

A STUDY OF PARTICIPATION IN AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER'S UNION

LOCAL UNION PARTICIPATION: A STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER'S  
LOCAL

By

BRETT SCHOENFELDT, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

Copyright by Brett Schoenfeldt, August 2005

MASTER OF ARTS (2005)  
(Work and Society)

McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Local Union Participation: A Study of an Elementary Teacher's Union

AUTHOR: Brett Schoenfeldt, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor C.A.B. Yates

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 41

## **Abstract**

Union participation is an integral part of almost every union. This thesis studies the dimensions of participation in local union activities. The study is based on a survey that was conducted at the Hamilton-Wentworth Elementary Teachers Local. The study looks at participation trends within this union, looking at variables such meeting attendance, voting behaviours, and social event attendance, among others. This study finds that participation in this union is relatively high compared to many unions in comparable studies. It also finds that gender was not a barrier to participation. Women in this union participated at a higher level than men. The study also outlines how union structure issues as well as leadership issues affect participation of the union members. This paper outlines why participation is important to this particular union, as well as why participation is important to unions in general.

## **Acknowledgments**

First, and foremost I would like to thank my thesis advisor Professor Charlotte Yates for her support and guidance over the last few years. I would also like to thank my partner Jodie Roy for all she has done for me, it means a lot. My parents also deserve the utmost gratitude for their assistance and support throughout all the years of my education. To all my family and friends, all your help and love over the years has helped make me what I am today. I would also like to offer a sincere thanks to all the Professors who have helped throughout my university career. Finally thanks to all the faculty, staff, and fellow students of the Labour Studies department at McMaster. Without all of you these thesis would not have been possible, many thanks.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction-</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Literature Review-</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Methodology-</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Findings and Discussion-</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Conclusion-</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix-</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Bibliography-</b>	<b>39</b>

**List of Tables**

**Table 1- 15**

The study of union participation has been an important part of academic research for quite some time. Much of the literature is from the 1970's and the 1980's. After this time period there is a marked decline in studies addressing union participation. However, there has been an increase in literature addressing these issues in the last five to ten years. Literature on organizing has become prevalent because of a perceived crisis related to organized labour. This re-emergence of literature which can be related to union participation makes this study especially relevant.

This study is concerned with participation in local union activities by union members. Participation is an integral part of maintaining unions. Without participation unions would not be able to continue their existence. The marked decline of power for organized labour in North America is well documented. It is especially important now for members to become active and strengthen their unions. Unions need their members to maintain effectiveness, democracy, fairness, and financial feasibility. Unions require the dedication of their members in order to function. Much of the work done within unions is done by members who volunteer their time in order to help the union. Without dedication many of these activities would become very difficult. Activities such as attending meetings, attending social functions, voting in union elections, reading union literature, serving on union committees, and a variety of other actions are what make up union participation. These activities are essential to the success of unions and therefore union participation is a pressing concern for unions. Democracy within unions gives working people more power. They gain power over their own working lives. It allows them to grow as people and as workers. This in turn strengthens unions. Strong members lead to strong unions. Strong unions require democracy among the ranks of their members. Why do members participate in union activities? Why do they abstain from participating? These are important questions that this study will address.

This study evaluates one union in particular, the Hamilton Wentworth Elementary Teachers Local (HWETL). The leaders of this union were concerned that the union suffered from low rates of participation. They reported low attendance at meetings and experienced little interest in union social activities such as dances and dinners. There were several reasons why this lack of participation concerned the union's leaders. First, they felt that a greater involvement by the union members would strengthen the union by creating a more democratic union with a higher degree of solidarity. Secondly, the leadership felt that they could obtain a more diverse range of opinions from higher participation levels. This was important for the union and for the members because this could bring in members who share opinions that they may consider unimportant to leadership. Finally, they felt higher participation would ensure that the union represented all members and not just a small group of highly active members.

This study is an exploratory piece of research that will look into some main research questions. Why do members participate? What are the barriers to participation? What techniques can be used in order to motivate members to participate? How can participation, in this teachers union specifically and all unions in general, be increased? What role does gender play in shaping rates of participation? What role does race play in determining levels, and possibly types, of participation?

