



Provided by the author(s) and NUI Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	Put Up and Shut Up: social mobilisation and employee attitudes in non-union firms
Author(s)	Dundon, Tony
Publication Date	2001-06
Publication Information	Dundon, T. (2001), 'Put Up and Shut Up: social mobilisation and employee attitudes in non-union firms', Paper presented to the British Universities Industrial Relations Association Annual Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, 5th - 7th July 2001
Publisher	British Universities Industrial Relations Association Proceedings
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/2072

Downloaded 2019-11-12T18:06:32Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



Put Up and Shut Up: social mobilisation and employee attitudes in non-union firms

Tony Dundon

Department of Management
National University of Ireland, Galway.
+353 91 512115
tony.dundon@nuigalway.ie

British Universities Industrial Relations Association Conference,
Manchester Metropolitan University
5th – 7th July 2001

Available for citation as:

Dundon, T. (2001), "Put Up and Shut Up: social mobilisation and employee attitudes in non-union firms", Paper presented to the *British Universities Industrial Relations Association Annual Conference*, Manchester Metropolitan University, 5th – 7th July 2001

PUT UP AND SHUT UP:

SOCIAL MOBILISATION AND EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES IN NON-UNION FIRMS

INTRODUCTION

Between 1984 and 1998 the proportion of workers covered by collective bargaining declined from 70 to 40 percent, with union density at an all time low of around 32% (Millward et al, 2000:197). In Britain the academic interest in non-union industrial relations has gained increasing momentum over the last decade. Oversimplification notwithstanding, this interest tends to fall into one of three categories. First is the use of survey data to identify key features of the non-union organisation (Marginson et al, 1988; Millward et al, 1992; Guest & Hoque, 1994; Beaumont & Harris, 1994; Cully et al, 1999). The majority of non-union firms appear to have fewer methods for resolving discipline or grievance issues, while workers are more likely to experience compulsory redundancy than is the case in most unionised establishments (Millward *et al*, 1992; Beaumont, 1995). This generalisation has not gone unchallenged. Guest and Conway (1999:397) suggest that in the 'black-hole' of smaller firms, workers report a significant degree of job satisfaction. In their survey 29% of workers said they are 'very satisfied' with their job and 31% displayed a 'lot of loyalty' to their firm.

A second category in the literature is the non-union case study (Foulkes, 1980; McLoughlin & Gourlay, 1994; Scott, 1994; Turnbull & Wass, 1998; Dundon et al, 1999; Blyton & Turnbull, 1998; Bacon, 1999). Here, detailed analysis often reveals a more complicated and dynamic pattern of non-union employment practices. Turnbull & Wass (1998) suggest that despite better pay and terms and conditions in the more sophisticated (or M&S) non-union model, workers remain highly dependent upon management. Similarly, Bacon (1999) shows that 'soft' HRM techniques can be used in tandem with 'harder' managerial control systems. One implication is that traditional 'good and bad' images of the non-union firm derived from large scale surveys can leave the researcher ill-equipped to appreciate the unfolding drama of non-union managerial strategies and worker experiences (Bacon, 1999).

A third category is based on employee attitudes. These focus on a number of related issues such as the propensity to unionise, job satisfaction and attitudes toward management and unions (McLoughlin & Gourlay, 1991/92; Wheeler & McLendon, 1991; Hartley, 1992; Kelly & Kelly, 1994). Variables such as job dissatisfaction, occupational status, union availability and/or establishment size are used to assess the extent of potential union triggers. These studies offer valuable insights into the attitudes of workers and provide important clues concerning the processes that underpin mobilisation. Nevertheless, there remains a comparatively small amount of research targeted at non-union workers and, more specifically, concerning their attitudes to unions and management.

SOCIAL MOBILISATION, THEM AND US ATTITUDES AND NON-UNION WORKERS

Kelly's (1999) recent case for mobilisation theory complements traditional and structural correlates concerning the propensity for non-union workers to unionise. Drawing on American mobilisation theorists (Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1988), the argument is that collective mobilisation can flow from employee perceptions of *injustice*, *attribution* and *identity*. Central to this process is the existence of 'them and us' attitudes:

"Attributions of blame to groups such as management presuppose that employees belong to and identify with social categories such as 'us' (the employees) and against 'them' (the management)" (Kelly, 1998).

