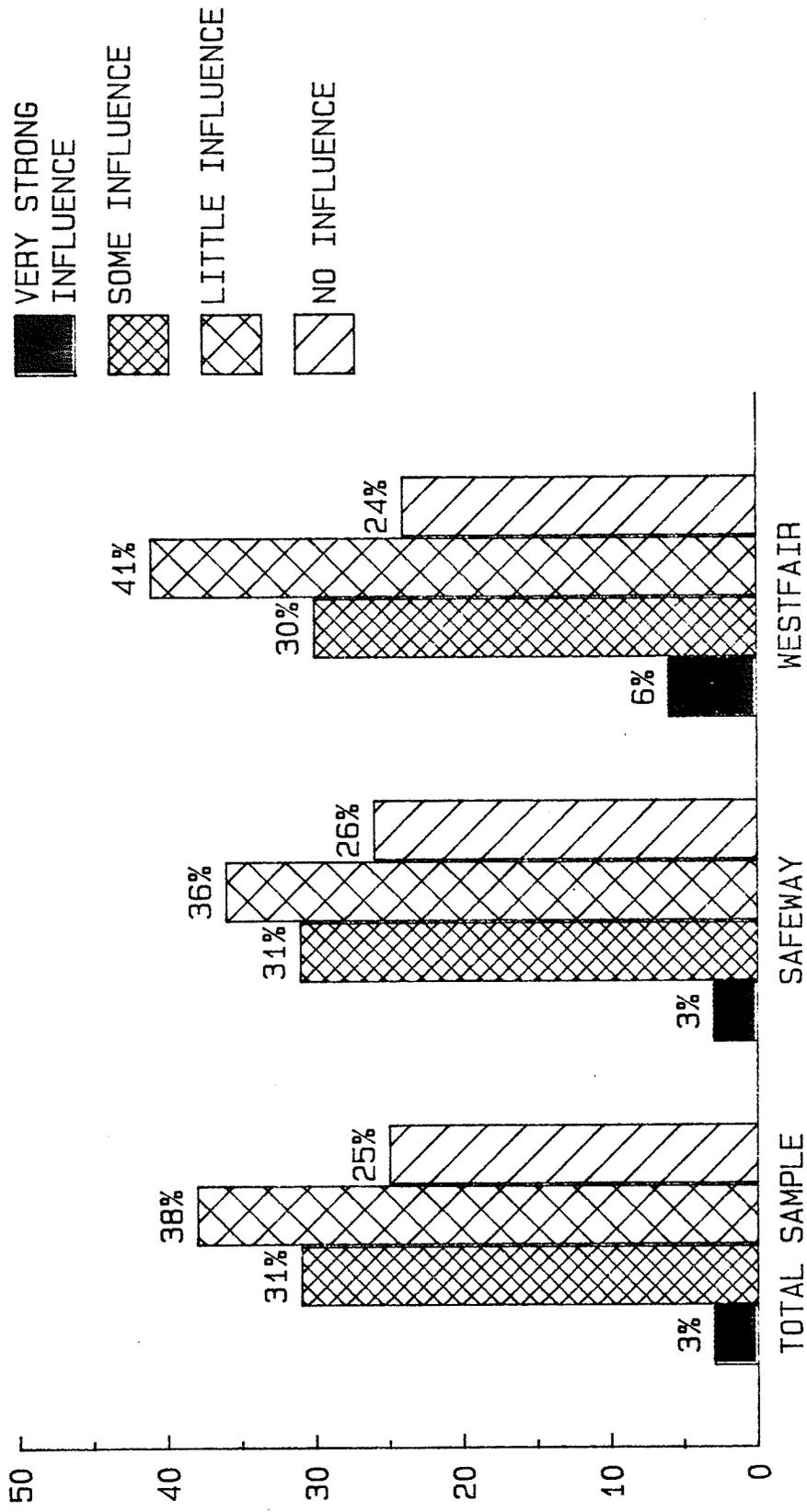


FIGURE 2

UNION MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS AS TO THE LEVEL OF INFLUENCE THE MEMBERSHIP HAS OVER UNION POLICIES IN GENERAL



Some significant differences were discerned among the groups on individual union decisions. Sixty-four percent of part-timers and seventy-three percent of members with the least tenure felt they had little or no influence over contract proposals. Conversely, forty-four percent of full-timers, and forty-seven percent of workers with the greatest amount of tenure felt they had little or no influence over contract proposals. Finally, workers 45 and over felt they had some or very strong influence in this area (59%), while only thirty-five percent of those between the ages of 16 and 26 responded in this manner.

With respect to electing leaders, the most significant difference was observed in the age category. Sixty-eight percent of workers over 45 felt they had some or very strong influence; only twenty-nine percent of workers in the youngest age bracket responded in this manner.

Workers were unanimous in their belief that they had little or no influence over the use of union funds, hiring union staff and the discipline of members.

As mentioned, the opinions of workers was split as to the degree of influence over accepting and rejecting contracts. Full-timers older workers and those with more tenure were more inclined to state they had some or very strong influence.

The above discussion is reflected in the responses members conveyed with regards to influence over union policy in general. Thirty-four percent of those surveyed felt they had some or very strong influence. Sixty-two percent

felt they had little or no influence. The majority of part-timers (67%) fall into the latter category, as do the younger workers with less tenure.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree that it is easy to change the union's positions on issues. Fifty-three percent of those surveyed disagreed with the statement, while only nine percent agreed. (A large percentage did not state an opinion on the question). Interestingly seventy-three percent of full-timers did not believe it was easy to change the union's position on issues.

Members who participated in the survey were also asked whether they considered the MFCW a democratic union. Opinions were very divided on this question: thirty-five percent felt it was, thirty percent felt it was not, and thirty-one percent did not state what they thought. More full-time members believe it is democratic, and a large proportion of people with tenure of 2-5 years or more than 9 years also said it was democratic. As well, a large percentage of workers over 45 (59%) described the MFCW as a democratic union.

In summary, those questioned do not feel they have much influence over the decision-making process of Local 832, and union policies in general. The most surprising finding is the members' perceptions about their influence over electing leaders and accepting or rejecting contracts, areas where theoretically they have total control. It is interesting that more than fifty percent of those interviewed believe they have little or no influence over the conditions of work that will govern them on the job.

Only forty-eight percent of the respondents stated why they considered the MFCW democratic or undemocratic. Those who believe the union is democratic explained that: members are given a vote, decisions are made by a group, members are informed on issues, can voice opinions and participate in union activities, and because the union listens to the members.

Explanations given as to why the MFCW is undemocratic included: members do not have much say, members do not have enough influence over and are not consulted about decisions, the union "pursues its own purposes" and "brainwashes" the members, there is too much concentration of power, members have not had the opportunity to vote against Christophe, there is no option regarding joining, union dues are high, a minority controls the majority, most of those in authority are appointed rather than elected, leaders are not elected regularly, and "one man decides".

Support for Union Policies

Membership support for union policies was determined by examining whether members agree with the MFCW's policies, whether they are happy with the job the union is doing and if they think the union is pursuing goals which are in the best interests of the members. (Table 13)

A majority of the members interviewed said they agree with the leaders' policies sometimes or never (60%). Thirty-five percent always or often agree with these policies.

Of the respondents, forty-nine percent were happy with the job the union is doing, (strongly agree or disagree with the statement) while twenty-four percent were not happy. Full-timers are more inclined to be happy with the job the union is doing (64%) than part-timers (46%). As tenure increases members are generally more satisfied with the union's performance. A similar trend occurs for age.

A significant number of respondents (57%) believed the MFCW is pursuing goals which are in the best interests of the members, while twenty-five percent felt it is not. (5% feel only some of the goals reflected the best interests of the members.) Younger workers were less inclined to be supportive of the union's goals.

The results of this series of questions are rather ambiguous. A large percentage of members tend to agree with the MFCW leaders' policies only sometimes or never, even though members are generally happy with the job the

TABLE 13

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT FOR UNION POLICIES

 Agree with Leaders' Policies:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Always	2%	1%	4%
Often	33%	34%	32%
Sometimes	53%	55%	49%
Never	7%	5%	10%

Generally Happy with Union's Job:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	9%	5%	17%
Agree	40%	45%	30%
No Opinion	26%	27%	25%
Disagree	13%	13%	13%
Strongly Disagree	11%	10%	13%

Union is Pursuing Goals Which are in Best Interests of Members:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Yes	57%	56%	59%
No	26%	25%	28%

union is doing, and believe the union is pursuing goals which are in the best interests of the members. This trend might be explained by the fact that the members are happy with belonging to a union and appreciate the benefits which this has produced, but are not enthusiastic about the manner in which the leaders conduct union affairs. The first question asks the members to identify personally with the MFCW's leaders, while the remaining two questions are far more general. Another possible explanation is that members who responded were unclear as to whether 'leaders' policies referred to policies undertaken by the leaders in respect to the union's strategies and organization, or if 'policies' referred to the leaders' views on politics.

Views on Management

One survey question was utilized to determine members' views of management. Members were asked to state how cooperative they find management in trying to find a solution to a problem at work which is agreeable to themselves and the company. (Table 14) Seventeen percent of the members felt that management was not cooperative, forty-two percent found management somewhat cooperative and while thirty-three percent found management very cooperative. Westfair workers were more inclined to view management as uncooperative. Part-time employees, younger workers and those with less tenure were also more inclined to view management as uncooperative.