First, a review of the relevant literature will be presented. This will allow for previous findings to be compared and contrasted with the findings of this study. The existing literature may also help to explain some of the results that are apparent from the survey. Next, the methodology will be presented. This will set out how the information was gathered and outline the details of the survey used in this study. Next, the findings and discussion about the findings will be presented. This will allow for the presentation and analysis of the relevant data found in the survey. These data will help to answer the main research questions posed earlier. Finally, a conclusion will outline some prescriptions for the union in question, i.e. ways they could try to increase participation rates.

### **Literature Review**

The participation of union members in their respective unions is an important part of a union's survival and overall health. Unions depend on their members for multiple actions, which can be very simple (such as dues paying) or can be far more active (such as actively participating on the union executive). Unions are voluntary organizations and are heavily dependent on their members in order to achieve the goals of the unions and of the union members. "Since the ability of union locals to attain their goals is generally based on the members' loyalty, belief in the objectives of organized labor, and willingness to perform services voluntarily, commitment is part of the very fabric of unions" (Sverke and Kuruvilla 1995, P. 505). These scholars also assert that commitment leads to union participation. Participation involves a behaviour and an ideology. If a member is ideologically committed to the union they are more likely to become involved. Union participation has become increasingly important in recent years because of the apparent decline in union power and activism. For these reasons, lack of participation has become a pressing concern for both North American and British union leaders (and potentially some others as well) (Kelloway and Barling, 1993, P. 262). Unions must build and maintain member attachment to the union. This is fundamental for union strength, internal governance and effectiveness ( Fullagar, Ghallager, Gordon, and Clark, 1995, P. 147).

#### ***Definition of Participation***

In order to study participation, one must have a working definition of what is meant by union participation. According to Lawrence, there is no common definition of participation and this creates difficulties when trying to study it (Lawrence, 1994, P. 11). This section will outline some conceptions of what is meant by participation and conclude with the definition that this study will use. Participation is a behavioural construct. That is, union participation is based on the behaviours of union members (Kelloway and Barling P. 262). It is not enough for a member to have a certain attitude, e.g. union attachment, if they do not act upon it. Union participation must involve action.

There are several models used to classify different types of participation. Mclean, Parks, et al. identify three dimensions of participation: administrative, intermittent, and supportive (Redman and Snape, 2004, P. 847). Kelly and Kelly use a two factor model which identifies participation as easy or difficult (Redman and Snape, P. 847). These models show the multi-dimensionality of union participation (Redman and Snape, P.

862). Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton divide union members into several categories: reluctant members, card carriers/passive dues payers, selective activists, apolitical stalwarts, and ideological activists (Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton, 1981). Although there are many ways to divide participation, what is important here is that there are different types of behaviours that can be classified as union participation. Any definition of participation must take into account the fact that participation is a varied activity, which can be constituted by a large range of behaviours.

The first issue that needs to be tackled is how to differentiate union participation from other behaviours. There is considerable debate over this which has led to several definitions of participation. Ramaswamy asserts that union participation is “any interaction between members or between them and their leaders over (work-related) issues” (Nicholson et al, P. 17). This definition is useful, but it could be interpreted as too narrow because of the focus on work related factors. Union participation can take routes that are not necessarily work related. If a union holds social functions it should still be considered participation even if work related issues are not discussed. Social interaction, even if not work related, can garner solidarity between union members and hence, contributes to the union’s effectiveness. Anderson claims that participation is encompassed by attendance at meetings and voting in elections (Anderson, 1979, P. 19). He claims that unions use the “town meeting” model whereby any member can choose to participate or to abstain from participating (Anderson, P. 18). This definition also ignores social activities, as well as some other more formal activities (e.g. reading literature). Dickenson claims that participation may take place within formal institutions such as meeting, elections, and plebiscites, or within informal structures such as parties, factions, occupational groups, inter-union links, shop-steward committees, workplaces, and the public (Dickenson, 1982, P. 32). This definition is broader and more useful. It captures the idea that participation can take place through informal avenues as well as through formal institutions. Using a similar definition Redman and Snape identify participation as the behavioural involvement of members in activities such as participation in administrative and democratic structures, day to day discussion of union affairs, reading literature, and taking part in union campaigns and industrial action (Redman and Snape, P. 847). This definition, like Dickenson’s, captures the multi-dimensionality of union participation.

