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# Concession Bargaining and Unions: Impacts and Implications\*

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*The characteristics of concession bargaining relating to management behavior, information disclosure, intraunion activity, and union member attitudes are formulated and briefly described, followed by an exploration of the impact of the experience on and the implications for unions. The analysis suggests that union solidarity, union leader credibility, and union effectiveness have been negatively affected. Concession bargaining appears to lead to more difficulty in administering unions, a further decline in union image, an emphasis on adversarial relations with management, and the potential use of new tactics in collective bargaining.*

## I. Introduction

Concession bargaining has been one of the most significant labor relations phenomena during the last several years. Its importance is emphasized by the fact that sizable numbers of employees covered by negotiated agreements have been affected and several of the largest and traditionally most powerful industrial unions in the American labor movement have been directly involved in the experience. While there has been some research and analysis done on the meaning of concession bargaining for such issues as wage determination (Mitchell, 1983), bargaining structure (Freedman and Fulmer, 1982), and labor-management relationships (Kassalow, 1983; Fulmer, 1983), little has been done to examine its significance for the unions involved in the process.

This paper draws on the concession bargaining experience over the last several years and examines its impact on unions that have been involved in the process. The implications for unions are also explored. Our research data include an

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extensive archival review of information relating to the concession bargaining process and experience from business, union, and government publications, labor reporting services, newspapers, and scholarly journals. We also draw on information obtained from field observations and over 100 interviews with union leaders and members who have been involved in concession bargaining during the last few years.<sup>1</sup>

This paper presents a synthesis and a summary of the key characteristics of the concession bargaining experience focusing on the impact of concession bargaining on unions. In addition, we explore the implications for union administration and image, relations with management, and collective bargaining. Finally, we offer some comments regarding the overall significance for unions of the concession bargaining experience.

## II. *Characteristics of Concession Bargaining*

Concession bargaining, while by no means unknown in the American industrial relations experience (Hernstadt, 1954; Greenberg, 1968; Juris, 1969; Henle, 1973), is certainly not as well understood as is traditional bargaining for gain. As contrasted to typical bargaining procedure, for example, in concession bargaining management has taken the initiative to obtain changes in pay and work rules. In most situations, management accompanied its demands with threats that were linked directly to negotiation outcomes. The threats were generally clear and specific, including stated intentions to close particular plants, liquidate specific business units, shift operations to other facilities, implement massive layoffs (with specific numbers indicated), or, in a few cases, file for bankruptcy. In numerous instances, the demands and accompanying threats were given to rank-and-file members and the community as well as the union leadership. In cases where firms had no intention of closing operations but still demanded concessions because wages were "out of line" or to improve return on investment, it was often made clear that the company would defy any strike and maintain activity with supervisors or nonunion personnel or both.

In order to obtain work rule changes, it was common for management to use whipsaw tactics by comparing rules and productivity information between plants and threatening to shift or outsource work if recalcitrant locals did not agree to changes.

*Information Disclosure.* In concession situations, management frequently disclosed information to the union that previously had been considered confidential. Such information about the firm was used to justify demands and add

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<sup>1</sup>The interviews and field work used in this paper were concentrated in the steel (53) and rubber (21) industries. Interviews were also conducted with unionists in shipbuilding (10), retail food (9), distilling (8), railroad (4), and aerospace (1) industries. Slightly over half (56) of the interviews were conducted with local officers; the remainder were split between higher level union officials (21) and rank-and-file members (29). For additional information on the interviews, see Abboushi, 1984.

credibility to threats. In a number of cases, union leaders were allowed to scrutinize company financial data, including some or all of the following types of information: costs and revenues, changes in working capital, labor and nonlabor operating costs, past and current capital expenditures, and debts and liabilities. Some unions reported receiving information regarding suppliers, competitors, and other heretofore restricted data. In addition, some unions conducted their own research to verify company-provided data and to do comparative analyses between firms in the same industry.

*Intraunion Actions.* As might be expected, the initial union response to employer demands and threats was militant and defensive. As the leaders became convinced that the threats would be carried out with the resulting unemployment and potential challenge to the institutional viability of the union, however, many began to assume the uncharacteristic role of promoting contract concessions. In several major unions, top officials urged local leaders and members to agree to givebacks. Staff representatives made presentations at local meetings testifying to the credibility of management's threats. In some cases, information obtained from management was condensed into reports that appeared to exaggerate the threatened impacts, and these were distributed to local leaders and members. National union staff used political muscle (e.g., threats to withhold resources needed by local leaders, implied threats to careers of local officers) to induce unwilling local leaders to support concessions. In other situations, the national union redefined the appropriate constituency for the ratification votes on concessions to enhance prospects for approval.

