

UNION DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Robert Michels' "Iron Law of Oligarchy" has stimulated much research in Sociology; the value of this research is less in whether or not the law is proven or disproven than in the resulting discussions regarding the nature of democracy and the issue of power. Are oligarchy and democracy two mutually exclusive categories into which all instances of power distribution in the extant world can be divided or are they end points on a continuum? Is a democratic organization one in which there are channels through which the non-leaders can make their feelings known to the leaders, or is it to be defined as one in which the non-leaders do, in fact, utilize these channels with effect. Is a benign oligarchy a form of democracy? How much voice need the non-leaders in an organization possess in order for that organization to qualify as a democracy?

Michels' law asserts that every instance of formal organization requires that there be a designation of a few leaders to carry out necessary tasks. It would indeed be difficult to argue against this. However, the conclusion from that -- namely that the very act of separating out a small group of leaders from the general body of members leads to membership apathy, which in turn tends to increase and perpetuate the power of those leaders -- is open to test. It is not a conclusion which must be granted on grounds of logic nor even on the grounds that one cannot at the moment think of an exception.

Michels is very clear and very correct in identifying the critical issue involved, however. What makes an oligarchy an oligarchy is power, located in the hands of a small group of leaders. This may seem self-evident -- almost a definitional matter -- with respect to the concept of oligarchy. However, when reading about an alternate form of power distribution, democracy, the issue of power is often ignored or treated only implicitly. What

• makes democracy different from oligarchy is simply the matter of where power lies. In a "pure" or "ideal type" of democracy, the power to determine all of the actions of the organization lies entirely in the hands of the general membership. The leaders have no areas of autonomous discretion.

AN EXCEPTION TO THE LAW

Lipset, Trow and Coleman, in their classic work, Union Democracy, report an intensive case study of the Typographical Union, an organization which appears to be an exception to Michels' law. Their evidence demonstrating that this organization is, in fact, a democracy and has endured over several centuries without any sign of oligarchy is impressive. Unfortunately, the book's contribution to a more general understanding of democracy is small. Since it places such emphasis upon the dependency of ITU democracy on the informal friendship structure of the membership, one is lead to wonder whether it is not after all impossible to have a democratic formal organization unless there is such a friendship system supporting it. Secondly, the treatment of this union is such as to make it a unique historical anomaly -- a single exception. The central concept -- democracy -- is defined as a strong two-party system of politics. No other labor union has such a structure, and, therefore, no other union is democratic. It could be argued that I am pushing the authors too far on this point. The question is whether they really meant to be this specific. Is the ITU political structure itself necessary for democracy or does their system represent only one form of a more general phenomenon

which leads to legitimacy of opposition, and it is this latter which is necessary for democracy.

The book is fairly clear on its stand that ITU democracy can be defined in terms of its two-party system and that this system arose out of certain historical events (which events are shared by several other unions, as the book itself admits) and is sustained over time by a strong friendship system (which the authors, in a totally undocumented position, state is probably not to be found in most other unions). This exception to the "law", then, appears to be a product of certain historical events and of an informal friendship structure, both peculiar to this union. This is not an idle issue. If the two-party system of the ITU as such is necessary for democracy and if it is the result of unique circumstances, then we do not have much by way of generalizable knowledge and the ITU is but a lonely exception to Michels' argument. If, on the other hand, it is legitimacy of opposition which is vital and if there are more than one set of historical conditions which can lead to it, then we are led to search for other instances of democracy.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The purpose of the present study was to compare a local of the ITU, which has quite different demographic characteristics than Big Six studied in Union Democracy, with three other printing trades locals. Since these three locals share much of the ITU historical backdrop and since they represent fairly comparable occupations, the focus was on differences in power distribution and informal friendship structure.

Finding an initial definition of democracy with which to work was difficult. All four unions claim to be highly democratic. Since this was a comparative study, there was no value in initially defining democracy as that political structure unique to the ITU. Seidman¹ suggests that the test of democracy in a union lies in the responsiveness of the leaders to the rank-and-file members. Since responsiveness may range from very little to very great, this is not a great deal of help. In the ITU, for example, the officers are responsive to their members because there is no other alternative open to them. In one of the other locals in the study, the Bookbinders' Union, the officers have the power to make most decisions but they choose to carefully feel out their membership before doing so. Both sets of officers, then, tend to be highly responsive to their membership, but the first because they have to be and the second because they choose to be. Seidman's criterion does not meaningfully distinguish between the two.

I have chosen, then, to view democracy as an ideal type after the fashion discussed earlier. As an ideal type, Democracy exists when all of the decisions within an organization must be made by all of the members of that organization. From the point of view of the officers, then, the more democratic a union is, the fewer and less important are the areas of autonomous discretion of the leaders.

The research is an attempt to discover the degree to which the four locals approximate that ideal.

¹Joel Seidman, "Democracy in the Labor Movement", Bulletin 39; February, 1958; Ithica, New York: New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations; Cornell University; 1958.

Hypotheses

Since percentage of turn-out of rank-and-file at meetings is frequently considered a formal measure of degree of democracy in unions, and since the ITU reported higher percentages of turn-out at meetings than the other locals in the study, it was initially decided to formulate the hypotheses in such a way as to account for the differences in meeting attendance rates. That is, if rate of formal participation is a valid indicant of democracy, then differences among the four locals' participation rates ought to vary with differences in informal friendship systems (given the Union Democracy position) and/or with the degree to which the officers of the four locals control decision-making. The initial hypotheses, then, were:

- 1) that rate of formal participation in union affairs is a function of a strong friendship system;
- 2) that rate of participation is a result of perceived power in union decision-making on the part of the rank-and-file members and of felt-dependence on rank-and-file on the part of the leaders.

This approach is based on the assumption that turn-out at meetings refers to a similar phenomenon in all four unions. However, during the study it became apparent that in only two of the locals did the meetings constitute decision-making bodies. Consequently, it was not at all clear what any systematic differences among the unions in terms of (1) and/or (2) would really be explaining. Since it is unclear just what rate of participation really measures and given that we have defined democracy essentially in terms of the distribution of power over decision-making within a union, the actual hypotheses were simply the sensitizing questions:

- 1) Are there any differences among the four unions with

respect to their informal friendship systems and, if so, what is the impact of these differences;

- 2) Do the unions differ systematically with respect to perceived power in decision-making by rank-and-file members and perceived dependence of officers on rank-and-file. If so, what factors do the data suggest as giving rise to these differences.

Given the Union Democracy hypothesis regarding the importance of the informal friendship system, then, it is possible that one of the factors causing systematic differences in (2) might be systematic differences in (1).

Further Specification of Variables

Indices of informal friendship patterns included membership in union recreational and relaxational clubs, residential contiguity at the neighborhood level, and all off-the-job social and athletic relationships with members of one's own union. Respondents were also asked about similar relationships with people not in their union and about membership in organizations unrelated to the union so as to estimate proportional time spent with fellow union members in relation to the wider community.

Decision-making included election of officers, policy making, formulating union laws, control over the dues system and expenditure of union funds, contract settlements and the like.

One could easily take issue with the procedure of using perceived role in decision-making as a measure of actual role. The main purpose in doing so was to avoid the danger of assuming that some objective criterion of democracy (e.g. a meeting which opens the floor for free discussion and vote) does, in fact, give the members power in decision-making when it may not. As mentioned earlier, all four locals in the

study have meetings as described above; yet in only two of them are the meetings opportunities to exert power over decision-making.

To avoid an equally dangerous error -- namely that of inaccurate or distorted perception on the part of the respondents -- the unions were first ranked on democracy by objective criteria. These included, in addition to average number of rank-and-file turnout at meetings, percentage of membership who participate in elections, presence or absence of referendum and the number of issues for which the referendum is constitutionally required, turnover in office, and the definition of the authority of officers as listed in the constitutions. A ranking of the four locals on these criteria resulted in the same rank order as was later arrived at from using the perceived responses. In addition, the respondents' reports were remarkably consistent with each other within each union, even on very open ended questions. If there is misperception at work, it is certainly going on at a massive scale.

