

SELECTED REFERENCES

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SECTION

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PUBLIC OPINION AND AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS**

I. GENERAL DISCUSSIONS AND BACKGROUND READINGS

Bilik, Al. "Corrupt, crusty, or neither? The poll-ish view of American unions." *Labor Law Journal* (Commerce Clearing House, 4025 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646), June 1979. pp. 323-333. Contact Order Department for single issue price.

Bilik addresses the problem of the substantial decline in union strength from 1950 to 1977. He downplays the significance of the popular view that this decline was due to the change in the public image of unions, with unions going from being champions of the working man to being corrupt or ossified, old institutions. He points to the success of unions in the public sector and the results of polls to indicate that unions have not been losing ground due to public opinion. Through the use of specific examples, Bilik focuses on employer attitudes and unfair labor practices as the major causes of the decline of unions.

Bok, Derek C. and John T. Dunlop. "Trade unions and public opinion: how fares labor's ark?" in *Labor and the American Community*, pp. 7-41. New York, NY 10022. Simon and Schuster (1230 Avenue of the Americas). 1970. 542 pp. o.p.

The first chapter in this outstanding, comprehensive overview of the American labor movement (pre-1970) is important background reading. The authors examine the attitudes toward the labor movement held by the public, business leaders, intellectual critics, and workers (particularly labor union members) that most concern and divide the American community. This treatment provides the groundwork for their study, which among other contributions, reviews the growth of trade unions, assesses their internal government, and discusses the changing nature of collective bargaining and the political impact of labor.

Craft, James A. and Suhail Abboushi. "The union image: concept, programs, and analysis." *Journal of Labor Research* (George Mason University. Department of Economics. Fairfax, VA 22030), Fall 1983. pp. 299-314. Contact publisher for single issue price.

Craft and Abboushi address the problem of organized labor's deteriorating public image. They break down the concept of the "union image" into five well-defined core areas: union instrumentality; leadership; external power; internal governance; and membership identity. They then examine popular perceptions of each area and the factors that cause these perceptions. The authors identify several direct and indirect approaches that unions have taken to improve their images, but note that in most cases organized and rigorous image-building policies have not been followed.

Farber, Henry S. "The recent decline of unionization in the United States." *Science* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H. St., NW, Washington, DC 20005), November 1987, pp. 915-920. (NBER Reprint no. 1012). \$5.00.

Farber investigates the dramatic decline in unionization during the last decade. He notes that unionization has not only declined but that its rate of decline has accelerated since the mid-1970s. The author uses data from the

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** Items on this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.

1977 *Quality of Employment Survey* and the 1984 AFL-CIO surveys to statistically analyze this decline. Farber finds that the drop in unionization is most likely due to a combination of factors, such as the changing structure of the U.S. labor force, the decline in demand for unionization among nonunion workers, and increased employer resistance to union organization. Farber points to job satisfaction and competitiveness of the economy as related contributing factors.

Hershizer, Brian. "Union officials assess the labor movement and labor management relations." *Labor Studies Journal* (Transaction Periodicals Consortium Department 80903, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903), Spring 1987. pp. 29-47. \$14.00.

This study analyzes three sets of data. The first set was gathered from a questionnaire sent to all national and local union officials in 1983. The responses from both groups suggest that labor power and influence have declined over the years and that both local and national union leaders are concerned about the status and security of the labor movement. The second set examines the relationship between the local union and management, based on a questionnaire sent to a sample of local union officials. The findings show that unions generally feel accepted by their bargaining partners; have adequate but not compelling power in relation to the company; and have reacted in bargaining according to market changes. The third set compares responses of local union leaders from the 1985 survey and those of union members from a 1977 quality of employment survey, on questions regarding union priorities and performance. The data indicate that both officials and members share a similar view on the level of union accomplishment and priorities. Of interest: local and national union leaders seem to be accepting greater constraints in economic bargaining, with a tendency to focus more on quality-of-work-life issues in the bargaining process. Hershizer also reports on these surveys in the June 1986 issue of *Personnel* ("Labor's perspective on labor: a view from the other side of the table," pp. 58-62).