When the national union had a strong position against concessions or the locals clearly saw their unhappy fate, but felt that the national was not taking adequate action, some locals independently chose to negotiate concessions directly with management — often to the consternation of the national.

*Union Member Attitudes.* During and after the concession bargaining experience, our data suggest that union member attitudes can be characterized as reflecting insecurity, frustration, and strong suspicion. After management articulated its threats, provided some supporting data, and began to take action, workers became increasingly fearful of losing their jobs. Their insecurity was magnified by the apparent inability of the national union to stop plant closures and layoffs. Frustration mounted as union members realized that they had little power to alter the situation and retain what they believed to be well-deserved and hard-fought pay and rights. In addition, concessions that were initially anticipated to be temporary turned out to be permanent in many cases with the employers returning for second and even third rounds of givebacks. Suspicion, distrust, and anger were directed toward union leadership and fellow unionists as well as management. Serious questions were raised about how effectively national leaders were doing their job and about the national's support of concessions. Workers expressed anger and distrust regarding fellow unionists in other locals who were reducing work rules and costs and, presumably, taking work away from them. Union members were

often angry, since they believed that management had taken advantage of the current economic situation, had not carried out its responsibilities (planning, investment) properly, and was shifting the consequences and blame to the workers. Unionists were particularly resentful in those cases where workers took pay cuts but where concurrently management salaries or bonus prospects or both were significantly improved.

*Concession Agreements.* In the contracts resulting from concession bargaining, the union agreed to give up current pay or expected increases, holidays, bonuses, and insurance benefits, as well as numerous work rules that had restricted management's flexibility in allocating and utilizing manpower. In return, unions generally sought some form of employment security for members and, in a few cases, increased participation in the firm. Employment security gains usually entailed such things as a moratorium on plant/department closings, restrictions on subcontracting and outsourcing, or guarantees of minimum employment for particular workers. In addition, some companies agreed to invest some or all of the concessions savings back into production facilities. In regard to income security, union gains frequently focused on increasing or extending unemployment benefits for laid-off members, obtaining pension guarantees for senior members, and implementing profit-sharing plans. Increased participation, while much less common, emerged with agreements to form labor-management committees, the granting of minority ownership through an exchange of stock for wage concessions, or, in a few cases, an agreement that one or more union appointees would hold seats on the company's board of directors.

### III. *Impacts on Unions*

Beyond the processes and resulting labor agreements, concession bargaining has had a significant impact on the unions involved. Our research suggests that union solidarity, leadership credibility and control, as well as union effectiveness and power have all been negatively affected.

Union solidarity, a unity characterized by member cohesiveness, attachment, and loyalty to the union (Barbash, 1956; Rose, 1952; Tannenbaum and Kahn, 1958), appears to have declined in a number of unions. Concession bargaining in the current economic context appears to have exacerbated intraunion differences, diversities, and conflicts by stimulating competition between union members, emphasizing traditional differences among various member groups, and promoting more individualistic attitudes on the part of the rank-and-file.

For example, in the automobile and steel industries, employer whipsawing (playing one local union off against another to obtain cost and work rule concessions) has created intraunion animosity and suspicion. Competing locals of the same union view each other as a threat to their members' job security. Classic divisions in union member interests have been reinforced as well. Illustrative are the conflicts between senior and junior workers on questions of whether concessions should be

made at all and, if so, what they should be. Senior workers frequently tend to be more conservative and reluctant to give up established pay and benefits, while mid-seniority and junior workers, who bear the brunt of unemployment, have often supported concessions necessary to retain their jobs. In late 1982, divisions along international lines were apparent when the Canadian UAW Chrysler workers struck just two weeks after their U.S. counterparts voted overwhelmingly to forego a strike and continue negotiations later. Many American unionists considered the Canadian action "reckless," while Canadians portrayed U.S. workers as "spineless" (Buss, 1982).