Research Population and Sample

The study was conducted in Portland, Oregon. The locals were small ones. This served certain practical purposes in terms of the time allotted for the study and also proved to be an interesting comparison with Lipset, Trow and Coleman's work, since the bulk of their data concerns the large, New York City local of the ITU.

Specifically, the locals studied were:

The Portland local of the International Typographical Union, whose total membership at the time of the study was 300;

The Portland local of the Lithographer-Photo-engravers' Union, whose total membership was 200;

The Portland local of the International Bookbinders' Union, whose membership totaled 200;

and the Portland local of the Printing Pressmen's Union, which has 180 members. Due to a recent newspaper strike which the unions lost, all of the members of each of the unions were currently employed in job shops.

During the pre-test stage of the research, it was discovered that not all of the members of the unions could be considered as part of the research population for this study. The Typographical Union had a dozen deaf members, and the interview situation did not lend itself to communication with these members. The Lithographer-photo-engravers' Union had 40 members who were geographically inaccessible due to its unusually large area of jurisdiction. It was also learned that responses of retired members or members without permanent situations were not comparable to those of most of the members since they referred to the union as it was years ago and only rarely to the current state of affairs. Consequently, the total number of members in each union included in the population to be sampled was:

Typographical Union -- 210
Lithographer-Photo-engravers' Union -- 160
Bookbinders' Union -- 150
Pressmen's Union -- 180.

Since each of these locals has a law against making public their roster of membership, it was necessary to ask the full-time officer of each local to select the sample. Though care was taken to explain the importance of a random sample to the research and though each officer was asked to simply select every tenth name on the list of membership, the

sample probably cannot be considered to be a strictly random one. In one of the locals the mailing list was organized according to shops, in a second according to home residence and in a third according to seniority. Though I was unable to find any systematic bias in the samples selected in the ITU, LPIU or Bookbinders' Union, it is improbable that they were strictly random. The full-time officer of the Pressmen's Union (i.e. the Secretary) promised full cooperation and a list of a sample of his membership; but, in spite of my proddings, he did not fulfill that promise. Two weeks before the completion of the study, the president of the local, who had heard about the study at his place of work, phoned and offered to set up interviews with as many of his members as I had time for. Given the brief length of time left, it was possible to interview only 8 of the total 180 members of this local. Since the responses of these 8 were so dramatically consistent and since they fell in the direction one would expect, given the rest of the study, they are included in the research presentation. However, the certitude with which one can make conclusions about this local is clearly limited by the small number of respondents and by the clearly non-random fashion in which they were selected.

The sample, then, consisted of a 10% sample of the research population in the ITU (21 respondents), the LPIU (16 respondents) and the Bookbinders' Union (15 respondents) -- plus the eight Pressmen. These figures include all of the major officers of each local, with the remaining respondents including highly active members, moderately active ones and long-time inactives. In every case, the respondent himself and the officer who drew the sample agreed on the extent to which the respondent could

be considered an active member of the union.

Each of the 21 ITU members and the 16 LPIU members agreed to the interview. There were no non-respondents. Of the 15 Bookbinders selected, 4 declined the interview leaving 11 respondents. Each of the four members was a long-time inactive; none of them attended meetings or voted.

Data Collection Procedure

After the initial interviews with the four full-time officers, each of the persons whose name appeared in the sample (in the case of the Pressmen, each person who was mentioned by the President) was contacted by phone. It was explained to each how his name and phone number had been gotten, the nature of the research and the importance of his cooperation, and that he was quite free to decline the interview if he did not wish to participate. All but the four Bookbinders mentioned earlier agreed to participate and an appointment for the interview was set.

The interview schedule itself is fairly long (the average interview ranging between 1 and 1-1/2 hours in length) and is largely open-ended. It centers not so much on whether the members feel that their local is democratic (they all do), but on just how much they feel they can control and determine any significant decision made in their local. Respondents were not asked about hypothetical situations; they were questioned on real issues which occur regularly in their local. In addition, there were a number of questions directed at patterns of friendship within, between and outside of the unions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four Preliminary Profiles

While the two political parties of the International Typographical Union (the Progressives and the Independents) operate in the Portland local, they do not have a formally organized structure and certainly are not political "machines" such as outlined in Union Democracy for the Big Six of New York. The formally affiliated Progressives far outnumber the card-holding Independents in this local, but there are a large number of "anti-proggs" who are not affiliated with the Independents.

The local handles all major issues by referendum ballot. The ballot is sent to each member's place of employment (or, in the case of members not at the trade, to his bedside, as one officer put it). The members vote at work, turn in the ballots to the Chapel Chairman who must have them back to the union office within 12 hours, under pain of fine. There is an institutionalized means whereby the rank-and-file members may force any issue to referendum and the respondents evidenced detailed familiarity with that procedure. All sanctions associated with the rules of the union are consistently levied. For example, if a member has not paid his dues by the deadline, he is not allowed to report back to work until he does so. Sanctions are employed against officers and non-officers impartially. While all four locals have sanctions for their rules, this is the only one which makes use of them in anything but extreme cases.

The average turnout at meetings is 25% of the total membership (as reported by the full-time officer). This is low for most locals in the ITU. It must be remembered that all of the members of this local work in shops

as opposed to newspapers, and the Portland printing shops are small ones. Both the data in Union Democracy and my own suggest that members in small shops do not typically attend union meetings with great regularity. In a small shop, an employer can (and does) keep track of his employees' union activities. This is particularly true for the ITU, since it is the most powerful of the printing trades unions and it is the only one with union machinery in the shop itself (i.e. the Chapel). The Typographical Union is always first to bargain with management, and those unions which follow may be sure of securing a contract roughly equal in benefits to that negotiated by the ITU. In order to secure opportunities for advancement and peaceful on-the-job relations, these men tend to avoid taking any enthusiastic part in their union as well as on-the-job union discussions.

This local showed the highest turnover among officers in recent years and an absence of officer "recruitment". In the other three locals, there seems to be an informal procedure whereby the major incumbant officers seek out what they consider "good, potential leaders" and ask them if they would like to run in the next election. This appears to be the major way in which names appear on the ballot for all but the ITU local.

Lastly, the ITU local charter is far more explicit in defining the duties and authority of its officers than the constitutions of the other three locals. The president may not cast the deciding vote in a tie, as in the other three. The officers interpret the laws and contracts, but they may not make exceptions to them as can the Pressmen and Bookbinder officers. There are clearly institutionalized methods for impeaching and fining an officer and for counteracting any decision which the officers may have made

during the summer recess of meetings, which is the only opportunity the officers have to make significant decisions without consulting the membership body.¹ There is a clearly stated procedure whereby members can send to referendum any issue which was decided at a meeting whenever a sufficient number of members wish to challenge the decision. These procedures were clearly and frequently cited by all ITU respondents including the very inactive ones who had not been to a meeting in years, and they were reported as having been used.

This local will hereafter be referred to as the ITU with the understanding that, except where specified otherwise, it shall mean the Portland Local of the International Typographical Union.

The Lithographer-Photo-engravers' Union in Portland also uses the referendum ballot. None of the respondents mentioned any procedures by which the rank-and-file membership could use it as a means to counteract previous decisions or as a weapon for the power of initiative, though there are provisions for this in the constitution. The referendum seems to be viewed simply as a more equitable method of vote-casting than that which occurs at meetings, particularly in view of the number of out-of-town members who are unable to attend meetings.

Turnover in office is a senseless question to ask of this local since it has only been in existence since January, 1966. The local is a result of a merger between the old Amalgamated Lithographers Association and the Photo-Engravers' Union. For all officers, then, this is the first term of tenure. However, the highest officers in the merged union were also major officers in the pre-merged unions.