This variable was included in order to help explain members' informal participation in union activities, particularly with respect to contacting shop stewards and union representatives. Very cooperative management would obviously reduce the need to contact the union if a problem at work

TABLE 14

VIEWS ON MANAGEMENT

How Cooperative is Management:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Very Cooperative	33%	36%	27%
Somewhat Cooperative	42%	43%	41%
Not Cooperative	17%	14%	26%

occurred. Most of the members surveyed felt management was somewhat cooperative, with a significant number stating management was in fact very cooperative. Westfair workers stated management was somewhat or not cooperative, yet the figures for contact with shop stewards and union representatives indicate that these employees were less inclined to contact a shop steward than their Safeway counterparts, and only slightly more inclined to have contacted a union representative.

Views on Labour Unions

Views on labour unions also consisted of only one question in the membership survey. Members were asked whether they would prefer to be non-unionized. (Table 15) Of the total sample, sixty-five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I would prefer to be non-unionized." Seventeen percent agreed with the statement. The largest percentages of members who agreed with the statement were workers who had a length of service of less than 2 years (30%).

The results help explain some of the behaviour patterns of younger, newer workers at these companies; perhaps these members are not participating in union activities because they would prefer to be non-unionized. The trend is disturbing however; the 16-25 year old group with less than 2 years' tenure made up a significant proportion of the total sample (74 or 32%) and will undoubtedly constitute a large segment of the future workforce as both companies attempt to cut labour costs by hiring new employees at much lower wages. The union's policies are clearly not pleasing to a large number of the

TABLE 15

VIEWS ON LABOUR UNIONS

Would Prefer to be Non-Unionized:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Disagree	37%	35%	43%
Disagree	28%	30%	23%
No Opinion	16%	18%	11%
Agree	8%	7%	10%
Strongly Agree	9%	8%	11%

companies' newest workers, a phenomenon which must be addressed in the very near future if the union's security is not to be threatened.

Direct Say Over the Union's Operations

This intervening variable was also included to help explain membership behaviour and attitudes toward union policies. Respondents were asked to state how important it was to them to have direct say over how the union operates. Table 16 illustrates the frequency results of this question. Most of those surveyed stated it was very important (48%) or slightly important (35%) to have direct say in this area.

It was essential to determine whether members felt having direct say over how their union operates was important before proceeding to how membership influence in the decision-making process and participation in union activities might be improved. The frequency results and explanatory responses indicate that members believe they should have direct say over how the union operates.

Members were once again invited to express the reasons for their opinions on this question. Seventy-four percent responded to the question.

One in three of those responding felt it was important because members are the union, they should run it, and having direct say lets the union know what the members want. Thirteen percent stated that members should have a say because they pay dues, while eleven percent responded that decisions affect them so it is important to have a say over what goes on. For the other responses (slightly important or not important) members explained that the

TABLE 16

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF HAVING DIRECT
SAY OVER UNION OPERATIONS

How Important is Having a Direct Say:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Very Important	48%	49%	45%
Slightly Important	35%	34%	38%
Not Important	11%	10%	13%

union is like a business and should be run like one, there are more qualified individuals to handle the 'business' and they do not have the time or desire to become involved. A few stated that they were afraid to speak their mind, the union does not listen to the members, or they feel "a small part of it."

Perceptions about Changes to Union Activities

The final two variables consist of members' perceptions about union activities. Firstly, several questions were combined in order to arrive at a measure of what changes the members would like to see in the union's structure and activities. (Table 17)

Respondents were asked whether they felt the members should have more direct say over how the union will act during a strike. Of the total sample, seventy-two percent responded yes, while only six percent said no. Full-time members were more inclined to respond no than part-time workers.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "Union negotiating committee members should be elected and not appointed by the union." In total, seventy-five percent of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (44% and 31% respectively.) Only seven percent disagreed with the statement. (These were more likely to be Safeway members). Again full-timers tended to disagree with the statement, as were older workers and those with more tenure.

TABLE 17

MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING CHANGES
TO UNION OPERATIONS

Members Should Have More Influence over Decisions Made
During a Strike:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Yes	72%	73%	69%
No	6%	6%	7%
No Opinion	20%	20%	21%

Negotiating Members Should be Elected:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	31%	28%	37%
Agree	44%	44%	44%
No Opinion	17%	16%	19%
Disagree	5%	7%	1%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	0%

Members Should be More Involved in Negotiations

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	34%	33%	37%
Agree	53%	56%	46%
No Opinion	8%	7%	10%
Disagree	4%	4%	4%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	1%

There Should be More Shop Stewards:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	13%	13%	13%
Agree	27%	29%	21%
No Opinion	36%	35%	39%
Disagree	21%	20%	23%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	3%

Should be a Change of Leaders/Regular Intervals

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SAFEWAY</u>	<u>WESTFAIR</u>
Strongly Agree	16%	16%	17%
Agree	37%	40%	32%
No Opinion	27%	28%	25%
Disagree	17%	14%	24%
Strongly Disagree	2%	2%	1%

There was overwhelming agreement with the statement "Members should be more involved in negotiations" Of those who responded, (53%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Members were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "There should be more shop stewards." The most surprising figure was the number of respondents who chose not to state an opinion on this issue (36% of the total sample). Of the remaining respondents, forty percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while twenty-four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Fifty-four percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "There should be a change of leaders at regular intervals," while nineteen percent disagreed. Twenty-seven percent did not record an opinion.

The members generally agreed that more active membership involvement would make the union stronger. Four in five agreed with this broad statement; one in three agreed strongly.

Clearly, MFCW members, when they state their opinion about the structure of union activities, believe there is room for change in certain areas. More specifically, members believe they should be more involved in negotiations, and would like more say in who will be conducting negotiations. Over half of those surveyed stated there should be a change of leaders at regular intervals, and that it is not easy to change the union's position on issues. There is strong agreement that more active membership involvement would make the union stronger.

Perceptions About the Union's Functions

Finally, a number of questions dealt with what the members believe the union should be doing. Respondents were asked to state how important the union's role is in a number of situations. Table 18 and Figure 3 illustrate the total frequency of responses and the breakdown between Safeway and Westfair workers. Protecting jobs, upholding the contract and fighting for equal pay for work of equal value were seen as very important aspects of the union's job by overwhelming percentages of the members surveyed. (89%, 90% and 82% respectively) Securing wage increases and more full-time positions, as well as supporting members of the same union who are on strike were viewed as very important (58%, 53%, 52%) or slightly important (35%, 36%, 33%). The members did not view educating members about the labour movement in Canada or supporting members of a different union who are on strike as important functions of the Local.

Westfair workers were more inclined to feel that supporting members of the same union who are on strike is a very important part of the union's role. These workers also felt it was very important for the union to educate its members about the labour movement in Canada.

Similarly, a significant difference of opinion emerged between the two groups of workers concerning the issue of supporting members of a different union who are on strike. Forty-six percent of Westfair workers felt this was very important, while only fifteen percent of Safeway workers recorded this response.

TABLE 18

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT UNION'S FUNCTION

"How important is the union's role in the following situations?"

	IMPORTANCE		
	Very Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
Job Protection:			
Total	89%	9%	2%
Safeway	91%	8%	1%
Westfair	86%	10%	4%
Upholding Contract:			
Total	90%	9%	1%
Safeway	91%	8%	1%
Westfair	86%	11%	1%
Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value:			
Total	82%	15%	3%
Safeway	81%	16%	3%
Westfair	83%	14%	3%
Wage Increases:			
Total	58%	35%	7%
Safeway	65%	30%	5%
Westfair	42%	46%	11%
More Full-time Positions:			
Total	53%	36%	11%
Safeway	53%	35%	11%
Westfair	54%	37%	10%
Educating Members About Labour Movement in Canada:			
Total	29%	46%	24%
Safeway	26%	51%	22%
Westfair	37%	37%	27%

Supporting Members of Same
Union on Strike:

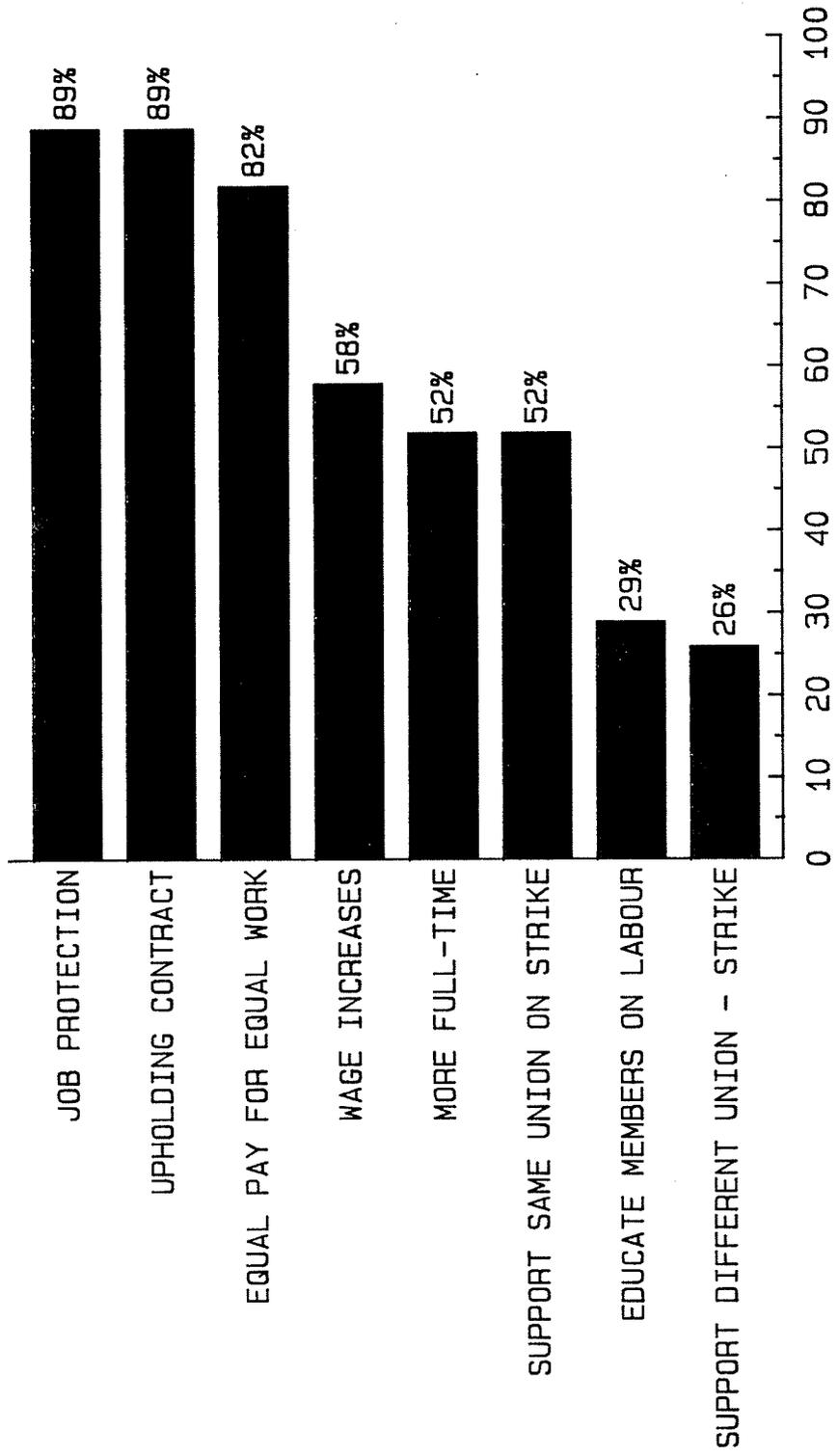
Total	52%	33%	14%
Safeway	48%	37%	14%
Westfair	62%	24%	14%

Supporting Members of
Different Union on Strike:

Total	27%	36%	37%
Safeway	18%	38%	43%
Westfair	45%	31%	24%

FIGURE 3

MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT THE UNION SHOULD BE DOING



This series of questions was asked in order to determine what the members felt the objectives of MFCW Local 832 are. The variety of objectives listed attempted to determine if there was a difference between objectives confined to the Local's members, and those which included wider objectives of the labour movement. Supporting members of a different union who are on strike, and educating members about the labour movement in Canada were not viewed as terribly important objectives. Indeed, only one-half of those surveyed believed supporting fellow members on strike was very important.

(v) Summary of Frequency Tabulations

The following items summarize the behaviour and opinions of Safeway and Westfair members who participated in the survey.

1. Formal participation of members is very low, with the exception of meeting attendance. Members are more likely to attend meetings which involve negotiations.
2. Informal participation of members is higher, and members are generally not hesitant to voice their disagreement with union policies. They are also not hesitant about contacting the union about a problem at work.
3. MFCW members feel the level of communication between the union and the membership is good.
4. Shop stewards and union representatives are not completely effective in helping members with their problems at work. In general, the members were inclined to state the leaders are responsive to the members' ideas and concerns.
5. Those surveyed felt they had little influence over the decision-making process, and union policies in general.
6. Members tend to disagree with the leaders' policies, although they are generally happy with the job the union is doing and believe the union is pursuing goals which are in the best interest of the members.
7. Most members find management somewhat or very cooperative.
8. Most would prefer to remain unionized.
9. Having direct say over how the union operates is important to those who participated in the survey.
10. Most members want more say over how the union will act during a strike. They believe negotiating committee members should be elected, members should be more involved in negotiations, and active membership involvement would make the union stronger. The members were ambivalent about whether there should be more shop stewards. There was general agreement that there should be a change of leaders at regular intervals.

11. According to the members, protecting jobs, upholding the contract, and fighting for equal pay for work of equal value are very important aspects of the union's objectives. Less important are securing wage increases and more full-time positions, or supporting members of the same union who are on strike. Educating members about the labour movement in Canada, or supporting members of a different union who are on strike are not regarded as important functions of the local.

The survey results also revealed interesting differences across various sub-groupings of the union membership. Full-time workers, workers with more tenure, and older workers seem to be satisfied with the job the union is doing and do not see a need for major changes in how the union conducts its affairs. These workers are also the ones who are generally more supportive of union policies, and who are more likely to have participated in union activities. One change this group does want is more involvement of members in the negotiating process.

The young, part-time workers, and those who have worked at either company for less than 2 years offer a different story. These members have not, for the most part, participated in union activities, are generally less supportive of union policies and are more likely to desire changes to the union's structures and activities. Many of the members in this second group are unaware of what the union's role is, or when to contact the union. Finally, younger employees part-time workers and those who have worked less than two years are more likely to feel management is very uncooperative than workers in the first group. The significance of the differences in group behavior will be examined in more detail following the discussion of the correlation and regression results.

CHAPTER VI

(i) Data Analysis - Regression Analysis Results

One of the central objectives of the study is to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between influence over the decision-making process, participation in union activities, leadership responsiveness and level of communication, with support for union policies. Correlation procedures and regular and stepwise regression procedures involving the variables were undertaken to examine the relationships in detail. Each of the responses in the questionnaire constitutes a variable. For the regressions and correlation procedures, some of these variable values were transformed in order that all low values would correspond to negative responses; similarly, higher values were assigned to positive responses.

Many of the variables in the regression involved a combination of several questions. Where two or more questions were combined to arrive at a measurement, the indices were standardized and scores for individual questions were added to arrive at the new variable score. Thus a variable involving three separate questions would be a sum of the score of the three questions where each question had been standardized to the same scale.

Table 19 outlines the variables used in the regression analysis, the range of possible scores for each variable, the mean of each variable for the entire sample and the means for each store location.

TABLE 19

VARIABLES IN REGRESSION ANALYSIS

<u>Variable</u>	<u>N*</u>	<u>Possible Range</u>	<u>Sample Mean</u>	<u>Safeway Mean</u>	<u>Westfair Mean</u>
DECISION	196	4-40	20.472	20.405	20.616
SUPPORT	188	3-12	8.045	8.126	7.883
FORMAL	216	4-8	4.954	4.797	5.294
INFORMAL	193	5-20	8.860	8.629	9.360
LEADERS	221	1-5	1.884	1.820	2.026
COMMUNIC	215	4-16	10.815	10.389	11.735

* Number of observations included in the combined variable.

Several modifications to the variables were made after initial regression analysis procedures indicated that missing values were creating a low data base in the regression. The variable DEMO (whether members felt the union is democratic) was removed from the combined variable DECISION since seventy respondents had not answered the question. Missing values for the variable GOALS (whether the union is pursuing goals which are in the best interest of its members) were replaced by substituting the mean of the recorded responses (3.036) for each missing value. (B. G. Tabachnick and L. A. Fidell, 1983, p.71) Finally, the variable SSHELP (whether shop stewards were helpful in dealing with problems raised at work) and the variable REPHELP (whether union representatives were helpful in the same situation) were removed due to low response levels. (B.G. Tabachnick and L.A. Fidell, 1983, p.71) (There were 74 missing values for the variable SSHELP and 76 missing values for the variable REPHELP.) As a result, the variable LEADERS consisted of only one questionnaire variable, namely whether respondents felt the leaders were responsive to members' ideas and concerns.

Correlation coefficients for the model are summarized in table 20.

The strongest correlation in the model occurred between perceived influence over the decision-making process (DECISION) and support for union policies (SUPPORT), supporting the original hypothesis that there is a relationship

TABLE 20

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR THE MODEL**

	DECISION	SUPPORT	FORMAL	INFORMAL	LEADERS	COMMUNIC
DECISION	1.000	0.6269	0.2235	0.2236	0.4670	0.4823
SUPPORT	0.6269	1.0000	0.1137*	0.0113*	0.6124	0.6240
FORMAL	0.2235	0.1137*	1.0000	0.5783	0.1275*	0.1008*
INFORMAL	0.2336	0.0113*	0.5783	1.0000	0.0324*	0.1376*
LEADERS	0.4670	0.6124	0.1275*	0.0324*	1.0000	0.4443
COMMUNIC	0.4822	0.6240	0.1008*	0.1376*	0.4443	1.0000

* denotes insignificant relationships where $p > .05$

** DECISION = Influence over the Decision-Making Process

SUPPORT= Support for Union Policies

FORMAL = Formal Participation in Union Activities

INFORMAL = Informal Participation in Union Activities

LEADERS = Leadership Responsiveness

COMMUNIC = Level of Communication Between the Union and the Members

between the structure of union government and level of support for union policies. A strong correlation between formal and informal participation in union activities was also apparent, indicating that individuals who participate in formal union activities are also likely to voice their concerns and contact their local's representatives. Satisfaction with the level of communication and leadership responsiveness had relatively strong correlations with SUPPORT and DECISION; members who felt the leaders were responsive to their views and concerns, and who felt the level of communication was relatively satisfactory were likely to support union policies and feel they had some role in the decision-making process. Formal and informal participation had low correlations with support for union policies. These statistics point to the conclusion that, in this population, participation in union activities might not be an important factor in predicting support levels for union policy. More importantly, the low correlations between FORMAL and INFORMAL with influence over the decision-making process indicate that membership participation in union activities does not necessarily entail a perception that these workers have influence over how the Local is run.