Hershizer, Brian. "Unions and public opinion: why the declining relationship?" *Labor Studies Journal* (Transaction Periodicals Consortium Department 8010, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903), Winter 1985. pp. 254-270. \$14.00.

Hershizer attempts to explain why organized labor's image has been declining in the polls over the past several years. The author proposes that it is not the ineffectiveness of unions that is causing them to be seen in a bad light, but the outside societal forces that are affecting their image. He points out that although even union members have had a declining approval of unions in general, their satisfaction with their own unions has not waned. He argues that the unfavorable image of organized labor projected by the media has both misinformed the public and influenced its perceptions. Another recommended article, in the Fall 1989 issue of this journal, is Paul F. Clark's "Union-image building at the local level" in which he recommends several strategies for strengthening labor's public image.

Keegan, Carol. "How union members and nonmembers view the role of unions." *Monthly Labor Review* (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402), August 1987. pp. 50-51. \$5.00.

Keegan reviews the results of a survey conducted by the Harris Organization which grew out of an effort by the AFL-CIO's Evolution of Work Committee to learn more about how the public thinks about labor unions, so that future communication activities would reflect an understanding of labor's public image. The survey involved nearly 1,500 telephone interviews with a national sample of employed persons, four-fifths of whom were not currently members of a labor union. The results show a very different pattern of member versus nonmember responses, which suggests that there is an image gap between those with direct experience of union membership and those whose information about unions is acquired from more indirect sources. The former realize unions help them improve a variety of important conditions in their daily working lives, while the latter primarily see unions as improving pay and benefits and seem unaware of nonwage aspects of union representation.

Kochan, Thomas A. "How American workers view labor unions."

Monthly Labor Review (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402), April 1979. pp. 23-31. \$5.00.

Kochan summarizes the results of the 1977 *Quality of Employment Survey* in which attitudes and experiences of a representative sample of the labor force were surveyed on a variety of questions related to the respondents' working lives. Workers were asked about their beliefs regarding labor unions in general. Nonunion workers were asked if they would vote to become part of a union, and union workers were asked about their satisfaction with their unions. Results reveal that workers generally view unions as large powerful bodies, which are highly effective. Of the nonunion workers, almost one third said they would vote to unionize. Although union members were most satisfied, they placed highest priorities on improving their unions' internal administration, while also emphasizing the importance of traditional collective bargaining issues such as wages and fringe benefits. Kochan evaluates the implications of these data for organized labor and recommends future research directions.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Labor unions in the public mind," in *Unions in transition: entering the second century*, pp. 289-321. San Francisco, CA 94103. ICS Press (Suite 750, 785 Market St.). 1986. 506pp. \$29.95.

Based on a number of surveys dealing with attitudes toward labor groups, Lipset reports that the public views labor in contrasting lights, and that even many labor union members exhibit ambivalent feelings. Among the observations: The principal virtue of unions is that they serve the interests of their members and protect them from exploitation, and largely for this reason, even though general approval rates have declined markedly since the mid-60s, unions are viewed as doing more good than harm. The public trust in unions and their leaders is not great. Unions are viewed as both powerful and self-serving and, unlike corporations, less inclined toward public service. Union leaders are often viewed as corrupt and unethical. Related overviews by Lipset and co-author William Schneider include the following: "Labor unions: necessary but unpopular" (pp. 199-220) in *The confidence gap: business, labor, and government in the public mind*. NY, NY 10022. The Free Press (866 Third Avenue). 1983. 434 pp. \$24.95; "The confidence gap during the Reagan years" in *Political Science Quarterly*. (Spring 1987, pp. 1-23); and "Organized labor and the public: a troubled union" in *Public Opinion* (August/September 1981, pp. 52-56).

Maxey, Charles and Susan Albers Mohrman. "Worker attitudes toward unions: a study integrating industrial relations and organizational behavior perspectives," in *Proceedings of the thirty-third annual meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association*, pp. 326-333. Edited by Barbara B. Dennis. Madison, WI 53706. Industrial Relations Research Association (7226 Social Science Building, University of Wisconsin). 1980. 348 pp. \$20.00.