However there are quite important issues that differentiate between the 'attitudinal' and 'behavioural' experiences of workers (Mowday et al, 1982; Cohen, 1992; D'art & Turner, 1999). In the non-union context, it is possible that a reduction or even elimination of them and us attitudes can significantly influence the processes toward collective identity and mobilisation.

A key factor in this process is *leadership*. The actions of leaders (workers, union activists and management) can influence the processes that shape a

sense of identity and attribution. In a recent paper on the nature of local union leadership, Darlington (2000) presents a polemic case for political activism as a central lever in the process of collectivisation. Local leaders with a predisposition for class-consciousness often defend collective action and promote a sense of attribution. Of course such activity does not exist in a vacuum. There is contextual circumstance, space, opportunity and threat to such organisation. In non-union firms managerial hostility, ideology and action can counterbalance a workers sense of collective identity and attribution. The nature of industrial relations in such companies may promote a climate that limits the extent of collective identity (see for example, Foulkes, 1980; Dickson et al, 1988; Bacon, 1999). Unions are not necessarily outlawed but certainly discouraged, either by inaugurating managerial techniques that 'substitute' a workers sense of attribution, or through more coercive managerial tactics that 'suppress' the triggers to collective mobilisation (Gall & McKay, 2001).

In this paper the focus is on non-union employees and their attitudes to management and unions. The data is presented to deal with two separate but not unrelated topics of current interest to industrial relations; the extent of 'them and us attitudes' between management and worker, and the links from these attitudes to 'social mobilisation' theory. After outlining the general methodological approach the data is structured in three parts. First, the extent of employee 'them and us' attitudes are reported. Second, the prevailing industrial relations climate in each organisation is used to assess variations in them and us attitudes, group identity and the workers' sense of attribution between the case studies. Third, more qualitative and discursive data is analysed which show how (anti-union) managerial attitudes represent a significant hurdle to the processes of social mobilisation. Finally, a number of implications and conclusions are considered.

METHOD AND CASE STUDY OUTLINE

While survey data is important in outlining the range of employment practices, ultimately it can only (tentatively) provide clues as to 'what is there' in terms of

the type of non-union firms. This paper seeks to explore the attitudes and experiences of workers in a selected number of non-union case studies in greater depth. The data is used to evaluate some of the key processes of social mobilisation theory. The evidence is drawn from four case studies, collected over a two-year period and includes an attitude survey of approximately 230 non-union workers from different industry sectors and occupations. In addition, interviews were carried out with both workers and management (see table 1).

Table 1: Organisational Context and Background

	Water Co.	Chem Co.	Merchant Co.	Delivery Co.
Established	1987	1977	1936	1974
Sector	Services / Processing	Manufacturing/ Processing	Services	Services
Business Activity	Bottled Mineral Water	Chemicals (intermediaries)	Builders Merchant	Parcel Delivery
Market Conditions	Rapid growth of UK market	Stable domestic market share, small export growth	Decline	Large growth of UK and international market.
Regional Coverage (<i>case study sites</i>)	Tewkesbury (HQ) Derby, Warrington	Knowsley and Leeds	Yorkshire	London (HQ); East Midlands, Leeds, Liverpool
Size by Employees	120	130	3,000 (sample, 120)	53,500 3,500 in UK (sample, 200)
Ownership	USA-Canada	UK	UK	USA & Others
Response Rate	13% (n 16) *	51% (67)	32 % (n 39)	54% (109)

* Management changed questionnaire, data collected from employee interviews

THEM AND US ATTITUDES AMONG NON-UNION EMPLOYEES

Central to Kelly's (1999) recent assessment of collective mobilisation is the notion that workers coalesce as a group with quite distinct identities and interests to management. To evaluate the extent of group identity, either towards management or trade unions, a total of twenty-five questions were incorporated in the employee questionnaire. These were based on a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree to 6 = strongly disagree). Thirteen items asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements about managerial objectives, while a further twelve questions tapped respondent views about trade unions.

The responses were analysed using SPSS. After general descriptive tabulations a factor analysis was conducted in order to evaluate any latent patterns to test for the extent of group identity (table 2). Two factors emerged which show a strong identity of ‘them and us’ among workers. Factor one has been labelled ‘attitudinal them and us’, showing a pattern of responses that offer some insights into whether workers internalise (or not) managerial values. Of the thirteen management-related questions, eight were found to correlate significantly into factor one. Factor two shows a strong pattern of responses toward trade unions, and this has been labelled ‘behavioural’ them and us. Of the twelve original union statements, seven correlate into factor two.