The multiple regression results reflected findings in the correlation matrix. Support for policies was modelled as the independent variable, with influence over the decision-making process, formal and informal participation in union activities, leadership responsiveness and level of communication as the independent variables. In total, 149 observations were included in the regression. Almost fifty-four percent of the variation in the levels of support was explained by the model; ($R^2=0.5369$). The standardized estimates, or slopes of the independent variables, reveal LEADERS as the strongest

influence on variation of SUPPORT levels, (0.3230) followed by COMMUNIC (0.3100) and DECISION (0.2906). Values for INFORMAL and FORMAL were not statistically significant (Probability levels were greater than .05).

Multiple regression analysis was also carried out with DECISION as the dependent variable and INFORMAL, FORMAL, LEADERS and COMMUNIC as the independent variables. Only forty percent of the variation in degrees of influence in the decision-making process was explained by the model. Of the independent variables, COMMUNIC and LEADERS were the most significant causes of variance in the variable DECISION. Again, the relationships between FORMAL and INFORMAL with the variable DECISION were not statistically significant.

Stepwise regression was performed, using the maximum R option. The maximum R-squared improvement technique attempts to find the best one-variable model, two-variable model, and so forth, in order to determine which variables are the best predictors of variance in support levels for union policy. (SAS User's Guide: Statistics; SAS Institute Cary, North Carolina, 1982, p.102) Table 21 summarizes the results of the stepwise regression in terms of which variables produce the most variance in support levels, from a one-variable to a five variable model.

Regular and stepwise regression indicate that perceived influence over the decision-making process is an important predictor of levels of support for union policies. Leadership responsiveness and communication levels are significant predictors of variation in support levels, while participation in union activities is a weak predictor of whether members will support union

TABLE 21

STEPWISE REGRESSION: MAXIMUM R OPTION

<u>Model</u>	<u>Variable(s)</u>	<u>R2</u>
One-Variable	DECISION	0.35722
Two-Variable	LEADERS COMMUNIC	0.48320
Three-Variable	DECISION LEADERS COMMUNIC	0.53646
Four-Variable	DECISION LEADERS COMMUNIC INFORMAL	0.53696
Five-Variable	DECISION LEADERS COMMUNIC INFORMAL FORMAL	0.53694

policies or whether they believe they have influence over the decision-making process.

(ii) Specific Group Behaviour Results

The frequency tables discussed earlier suggested the existence of definite sub-populations in the study. Significant differences in behavior and attitudes were discerned between old and young workers, full-time and part-time employees, and and new employees and those with more tenure. Some additional data analysis was performed to determine correlations between the dependent and independent variables within specific groups. The following table illustrates these correlations within specific groups, and compare the results to the correlations found in the total sample. (Table 22)

The correlation between DECISION and SUPPORT was significantly higher in the Westfair group of employees, as was the relationship between LEADERS and SUPPORT. Both FORMAL and INFORMAL had stronger relationships with SUPPORT in the Safeway population, although only the FORMAL relationship was statistically significant.

With respect to tenure, the correlations indicate that the relationship between decision-making influence and support for union policies is strongest in the groups with more than five years' service with their company. As well, leadership responsiveness and level of communication between the Local and its

TABLE 22

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR
UNION POLICIES AND THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
BY SELECTED SUB-GROUPS

By Store Location:

	<u>Safeway</u>	<u>Westfair</u>	<u>Total Sample</u>
DECISION	0.5371	0.7060	0.6046
FORMAL	0.2216	0.1609	0.1816
INFORMAL	0.1222	0.0991	0.1128
LEADERS	0.5523	0.6398	0.5781
COMMUNIC	0.6052	0.6038	0.5808

By Tenure:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Less than 2 yrs.</u>	<u>2 - 5 yrs</u>	<u>5 - 9 yrs</u>	<u>Over 9 yrs</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.4613	0.6037	0.7108	0.7241
FORMAL	0.1816	0.1812	0.1003	0.1536	0.1818
INFORMAL	0.1128	0.0902	0.1419	-0.2029	0.2334
LEADERS	0.5781	0.4938	0.4499	0.6925	0.6950
COMMUNIC	0.5808	0.5208	0.5127	0.5264	0.7883

By Work Status:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.7205	0.5770
FORMAL	0.1816	0.1217	0.1688
INFORMAL	0.1128	0.1780	0.0792
LEADERS	0.5781	0.7318	0.5430
COMMUNIC	0.5808	0.7713	0.5533

By Sex:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.5823	0.6432
FORMAL	0.1816	0.2031	0.1465
INFORMAL	0.1128	0.1857	0.0351
LEADERS	0.5781	0.6366	0.5180
COMMUNIC	0.5808	0.5708	0.5985

By Age:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>16-25 yrs</u>	<u>26-35 yrs</u>	<u>36-45 yrs</u>	<u>Over 45 yrs</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.4824	0.8357	0.5906	0.3462
FORMAL	0.1816	0.2562	-0.0159	0.2787	0.2323
INFORMAL	0.1128	0.0024	0.0073	0.4466	0.1264
LEADERS	0.5781	0.5036	0.7680	0.3789	0.5895
COMMUNIC	0.5808	0.5253	0.7348	0.6612	0.6153

members enjoy much stronger relationships with SUPPORT in the groups with more tenure. The correlation between DECISION and SUPPORT is higher among the group of women, and much higher in the full-time population of workers. As well, the relationship between DECISION and SUPPORT is strongest in the group of workers aged 26 - 35, and decreases in strength considerably after this point.

However, the number of employees in the 36-45 age category was 30, while only 22 employees were included in the 'over 45' category. Many of the relationships in the last category were not statistically significant.

In summary, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is strongest in a number of specific groups of workers, namely, Westfair workers, full-time workers, those with more tenure and older workers.

Further analysis was performed on the data on the basis of more specific membership behavior. The results were sorted according to meeting attendance, satisfaction with the level of communication, and preference to be unionized.

(Table 23)

Meeting attendance seems to affect the relationship between influence over the decision-making process and support for union policies; the relationship is stronger in the group who attends meetings, and strongest in the group who attends more than five meetings.

TABLE 23

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR UNION POLICIES
AND THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY SPECIFIC
BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

By Meeting Attendance:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Have Never Attended</u>	<u>Have Attended</u>	<u>Five or Less Meetings</u>	<u>Six or More Meetings</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.6269	0.5184	0.5242	0.7369
FORMAL	0.2783	0.1137	0.0582	0.1778	0.0244
INFORMAL	0.2579	0.0113	0.1208	0.0736	0.0772
LEADERS	0.4677	0.6124	0.4687	0.4902	0.7357
COMMUNIC	0.5432	0.6240	0.4813	0.5396	0.6558

By Satisfaction with Level of Communication:

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Always Satisfied</u>	<u>Often Satisfied</u>	<u>Sometimes Satisfied</u>	<u>Never Satisfied</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.5063	0.4328	0.4800	0.5326
FORMAL	0.2783	0.2792	0.2169	0.1112	-0.2182
INFORMAL	0.2579	-0.2078	0.1270	0.1658	0.2126
LEADERS	0.4677	0.5184	0.3887	0.5704	0.5405
COMMUNIC	0.5432	0.2707	0.3363	0.3500	0.4634

By Agreement to the Statement "I Would Prefer to be Non-Unionized":

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
DECISION	0.6046	0.4627	0.0235		0.5416	0.3306
FORMAL	0.2783	-0.0805	0.5112		-0.0691	0.1281
INFORMAL	0.2579	-0.0854	0.1879		-0.0202	-0.0868
LEADERS	0.4677	0.5672	0.3824		0.4241	0.5451
COMMUNIC	0.5432	0.0197	0.4761		0.4699	0.5149

Whether members believe the level of communication is satisfactory or unsatisfactory does not seem to effect the relationship between the variables, although the low response rates in many instances prevented meaningful comparisons across groups. Finally, the relationship between DECISION and SUPPORT was stronger among groups who preferred to remain unionized.

In the general population, the relationship between participation in union activities and perceived influence over the decision-making process was insignificant. In order to further explore the relationship, correlations between FORMAL and INFORMAL with DECISION across the groups were produced. Table 24 summarizes the results of the exercise.

The relationship between formal methods of participation and perceived influence on the decision-making process is strongest among Safeway workers, workers with more than nine year's tenure, the youngest age group (16-25) and the group comprising 36-45 year olds and those who strongly disagreed with the statement "I would prefer to be non-unionized." The relationship was equally strong among groups of men and women. The relationship between FORMAL and DECISION among those who have attended a union meeting was only slightly higher than the same correlation for the entire population (0.2235 and 0.1815 respectively).

The relationship between informal methods of participation and perceived influence over the decision-making process was strongest among workers with over nine years tenure, full-time workers, those in the 36-45 age bracket and those who felt the level of communication was sometimes satisfactory.