By combining these definitions a strong working definition of union participation can be formulated. It is important to encompass the different aspects of participation, i.e. formal and informal. However, it is also important not to make the definition too broad because this can make the definition less useful. For example, some actions between union members could be considered participation because multiple union members are involved, but these actions could be totally unrelated to the union. Fellow union members could develop close friendships because of their shared employment. If they, for example, joined a sports team or club together this could easily fall outside the realm of union participation. For this study, participation is the formal or informal interaction between union members or between union members and their leaders. However, these actions must be connected to the union in some way. That is, they must be directly related to the union or indirectly improve the state of the union in some way.

### *How to Measure Participation*

It is important to establish a way to measure participation in order to study it more effectively. According to some studies, intention to participate sheds light on actual participative activities. Redman and Snape argue that intent to participate is important because participation represents willingness and opportunity. Members may intend to participate (i.e. are willing), but may not have the opportunity (Redman and Snape, P. 848). Zinni cites numerous social psychological and industrial relations literature that support the measurement of intentional participation (e.g. Ajzen 1991, McShane 1986, Klandermans 1986, etc) (Zinni, 2002, Pp. 33-34). Zinni also claims that behavioural intention is the best indicator of actual participation (Zinni, P. 15). It is clear that some authors argue that participation can be inferred by the intention of union members to participate. However, it is also important to study actual behaviours. Intentions can be helpful, but misleading in some cases. Some scholars argue that it is more important to study actual actions as opposed to intentions. A good measure of participation should measure both actual participation, as well as intentions to participate. This can infer future participation or could outline barriers that cause members to be unable to act upon their intentions. It is also important to keep both formal and informal measurements in mind because not all actions that support or further unions will be official formal actions. For example, older members might talk to newer members about why the union is important. This is not a formal action, but certainly benefits the union. In developing my measurement of participation I have broken it down into actual formal participation, intentional formal participation, actual informal participation, and intentional informal participation.

#### *Actual Formal Participation*

Actual Formal participation is probably the most commonly used, and arguably the best, way to measure union participation. Many academic works have measured actual formal participation by union members. In his study, Anderson uses variables that measure actual formal participation. He uses meeting attendance, union committee service, voting rates in previous elections, how many members campaigned in previous elections, readership of the union newspaper, and grievance filing to measure participation (Anderson, P. 23). Inkson uses attendance at meetings, voting in elections, and voting at job delegate elections in order to measure actual formal participation (Inkson, 1980, P. 447). Fosh uses attendance at branch meetings, frequency of voting, grievances, and education on trade unionism as measures of participation (Fosh, 1981, P. 12). These studies (and many others) show that there are certain variables that need to be examined in a study of formal participation. Anderson uses a fairly exhaustive list of variables and is a good model to emulate. However, Inkson's idea of measuring trade union education is also useful and could be combined with Anderson's variables. In my survey, I used a definition that combined these variables in hopes of achieving an all-encompassing measurement that shed light on participation in formal activities.

### *Intentional Formal Participation*

Intentional formal participation is the intention of members to participate in formal union activities. For example, a member who plans on participating on the local executive within a certain time period would be an instance where intentional informal participation is taking place. Metochi uses union loyalty and willingness to participate as indicators of the intention to participate. She uses ten factors to assess union loyalty and four items to measure willingness to participate (Metochi, 2002, Pp. 95-96). She notes that “employing willingness to participate as a proxy for union participation provides an opportunity to focus more closely on the intention to participate” (Metochi, P. 96). In Zinni’s work, she also measures intention to participate in formal union activities (Zinni, P. 175). Metochi notes that there are differences in the determinants of intentions as compared to the determinants of actual participation. This allows us to distinguish between causes of intentional participation and influences on actual participation (Metochi, P. 96). To measure intentional formal participation one would use common variables that indicate participation. However, the question would be phrased something like: do you intend to attend union meetings in the next year.