Table 2: Factor Analysis: ‘them and us’ attitudes

All Employees	
Factor 1: Attitudinal Them & Us Eigenvalue = 10.23	Loading
If you work especially hard, are your efforts rewarded and recognised by management?	.78059 *
When decisions are taken which affect your pay or work, how often do you think your views are taken into account by management?	.77585 *
Generally speaking, would you say your pay and conditions are better or worse than those for other companies close to where you work/live?	.74403
Employees are very much involved with management in making decisions in this company	.71299 *
Would you say that the majority of employees you work with are committed to company	.66840 *
I believe management that the company’s most valued asset is people working here?	.65929 *
Does the amount of pay you receive adequately cover/satisfy your needs/living expenses?	.62749
How often do management communicate, to you, changes at work	.59555
Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient = 0.8731 (N = 230)	
Factor 2: Behavioural Them & Us Eigenvalue = 4.18	Loading
Trade unions ‘provide necessary protection’	.82236 *
Trade unions ‘can be beneficial to employees’	.74582 *
Are there benefits having the views of all employees represented to management	.70209
Trade unions ‘are, on the whole, sensible’	.69155 *
Trade unions are generally a good thing for workers	.68244 *
A trade union would make my job more secure in my company	.64486
My pay/conditions would be improved if a trade union represented my interests in this company	.61562
Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient = 0.8761 (N = 216)	

* This indicates the relevant item on which factor is loaded/most significant

These two factors are then used as composite variables to explore in greater detail the contours of non-union employee perceptions of them and us (table 3). Significantly, in all these non-union firms workers demonstrated a clear perception of inter (collective) group *identity*. Albeit uneven and at times marginal, workers were often critical of managerial values and indicated a distinct pattern of ‘them and us’ attitudes. With the exception Delivery Co,

workers displayed a negative response to the scales of factor 1 about managerial values. Also, for factor 2 about trade union judgements, all employees were supportive of trade union principles.

Table 3: Attitudinal and Behavioural ‘Them & Us’ scores

	All Workers		Water Co	Chem Co	Merchant Co	Delivery Co
	Mean	St.D	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Attitudinal Them & Us (F1)	4.4	1.1	4.7 (-1.2)	5.0 (-1.5)	4.9 (-1.4)	3.5 (+/- 0)
Behavioural Them & Us (F2)	2.3	0.9	2.7 (+0.8)	2.1 (+1.4)	2.7 (+0.8)	3.2 (+0.3)

Likert-types scale used, from 1= definite agree to 6= definite disagree
(+/- = extent of them and us attitudes by deviation from the mean)

$P < 0.005$ (occupation, age, education, apprenticeship, job tenure – χ^2 , Z & t-test)

Further analysis of factor two revealed some additional subtleties, in particular distinctions between ‘ideological’ and ‘instrumental’ support for unions (tables 4a and 4b). These suggest that in terms of union identity, workers seemed to question the *efficacy* of a trade union to resolve a perceived *injustice*.

Table 4a: ideological and instrumental union values (factor analysis)

Factor 2: Behavioural Them & Us Eigenvalue = 4.18	Loading
Trade unions ‘provide necessary protection’	.82236 ^a
Trade unions ‘can be beneficial to employees’	.74582 ^a
Are there benefits having the views of all employees represented to management	.70209 ^a
Trade unions ‘are, on the whole, sensible’	.69155 ^a
Trade unions are generally a good thing for workers	.68244 ^a
A trade union would make my job more secure in my company	.64486 ^b
My pay/conditions would be improved if a trade union represented my interests in this company	.61562 ^b

Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficient = 0.8761 (N = 216)

a = ideological union factor

b = instrumental union factor

While workers were generally supportive of trade union (ideological) values, they were less sympathetic about the (instrumental) ability of unions to improve pay or working conditions across the sample as a whole. This distinction between supporting what a union stands for (ideological), or whether the union can improve terms or conditions (instrumental), is evident across all cases to various degrees. In one respect this meant workers had little choice but to ‘put up and shut up’. In other words, there was a lack of

support for managerial objectives yet at the same time this did not transform into any obvious form of collective mobilisation such as union joining.