Finally, as union members came to believe that employer concessionary demands could not be resisted, they took actions to protect themselves. For example, cases of union workers crossing picket lines have led to serious rifts within unions. One of the most notable cases was the 1983-84 UAW strike against McDonnell Douglas, when about 40 percent of the members of the hardline Long Beach local crossed the picket line before the strike was terminated and a concessionary agreement reached. Such actions in various unions have resulted in bitterness and left some division in the membership. In other cases, workers have been willing to work extensive overtime rather than try to push management to call back laid-off fellow unionists. Even the concession agreements have created significant possibilities for further divisions. Illustrative are the contracts calling for two-tier wage structures with new workers making substantially less than current employees doing the same job. Two classes of citizens are created in one union with resentment between the classes likely to occur.

*Declining Leader Credibility.* Our findings indicate that the concession bargaining experience has led to a loss of leadership credibility and, to some extent, control. For example, rank-and-file members express resentment that top union leaders appear to care little about the consequences of concessions for them. In numerous instances, union members have voted directly contrary to the recommendations of the leadership regarding concession agreements. Local leaders speak bitterly of the pressure from the national union for concessions and what they consider a lack of support.

As noted earlier, in industries such as steel, autos, and trucking, top union leadership was convinced that concessions were necessary for company and union viability. These leaders and their staff strongly supported concessions in discussions with local presidents and rank-and-file. This created some suspicion, but it was compounded by what many members considered manipulation and pressure tactics by the national to force an acceptance of givebacks. For example, in the steel industry, numerous local presidents argued that they accepted a concessions agreement under pressure from the national union and that they did not have a good understanding of all the implications of the agreement. In addition, some felt that the union was manipulative by such actions as the Executive Board's decision to restructure voter eligibility in the third vote on a concession agreement after two previous failures. In this case, those local presidents who were tradition-

ally eligible but who were not working for the Big Eight steel firms were excluded. In the UAW strike against McDonell Douglas, the national union overruled the local and ordered a vote on the company concession proposal after fifteen weeks on strike. Local leaders and strikers expressed resentment against the national union, since many felt that calling for a vote undermined their effort.

After union leaders had supported concessions, the outcomes did not necessarily lead to job security. In the steel industry, for example, layoffs continued to occur, management sought to purchase foreign steel, and the companies made demands for additional concessions from union members. Vocal members of the Steelworkers, the Autoworkers, the Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters, and other unions expressed resentment that they had been "sold out" by the leadership. Reported differences among top union leaders, such as occurred in the UAW in the 1982 Chrysler negotiations and the 1983 McDonnell Douglas strike, likely added to the confusion among the members as to the certainty and direction of the leadership (Berkowitz, 1982; Curley, 1984).

Finally, management exacerbated the problem in a number of situations. In the steel industry, there were instances wherein management would send information directly to the rank-and-file regarding a proposal that local union leaders presumably had refused to negotiate and which, management indicated, would have serious consequences. In many cases, the membership was irate and called the officers to task. These officers greatly resented such circumventing actions that they felt undermined their leadership positions.

*Diminished Union Effectiveness.* The concession bargaining context, process, and outcomes appear to have reduced the power and perceived effectiveness of unions. Our field work provided numerous illustrations of local officers and members who felt that the union was weak and ineffective against the employer. The union was simply not able to stop concessions that directly affected worker earnings and security. Reports from a variety of firms and industries indicate that protective rules were substantially reduced or eliminated while management's discretion increased regarding manning, job combination, and job assignment decisions. At the Fairfield, Alabama, plant of U.S. Steel, for example, the contract provides management with full discretion (consistent with seniority rules) to determine crew sizes and job assignments. In addition, management is allowed to replace some retiring workers with outside contractors instead of calling back laid-off steelworkers (Koenig, 1984). These contract concessions were accepted despite growing rank-and-file sentiment that concessions were not saving jobs and the USW executive board policy against further concessions in the basic agreement, which had been passed a few weeks earlier.

In numerous situations, local union leaders felt helpless to prevent management from forcing work rule reductions by making coercive comparisons with other plants and threatening to outsource, reduce operation, or close down if changes were not implemented. In other cases, local management apparently violated the agreement by making unilateral changes. The workers and the union

were told that if they were dissatisfied, they could grieve the issue. The union simply did not submit all the perceived violations to arbitration, since high unemployment had reduced available local funds and the international union was not willing to pursue all of the grievances.

Employers' willingness to close plants (e.g., U.S. Steel, Kroger, Armour), to continue operating during strikes (e.g., Greyhound, Continental Airlines, Louisiana Pacific), and to threaten or actually declare bankruptcy (e.g., Wilson Foods, Rath Packing, Phoenix Steel) added to the perceived inability of the union to effectively restrain employer actions to reduce wages and slash work rules. Even when concessions were granted and the union argued that they were temporary and necessary to obtain job security, many employers returned in a matter of months seeking additional concessions, continued to close plants, or to outsource work. In at least one case, after concessions had been granted, the company (Ford) announced that it would build an assembly plant in a foreign country (Mexico). There were some situations in which the power and effectiveness of the union were in such disrepute that workers would not even file legitimate grievances, since they felt that the union could do little about them.