This paper addresses the question of how employees become pro- or anti-union. The authors maintain that the results of a research study conducted at a large urban public library support their hypotheses that (a) communication and influence processes are important to all employees and, (b) work group attitudes influence individual employee opinions. The data also affirm previous conclusions that (a) dissatisfaction with the terms and conditions of employment is associated with pro-union attitudes, that (b) workers' views toward unions are generally related to their age, length of service, and position in the hierarchy, and that (c) professional workers' views are associated with their perceived ability to influence events in the employing organization.

Quinn, Robert P. *The 1977 quality of employment survey: descriptive statistics, with comparison data from the 1969-70 and the 1972-73 surveys*. Ann Arbor, 48106. University of Michigan. Institute for Social Research. Survey Research Center (P.O. Box 1248). 1979. 359 pp. \$16.00.

Considered a vital source of information on the public's opinion on labor issues, the tables in Section 11 of this widely-cited survey supply information about people's relationships to as well as their perceptions of and atti-

tudes regarding the goals, characteristics, functions and benefits of labor unions.

Smith, Russell L. and Anne H. Hopkins. "Public attitudes toward unions." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (ILR Research Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14851-0952), July 1979. pp. 484-495. \$6.50.

Smith and Hopkins investigate the attitudes toward unions of public sector employees in five states. Based on questionnaire responses from 2,000 state employees, they report that as in the private sector, attitudes toward unions are more favorable among employees in large organizations and with work situation dissatisfactions, lower occupational status, negative life experiences, and less involvement with the organization. They also report that work situation dissatisfactions are most important in predicting attitudes toward unionization only among union members. Among nonmembers, pre-work and life experiences were better predictors.

"Unions are turning to polls to read the rank and file." *Business Week* (McGraw-Hill, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10020), Oct. 22, 1984. pp. 66, 70. \$2.00.

Unions are increasingly turning to polls for determining the concerns of their members and the opinions of nonmembers, regarding the union image. Major unions like the AFL-CIO and the UAW have commissioned expensive surveys to learn more about the needs of their members.

Willoughby, Floyd G. and Lizabeth A. Barclay. "College students' majors and attitudes toward unions: sources of future union members." *Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Public Sector* (Baywood Publishing Co., 26 Austin Ave., P.O. Box 337, Amityville, NY 11701), Vol. 15, No. 3, 1986. pp. 223-230. Contact publisher for single issue price.

The authors discuss the results of a survey given to juniors and seniors at a public midwestern university which measured attitudes toward unions. Attitudes were measured on several scales and categories such as attitudes toward national unions, union leaders, unions in general, and the economic impact of unions. Scores on the different scales were compared across the students' majors and their family backgrounds. The study found that the students were generally neutral toward unions, with no strong approval or disapproval in any category. The authors suggest that their neutrality reflects a possible readiness for attitudes to be shaped by initial experiences in the workplace after leaving college. They argue that these college students will be reasonable targets for labor organization efforts.

2. PUBLIC OPINION POLLS

American Public Opinion Index. (Opinion Research Service, P.O. Box 9076. Boston, MA 02114). Annual. \$125.00.

Beginning in 1981, this index has attempted to provide information on most of the public opinion polls conducted in national, state, and local publications. The polls on unions cited are from numerous and diverse organizations, including: NBC News; the Survey Research Center at the University of California-Berkeley; the Los Angeles Times; the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research; ABC News; Newsweek; the Eagleton Institute of Politics; Business Week; and the Institute for Social Research at the University of North Carolina.

The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion. (Scholarly Resources, 104 Greenhill Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19805-1897). Annual. \$60.00.

This well known poll gathers information via both personal and telephone interviewers. Over the years, recurrent questions have pertained to the degree of public confidence in and approval or disapproval of labor unions. Other questions have included inquiries on public attitudes about union power, union leaders, unions as a threat to the country's future, and union influence on the news media. Of note: when asked how much confidence they had in organized labor as an institution, the following percentages of people responded that they had "a great deal" or "quite a lot": 1987, 26%; 1986, 29%; 1985, 28%; 1984, 30%; 1983, 26%; 1981, 28%; 1979, 36%; 1977, 39%; 1975, 38%; 1973, 30%.