Table 4b: ideological and instrumental union values (mean scores and deviations)

	All Workers		Water Co	Chem Co	Merchant Co	Delivery Co
	Mean	St.D	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
<i>Ideological values</i>	2.4	1.0	2.4 (+1.1)	2.0 (+1.5)	2.3 (+1.2)	2.9 (+0.6)
<i>Instrumental values</i>	3.2	0.7	3.0 (+0.5)	2.4 (+1.1)	3.4 (+0.1)	3.1 (+0.4)

As with other studies that tap into employee attitudes (Hartley, 1992; McLoughlin & Gourlay, 1991/92), several variables were tested to explore for statistical differences (manual/non-manual occupational status, age, education, job satisfaction etc). On the whole there were very few statistical variations that could explain for any differences among the sample population, either in terms of attitudinal or behavioural them and us. In other words it was not found that worker's of a different age, occupational status, educational attainment or whether more or less satisfied with their job had a stronger identity to one group or another. Two exceptions to this were found at Chem Co and Merchant Co. Here, the patterns of group identity had a marginal association to occupational status and former union membership. At Chem Co, workers who had served an apprenticeship and had longer employment tenure were more supportive on the ideological union scale than other employees. At Merchant Co those employees who had previous experience of union membership, with a former employer, demonstrated higher instrumental union support than workers who had no prior union experience. This offers some support to the idea that union activists/officers are important agents in articulating an injustice and demonstrating attribution in developing collective mobilisation.

However, given the absence of any reasonably statistically significant explanations for variations in attitudes (e.g. in terms of manual/non-manual

occupations, age or education etc), further exploration of differences between the cases was undertaken in two ways. First, following Nicholson (1979), an assessment was made of the general industrial relations climate in each organisation in order to assess any differences between organisational context and management style. This was supplemented by a deeper and more qualitative assessment of both employer and employee attitudes towards trade unions in each of the case studies.

CLIMATE AND MOBILISATION

Although climate has a long pedigree within the industrial relations literature, it remains an extremely awkward and imprecise factor to define and measure. Koys & DeCotiis (1991) suggest that climate is a 'multi-dimensional phenomenon which has the capacity to influence modes of behaviour'. Purcell (1979) suggests that the extent to which the employment relationship is characterised by 'formalisation and trust' can provide an indication of the prevailing industrial relations climate in an organisation. Kelly & Nicholson (1980), in relation to strike processes, argue that ideologies together with perceptions of the economic environment can act as mutually reinforcing climatic indicators. Nicholson (1979) further comments that there is likely to be several sub-climates even within one organisation. For this reason Nicholson's (1979) twin-dimensional approach is used here. The first dimension is termed 'issue-centred' climate, which seeks to assess the relative ease or difficulty for employees (given the absence of a union official) to raise a concern or issue with management. A second dimension of climate, 'inter-personal' relations, complements this. Nicholson uses this to assess the interaction between management and union stewards; here, it is used to assess the interaction between the parties more broadly in the absence of a recognised union voice.

Using this framework several responses to statements in the employee questionnaire are used to give an indication of the prevailing climate in each of the cases. For the first dimension, issue-centred climate, two questions are used. The second dimension is derived from the factor analysis. Aggregate

mean values were assessed and, more importantly for this purpose, the extent or deviation from the median provides a crude picture of the climate in each organisation (see table 5 for summary values and technical appendix for more detailed description of variable measures).

Table 5: Industrial Relations Climate

	Water Co	Chem Co	Merchant Co	Delivery Co
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Issue-centred climate <i>Deviations above (-) or below (+) median of 6</i>	9.2 (-3.2)	8.2 (-2.2)	5.5 (+0.5)	6.5 (-0.5)
Inter-personal climate <i>Deviations above (-) or below (+) median of 12</i>	9.1 (+2.9)	11.2 (+0.8)	10.5 (+1.5)	7.4 (+4.6)
Overall climate <i>Deviations above (-) or below (+) median of 18</i>	18.3 (-0.3)	19.4 (-1.4)	16.0 (+2.0)	14.0 (+4.0)

The objective here is to give a flavour of the prevailing industrial relations climate as one possible explanation why employees identify with the social groups of ‘them’ (management) and ‘us’ (employees) (Kelly, 1998). In other words a less than favourable industrial relations climate may lead employees to blame management for issues or grievances. Broadly speaking, the evidence here suggests that where workers display a level of support for (ideological) union values, there also exists a less favourable climate. Moreover, non-union workers seem to experience a climate with few opportunities to raise a concern or issue with management (issue-centred climate); yet at the same time they seem to get on well with colleagues (inter-personal climate). In Delivery Co, the only case study that reported low levels of them and us attitudes earlier, workers also report a more favourable industrial relations climate.