The lithographers far out-number the photo-engravers (by about 4 to 1). Hence, the photo-engravers were fearful that the merger might result in a union which would not adequately represent their needs and interests. Because of this, the constitution states that for a period of three years, the officers must be evenly divided between the two crafts. Since the photo-engravers are concerned about what will happen at the end of the three years, they are not willing to give much power to the officers on a constitutional basis. Likewise, since the Lithographers feel that the photo-engravers are currently over-represented on the executive board, they are unwilling to grant much autonomous authority to the officers. Rather than agree to a constitution which would grant much authority to officers who may or may not represent their interests, the members have chosen to keep most of the power in their own hands. The two craft identities, then, seem to function much like the two political parties in the ITU in terms of limiting the areas of discretion of their officers.

The significant difference between the process in the ITU and that in the Lithographer-Photo-engravers' Union is that the internal competition of interest groups and the resultant unwillingness to grant much authority to officers is granted full legitimacy in the ITU; whereas in the LPIU it is considered an understandable, but hopefully temporary, phenomenon. In the latter, the hope is that after the initial three years, the commitments to craft identities will vanish and that the whole membership will be of one accord and will then place more trust in their officers.

This local has an average participation rate ranging from 15% to 20%, as reported by the full-time officer; and this is higher than either local

could boast before the merger. Hereafter, this local shall be referred to as the LPIU with the understanding that, unless otherwise specified, it refers to the Portland Local of the Lithographer-Photo-engravers' International Union.

The Bookbinders' and Bindery Women's Local in Portland (hereafter referred to as the Bookbinders' Union) has approximately 10% turnout at meetings (as reported by the full-time officer). It is not rare for a meeting to be disbanded due to lack of a quorum (10 members). This local does not use referendum. The definition of the officers' duties and authority scope in the constitution is vague and open to wide interpretation. The constitutional sanctions are rarely used to enforce the rules. The officers as a group are free to make exceptions to the rules, laws and contracts when they feel the situation requires leniency. At no time during any of the interviews with members of this local was any mention made of the constitution or by-laws of the Union.

The Portland local of the Printing Pressmen's Union (hereafter referred to as the Pressmen's Union) averages about 10% turnout at meetings (as reported by the full-time officer). As in the case of the Bookbinders' Union, this local does not always have a quorum (10 members). It is interesting that no member of the ITU or the LPIU could remember a meeting which failed to have a quorum. This local does not have the referendum and officers tend to be "recruited". The secretary's name does not always appear on the ballot. In such instances, he is declared unanimously elected at the nomination meeting. He has held this office (a full-time position) for 24 years and has run unopposed during that time. He considers his posi-

tion an appointive one, by virtue of the ties he has made with the International Headquarters.

The officers have much decision-making authority vested in them by the constitution. There are no institutionalized mechanisms whereby the members can appeal any issue to the general membership. This is the only local of the four studied where exceptions to the rules of the union are written into the contracts, just as the ITU is the only local of the four whose contract always carries the stipulation that union laws are not subject to negotiation. The secretary of the Pressmen's Union is free to make any exception to either the union laws or the negotiated contract. There are no written mechanisms whereby the members can appeal a decision made by the executive board or any member thereof.

In addition to being of approximately the same size, these four locals have roughly comparable wage scales and share similar working conditions and hours. All of the officers in each union are men who came up through the trade, and each full-time officer receives the average wage scale for his union in salary. He does not earn more as an officer than he would working at the trade. All of the officers seemed deeply concerned in doing what is right and just for their membership. The difference seems to be in what is considered to be the legitimate manner in deciding what is right. The officers of the ITU, for example, felt that it was the membership who should make this decision for themselves and the officers' task is simply to implement their dictates. The secretary of the Pressmen's local, on the other hand, felt that the membership could not often be trusted to make a fair decision which would hold for the general welfare,

so that decision as well as its implimentation was his moral obligation.

The Monthly Meetings

The officers of all four unions were deeply concerned about the low participation rate in their locals. Low turnout at meetings was considered a major problem. In the ITU, however, it was felt that this was not a problem which the officers could solve, or should even try to solve. ITU meetings are held at 11:00 a.m. on the third Sunday of each month. There is no attempt on the part of the officers to hurry or shorten the meeting (though all four sets of officers agreed that long meetings tend to reduce attendance). One newly elected officer of the ITU mentioned that she had been to nearly every meeting for years and that until she took office, she had never been able to sit through an entire meeting -- she always had to leave to fix dinner for her family. The average ITU meeting runs until 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. In the other three locals, however, there were clearly admitted attempts by the officers to keep the meetings brief. The average length of time for each ranges from 1-1/2 to 2 hours. In addition, these three locals have frequent shifts in meeting day and time, trying to find a time which would be most convenient to the general membership. The LPIU serves free beer following the meeting in an effort to draw more members. The general consensus of all officers in these three locals is that none of these incentives results in any appreciable increase in membership attendance. All of them expressed amazement at the ability of the ITU to draw members to their meetings at such an obviously inopportune time and for such long, drawn-out sessions.

It is also important to note that since so much of the ITU important business is handled through the Chapel and the referendum, it is technically

unnecessary for the ITU members to attend meetings at all in order to participate in major decision-making.

Why do the ITU members attend their meetings? The contention here is that the ITU members hold far more decision-making power in their local than do the rank-and-file members of the other three unions and not all ITU decisions are made in the Chapel. That is, the meetings are one place where some decisions are, in fact, made; and the members go there to make them. Let us look at the evidence.

All of the respondents were asked whether or not they felt their monthly union meetings were important. One ITU member, an inactive, said no because the really important decisions in his local were made at work through referendum. Two Bookbinders and one Pressman felt their meetings were not particularly important. All other respondents felt their meetings were highly important. However, as Table 1 indicates, their reasons for granting meetings importance were clearly not the same.

Fourteen ITU members felt that their meetings were important because they constituted the governing body of the Union. If the members did not come to meetings, then all those decisions made at the meetings would have to go undecided. The respondents clearly indicated that, except for the referendum, the membership body assembled at meetings was the only decision-making group in their union. Another 5 ITU members felt that the major importance of meetings lay in the fact that this was a main channel through which the membership could express itself on the affairs of its union. This is a less strong statement than the one given by the other fourteen. Only one respondent in the ITU gave as a reason

TABLE 1

REASONS GIVEN FOR PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF MEETINGS

	Power to Govern	Membership Expression	Inform the Rank & File	Don't Know	
ITU	14	5	1		20*
LPTU	4	6	6		16
BOOKBINDERS	1	1	7		9*
PRESSMEN		1	1	5	7*

*One ITU member, two Bookbinders and one Pressman felt that meetings in their union were unimportant.



for the importance of meetings that they served as a means through which the members become informed about what is going on in their union.

In the LPIU, four respondents gave the authority-to-govern reason for the importance of meetings, while another six felt that membership expression of opinion~~s~~ constituted their major importance. Six more replied that the importance of a meeting lay in its informative function.

Of the nine Bookbinders who felt meetings were important, there was one response in the authority-to-govern category, one in the membership expression category and seven who said that the informative function of the meeting was its primary importance.

By and large, the Pressmen were unable to give a reason for why they thought meetings were important. One respondent listed the membership expression function of a meeting as his reason and another gave the informing the rank-and-file response.

Thus, while all four unions have monthly meetings at which all respondents reported feeling free to express themselves, there was a clear differentiation as to the perceived function of these meetings. The ITU members see their meetings as decision-making bodies; the Bookbinders see theirs as a means through which the officers can inform the membership about their activities and decisions; the LPIU members are somewhat divided on the issue; and the Pressmen seem unable to say just what the importance of their meetings is.

Table 2 indicates a similar pattern in responses to the question, "Do you think that the really important decisions made in your local are

made at the union meetings?" and, if not, "Where would you say they are made, and by whom?" Only five of the ITU respondents said that the decisions in their local were made either entirely by the Board or made by the Board and merely ratified at the meetings. Eleven LPIU members, six Bookbinders and four Pressmen felt this was the case in their union. The proportion of ITU members who see the votes taken at meetings as only legitimation of policy or decisions already made by the officers is smaller than that in the other locals.