TABLE 24

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INFLUENCE OVER THE DECISION-MAKING
PROCESS AND FORMAL AND INFORMAL PARTICIPATION IN UNION
ACTIVITIES BY SELECTED SUB-GROUPS

	<u>Formal</u>	<u>Informal</u>
Westfair	0.6087*	0.2425* (PR=0.07)
Safeway	0.3449	0.2651
Less than 2 years	0.1897*	0.2330
2 - 5 years	0.0911*	0.0918*
5 - 9 years	0.1886*	0.0104*
Over 9 years	0.2935	0.3869
Men	0.2743	0.2638
Women	0.2832	0.2434
Full-Time	0.2843*	0.3827
Part-Time	0.2192	0.2031
16-25 years	0.3059	0.1498*
26-35 years	0.0821*	0.2228*
36-45 years	0.3424*	0.4184* (PR=0.07)
Over 45 years	0.2564*	0.2328*
Have Attended Meeting	0.2235	0.2336
Have Never Attended	-0.1124*	0.0758*
Communication Satisfactory		
Always	0.2982*	0.0527*
Often	0.2943	0.1885*
Sometimes	0.2626	0.3620
Never	0.0393*	-0.0156*
Prefer to be Nonunionized		
Strongly Agree	0.1803*	0.0306*
Agree	0.0963*	0.4244*
Disagree	-0.1382*	-0.1804*
Strongly Disagree	0.3304	0.3334

* Significance levels greater than .05

(iii) Summary of Correlation and Regression Procedures

The results of the correlation and regression procedures, as well as the correlation figures for specific groups of employees revealed:

1. Perceived influence over the decision-making process is strongly correlated to support for union policies. A significant proportion of the variation in support levels was explained by this variable.
2. Formal and informal participation in union activities had low correlations with support for union policies, and explained little of the variation in support levels.
3. Formal and informal participation in union activities had low correlations with perceived influence over the decision-making process.
4. The correlation between influence over the decision-making process and support for union policies was highest among Westfair employees, workers with more tenure, women, older workers, those who attend meetings, those who are satisfied with the level of communication, and those who prefer to remain unionized.
5. The relationship between formal participation and influence over the decision-making process is strongest among Safeway employees, workers with more tenure, and those who prefer to remain unionized.
6. The relationship between informal participation and influence over the decision-making process was strongest among full-time workers and those with the greatest amounts of tenure.

CHAPTER VII

(i) Comparison with other Quantitative Studies

Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff's study of union democracy in the United States utilized data from several surveys of union members performed by the University of Michigan Survey Research Department. Some of the results are comparable to those done in the present study. Tables 25 and 26 illustrate Freeman and Medoff's findings as they relate to formal participation in union activities and members' satisfaction with their union.

In general, the formal participation of members in union activities was higher in Freeman and Medoff's population, specifically in the areas of voting in a union election (73% compared to 10% in the present study) and filing a grievance through a union (28% and 10% respectively). The authors noted that more senior employees were more likely to attend union meetings and to vote in union elections, findings which were duplicated in the present study.

The results of Freeman and Medoff's study were compared to results of the participation of full-time members in union activities in the present population. Table 27 illustrates that full-time workers' behaviour is more consistent with the two authors' findings, with the exception of voting in a union election. Freeman and Medoff conclude that such levels of participation constitute an adequate level of internal union democracy. Perhaps the same conclusion should be applied to the full-time population of MFCW members, who tend to participate in union activities to a much greater extent than their part-time counterparts.

TABLE 25

FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN UNION ACTIVITIES

Union Activity:	<u>Total*</u>	<u>Present Study**</u>
In the last two years have you ever...		
Gone to a Union Meeting	76	63
Voted in a Union Election	73	10***
Been Elected to, nominated for, or chosen for an office in a union	16	8
Filed a grievance through a union	28	10

* Total in study quoted by Freeman and Medoff.

** Figures based on membership behaviour since becoming a member of the union.

*** Ninety percent of those who participated in the survey stated they had never attended a union election meeting.

Source: Based on tabulations of microdata from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey.
(Freeman & Medoff, 1984, p.209)

TABLE 26

SATISFACTION WITH UNION

	<u>Total</u>
Very Satisfied	25%
Somewhat Satisfied	49%
Not Too or Not at all Satisfied	26%

Source: Tabulated from a sample of 319 union workers in
Quality of Working Conditions Survey, 1977.
(Freeman and Medoff, 1984, p.143)

TABLE 27

FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN UNION ACTIVITIES

	Freeman and Medoff's Results*	Full-Timer's Participation Present Study**
	(%)	(%)
Attended a union meeting	76	95
Voted in a union election	73	17***
Been elected to, nominated for, or chosen for an office in a union	16	22
Filed a grievance through a union	28	17

* Within last two years of being asked.

** Since becoming a member of the union.

*** Eighty-three percent of full-timers who participated in the survey stated they had never attended a union election meeting.

The figures in Freeman and Medoff's study concerning satisfaction with the union are relatively comparable to responses recorded by individuals when asked to agree or disagree with the statement "In general, I am happy with the job the union is doing." However, in the present study, twenty-six of respondents did not record an opinion. Seventy-four percent of those in Freeman and Medoff's study were very satisfied (25%), or somewhat satisfied (49%) with their union. In this study, forty-nine percent were happy with the job the union is doing while twenty-four percent indicated they were not.

Table 28 outlines the authors' findings on leadership responsiveness and members feeling about their say in union affairs. Sixty-seven percent felt the feedback from the union was very good or somewhat good, while thirty-three percent felt it was not too good or not good at all. The findings in the present study indicate similar trends, although again, a large number of respondents (32%) did not respond to the statement, "The leaders are unresponsive to members' ideas and concerns." Of those who responded, twenty-seven percent agreed (20%) or strongly agreed (7%) with the statement, while forty percent disagreed (33%) or strongly disagreed (7%).

With respect to say in union affairs, Freeman and Medoff's findings were much more positive than those indicated by this survey. In the former, fifty-seven percent felt their say in union affairs was very good (19%) or somewhat good (38%), with forty-two percent stating it was not too good (27%) or not good at all (15%). When members of the MFCW, Local 832 were asked to state how much influence they had over union policy in general, thirty-four percent stated very strong some influence, while sixty-three percent felt they had little influence or no influence at all.

TABLE 28

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIVENESS AND SAY IN UNION

"Percentage of workers viewing union's performance as:"

	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Somewhat Good</u>	<u>Not Too Good</u>	<u>Not Good At All</u>
Feedback from Union	30	37	23	10
Say in Union	19	38	27	15

Source: Tabulated from the responses of 384 union workers in 1977 Quality of Employment Survey.
(Freeman and Medoff, 1984, p.210)

Again, Freeman and Medoff note that those who are satisfied with their union tend to be older workers, and those with more tenure, findings substantiated in the present analysis.

The authors conclude that there is a great deal of union democracy in the American labour movement, particularly at the local level. The results of the present study indicate that if the level of union democracy is to be judged by the extent of meeting attendance, satisfaction with the union, leadership responsiveness and say over union affairs, Local 832 is overall, considerably less democratic than unions analyzed in the Freeman and Medoff study.

Another study involving union democracy was undertaken by John C. Anderson in 1979. Independent variables in his analysis included formal and informal participation in union activities, involvement in the decision-making process, electoral process democracy and leadership responsiveness, while influence over the control structure was the dependent variable. Anderson also tested the validity of traditional measures of union democracy. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.438)

Table 29 summarizes Anderson's results in terms of mean values for the variables outlined in the study. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.441)

Anderson notes that measures of meeting attendance, other behavioural participation (union committee membership, union office, voting and campaigning

TABLE 29

LIST OF VARIABLES AND VARIABLE ATTRIBUTES
IN ANDERSON STUDY

<u>Democracy Criterion Scales</u>	<u># of Items</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>Range of Values</u>
Meeting Attendance	2	4.04	5.13	0-18
Other Behavioural Part	7	2.44	1.35	0-7
Informal Partic (Ratio)	6	0.34	0.90	0-6
Number of Decisions	11	3.15	2.80	0-11
Influence over Decisions	11	16.45	5.92	11-44
Electoral Control (R)	6	14.92	4.10	5-30
Leadership Responsiveness	12	34.66	7.78	12-48
Union Control Structure (Ratio)	6	0.13	0.10	0.05-0.80

Note: R indicates reverse scoring; a low value indicates a great deal of electoral control.

in Local elections and reading the union newspaper regularly), informal participation (contacting the union when a problem occurs), the number of decisions in which members are involved, influence over decisions, and influence over the union control structure indicate that the locals are basically undemocratic. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.441) However, the findings also indicated that leaders are moderately responsible and members have some control over the electoral process.

His analysis of individual items comprising the scales revealed that many members reported being involved in union activities and the decision-making processes, having influence over decisions, and having responsive leaders where little initiative or action were required on the part of the member. That is, almost one hundred percent of the respondents read the newspaper regularly and voted in elections, while few campaigned in elections or served on union committees. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.441)

Moreover, members reported participating in decisions, having influence over them, or seeing leaders as responsive on issues where structural mechanisms existed for obtaining input, contract proposals, elections, general union policy, and accepting or rejecting contracts. Thus, it appears that although a large majority of the membership may exercise their inalienable right to inactivity, where little action is required, or where structural mechanisms exist, democracy is likely to be greater. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.441)

Results of Anderson's regression analysis indicated that influence over decisions, informal participation, other behavioural participation (a negative relationship) and leadership responsiveness made the most significant additions to the explanation of the dependent variable. The number of decisions in which

members participate, meeting attendance, and electoral control do not provide much variance in the dependent variable. (J.C. Anderson, 1979, p.444) Anderson concludes that:

The structural characteristics, and perhaps behavioural participation variables might be seen as conditions which facilitate or hinder the functioning of a democratic process within unions, however, they should not be accepted by themselves as measures of the phenomenon called union democracy. Thus, future research on union democracy will need to focus directly on the decision-making process, as difficult as that may be.