Of course this tells us very little about why there is a perceived good or bad IR climate. Indeed, it provides very little evidence concerning the deeper social processes taking place at workplace level. To correct for this interviews were carried out with both management and employees in each of the case studies. The aim here is to illuminate the salience of issues at an

organisational level and assess any possible links between these and social mobilisation.

MANAGERIAL ATTITUDES AND COUNTER-MOBILISATION

In understanding how climate served to interact with a workers' sense of identity and attribution is the role of management. Of significance here is the 'configuration' of anti-union tactics used by employers as a potential counter mobilising offensive. This suggests that traditional categories of union 'suppression and/or substitution' have the potential to ignore other deeper and more qualitative options available to employers that can influence the processes of mobilisation and counter union organising drives. For instance the two small firms simply did not possess the resource to substitute collective organisation and relied mainly on suppression tactics. Yet the language and interpretation of anti-union tactics were uneven and at times complicated. Even in the smaller firms management sought to engender notions of loyalty and commitment through corporate symbols (Willmott, 1993).

Equally, the idea that large multi-national firms deploy sophisticated non-union voice mechanism is much more complicated on the ground. At Delivery Co, for instance, employers did not consciously favour one approach over another but devised a particularistic configuration of union avoidance tactics that workers found difficult to counteract. Using this analysis a three-fold framework is presented to chart the complexity of climate and managerial hostility as a barriers to the process of social mobilisation - structural barriers, managerial ideology and cultural influences.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Albeit uneven across the sample organisations, bureaucratic and formalised rules prevailed to countenance the potential triggers to unionisation. In effect, management used the tried and tested economic (external) sanction that unionism would damage company profits and future job losses likely to prevail.

In almost all four of these cases, management sought to devise flexible working systems justified on the grounds of external economic necessity. Significantly, this created a structural barrier to potential collectivisation and created a climate a fear, which to some extent explains why workers were less supportive in terms of instrumental union values. Thus issues about pay, employment security and terms and conditions were used as tools to exercise greater managerial control. At Water Co it was common for workers to be dismissed and re-employed a few weeks later to circumvent statutory employment rights. If the idea of union representation was discussed by groups of workers they were simply not invited back, according to the Managing Director.

Of course workers were not ignorant to economic conditions and in most organisations management used other tactics in tandem with the threat of economic instability. At Merchant Co and Chem Co, management devised structures of employee voice that mirrored collective forms of consultation by promoting their form of employee involvement: company councils and semi-autonomous teams. Similarly, at both Delivery Co and Chem Co, management implemented a series of worker participation schemes to counter claims for collective representation. The Personnel Director at Delivery Co was explicit that such schemes existed because of forthcoming statutory recognition legalisation:

We're not sure how to tackle them [union recognition] issues yet. We understand a bit more, we're putting some effort in to handle it our way because we think it's the right thing to do

IDEOLOGICAL

Structural factors, which interacted with concepts such as worker identity and attribution, were often secondary to the employers' ideological distaste of trade unionism. In most cases management were open in their own personal attitude of unions, and this conveyed a very clear and intimidating message to workers. Particularly in the non-union companies that had no prior experience

of unionisation, many workers were left without any recourse to the institutional support required to challenge management or to obtain a sympathetic ear. In many cases, management effectively substituted worker resistance with a climate of 'fear'. At Water Co one worker commented:

join the union and you get sacked, that's it.

Other employees were equally fearful of managerial reprisals:

I think a union could be useful here. [But] if you were to welcome a union, then you'd have to ask yourself the question, 'would I be jeopardising my job if the union didn't get in?' The management theory, I'd guess, is that the company's done well so far so why have one, and then to put your case to welcome one, means your going to be very, very unpopular, and that's not a good situation to have with the management here

At Chem Co the Chief Executive openly praised former government laws that paved the way to articulate a clear anti-union message to the workforce:

well, Maggie's [Margaret Thatcher] made it easier for me to stuff them, so they cant have a union and that's that.