Perceived Importance of Officers in Decision-making

Table 3 is a summary of the responses regarding the degree to which officers are perceived as the most important group involved in union decision-making. Only three ITU members felt that such was the case in their union. Six LPIU members considered this to be the case, as did seven Bookbinders and four Pressmen. It is interesting that of the five Pressmen officers, only the Secretary thought the Board was the most influential participant in decision-making, while the three non-officers agreed with him. To the non-officer, any decision given by the president at a meeting represents an action of the Executive Board. Yet the other officers do not agree that they play such a significant role in their union. From the interviews, one gets the clear impression that the Secretary makes the bulk of the decisions essentially by himself, brings them to the Board meetings for discussion and then to the general meeting for ratification. There was no evidence to suggest that any similar process operates in the other three locals.

TABLE 2

WHO MAKES THE REALLY IMPORTANT DECISIONS
IN THE LOCAL?

	Board Only, or Made by Board and Ratified at Meetings	All Other (Meetings, Referendum)	
ITTU	5	16	21
LPIU	11	5	16
BOOKBINDERS	6	5	11
PRESSMEN	4	4**	8

**These four were officers.

TABLE 3

WHETHER OR NOT OFFICERS ARE SEEN AS THE MOST IMPORTANT GROUP IN
DECISION-MAKING

	Yes	No	
ITU	3	18	21
LPIU	6	10	16
BOOKBINDERS	7	4	11
PRESSMEN	4	4	8

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH MEMBERS WOULD TAKE SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS
ONLY TO THE OFFICERS

	To Officers Only	Other	
ITU	2	19	21
LPIU	11	5	16
BOOKBINDERS	4	7	11
PRESSMEN	4	4	8

Table 4 summarizes the responses to a related question: "If you had a suggestion or complaint to raise about matters related to your union, would you go to the officers to discuss it or raise it directly at the meeting? Perhaps you would do both of these or neither. Can you tell me what you would do?" Only two ITU members reported that they would go only to the officers and let them take it from there. Eleven LPIU respondents mentioned this course of action as did four Bookbinders and four Pressmen. Two of these Pressmen stated that they would go specifically and only to the Secretary. There were no "don't know" replies to this question. It would seem, then, that the degree to which complaints and issues of initiative are mediated through the officers before reaching the union meeting is less for the ITU than for the other three locals.

Accountability of Officers

Each of the respondents was asked to rank the officers of his union on accountability to the general membership using a scale of ten, where ten represented highest accountability. Almost without exception, every respondent ranked his officers at number ten. Following that, they were asked to indicate why they felt that their officers were so accountable and what in their experience with the union made them feel this way. As Table 5 indicates, all of the ITU respondents were able to give a reason for their response (that is, something other than "I don't know, but I'm sure no one could be more accountable than our officers are".) In addition, all the ITU members agreed on their reasons. Without exception, their reasons consisted of a citation of specific procedures for impeaching officers, laws which govern every aspect of the officers' duties, and the process by which

the membership can force any issue to referendum. Appended to this in most cases was a statement similar to: "The members make all the decisions in our local and the officers cannot do anything without the prior approval of the membership; so they must be accountable because they are not given the opportunity to be otherwise." Of the eleven LPIU respondents who were able to say why they had ranked their officers high on accountability, one cited the membership's power of impeachment as his reason. All other answers centered around the trustworthiness of the officers. That is, there were answers like: "I know our officers are honest men"; "Our officers aren't snobs"; and "I never heard of any underhanded activities going on, except once when the president absconded with the funds". Only four Bookbinders could give reasons for their rankings. The three non-officers said something to the effect that if the officers did not account for their actions they were subject to the sanction (which sanction they could not specify) of either the union body OR OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD. Apparently, accountability of officers to each other is sufficient. The one officer who was able to give a reason for his ranking said that he and the other Bookbinder officers were accountable to their membership "because the officers preferred it that way".

Two Pressmen could give reasons for ranking their officers as they had. One was a non-officer who was an exception to the rule of ranking one's own officers high on this issue. He said that he had ranked them low because "things are kept quiet and not brought up before the membership". The other was an officer who said, "We report whatever we do to the membership. Our by-laws allow for repeal of any officer at the annual

TABLE 5

REASONS FOR PERCEIVED ACCOUNTABILITY OF OFFICERS

	Laws Insuring Membership Power	Trustworthiness of Officers	Accountability of Officers to Each Other	Don't Know	
ITU	21				21
LPIU	1	10		5	16
BOOKBINDERS			4	7	11
PRESSMEN			1	6	7*

*One Pressman felt his officers were not accountable.

elections -- except the full-time officer". "Repeal" occurs only during regular elections and the full-time officer is exempt from such censure.

It seemed in talking with these men that they found it difficult to give reasons for their rankings on this question not because they did not understand the meaning of accountability of officers but because it was (except for the ITU) a concept inappropriate to their philosophy of unionism. Obviously, if one is dissatisfied with an officer, he does not re-elect him for another term. This they understood, but they also realized that this was not total accountability. All three of these locals stress electing good, honest, dedicated officers in the first place, rather than institutionalized means for keeping strict tabs on them during tenure or procedures for impeaching them or reversing their decisions. If there is a wise election, such procedures become unnecessary. The non-ITU respondents felt that the use of such procedures implied derogatory things about their officers, who, after all, are men at the trade like themselves.

The ITU, on the other hand, seems to assume the worst about human nature. Every man makes mistakes and is potentially corruptable. They believe in having an organization in which an officer cannot be dishonest, even if he is a dishonest man. Their remarks indicated that if there is an incident of office mismanagement, it is as much the fault of the members for permitting an organization structured such that he was not prevented from carrying out the misdemeanor as it is the fault of the offender. Such mismanagement in the other three locals, however, is viewed as the result of electing the wrong man and the only way to avoid a repetition of a similar incident is to be more careful in future elections. This philosophy carries

over into particular incidences of decision-making. For example, most members of the three unions expressed a sentiment to this effect: "Members of our union will go along with the officers even if they don't agree on the grounds that it was an honest decision." The honesty of an officer's decision is a fairly irrelevant issue in the ITU.

Control over the Ballot

It was mentioned earlier that all four unions have annual elections of officers, two by referendum vote (the ITU and LPIU) and two by ballot which must be carried to the union hall (the Bookbinders and Pressmen). All four use secret and printed ballots. There was no evidence in any of the locals of intimidation by officers with respect to the voting process.

A critical issue, then, is the nature of the process by which candidates' names appear on the ballot. In the ITU, it can accurately be said that a candidate "runs" for office. A member must actively solicit nomination. An incumbant officer who is doing any kind of satisfactory job can rest assured that he will be nominated for re-election, but this in no way means that he will win the election. There is open and vigorous campaigning among ITU candidates for office. In the other three locals, however, there is no open campaigning and candidates are primarily recruited by the incumbant officers. In reply to the question, "Do you intend to run for this same office in the next election?", no member of the ITU responded with "I don't know; it depends on whether they (the officers) ask me to". This was the one outstanding answer to the question in the other three locals. The more typical ITU answer was: "It depends a lot on who else decides to run. I keep deciding not to run but every time someone decides to run

whom I don't think would do a very good job."

A similar difference was found in responses to a question asking why the officer had run in the last election for the office he now held. ITU respondents typically ran because they felt they could do the job better than someone else who had decided to run. The non-fulltime officers of the other locals replied that they were "asked to run", "railroaded into it", or "drafted" by the incumbant officers. The recruiting officers appear to be the major, long-incumbancy officers (i.e., full-time officer, the president, a retiring officer). In most cases, the prospective candidate is discussed among at least several of the incumbant officers respecting his desirability before he is approached.