Anderson's results are only marginally consistent with those of the present study; he found that members were likely to participate where channels of input existed, namely accepting and rejecting contracts, suggesting contract proposals, participating in elections or having influence over general union policy.

The results of the survey of MFCW members indicate that members do not vote in elections and rarely attend membership meetings where general union policy is discussed. Most have never suggested contract proposals. The only significant level of participation occurs in accepting or rejecting contracts.

Anderson's statement that democracy is likely to be greater where little activity is required, or where structural mechanisms exist, is not substantiated by the results of the present study. The structural mechanisms for participation are evident in Local 832, yet few members attend meetings or participate in the decision-making process. In general, members feel they have little influence over how decisions are made, even among those who do attend meetings regularly.

Anderson's argument that such structural mechanisms might only be conditions which hinder or facilitate union democracy is an important observation. In the population under study, for example, it was discovered that membership participation in activities has not fostered a sense of control over the decision-making process. The implications of this finding will be discussed in the summary and conclusions of the report.

(ii) Summary of Quantitative Research

The survey results indicate a minimal amount of democracy within Local 832 when traditional indicators are utilized. Popular participation in union activities is practically non-existent, leaders are only partially responsive, and members' perceived influence over any decisions is minimal. Only within a small group of employees have the participatory channels produced a sense of control over the union's operations. The older, full-time workers with greater tenure are the most supportive of the union structure and policies, and are most likely to concern themselves with the Local's activities. This group constitutes a very small, and dwindling percentage of the membership working at Safeway and Westfair stores. The increasing use of part-time help, and the growing numbers of younger workers have resulted in a population of workers who are less sympathetic to the union's position.

The relationship between participation in union activities and perceived influence over the decision-making process became more significant when correlations in sub-populations of employees were produced. For some workers, such involvement constitutes a means of influencing union policies and how

decisions are made. For most, however, meeting attendance and involvement in other union activities has not signified influence over the Local's operations.

Comparison with other studies revealed that democracy within Local 832 is less evident than in unions analyzed in similar studies.

CHAPTER VIII

(i) Discussion and Conclusions

The present study has included a wide array of research methods in an attempt to test old and new theories about the nature, extent and purpose of democracy within a trade union organization. This final section will discuss the findings of the study, focussing on the implications such research has on union management relations within an economically depressed capitalist environment.

What is union democracy? Is it a representative democracy made up of experienced and expert elected officials who discourage popular involvement of the rank-and-file in policy formulation and dealings with management? What is the role of the membership in a voluntary organization whose purpose is to secure maximum benefits and decent working conditions for a collective body of workers? How does a union's long-term relationship with an employer or group of employers affect the type of democracy desired, or possible within such an organization? Do the objectives of a trade union limit the possibilities of a democratic organization? How does the level of democracy affect the ability of the leadership to mobilize its membership to actively fight the employer on issues affecting wages, benefits and working conditions?

These questions are central to the discussion of union democracy and have been addressed in the present study. It is hoped that some insights into the theoretical and empirical research on the subject, as well as issues for future debate will emerge from this undertaking.

Union democracy is not a formal set of rules and by-laws set within a constitutional framework. It is not simply perfunctory attendance at meetings, the occasional filing of a grievance, or any other activity a member might engage in to register an opinion or complaint. Democracy is a dynamic process which extends beyond institutional structures; a description of these structures is useful for the framework of analysis, but must not be construed as democracy per se. Many authors have argued this point, yet Freeman and Medoff's study illustrate the persistence of researchers to focus on membership behaviour as the sole measure of internal democracy.

There have been studies which focus on informal methods of participation as valid measures of internal democracy. Authors such as John Anderson have argued that informal contact with union representatives is often absent from quantitative analyses of union democracy, yet constitutes an important means of membership influence over union affairs. This approach comes closer to a more comprehensive description of the phenomenon of union democracy. However, how a union's structure develops to incorporate the views of members expressed in such informal manners cannot be measured by such an approach.

In short, studies on union democracy have focussed on the participation of members in various formal and informal manners. Researchers have based their conclusions on the description of such behavioural activity. The central issue, however, is not how extensively members become involved in their local's activities, but how such involvement transfers into meaningful influence over the unions' decisions. This is the dynamic nature of democracy and requires more in-depth analysis of a union's government, and specifically, how, and to what extent members' views and demands govern the local's operations.

This study has attempted to examine all facets of a trade union organization to determine the level of internal democracy, and specifically, to what degree members influence, or are invited to influence, decisions made at the local. Those surveyed felt it was very important to have direct say over how their union operates; do they actually exercise such direct say?

The results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed a general lack of democracy within Local 832. Very few people become involved in union activities, and most feel they have little influence over decisions made by the local, and over union policy in general. There exists a small population of employees who do participate, and who feel they have some say over the union's affairs. However, the majority of the population is apathetic. It is essential to discern whether this apathy is due to genuine unconcern over union matters, or frustration at the lack of meaningful influence such activity entails.

Indeed, many members stated that involvement in union activities was not a priority in their life. More important, however, are the feelings of those who have participated; many were unhappy with the meetings they had attended, and felt their presence was not making a difference. These types of comments substantiate the conclusion that a mere description of membership behaviour gives no indication of the actual influence exercised by the involved individuals.

The same observation might be made about contact with union representatives, shop stewards and elected officers. Are members utilizing these channels of communication to voice their opinions and concerns about the local's operations and decisions which affect them in the workplace? Conversely, are the union's staff and volunteers reaching out to the members at the workplace and including them in the Local's operations? In fact, the role of the stewards and representatives has been confined to policing the agreement and representing the workers' interests on the jobs. Although past studies have commented on the importance of the stewards and reps in the shop society (in terms of relaying members' demands and comments to the leaders), the role of MFCW stewards has not included this function to any great extent.

Although a survey of membership behaviour and involvement in union activities was essential to this discussion of internal democracy, it became apparent that the actual structures and activities of the local was equally crucial to understanding the degree of democracy present at Local 832. Further, it was important to determine the attitudes of the leadership with respect to desired levels of membership involvement in the decision-making process.

The elected leaders and staff representatives of Local 832 believe it is essential for members to express their views on the Local's activities, and to comment on how well the leadership is performing its functions. None of those interviewed stated that members should be more involved in the policy formulation processes of the local. They were content with the channels of communication and involvement through which members can voice their opinions, elect their union officials, accept or reject contracts and vote on policies developed by the leaders and staff. Those who run the organization want comments and feedback on their performance; they have not made a commitment to increasing membership input into the policy-formulation and decision-making processes of the union.

The brief history of the MFCW revealed that the local has secured improvements in wages and working conditions for its Safeway and Westfair members over the past two decades. In particular, the union has been able to secure lucrative settlements with the companies during periods of economic prosperity. The relatively peaceful relationship the local has enjoyed with these employers has affected the development of the union's relationship with its own members. Prior to 1987, the mobilization of the members for an active show of strength against the food retailers has seldom been required. Rather, the negotiating committees and the president have been relatively successful in winning the workers' demands. Although these individuals undoubtedly recognize the importance of the strength of the rank-and-file during negotiation intervals, the actual mobilization processes have been few and far between. The union has developed a highly skilled team of negotiators, centered around the president, who undertake negotiations with relatively little input or involvement from below.

This type of situation is not detrimental to the interests of the members until the negotiators are unable to conclude an agreement without enlisting the members to back the demands with visible displays of strength, such as a strike vote or strike. The lack of consistent participation and involvement of an informed membership, it has been argued, has resulted in less than optimum levels of support during these crisis periods.

The MFCW has faced concessions for a number of years, yet has met new managerial strategies with few initiatives that might improve their collective strength at the bargaining table. The union's objective is to improve the lot of the members in the organization: when the structure and philosophy of a union hinder the attainment of this basic objective, the interests of the members are jeopardized.

There have been ~~no~~ minor changes to the local's structure within the past decade, but certainly no concentrated effort to increase membership influence in the decision-making process. More importantly, there does not seem to have occurred a change in the union's philosophy with respect to the importance of membership involvement. The leaders want a supportive membership, but have not provided programs and activities which would increase meaningful involvement of the members that might in turn foster a better understanding of the local's objectives and strategies.

The argument presented here is that a lack of membership involvement in, and influence over the day-to-day running of the local prevents the development of an informed and active rank-and-file who are easily mobilized to support demands

at the bargaining table. Democracy is essential to the attainment of such a collective body of workers. While leadership expertise is also essential, there must be a balance of power within the organization so that members have genuine influence over union matters, and can readily identify with their leaders at all times. The case study of the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers illustrates that the centralization of decision-making power within the union has contributed to a membership who are either apathetic, or unsympathetic to the local's philosophy and objectives.