Finally, it appears that union power was diminished by reduced public support. In some small communities threatened by a plant closure, for example, unions considering strikes to protect their position were charged with ignoring the public welfare. Local sentiment seemed to be that pay concession demands by management were reasonable to save the community and to promote the objectives of competitiveness and profitability. Cases were noted where the public actively crossed picket lines or acted as substitute labor during a strike. The fear alone of the public acting to offset union actions substantially reduced the willingness and ability of the union to stand up to the employer.

#### IV. *Implications: Administration and Image*

The impact and experience of concession bargaining have significant implications for union internal administration and operations. In particular, it will probably be more difficult for union executives to exercise control, carry out their policies, and exercise responsibilities for some time ahead. This, we believe, will result from what appears to be an erosion in the leaders' core political support that is necessary to maintain strong control. Layoffs and cutbacks have reduced staff and international representative positions. There are generally fewer resources available to maintain political support at the local level. In interviews, many local officers expressed resentment against the national leaders for the pressure placed on them to accept concessions. Some local leaders' elective positions are being threatened by a frustrated membership because of dissatisfaction with contract concessions. The union is classically seen in part as a fighting organization with the president as the general (Muste, 1928) and this image/role seems to be compromised as the top leadership has participated in the process of convincing members to take concessions (Rees, 1952).



Executive leadership will likely be more difficult, because concessions have exacerbated differences between groups in the union (e.g., junior vs. senior; American vs. Canadian) and created new differences (e.g., two-tier wage structures) that may stimulate factional fights and divisions within the ranks. Also, concessions negotiated by individual locals to save specific plants have created some diversity in local work rules. This will likely enhance the difficulties of negotiating and administering contracts due to comparisons and perceived inequities. Finally, in regard to leadership problems, it seems clear that the seeds of doubt about the union leadership have been sown in the minds of the rank-and-file. In a number of cases, local unions and rump groups have demonstrated significant independence from national officer recommendations, interests, and policy (e.g., rejecting recommended contracts, questioning leadership effectiveness, challenging leader supported procedures in the convention, striking against leader recommendations).

In regard to operations and activities, unions heavily affected by concession bargaining will place less emphasis on organizing than on administering current units in the near future. Rhetoric aside, the leaders see a need to restructure their political base and retrieve that which has been conceded. There is a clear need to rebuild the solidarity within the existing membership. Resources will be focused on administering agreements, dealing with member needs, and negotiating new agreements with relatively smaller investments in organizing new members. The pressures and impact of concession bargaining will increase the union emphasis on short-term goals. While American unions generally are not characterized by long-term planning (Bok and Dunlop, 1970; Siedman, 1954), the need to recover lost benefits and the internal political challenges will force emphasis on short-term accomplishments and away from labor statesmanship and the long-range perspective.

*The Union Image.* In recent years, labor has expressed concern over its public image, and a number of unions have taken action to improve it (Craft and Abboushi, 1983). It appears, however, that the concession bargaining experience may reinforce or even enhance the negative image. For example, unions frequently have been viewed as effective and powerful instruments for employees to attain work related goals. Nevertheless, during the last three years some of the largest and traditionally most powerful unions in the United States (e.g., Teamsters, Autoworkers, Steelworkers, Food and Commerical Workers, Machinists, Rubber Workers) have made substantial wage and benefit concessions to employers. The publicity surrounding these concessions tends to bring the union's instrumentality into question. Also, the extensive dissemination of management statements that union work rules and noncompetitive labor costs are the factors forcing plant closures, layoffs, and bankruptcies undermines the public confidence in unions. Illustrative is the Gallup Poll, which in 1983 reported that only 26 percent of the public had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in organized labor — down from 28 percent in 1981 and 36 percent in 1979 (Gallup, 1983a). In many communities where plant shutdowns were threatened, the union was blamed for the closure, and its image was exceedingly poor among local opinion leaders.