At one level such hostility among employers is not new. However what is significant is that such anti-union sentiments rarely existed in isolation but were combined with other union avoidance tactics that made it difficult for workers to mobilise into a coherent (or at least unionised) collective group.

CULTURAL BARRIERS:

In all four of these case studies management actively sought to socially construct a workplace climate that would engender loyalty to a (non-union) corporate identity, albeit to varying degrees. As Royle (2000) comments, what matters here is that practices such as long hours, unpaid overtime and working without trade union representation are symbols that can become internalised and accepted as the norm. A particularly important factor in this regard is how a discourse of language and meaning is interpreted inside the organisation. To this end a friendly and inter-personal climate coexisted with

more brutal union avoidance tactics. Significantly, this gave management the space and opportunity to counter any notion of collective representation while not appearing to be the bad guy. One example from a Delivery Co employee illustrates that where management create a more tolerable work environment, then this can disrupt the process of attribution and collective mobilisation:

I think people can say and do what they want here without a union. People can put their suggestions forward and if somebody doesn't like it at the end of the day then they say so. It's not a bad working environment, it's not like a factory where it's dirty or filthy, we get free coffee, we have a laugh, there's a good environment.

Significantly, management would merge cultural initiatives with other, more aggressive anti-union tactics (structural and ideological) when the occasions demanded it. However, as Willmott (1993) argues, such cultural symbols are only effective control systems where employees 'internalise' managerial ideologies. At Delivery Co, perhaps the most sophisticated and certainly the largest and commercially successful of all the case studies, management found it necessary to remove a cultural velvet glove to reveal an iron fist of anti-unionism when the impact of corporate culture was found wanting. One call centre employee remarked:

There was a lady who worked here. She was quite happy for a union to be here. She doesn't work here anymore - she was too much that way and not enough the management way. She did leave on her own accord, but I think it was because she was made uncomfortable

Another employee was left with no illusions when (accidentally) asking about union membership when starting a new job at Delivery Co

At my last place they had a union ... I mentioned it when I first came here and I said to someone, 'have you got a union?' And they said, 'don't mention unions here or you will be out on your ears'. So I've never brought it up again

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings in this paper support the theoretical proposition that perceptions of *injustice*, *identity* and *attribution* are central to the processes of (potential) collective mobilisation. The evidence shows that in these non-union cases,

workers regard themselves as a social group ('us') with quite distinct interests to management ('them'). Moreover, given the absence of independent collective representation, workers had little choice but to tolerate managerial objectives against a climate of anti-unionism. Although workers were also supportive of trade union values (ideological), more detailed and disaggregate analysis shows that workers question the *efficacy* of a trade union to resolve an issue or improve their terms and conditions (instrumental). A key variable in this process seems to be the prevailing anti-union climate and managerial styles of hostility at these case studies.

This might simply be explained by the non-availability of a union in the cases studied, although a more probable explanation is the hostility of management in creating an anti-union climate. For these workers at least, the *costs* associated with unionisation simply outweigh the *benefits*. Such costs equate with a less favourable industrial relations climate at one extreme, to managerial reprisals and even dismissal at the other extreme. Thus, other things being equal, the data in this paper would suggest that a significant factor in transforming individual employees into a collective agency – as indicated by union joining – is whether a union can counterbalance a hostile employer.

Of course collective mobilisation is more than union joining, and in these case studies workers found their own form of resistance, space and opportunity to challenge management. In two very different organisations, Water Co and Delivery Co, key groups of workers who occupied a strategic position in the production process recognised they were not powerless to resist management. In that respect the process of mobilisation can and does exist in forms other than union joining.