The only long-incumbancy officer in the Pressmen's Union is the Secretary, and he considers his position to be appointed by the International. His name does not usually appear on the ballot. The two most important LPIU officers were the heads of the two pre-merged locals; they ran unopposed in the last elections. The Secretary of the Bookbinders' Local has run unopposed for years and expects to continue to do so until she choses to retire. She reported that she expects to retire within the next five years and has selected the person whom she feels would make a good successor. Upon her request, he ran (unopposed) in the last elections for a position on the Executive Board, since both she and he felt this would better insure his winning the Secretary's position when the time came. The fulltime officer of the ITU generally runs opposed and openly campaigns for his position.

It seems safe to say that while the voting procedure is free and uninhibited in all four locals, officer control over the nomination procedure is

not equivalent for the four.

Friendship Structure

Lipset, Trow and Coleman spend many pages demonstrating the degree to which ITU democracy is dependent upon the strong, informal friendship structure found among printers due to the unusual nature of their occupation. A close scrutiny of these pages indicates that their case is built more on logic than on data. To disprove the Union Democracy thesis on this issue would be enormously more difficult than to try to prove that it is correct. Such was not my main purpose. However, since the book is so reputable and since it accords high importance to the friendship structure, every attempt was made to account for this factor in the present study. In the end, however, it did not appear as a significant factor. The friendship patterns are quite similar among the four unions. Of the total 168 friendships mentioned in response to several questions about such relationships, only nineteen involved persons who at some time or other had not worked together for at least one year. Of the nineteen exceptions, most were relationships between fellow officers which had grown during their terms of occupancy. All of the members of the several unions mentioned at least one other organization besides the union in which they were active and had close friends. Only five respondents said that they spent more free time with people in the printing trades than with people of other occupations: one ITU officer, two LPIU officers, one Bookbinder officer, and one Pressman non-officer.

All respondents were asked the question: "Now think of your three closest friends. What are their occupations?" The number of friends mentioned who were in the respondent's own union are summarized as follows.

TABLE 6

Number	Union	Ratio	Percentile
Twenty-one	ITU	$\frac{20}{63}$.32
Sixteen	LPIU	$\frac{15}{48}$.31
Eleven	Bookbinders	$\frac{12}{33}$.39
Eight	Pressmen	$\frac{7}{24}$.29

The replies to the question, "Now think of all the various places where you are likely to visit with other people in the printing trades off the job. Where would this be likely to happen for you and how often?" are summarized in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Number	Union	Place	FREQUENCY				Total
			monthly	%	twice a year or less often	%	
Twenty-one	ITU	Union function	$\frac{14}{21}$	(.666)	7	(.334)	1.00
Sixteen	LPIU	Union function	$\frac{11}{16}$	(.687)	5	(.313)	1.00
Eleven	Bookbinders	Union function	$\frac{7}{11}$	(.636)	4	(.364)	1.00
Eight	Pressmen	Union function	$\frac{5}{8}$	(.625)	3	(.375)	1.00

Since all of the respondents agree that various union functions are the only places where they are likely to visit with other union members off the job,

Date		Description		Amount	
1	1900	Jan 1	Balance	100.00	
2	1900	Jan 2	Jan 3	10.00	
3	1900	Jan 4	Jan 5	20.00	
4	1900	Jan 6	Jan 7	30.00	
5	1900	Jan 8	Jan 9	40.00	
6	1900	Jan 10	Jan 11	50.00	
7	1900	Jan 12	Jan 13	60.00	
8	1900	Jan 14	Jan 15	70.00	
9	1900	Jan 16	Jan 17	80.00	
10	1900	Jan 18	Jan 19	90.00	
11	1900	Jan 20	Jan 21	100.00	
12	1900	Jan 22	Jan 23	110.00	
13	1900	Jan 24	Jan 25	120.00	
14	1900	Jan 26	Jan 27	130.00	
15	1900	Jan 28	Jan 29	140.00	
16	1900	Jan 30	Jan 31	150.00	
17	1900	Feb 1	Feb 2	160.00	
18	1900	Feb 3	Feb 4	170.00	
19	1900	Feb 5	Feb 6	180.00	
20	1900	Feb 7	Feb 8	190.00	
21	1900	Feb 9	Feb 10	200.00	
22	1900	Feb 11	Feb 12	210.00	
23	1900	Feb 13	Feb 14	220.00	
24	1900	Feb 15	Feb 16	230.00	
25	1900	Feb 17	Feb 18	240.00	
26	1900	Feb 19	Feb 20	250.00	
27	1900	Feb 21	Feb 22	260.00	
28	1900	Feb 23	Feb 24	270.00	
29	1900	Feb 25	Feb 26	280.00	
30	1900	Feb 27	Feb 28	290.00	
31	1900	Feb 29	Feb 30	300.00	
32	1900	Mar 1	Mar 2	310.00	
33	1900	Mar 3	Mar 4	320.00	
34	1900	Mar 5	Mar 6	330.00	
35	1900	Mar 7	Mar 8	340.00	
36	1900	Mar 9	Mar 10	350.00	
37	1900	Mar 11	Mar 12	360.00	
38	1900	Mar 13	Mar 14	370.00	
39	1900	Mar 15	Mar 16	380.00	
40	1900	Mar 17	Mar 18	390.00	
41	1900	Mar 19	Mar 20	400.00	
42	1900	Mar 21	Mar 22	410.00	
43	1900	Mar 23	Mar 24	420.00	
44	1900	Mar 25	Mar 26	430.00	
45	1900	Mar 27	Mar 28	440.00	
46	1900	Mar 29	Mar 30	450.00	
47	1900	Mar 31	Mar 31	460.00	

The above is a list of the names of the persons who have been
 admitted to the membership of the Society since the last
 meeting of the Board of Directors.

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8	1900	Jan 14	Jan 15	70.00	
9	1900	Jan 16	Jan 17	80.00	
10	1900	Jan 18	Jan 19	90.00	
11	1900	Jan 20	Jan 21	100.00	
12	1900	Jan 22	Jan 23	110.00	
13	1900	Jan 24	Jan 25	120.00	
14	1900	Jan 26	Jan 27	130.00	
15	1900	Jan 28	Jan 29	140.00	
16	1900	Jan 30	Jan 31	150.00	
17	1900	Feb 1	Feb 2	160.00	
18	1900	Feb 3	Feb 4	170.00	
19	1900	Feb 5	Feb 6	180.00	
20	1900	Feb 7	Feb 8	190.00	
21	1900	Feb 9	Feb 10	200.00	
22	1900	Feb 11	Feb 12	210.00	
23	1900	Feb 13	Feb 14	220.00	
24	1900	Feb 15	Feb 16	230.00	
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28	1900	Feb 23	Feb 24	270.00	
29	1900	Feb 25	Feb 26	280.00	
30	1900	Feb 27	Feb 28	290.00	
31	1900	Feb 29	Feb 30	300.00	
32	1900	Mar 1	Mar 2	310.00	
33	1900	Mar 3	Mar 4	320.00	
34	1900	Mar 5	Mar 6	330.00	
35	1900	Mar 7	Mar 8	340.00	
36	1900	Mar 9	Mar 10	350.00	
37	1900	Mar 11	Mar 12	360.00	
38	1900	Mar 13	Mar 14	370.00	
39	1900	Mar 15	Mar 16	380.00	
40	1900	Mar 17	Mar 18	390.00	
41	1900	Mar 19	Mar 20	400.00	
42	1900	Mar 21	Mar 22	410.00	
43	1900	Mar 23	Mar 24	420.00	
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45	1900	Mar 27	Mar 28	440.00	
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it is not surprising that the ITU and LPIU show somewhat higher percentages of such visits than the Bookbinders or the Pressmen. Still, the figures are remarkably similar for the four locals, in spite of their differences in average participation rates in union meetings.

Given the small N in each case, not much confidence can be placed in the percentiles on the previous two tables. However, since the respondents in the four locals clearly differentiated themselves according to union membership on the other variables studied yet failed to do so on the questions regarding friendship patterns, it does not appear that, for these locals, at least, friendship structure is an important variable in the explanation of their different power distributions.