Union leadership continues to be suspect in the public eye. While not held in high esteem in recent years, union leadership appears to have suffered even more from concession bargaining. In the conflicts and difficulties of such bargaining, it sometimes seems that leaders do not have good contact with the membership or that they may have played politics or acted in their personal self-interest. This leads to questions and suspicions regarding union leaders. For example, 57 percent of the respondents to the 1982 Washington Post/ABC News Poll regarding views on labor unions agreed that labor leaders are out of touch with the workers they represent (Sussman, 1982). In a nationwide poll conducted in 1983, only 12 percent of the public rated union leaders as very high or high in honesty and ethical standards. This was down from 14 percent in 1981 and placed them twenty-third out of twenty-five occupations ranked (Gallup, 1983b).

Finally, the public perception of fairness and representativeness in union internal processes may have been negatively influenced by published accounts of union dissident groups attacking the leadership (e.g., Teamsters, Steelworkers), challenges in the national conventions (e.g., Autoworkers), and pressures exerted by national leadership on members (e.g., control of information, restructuring voting units, pressuring local leaders) to promote acceptance of concessions. In 1981, the public approval of labor unions was only 55 percent, a historical low (Gallup, 1981; Lipset and Schneider, 1981).

### V. *Implications: Management Relations and Bargaining*

As a result of the concession bargaining process and experience, it appears that unions will re-emphasize the adversarial nature of the relationship with management. In fact, our observations suggest that relations could become increasingly confrontational in major industries, such as steel, autos, aerospace, and meatpacking.

As noted earlier, the last several years of concession bargaining have created some serious internal problems for unions. We have seen, for example, questions raised about the independence and effectiveness of the leadership and the union. A strong adversary position by the leaders can help demonstrate that they are independent and not dominated by management. As the economy improves, the union may be able to confront management in a more traditional style and retrieve some of the losses. This is important, since it shows that the *union* has done something; that is, it is able to exert pressure on management on behalf of the worker. Also, union solidarity has been damaged and sorely needs to be buttressed. The union can focus on management — the traditional adversary and the source of the concession demands and pressures — and can attempt to rally rank-and-file members. The superordinate goal of dealing with a common foe may be helpful, in the short run at least, in reducing the internal divisions and infighting resulting from concessions. The emphasis on unity in directing frustration and fears toward management provides a historical basis for union solidarity.

The pervasive frustration about concessions, the distrust of management, and the strong dislike of management actions during concession bargaining will

certainly be reflected in union behavior toward management. There is widely held belief among union leaders and members that concessions have not worked to save jobs. They abhor how management has used its power to get concessions from workers. Resentment is evident in certain firms where management has received bonuses or pay increases while workers were being asked to take or had already taken concessions (e.g., General Motors, Ford, Greyhound). The political nature of the union will likely bring this discontent to the surface in dealing with management.

Finally, there appears to be little direct evidence that management in concession plagued industries intends to revert to the days of union demands and employer giving. While less widespread, concession demands continue into the economic recovery. Even though the profit picture is brightening in other cases, it is questionable how much of the previous concessions will be restored. It is clear that management intends to retain a harder line in dealing with labor costs. It seems quite likely that, where possible, the unions will react with a militant adversarial response.

*Bargaining.* The concession experience has implications for negotiation content and union pressure tactics used in collective bargaining. For example, over the last few years, numerous unions have received extensive financial and marketing information about companies as justification for employer concession demands. Much of this information traditionally was considered confidential. In conjunction with this, unions have developed increased sophistication in assessing and understanding such data and in searching out alternative sources to check and supplement company proffered information (Cooper, 1983). Further, unions now have appointees on the boards of directors in at least fourteen companies, including firms in the meatpacking, steel, auto, airline, and trucking industries ("Labor's Voice . . .," 1984). This will likely provide additional information on company operations, strategy, and long-range policy. Undoubtedly, unions will attempt to use this wealth of information in negotiations with employers. They should have a better idea of how far the employers can be taken at the bargaining table. Beyond this, however, if union demands cannot be met, it is possible that the focus of negotiations will change from the allocation of available funds to the figures that management provides and to the meaning and appropriateness of managerial accounting practices used to determine profit and ability to pay (Craft, 1981).

It also appears that unions will increasingly use nontraditional pressure tactics to achieve bargaining objectives with firms that are trying to reduce costs or experiencing economic difficulties. The strike, of course, will remain the key coercive tactic/threat; but in situations of high unemployment, lowered union solidarity, low community support, or fear of job loss, its effectiveness may be muted. When it is used, it will more likely be focused or targeted to maximize pressure on the employer and minimize costs and unemployment for the weakened union. Illus-

trative is the Mineworkers' announced strategy to conduct selective strikes if it cannot reach agreement with the bituminous coal industry representatives.