The data raises a number of issues for the future direction of trade union organising. Arguably, it is workers such as those surveyed here that are crucial to 'distant expansion' and membership growth (Machin, 2000). Whether the recent statutory recognition procedures can redress the

(instrumental) union concerns expressed by these workers is too soon to predict. However, there is some evidence that this will heighten anti-union tactics among a small but significant number of employers (Gall & McKay, 2001). Second is the utility of a social partnership model. According to the evidence in this paper, a partnership model based on gaining the support of both employees and employers is unlikely to gain much ground. Both the non-union workers surveyed and the employers interviewed show that managerial hostility is a real and significant barrier to overcome. It is unlikely that such employers will be persuaded by the underlying philosophy of mutual gains contained in many partnership agreements. Finally, however, there may be some gains according to the recent TUC suggestion (TUC, 2000). The argument here is that unions adopt either a partnership or organising model, depending on the resistance from employers. One problem is the unease at which partnership-organising approaches sit side-by-side. Any model, which seeks to persuade employers on the premise of future partnership or mutual gains, is unlikely to gain the support of workers who experience and feel the hostility of employers. The evidence from workers in this sample would suggest that organising has to first and foremost address employer resistance but also be capable of protecting employees from managerial reprisals.

References

- Bacon, N. (1999), 'Union Derecognition and the New Human Relations: A Steel Industry Case Study', *Work Employment & Society*, Vol 13 (1), 1-17.
- Beaumont, P. (1995), 'HRM and the Non-Union Sector', in P. Beaumont, *The Future of Employment Relations*, London, Sage.
- Beaumont, P.B. & Harris, R.I.D. (1994), 'Opposition to unions in the non-union sector in Britain', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(2), 457-471.
- Blyton, P & Turnbull, P. (1998), *The Dynamics of Employee Relations*, London, Macmillan.
- Cohen, A. (1992), 'Attitudinal militancy and propensity to strike among unionised technicians', *Human Relations*, Vol 45 (12), 1333-66
- Cully, M., Woodland, S., O'Reilly, A. & Dix, G. (1999), *Britain at Work: as depicted by the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey*, London, Routledge.
- Darlington, R. (2000), *Shop Stewards' Leadership, Left-wing Activism and Collective Workplace Union Organisation*, Paper presented to the BUIRA Marxist Study Group, Manchester Metropolitan University, 11th February 2000.
- D'Art, D. & Turner, T. (1997), An Attitudinal Revolution in Irish Industrial Relations: The End of Them and Us?, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol 37 (1), 101-16.
- Dickson, T., McLachlan, M. Prior, P. & Swales, K. (1988), 'Big Blue and the Union: IBM, Individualism and Trade Union Strategy', *Work, Employment & Society*, 2(4), 506-520.
- Dundon, T., Grugulis, I. & Wilkinson, A. (1999), 'Looking out of the black-hole: non-union relations in an SME', *Employee Relations*, Vol. 21 (3), 251-266.
- Foulkes, F. (1980), *Personnel Policies in Large Non-Union Companies*, New York, Prentice Hall.
- Gall, G. & McKay, S. (2001), 'Facing 'fairness at work:' union perception of employer opposition and response to union recognition, *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol 32 (2), 94-113.
- Guest, D. & Hoque, K. (1994), 'The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: Employment Relations in New Non-Union Workplaces', *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 5(1), 1-14.
- Guest, D. & Conway, N. (1999), 'Peering into the Black Hole: The Downside of the New Employment Relations in the UK', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 37(3), 367-89.
- Hartley, J.F. (1992), 'Trade Union Membership and Union Joining, in J.F Hartley & G. M. Stephenson (eds), *Employment Relations: The Psychology of Influence and the Control of Work*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Kelly, J. (1998) 'The future of trade unionism: injustice, identity and attribution' *Employee Relations* 19 (5) pp 400 - 414
- Kelly, J. (1999), *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London, Routledge.
- Kelly, C. & Kelly, J. (1994), 'Who Gets Involved in Collective Action? Social Psychological Determinants of Individual Participation in Trade Unions, *Human Relations*, 47(1), 63-88.
- Kelly, J. & Nicholson, N. (1980), 'The causation of strikes: a review of theoretical approaches and the potential contribution of social psychology', *Human Relations*, 33 (12), 853-83.
- Koys, D. & DeCotiis, T. (1991), 'Inductive Measures of Psychological Climate', *Human Relations*, 44(3), 265-285.
- Marginson, P., Edwards, P., Martin, R., Purcell, J. & Sisson, K. (1988), *Beyond the Workplace*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- McAdam, D. (1988), Micromobilization contexts and recruitment activism, *International Social Movement Research*, Vol 1, 125-54.
- McLoughlin, I. & Gourlay, S. (1991/92), 'Transformed Industrial Relations? Employee Attitudes in Non-Union Firms', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 2(2), 8-28.