Perceived Meaning of Trade Union Democracy

One of the most interesting questions in the study, in terms of the responses it elicited, was the one: "What does the term, Trade Union Democracy, mean to you?" In spite of the open-endedness of the item, the answers were remarkably patterned, as Table 6 clearly indicates. Before continuing, however, it should be pointed out that just as nearly all the respondents felt that their officers were as accountable as possible, so they felt their union was as democratic as possible, with the exception of one Pressman. But members of the different unions do not mean the same thing by democracy.

Nineteen ITU respondents agreed that democracy in a union means that the union is run by the rank-and-file membership. "All decisions are made by the members;" "The direction of the union remains entirely in the hands of the members;" "There are no rules from the top, we do not have a real hierarchy. Every member is as important as the President;" "It is the absence of an oligarchy." The two remaining ITU respondents gave the reply

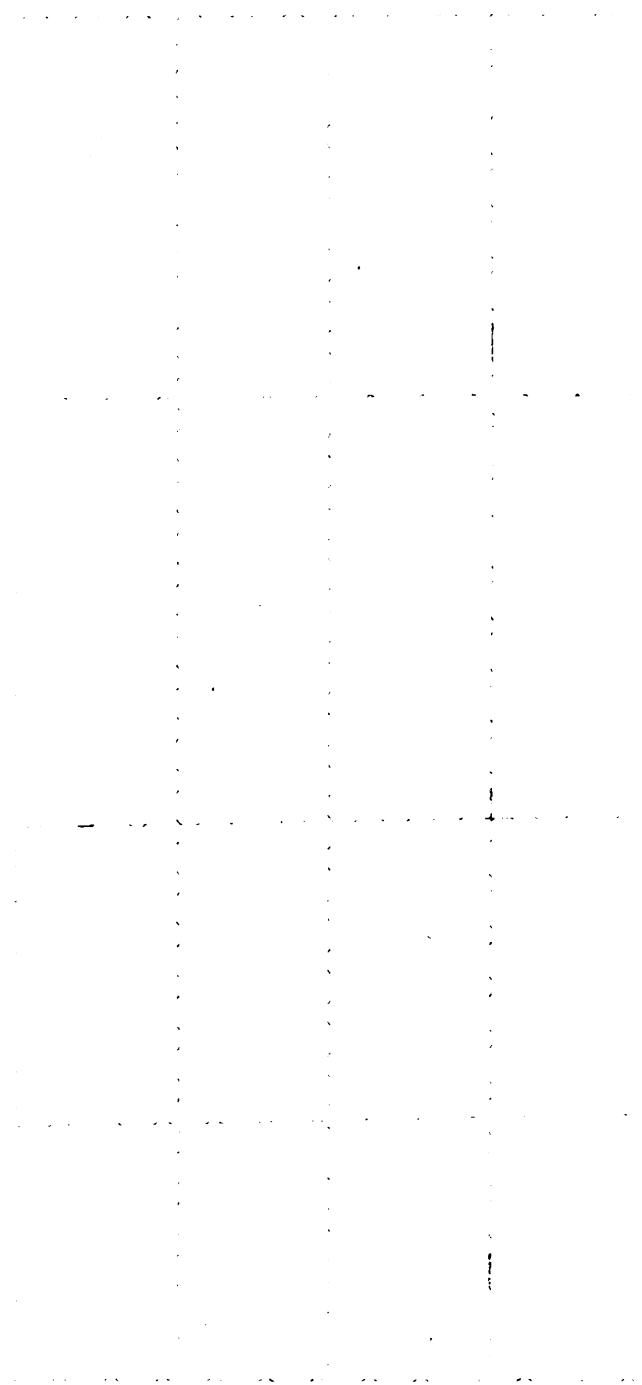
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TABLE 8

RESPONSES TO "WHAT DOES THE TERM TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY
MEAN TO YOU?"

	Membership Power Over All Decisions	Freedom of Expression and Vote	Don't Know	Democracy is Inefficient and Unattainable in a Union	
ITU	19	2			21
LPTU	3	10	3		16
BOOKBINDERS		1	10		11
PRESSMEN			1	6	7*

*One Pressman responded that democracy was absent from his union.



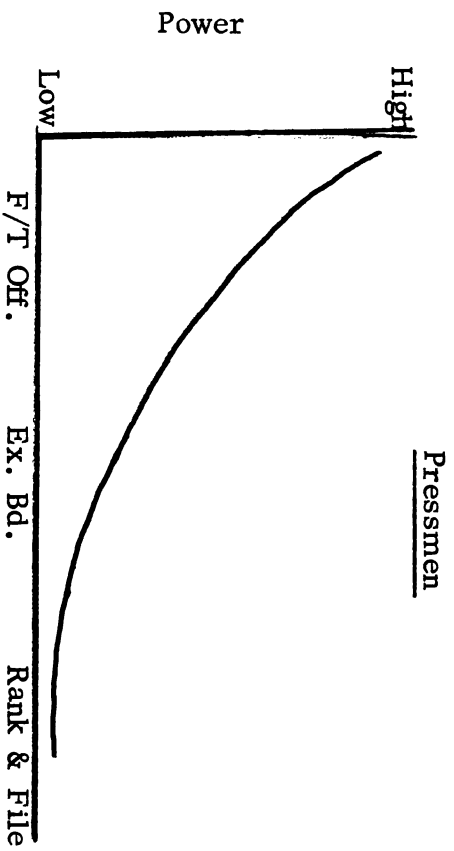
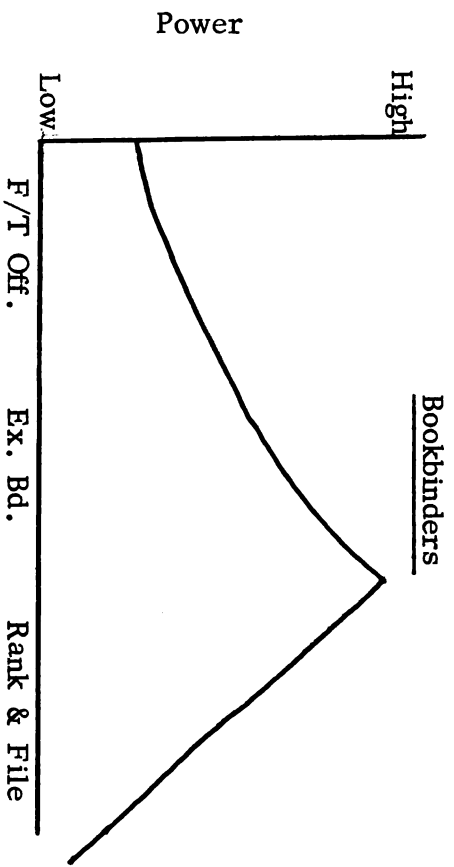
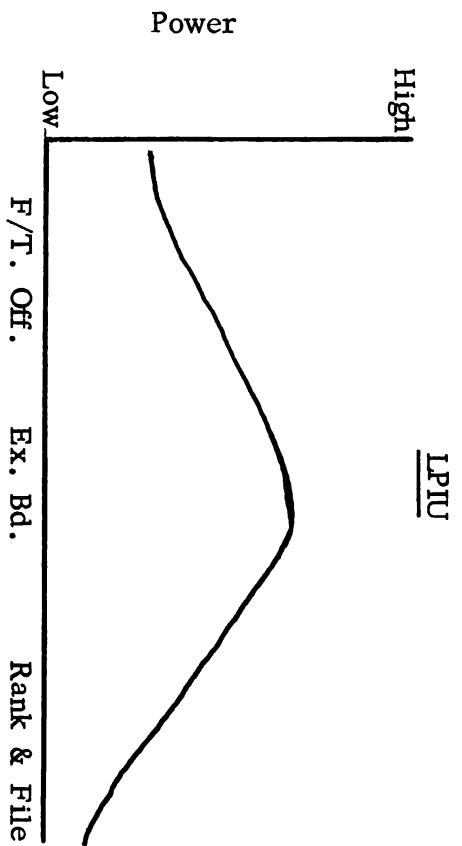
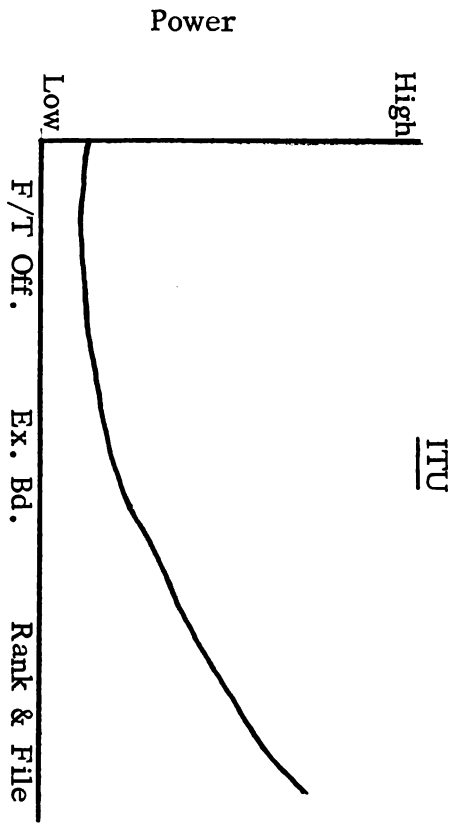
that is most typical of the LPIU members -- namely, that democracy in a union means freedom of expression and free and secret elections. Ten of the LPIU respondents replied in this manner. Three LPIU members gave the typical ITU reply and the remaining three gave the response most characteristic of the Bookbinders -- that is, they said they didn't know what the term meant. Ten Bookbinders said this. "I really don't know"; "I've never considered the term democracy with respect to a labor union before, I really don't know what it means". The eleventh Bookbinder responded like most of the LPIU members. One Pressman replied like the bulk of the Bookbinders, and another replied: "That's what we don't have in our union." The remaining six said that they knew what democracy "in theory" was (though they could not define it at all), but they felt the question was irrelevant because democracy is certainly unattainable and probably inefficient in labor unions.