Our observations suggest, however, an increased interest in alternative pressure tactics that will not impact directly and heavily on the union. For example, several unions appear to be interested in the use of corporate campaigns. As we noted earlier, unions involved in recent concession bargaining often have substantial information about an employer's financial, market, and power bases. Such information is critical and provides a necessary data core to launch programs against a corporation's economic and political foundations (Rogers, 1984). Consultants and the AFL-CIO recently assisted a number of unions in starting corporate campaigns. Illustrative are those by the Pilots union against Continental, the Autoworkers against General Dynamics, and a multiunion campaign against Litton Industries.

In the same vein, scattered recent events suggest that there may be some use of community action groups to put pressure on management in labor disputes. In such cases, the union forms alliances with ad hoc or standing community action groups to pressure the employer to respond to the union's position. The broadened scope of conflict, the publicity, letters to directors or community members, and presence at stockholder meetings can put pressure on a firm to meet labor's demands. The labor/community coalition is most likely generated when a company threatens to close a still profitable plant, to implement massive layoffs, or to take a negotiating position that broadly could be construed as inequitable. Illustrative of this approach are recent actions by the Save our Neighborhood Action Coalition (SNAC) in Pittsburgh. SNAC joined forces with the Bakery and Confectionary Workers to pressure Nabisco to rescind the closing of a profitable but excess capacity plant and has taken sides with the United Paperworkers Union against Papercraft Corporation, which is demanding wage concessions after earning record first quarter profits.

Finally, we expect to see those unions weakened by concession bargaining making as much use as possible of the courts, governmental agencies, and external parties to pressure management and to try to obtain objectives outside the bargaining process. Illustrative of this is the action taken by the Steelworkers against U.S. Steel in recent months. The union has obtained a restraining order to stop dismantling blast furnaces at the Chicago South Works, filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB, and launched a major publicity/lobbying campaign to stop the company from importing British Steel for finishing at its Philadelphia Fairless Works. It has also filed suit in U.S. Court to enforce a memorandum of understanding that it felt obligated the company to build a new rail mill.

## VI. *Concluding Comments*

We have attempted to synthesize a great deal of experience and data into a coherent examination and interpretation of the recent concession bargaining phenomenon. In particular, we have described the core characteristics and processes represented in concession bargaining. Focusing on the union institution, the impacts and im-

plications of the experience have been specified and explored. Since we believe that the concession bargaining experience of the early 1980s may be viewed retrospectively as a watershed period in American industrial union history, we would like to offer some concluding comments on its significance.

First, the recent period of concession bargaining appears to be a dramatic statement of the continuing decline in the relative membership and power of the union movement broadly, but particularly for the classical industrial union based in heavy manufacturing. The loss of membership in traditionally core union industry, the negative impact on the union image, and the internal difficulties appear to have accelerated the long-term trend.

Second, there appears to have been a significant loss of key institutional leadership in the union movement. For example, the Steelworkers and Autoworkers unions have traditionally provided innovation and direction in bargaining, but both have been severely impacted by concessions and seem to be more interested in reconsolidation and internal recovery than in providing leadership for the labor movement. Frankly, there is some question as to *whether* they can affect dominant roles again. Further, it is not clear that there are other unions ready or able to assume significant leadership positions.

Third, the concession experience appears to have broken certain barriers and created a few significant opportunities for unions to explore differing types of involvement and participation in work organizations. Traditionally, unions have focused efforts on controlling job level decisions and some administrative aspects of the technical sub-organization (Koch and Fox, 1978). Now, as a result of concession bargaining, workers in a number of firms have substantial stock ownership in their companies; they are involved in profit sharing plans; and, in several cases, they have membership or representation on the boards of directors. There is clearly greater opportunity for involvement in overall organization policy and strategy than has been the case before. How this evolves has yet to be determined, but formerly unthinkable prospects and opportunities are now extant.

Finally, recent events seem to have been influential in stimulating interest in and more use of nontraditional pressure tactics by unions in dealing with employers. Corporate campaigns, community action activities, and other emerging tactics have the potential to bring about new dimensions to labor relations that go beyond the traditional, private, direct bilateral confrontation. It is not clear how fast unions can or will employ such approaches, but they have been brought to the forefront as potential alternatives. We believe that their use will increase over time and with it may come a changing model of labor conflict.

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