- McLoughlin, I. & Gourlay, S (1994), *Enterprise Without Unions: Industrial relations in the non-union firm*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Millward, N., Stevens, M., Smart, D. & Hawes, W. R. (1992), *Workplace Industrial Relations in Transition. The ED/ESRC/PSI/ACAS Surveys*, Aldershot, Dartmouth.
- Millward, N., Bryson, A. & Forth, J. (2000), *All Change at Work? British employment relations 1980-1998, as portrayed by the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey series*, London, Routledge.
- Mowday, R., Porter, L. and Steers, R. (1982), *Employee-Organization Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism and Turnover*, San Diego, Academy Press.
- Nicholson, N. (1979), 'Industrial Relations Climate: A Case Study Approach', *Personnel Review*, Vol 8 (3), 20-25.
- Purcell, J. (1979), 'A Strategy for Management Control in Industrial Relations', in J. Purcell & R. Smith (eds), *The Control of Work*, London: Macmillan.
- Royle, T. (2000), *Working for McDonald's in Europe: The Unequal Struggle?*, London, Routledge.
- Scott, A. (1994), *Willing Slaves? British Workers Under Human Resource Management*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tilly, C. (1978), *From Mobilization to Revolution*, New York, McGraw-Hill.
- Turnbull, P. & Wass, V. (1998), 'Marksist Management: Sophisticated Human Relations in a High Street Retail Store', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 29:2, 98-111.
- Wheeler, H. & McLendon, J. (1991), 'The individual decision to unionise', in G. Strauss, D. Gallagher & J. Fiorito, *The State of the Unions*, IRRA, Madison.
- Willmott, H. (1993), 'Strength is ignorance; slavery is freedom: managing culture in modern organisations', *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol 20, 515-52.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX FOR MEASURES OF CLIMATE

Issue-Centred Climate
It takes a strong-minded individual to stand-up to management
I would be labelled a trouble-maker if I questioned management decisions

Inter-Personal Climatic Relations
On the whole, I get on very well with the management in my company?
I am willing to put-in extra effort to help my company be successful?
There is a tension between employees and supervisors in this company
I mix and socialise with colleagues from work
Cronbach's Reliability Coefficient, 0.6711

Full climate results for Water Co

Attitude Dimensions	Mean	Deviation from Mid-point (- or +)	Min Score (Positive)	Max Score (Negative)	X ²	D.F	Sig *
Sub-Scale: Issue-Centred Climate (Σ =Issue-Centred)	9.2	- 3.2	0	12	5.5	5	.3561
Sub-Scale: Inter-Personal Climate (Σ =Inter-Personal)	9.1	+ 2.9	0	24	29.8	11	.0017 *
Overall Climate	18.3	- 0.3	0	36	24.3	14	.0020 *

^x Mean values re-scaled from 1-7 to 0-6 for comparison and consistency.

Full climate results for Chem Co

Sub-Scale: Issue-Centred Climate (Σ =Issue-Centred)	8.2	- 2.2	0	12	83.6	9	.0000 *
Sub-Scale: Inter-Personal Climate (Σ =Inter-Personal)	11.2	+ 0.8	0	24	45.9	11	.0000 *
Overall Climate	19.4	- 1.4	0	36	69.1	13	.0000 *

^x Mean values re-scaled from 1-7 to 0-6 for comparison and consistency.

Full climate results for Merchant Co

Sub-Scale: Issue-Centred Climate (Σ =Issue-Centred)	5.5	+ 0.5	0	12	8.8	6	.0045 *
Sub-Scale: Inter-Personal Climate (Σ =Inter-Personal)	10.5	+ 1.5	0	24	9.3	10	.5026
Overall Climate	16.0	+ 2.0	0	36	10.7	12	.5524

^x Mean values re-scaled from 1-7 to 0-6 for comparison and consistency.

Full climate results for Delivery Co

Sub-Scale: Issue-Centred Climate (Σ =Issue-Centred)	6.5	- 0.5	0	12	17.2	12	.1306
Sub-Scale: Inter-Personal Climate (Σ =Inter-Personal)	7.4	+ 4.6	0	24	48.9	18	.0001 *
Overall Climate	14.0	+ 4.0	0	36	97.5	28	.0000 *

^x Mean values re-scaled from 1-7 to 0-6 for comparison and consistency.