An interesting fact which can be clearly seen on the Table is that for each union, those responses which are not in agreement with the modal response of the local always fall in cells immediately adjacent to the cell which contains the modal responses. The non-modal responses (which are few to begin with) are not random in their variance from the dominant response of their union.

A Visual Summary

At this point it might be helpful to visually represent the distribution of power in each union as suggested by the preceding data. Figure 9 is a visual diagram representing degree of power over all significant decision-making held respectively by the full-time officer, the executive board as a group, and the rank-and-file membership in each of the four locals.

FIGURE 9





Additional Remarks and Interpretation

In any fairly long, open-ended interview, many of the remarks made by the respondents which are not directly in reply to a specific question prove to be quite interesting. What follows is a digest of these remarks for each union. All pertinent remarks of each respondent are included, though in cases of duplication only one of the responses was used. The attempt was made to be inclusive and not selective -- only duplications were deleted. These digests proved to be highly consistent with the other data.

ITU

"All Unions should be run democratically. I can't think of any group who could run the union better than the members themselves. ...If you become an officer, you must be prepared to lose an office just as you got it -- through the vote. ...Policy is not formed in this office (ITU headquarters), in anyone's Chapel Room, or in anyone's living room. It is formed on the floor of the union hall. ...It isn't what the union will do for its members what what the members are going to do together for themselves. ...Our officers are very receptive to the membership, except when it concerns the laws. ...No officer can, under the constitution and by-laws, do what he thinks is best. He must always be guided by the laws and the superior body (the membership). ...An officer could not do what he thought was best in the ITU. If he tried, they'd stop him. ...The membership is always the ultimate governing body. ...If you are working against the jury of the membership, you will not have any effect. ...Our officers are afraid to go to the john without taking a vote first. ...The members always must have the right to be wrong. No matter what, they make the decisions

in our union. ...Disagreement is the test of leadership on the union floor. ...Having the union dictate to you is not much better than the guy you are working for doing it. It defeats its own purpose. ...After all, the officer is there to serve you. He should go along with the membership. They pay his wages and he works for them. ...They are free to exercise their rights as officers according to our by-laws. They can't do very much that they shouldn't do if they stick to our by-laws. ...Suppression through the union would be as bad as suppression from management. ...We're not heard around. We read a lot. We'd feel like a fool if we let somebody tell us how to do something. ...An officer in our local does not have to be 'concerned' for the welfare of the members. He merely carries out what we tell him to do. We don't need any help from an officer. ...The word of an officer carries as much weight as anybody else's. They have as much and as little voice as anybody else. They have one vote and I have one vote -- and they don't even have that in a tie. ...A printer will give you anything, but you can't take anything from him. ...We're a peculiar breed of people. Anybody can become a printer but a printer can't become anything else. ...The ITU isn't a union; it's a cult."

There are at least four clear statements which are implicit in the above. The ITU rank-and-file have strong power over decisions made in their local and over their officers. ITU laws limit the behavior and authority of the officers. There is a strong commitment on the part of ITU members to open disagreement with their officers. ITU members consider themselves to belong to a unique, cult-like organization.

LPIU

"I (the president) see things on a higher level than most people in the union. I have a fuller understanding and greater insight into the problems we face. ...Decisions are ratified in the meetings, not made there. ...Before the regular meeting is the council's meeting and that's where the decisions are made. ...The council is an important body of men. All gripes and problems are brought to them. Their opinion in favor or opposed to a situation is pointed out to the members. The membership then decides for itself. ...They (the members) attend meetings but like sheep. They are led by those that will say something. It is rare that any motion is turned down. ...Members will go along with the officers even if they don't agree on the grounds that it was an honest decision. ...The members listen when I speak -- if they didn't, I shouldn't be an officer. ...Our union is run by a clique. ...A lot of things go on that never come to the union floor. ...We inform the membership of everything. ...Things have been pretty well discussed and gone over by the time they reach the members. ...Our president is a Lithographer, and he does not know about the problems of the Photo-engravers. ...I see no point in unnecessary opposition. ... If you have a good team, stick with it."

It seems safe to make at least these three implications from the above, particularly in view of the previous data. LPIU officers perceive themselves -- and are perceived by their members -- as having high power, at least on the basis of charisma and expertise. Decisions are made at the executive board meetings and the membership generally feels obliged to ratify these decisions on the grounds that the decisions are honest and are probably

based on better information than the general membership possesses. Internal divisiveness and opposition to officers are not considered legitimate, but craft identities are protected.

Bookbinders

"Our membership are very concerned in their union but it does not express itself through the attendance at meetings. They just call the secretary on the phone. ...They are informed about what is happening in the union. It is their right to know what is going on. ...Of course, there will always be a few who run any organization -- an oligarchy. You may as well forget trying to get everyone interested. ...The toughest unions are not run democratically. ...The democratic process is very slow and does not always accomplish the things you want it to. ...I always take my suggestions to the officers. I don't like making a lot of unnecessary noise at the meetings. ...In general, the membership do not know what they want. ...There is no adequate representation in our union. The employers get by with violations of the contract. Our union is afraid to take a stand against management. ...The Executive Board makes the policy, nobody else has much to say about it. Only a vote. It's a fair union, though, and democratic. ...It is suggested to us how we should vote, but we are not told. ...We never make a recommendation to the members at a meeting until we have reached unanimous agreement on the issue in the Executive Board meetings."

The above implies four things about the Bookbinders' Local which seem to be in keeping with the rest of the data. Decision-making is strongly in the hands of the Executive Board of the Local. The officers present a united and prescriptive front to the members in presenting their suggestions and de-

cisions for ratification. There is a belief in the inevitability of oligarchy and the inefficiency of democracy, at least in part because they feel that the general body of members do not usually know what they really want. The vote is not seen as a major power weapon.