Researchers have argued that the objectives of trade unions shape the nature and extent of internal union democracy. This issue has also been addressed in the present study. According to staff representatives, shop stewards, elected officials and the members surveyed, the objectives of the MFCW consist mainly of gaining improvements to wages and working conditions, and enforcing the collective agreement. In light of past studies, these objectives seem 'narrow'; questions of job control, influence over managerial decisions, or developing a class consciousness among members are beyond the scope of the local's objectives.

It can be argued that these narrow objectives have further limited the extent of internal union democracy within Local 832 for the same reasons outlined above. The local has enjoyed a relatively peaceful relationship with the employers partly because it has never issued demands for more control in the workplace. The more antagonistic relationship this would produce would necessitate a militant rank-and-file prepared to back the union's demands at the bargaining table and in the workplace. The 'business' demands the local

has concentrated on have justified the development of an expert group of officials who are able to win such demands without excessive involvement of the rank and file,

Another dimension to this argument is that, in an economically depressed climate, even narrow objectives of improved wages and working conditions pose serious threats to a company's economic viability. An expert team of negotiators alone will not suffice to win the members' demands at the bargaining table. A collective show of support is often required to resist concessions to management. The ability of the leadership to mobilize this support will be affected by the relationship it enjoys with the members. Certainly an informed and involved membership would be more easily mobilized than one who had been consistently discouraged from active involvement in the union's affairs.

The MFCW's leadership recognized this dilemma prior to entering into negotiations with Canada Safeway in 1985. An extensive campaign was undertaken to bring the membership into the confidence of the Local. The strategy proved highly successful in terms of mobilizing support for the union's position at the bargaining table. The incident illustrates that greater involvement and input from the shop floor results in a better understanding of the Local's operations, and an increased probability of bringing members on side to support the union's position.

Indeed, one of the central contentions of the study is that the level of internal democracy is related to the nature and extent of membership support for union policies and actions. The survey results supported this hypothesis:

there is a relatively strong relationship, and the perceived influence members have over the decision-making process is a good indicator of whether they will support union policies. As well, the recent Westfair strike revealed a lack of general support for the union's position. Of course, the strike was very long, and support levels undoubtedly deteriorated for reasons other than the members' views on their local's structure and strategies. However, the brief history of the local's association with the Westfair membership revealed a tenuous relationship between the two parties which may have affected the levels of support for the union's strike position. A more democratic institution might well have fostered a more close-knit relationship between the leaders and the members, resulting in a stronger display of strength on the picket line.

This leads to the final contention of the study, namely, that greater internal democracy would improve the union's strength, and consequently, members' working conditions and benefits. The relatively strong quantitative relationship between perceived influence over the decision-making process and support for union policies indicates support for this hypothesis. As well, the survey results and the examination of the Local's structure, activities, programs and policies revealed a minimal level of democracy in the form of popular participation and diffusion of decision-making power. While the interests of the members were served during periods of economic prosperity, the recession has provoked a number of management strategies to cut labour costs through concessions from its unionized employees. The increasingly volatile bargaining environment which has developed over the past several years has necessitated the union's dependence on the rank-and-file to win demands at the

bargaining table. The union has encouraged greater membership involvement in the negotiating process in an attempt to increase support for its bargaining position, and to fight these concessions. While these attempts have been relatively successful, a more systematic incorporation of membership input and involvement in all areas of the union's operations would undoubtedly raise the consciousness of the workers, their militancy and their support for the union during these crucial periods.

The case study of the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers has provided insight into a number of contentious issues surrounding the discussion of internal union democracy. The major findings of the report can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Union democracy is a dynamic process which centres around the relationship between the elected leaders and the rank-and-file members. Most importantly, it involves the manner in which members are informed of the union's strategies and policies, the extent to which they influence decisions made by the Local, and the ability of the leadership to incorporate members' views and involvement in the formal structure of the union.
- (2) The measurement of union democracy must focus on the above elements, and must therefore include, not only a description of membership behaviour in union activities, but an in-depth analysis of the control structure of the union and the role of the members in all decisions made, from day-to-day matters to issues evolving during crisis periods.
- (3) The economic context surrounding the bargaining relationship between a union and the companies with which it deals, as well as the nature of a trade union's objectives, affect the degree of internal democracy within a union organization. If demands for improvements to wages and working conditions will result in economic loss for the employer, or when an employer's managerial rights are threatened, the bargaining relationship becomes increasingly volatile. In order to win demands, a collective and sustained display of strength by the workers is crucial. Such activity can be mobilized more effectively if the membership is informed and sympathetic to

the union's objectives, and has developed a sense of control over the union's operations, and a vested interest in any developments which affect its relationship with the employer. In short, a more democratic institution would increase the strength of the union in relation to management.

- (4) Membership support for union policies is related to the perceived influence members have over the decision-making process. Greater union democracy may be an important tool for increasing membership support for union policies, and consequently, the strength of the union in relation to management.
- (5) The relationship between a union and its membership is affected by the bargaining relationship the union enjoys with the employers. Changes to the bargaining relationship often require new strategies on the part of the Local, which in turn must include a reorganization of structures and policies if greater militancy is required. The extent of union democracy plays a crucial role in determining the ease with which the leadership can incorporate membership involvement and transfer it to support for the union's position at the bargaining table and in the workplace.

How do these results compare with conclusions past authors have made about the measurement and purpose of union democracy? John Anderson has argued that the measurement of union democracy must include an analysis of formal and informal membership participation in union activities. This study reveals that, while such measurement procedures provide a starting point, more in-depth evaluation of the structures, activities and philosophy of a union is required to determine whether such membership behaviour is transferred into genuine influence over the decision-making process.

Freeman and Medoff state that union democracy is dependent on the extent to which members are involved in choosing leaders and determining union policy. Unfortunately, they do not provide evidence that this is the case in the unions they examine in their study. In fact, they also rely on membership participation behaviour as sole indicators of the extent of internal union

democracy. This study has illustrated that participation in union activities does not necessarily entail a perceived influence over the decision-making process. A numerical description of such behaviour falls short of a true understanding of the dimensions of internal union democracy.

Perry Anderson contends that a more democratic union, and greater freedom of debate within the union movement would foster a more self-reliant and militant working class. Such militancy would be instrumental in strengthening the union's position in relation to management, a situation clearly in the membership's interests. This case study of the Manitoba Food and Commercial Workers' union provides considerable evidence to support Anderson's contentions. Greater involvement of the members in specific incidents has led to a more unified body of workers willing to support the leadership's position at the bargaining table. Conversely, the lack of an ongoing, successful endeavor to educate the members about the policies and functions of the union, to encourage them to participate, and to vest them with genuine influence in policy setting and decision-making has resulted in several instances where the union has had to scramble to bring members on side. The failure to do so has weakened the union in relation to management, and has resulted in contracts which have not always reflected the best interests of the members.

Benson's argument that unions are oligarchic structures was made in the context of describing national union structures; most of his conclusions are not readily comparable to those reached in the present study. However, some observations might be made. There have been no oppositional currents within Local 832, at least within the last twenty years. No challenges to the

leadership have occurred within this period. This factor may have also contributed to the state of internal democracy outlined above. A strong oppositional movement within the union may have succeeded in pressuring the leadership for more widespread democratic reform. However, this is speculation, and the results of the study do not warrant a conclusive critique of Benson's argument. It does appear that the concentration of decision-making power which has developed over the years, and the lack of necessity to call on the members to win demands at the bargaining table, may have resulted in an apathetic membership unprepared, and unwilling to participate more actively.

Richard Hyman has argued that the focus on collective bargaining to achieve a union's objectives has limited the role of the rank and file in the decision-making process. This might be a further explanation of the limited degree of internal democracy within Local 832. The union has, historically, confined its objectives to improved wages and working conditions and the policing of agreements, objectives traditionally obtained through the collective bargaining and grievance procedures. Wider objectives such as job control or influence over managerial directives are considered beyond the scope of the union's mandate. However, the MFCW has, in this author's view, made a genuine attempt to include the members in the operation of the Local, particularly with respect to the negotiating process. Even a local with 'limited' objectives, can entertain a good deal of democracy. Indeed, it has been argued here that democracy is instrumental in achieving a union's objectives, regardless of how narrow they may be, particularly in an economically depressed climate. To test Hyman's contentions more systematically, a cross-examination of unions would be required to determine

whether differing objectives have an effect on the degree of internal union democracy.

Some general comments might be made with respect to the efficiency versus participation argument. There is obviously merit to both sides of the argument. A leadership completely responsible to the membership for each decision would accomplish very little, whether in the implementation of programs, the choice of staff, or the use of minor amounts of union funds. Some degree of power and responsibility must be vested in the elected leaders to carry out the day-to-day operations of the union. As well, in certain instances, such as collective bargaining, the negotiators cannot ask for popular consent for each bargaining strategy, for this may jeopardize the union's position at the bargaining table. In fact, even members of the negotiating committee are kept in the dark about key strategic positions. The experience of the Local, in terms of company sympathizers participating as elected members of the negotiating committee has understandably made them wary about opening the process up to the members.

Still, the power structure of Local 832 must be transformed to incorporate greater membership involvement. Although attempts have been made to address the concerns of specific groups, a systematic reorganization of the Local's structure must be undertaken to provide input and influence from the rank and file. The leadership must incorporate such involvement in all areas of the union's operations on a continuous basis rather than waiting till the eleventh hour to bring its members on side.

The issue of membership interest versus those of the leaders was not addressed specifically by the study. Further research would be required to determine whether the members' interests govern the actions of the elected officials and staff representatives. However, it is the opinion of the author that the leadership of the MFCW Local 832 is genuinely committed to serving its members. It is a further opinion that the leadership believes the interests of the members are best served in the manner outlined in the description of the Local's activities. That is, the leaders believe they are elected or appointed to perform the job of running the union and must enjoy the confidence, but not the involvement of the members in this task. It has been argued here that the interests of the members might be better served if there was greater membership involvement and input.

The results of the present research have several policy applications with respect to the MFCW's structure and activities. If the purpose of a union is to serve the interests of the membership and a lack of democracy threatens these interests, some major changes must occur. Some suggestions based on the findings of the report include:

- (1) A systematic evaluation of the Local's structures, policies and programs, to determine areas in which greater membership involvement and input could be achieved.
- (2) More diffusion of decision-making power so that members can exercise direct influence over union policies in manners outside those specified in the Constitution and By-laws. More specifically, committees should be vested with greater decision-making power, while meetings should be forums of debate and policy formulation.

- (3) More education of the members with respect to issues affecting them at the workplace, and how the union's objectives (and those of the members) can be more readily attained if the members are united in their fight against management. This might include unit meetings where members can debate and question the Local's policies, and in which the leadership and union representatives are present to respond to members' queries.
- (4) A comprehensive education program to include orientation of new members to the union's objectives and policies.
- (5) A reorganization of the shop steward system so that better communication channels exist between the members and the staff representatives and elected officials. Shop stewards must be better trained to deal with membership concerns, must be knowledgeable about the union's functions, and be in a position to relay leadership directives to the members and members' input to the leaders. The shop stewards should become an active element of the local's communication network, most importantly for the purpose of establishing a visible sign of the union's presence in the workplace.

A greater commitment to an informed and active membership must be adopted by the leadership before any of these reforms can be realized. A more unified and sympathetic membership, in tune with its leadership's policies and objectives should be reasonable impetus for this commitment.

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APPENDIX 1
- QUESTIONNAIRE -

QUESTIONNAIRE
INSTRUCTIONS

Please read each question carefully before you answer.

If there are certain questions you cannot answer, or do not wish to answer, please leave them blank. Otherwise, please answer all of the questions. (ie. a zero or a none is an acceptable answer)

One section contains questions for those of you who are shop stewards.

There is room at the end of the questionnaire for your comments. Please use this space for any comments you wish to make.

Please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

TABULATING
PROCESSES ONLY

2
Card 1
2
6

General Information

This first page contains general questions in order to get an idea of the type of respondents in the study and so I can do some statistical calculations with the results.

1. Are you an employee working at Safeway Westfair
2. Are you Full-time Part-time
3. How many years have you worked for the above company?
Less than 2 years 2-5 years 5-9 years Over 9 years
4. Are you Male Female
5. Age 16-25 26-35 36-45 over 45
6. Which department are you currently working in? _____
7. Have you ever belonged to another union? Yes No
8. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
Less than complete high school Completed High School
Some technical training or some University Completed a University Degree
9. Marital Status _____
10. Are you Your household's only income earner
 One of your household's income earners
 Not a major income earner in your household

ACTION/Communication with Members

18. Do you read the MFCW ACTION Magazine

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

46

19. In general, from the materials the union sends you, do you think the level of communication between the MFCW and the membership is satisfactory?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

—

20. How could better communication be established?

—

51

Attitudes toward leaders/Strikes

21. In general, do you tend to agree with the MFCW leaders' policies?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

52

22. Would you voice your disagreement if you did not agree with a union policy?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

—

23. Have you ever suggested contract proposals?

- Yes
- No

54

24. Once the membership goes on strike, how much power does the membership have in influencing the leaders' decisions during the strike? (ie. can the members change the union's strategy during a strike?)

- Alot of Power
- Some Power
- Hardly any Power
- No power

—

25. Should the members have more direct say over how the union will act during a strike?

- Yes
- No Opinion
- No

56

Meeting Attendance/Voting Behaviour

The following questions are more specifically related to your participation in union activities such as meetings and elections. Please answer as accurately as you can remember.

11. Have you ever attended a union meeting? Yes No

12. If yes, approximately how many meetings have you attended since becoming a member of the union ____ In the past year ____

13. Please indicate how many times you have attended the following types of meetings since becoming a member of the MFCW.

General Membership _____ Election _____
Negotiation Update _____ Strike Vote _____
Contract Proposal _____ Other (Please Specify) _____

14. Are you sufficiently notified and informed about the times and places of union meetings?
 Always Often Sometimes Never

15. If you do not attend union meetings, could you say why? (Is it because you are too busy, not very interested, etc.)

16. Have you ever been nominated for, run for, been elected to or applied for a union office position? (Executive, Shop Steward, Union Rep., etc)
Yes No

17. If you have not been involved in the union in this manner, could you say why?

FOR TABULATING PURPOSES ONLY

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y: _____
WA _____ 23
N _____
Cf _____ 27
E _____
SV _____ 31
C _____
OF _____ 34

____ 35

____ 39

____ 40 $\frac{Z}{41}$

____ 45

Shop Steward/Rep Contact

This next section will ask you questions about your contact with shop stewards and union representatives.

26. How many times have you contacted a union representative about a problem at work

Since you became a member of the union? _____ In the last year? _____

27. If you have contacted a rep, please indicate the type(s) of contact.

Telephoning the union office Visiting the union office

Sending a letter to the union rep Other _____

Speaking to a rep in the store _____

28. If you have not contacted a rep, could you please state why? (Is it because you have never needed to, you do not know the rep, etc.)

29. How many times have you contacted a shop steward from your store about a problem at work

Since becoming a member of the union? _____ In the last year? _____

30. If you have not contacted a shop steward, could you please say why?

31. Have you ever filed a grievance? Yes No

32. If no, could you please state the reason?

33. Have you ever tried to contact, or spoken with Bernard Christophe?

Yes No

FOR TABULATING
PURPOSES ONLY

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_____ 11

Attitudes about union/management

34. In general, how helpful have the following individuals been in dealing with concerns you have raised?

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful
12 _____ Shop Stewards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ Union Representatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

35. Are you hesitant about contacting the union about a problem at work?

14 _____	Always <input type="checkbox"/>	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>	Never <input type="checkbox"/>
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36. In general, how cooperative do you find management in trying to find a solution (if a problem occurs at work) which is agreeable to yourself and the company?

_____	Very cooperative <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat cooperative <input type="checkbox"/>	Not cooperative <input type="checkbox"/>
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General Attitudes

The next section involves your views on what you think your union should be doing. For each item, check the response which most closely describes what you think.

37. How important should your union's role be in the following situations?

	Very Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
16 _____ (a) Protecting workers' jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ (b) Upholding the contract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 _____ (c) Fighting for equal pay for work of equal value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ (d) Gaining wage increases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 _____ (e) Gaining more full-time positions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____ (f) Educating its members about the labour movement in Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 _____ (g) Supporting members of the same union who are on strike	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 _____ (h) Supporting members of a different union who are on strike	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Democracy/General

Finally, here are some general questions about your role in the decision-making process of the union.

39. How much influence do you feel you have over the following types of union decisions?

	Very Strong Influence	Some Influence	Little Influence	No Influence
--	--------------------------	-------------------	---------------------	-----------------

- | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35 | (a) Determining Contract Proposals | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | (b) Electing Leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 37 | (c) Use of union funds | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | (d) Hiring union staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 39 | (e) Discipline of members | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | (f) Accepting/Rejecting contracts | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41 | (g) Union policy in general | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

40. How important to you is having direct say over how your union operates?

Very Important Slightly Important Not Important

41. Why?

42. What do you think the members' role in the union is?

43. How do you think greater membership input could best be obtained?

35
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FOR TABULATING
PURPOSES ONLY

MFCW Structure

These questions are concerned with the MFCW's structure; things that people have said about the union.

18. Please state how you feel about the following statements, by checking for each item the response which most closely describes what you think.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Dis- Agree	Strongly Disagree
a) Union negotiating committee members should be elected and not appointed by the union	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b) Members should be more involved in negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) It is easy to change the union's position on issues	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d) I would prefer to be non-unionized	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e) The leaders are unresponsive to members' ideas and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f) There should be a change of leaders at regular intervals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g) There should be more shop stewards	<input type="checkbox"/>				
a) The members don't have much say over how the union's decisions are made	<input type="checkbox"/>				
l) Members are kept well informed about union business	<input type="checkbox"/>				
j) More active membership involvement would make the union stronger	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c) In general, I am happy with the job the union is doing	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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44. Do you consider the MFCW a democratic union?

Yes

No

56

45. Why do you feel this way?

60

46. Do you believe the MFCW is pursuing goals which are in the best interests of its members?

Yes

No

61

47. If no, what goals should the union be pursuing?

63

67

Shop Stewards

If you are a shop steward, could you please answer the following questions.

48. How long have you been a shop steward? _____ years

69

49. How often does the union contact you, (either at work or at home) to keep you informed about union business?

At least once per week

About once per month

About once every 6 months

Hardly ever

Only when a specific job needs to be done

50. Is the union responsive to your questions and other needs?

Always

Often

Sometimes

Never

71

51. Are there any suggestions you have as to how the shop steward system could be improved to encourage membership participation in union activities?

75