Pressmen

"The Executive Board makes the policy; nobody else has much to say about it. Only a vote. ...There is no adequate representation in our union. ...The membership is weak because we have no one to lead it. ...Decisions are made by the executive board and sold to us at the meetings. ...Our local is dominated by one mind and he will sway the minds of the membership to what he thinks is right. If you go to the meetings with the intention of voting against something he wants, your vote won't count. ...When your union falls down as ours is more and more, you lose interest in it because you don't see any future in it for yourself. ...I've been to so many meetings and heard the same old things hashed and rehashed and never any change in attitude or achievement. ...I lost a job for upholding a union law. Ours is a weak union; it affords no protection. ...Appointed positions have greater responsibility than elected ones. You are appointed because you are considered able. I've seen poorly qualified people being elected. Elections are not always democracy at work. They are often popularity contests. ...It takes a wise man to know where to stop and that's hard to do in your so-called democracy, due to the narrow viewpoint of the selfish individual. ...Unionism helps the weak at the expense of the strong. ...If I felt that an issue was of prime importance to the membership as a whole, I would discuss it with the officers so that they would speak along the same lines

to inform the membership that this is what they need. ...I ran for this office to see to it that the union is run in a democratic manner and to make sure that questionable people don't get into office."

The Pressmen evidence high dissatisfaction with their union and powerlessness to change it. The vote is not seen as a tool of power over the officers. The importance of the officers, in particular of the Secretary, in decision-making is very high. There seems to be a general disenchantment with democracy as an effective way to run a union.

All of this seems to verify what we have said before -- namely, that as one goes from the ITU to the LPIU the Bookbinders' Union and the Pressmen's Union (in that order), there is a decrease in the perceived power of rank-and-file members over decision-making, an increase in the power of officers in decision-making, a decrease in the commitment to democracy as an efficient and effective way to run a union, and a decrease in the perceived power of the vote.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this research has been to document the distribution of power within each of these four locals in an attempt to understand what factors account for the differences in their distributions. If one grants that clear and systematic differences in power distribution have been demonstrated, the question remains as to why this is so.

There seem to be two ways in which these locals differ systematically, besides in their power distributions. The first centers around the laws which relate to the duties of the officers. ITU officers have almost no areas of discretion. This is to say that there is almost no area of the officers'

activities which is not regulated by a law (established by referendum) or which is not required by law to be sent to membership vote. The LPIU officers are similarly regulated. Like the ITU officers, they are not free to make major decisions or to establish rules or levy taxes. Nor are they free to make exceptions to rules and contracts.

This is not the case with the officers of the Bookbinder or Pressmen unions. Their activities are not clearly defined or limited by laws, and most union rules and contract stipulations have a clause which allows for their exception provided the Executive Board deems it necessary. For these two unions, then, decision-making is formally defined within the scope of responsibility of the officers, while in the cases of the other two, it clearly is not.

The second difference among the unions concerns legitimacy of opposition to officers. Since ITU candidates for office generally represent only one of the two political parties, an incumbant officer is always aware that there are many members of his union who are not "in his camp", so to speak. He expects that many of the persons he serves will not agree with his beliefs about the best way to run the union. Any decision, election, or the like is expected to be the result of a battle between the opposing groups. This opposition is considered fully legitimate. The ITU two-party political system, then, is a form of internal competition which appears to lead to opposition to officers with respect to decision-making.

In the LPIU, the competition between the two crafts seems to operate in much the same fashion as the political parties of the ITU. That is, when an officer speaks, he realizes that members of the other craft will be suspect of his intentions on the grounds that they might not serve the interests

of both crafts equally well. This internal divisiveness seems to have led to certain legal limitations on the power of officers and at least some covert opposition to them over decision-making. However, this is not considered legitimate in the LPIU. Members and officers alike agree that this conflict is understandable in that one cannot expect craft identities to disappear immediately; but the hope is clearly that, with time, such competition will fade away and the membership can then grant more freedom to their officers. A lack of internal conflict and the consequent delimiting of the authority of officers is considered vital if the new union is to survive.

Both the Pressmen and Bookbinders expressed a similar sentiment. If a union is to be strong, effective and efficient, it must operate with internal harmony and the membership must be behind their officers "all the way".

All of the members of the non-ITU unions expressed amazement at the efficiency and power of the ITU in view of its internal divisiveness. Like Lipset, Trow and Coleman, they think of the ITU as a unique exception to the laws of the way things are in the world. Their system shouldn't work for them and it certainly wouldn't work for anyone else. There are too many rules limiting the ITU officers; they enforce their rules almost mercilessly; they are constantly fighting among each other. Yet they consistently have the most powerful and effective organization and secure the best contracts. It is perhaps unfortunate that the ITU members have perpetuated the idea that they are a "cult", a "unique breed of people". They are believed.

In this respect, the LPIU is perhaps the most interesting case in this comparison. Their merger has proven to be highly successful. Both together are stronger and more powerful than either was before the merger.

It has resulted in higher membership participation and interest. But they do not see that this is in any way a result of competition between craft interests. In fact, they consider this competition the only point of failure in the new union.

This is no matter of insignificance. The LPIU represents the first of a series of planned mergers which, hopefully, will result in an Allied Printing Trades Union. The test of whether other crafts will join in the merger movement depends upon the success of the LPIU. To prove their success, they feel they must show that competition among crafts will not lead to a weak, inefficient union which cannot present a "united front" against management. Since it is fundamentally assumed that craft competition (or any internal strife) DOES hinder efficient and effective unionism, they must show that craft identities will be abandoned.

As might be expected from this, even though there is a clear plan by which the various crafts will be asked to participate in the merger movement, the ITU -- the strongest and most powerful of the printing trades unions -- does not appear on that schedule. The reason is fairly clear. The ITU has demonstrated in the past that it will not belong to any organization which denies it the right to political parties nor in one which takes any power from the hands of the membership so as to extend the areas of authority of the officers. The other crafts, denying any legitimacy to internal strife and strict limitations on officers because of the belief that the result will be inefficiency and ineffectiveness, are unwilling to formally affiliate with a union which would permit political parties (or any other form of institutionalized competition) and deny officers authority to make "necessary"

exceptions to the rules and important decisions in "emergency" situations.

If this impasse is ever to be bridged, the ITU must be "de-cultized", if you will forgive the word. The majority of the ITU respondents said they considered members of their union the elite of the industry and that their system works largely because it is a good system to begin with but also because they are "more intelligent people, by nature of their trade".

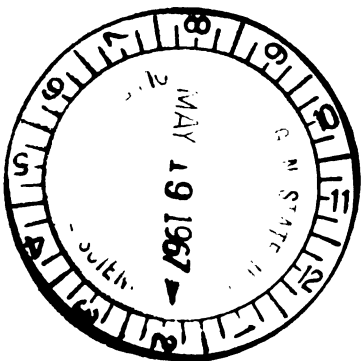
The point being made here is that ITU democracy and effectiveness does not seem to be explained on the grounds that its members are a "unique breed of people" or because of any exceptionally strong friendship structure. Rather, they seem to have an organization such that the members must make their own decisions and in which the officers may not extend their own power; in order to exist on these grounds, they have had to find ways to make democratic channels efficient. This legal structure, plus their firm commitment in the value and legitimacy of opposition to leadership which arises out of their particular form of internal competition, seems to better explain the ITU phenomenon.

The LPIU merger resulted in an organization more like the ITU than any of the other crafts because it was forced to structure the organization -- at least temporarily -- so that power remained in the hands of the general membership in order to win agreement from two opposing crafts on the merger. This seems to suggest that democratic distribution of power can be built into a system almost deliberately and prove to be effective. The ITU's history indicates that once such a system is established, it can endure over time; and that internal opposition does not, in and of itself, make for a weak, inefficient organization.

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