### *Actual Informal Participation*

Actual informal participation is participation in informal actions (e.g. talking to other union members) that has already transpired. For example, some stating: I have talked to union members about working conditions in the last year, would have been involved in actual informal participation. Fosh measures actual informal participation by measuring whether members talk about union affairs with other workers and how frequently members talked to union officials (Fosh, P. 13). Zinni uses variables such as helping another member with grievances, problems, or campaigns (Zinni, P. 175). It is important to measure actual informal participation in terms of social interaction between union members. Social interaction builds unity and consciousness and therefore is important in a union setting. A good measure should include any social interaction within the union environment that actively helps achieve the union’s goals. Variables used to measure actual informal participation should include the above, as well as attendance at union social functions (e.g. union picnics, dances, etc).

### *Intentional Informal Participation*

Intentional Informal Participation is not measured in very many studies. To measure this type of participation one should use the same variables as used in actual informal participation, but should concentrate on intended actions.

Although intention to participate can be useful this study concentrates more on actual participation. It is easy for someone to say they will participate, but it can be conceived to be more accurate to measure what members actually do. Having a working definition of participation and establishing ways to measure participation is important, but is also very important to look at what factors either motivate members to participate or deter them from participating.

### **Barriers to Participation**

Metochi believes that individual willingness to take collective action rests on a calculation of what costs and benefits of making a certain action encompass (Metochi, P. 88). This is not purely a cost benefit analysis because these decisions are also affected by social factors (Metochi, P. 50). For example, members may want to participate, but face systemic barriers such as racism or sexism preventing them from doing so. The process is mitigated so that even if the benefits outweigh the costs there may be social barriers, such as childcare, that prevent participation. Participation decisions can be better understood if one takes costs, benefits, and mitigating social factors into account. Many factors influence participation decisions. What particular barriers inhibit participation are important to understanding why some do not participate. This section will outline broad barriers, barriers to women, and barriers to minoritites.

#### *Overall Barriers*

There are some barriers to participation that could influence all members regardless of their gender, ethnicity, race, etc. Participation in union affairs is a cost to union members' leisure and family time (Fosh, P. 1). Therefore, some authors argue that union participation is related to a cost benefit analysis. If time is used participating in union matters, time must be lost in other areas of life. If members deem participation less worthwhile than other uses of time, then they will not actively participate in the union. Hence, members must feel some sort of gratification for participation in order to be inclined to take part. Of course, the issue of leisure time is rooted in class and race based differences. This challenges the idea of leisure as an overall barrier; however, despite the fact that leisure is different for different members it can be generalized to the whole union population because everyone faces this issue, even if not to the same degree. Fosh notes that participation in any voluntary organization is generally low (Fosh, P.1). It is also noted in many works that union participation is a minority pursuit (e.g. Flood, Willman, and Turner, P.110).

The size of unions has been identified as a factor that influences participation. Traditional bureaucratic unions, which are large organizations, generally have a lower participation rate than their smaller counterparts (Metochi, P. 103). Other studies also show that the larger the union, the lower the rate of participation by members (e.g. Perline and Lorenz, 1970, P. 435). It seems that larger unions may be less responsive to individuals and may leave individuals feeling powerless. This can lead to the "not making a difference mentality." Members end up feeling that they do not make a difference so they do not participate. Conversely, because of the large size of unions they may feel that their individual participation is taken care of by other members who think the same way they do (Gruelle and Parker, 2000, P. 98). Members may also feel that the union is large enough that its power does not depend on them. It is also important for members to feel that their union is effective in order to bolster participation. Members who do not feel that they could influence the union are very unlikely to undertake actions such as attending meetings or voting in elections (Gruelle and Parker, P. 85). Members are also unlikely to participate if the union is unsuccessful at achieving the goals of the members (Gruelle and Parker, P. 98).

Union participation is also affected by the leadership of the union. It is important that the leadership of unions is on the same page as the members. For example, when unions use the organizing model (discussed in more detail below) it can become problematic if the leaders support it, but the members are skeptical or oppositional (Fletcher and Hurd, 2000, P. 60). The organizing model can sometimes lead to the union neglecting its members, i.e. the union is more concerned with recruiting new members than servicing old members. Members are unlikely to participate if they feel negatively about the strategies leaders are implementing. It can also be problematic when progressive leaders are separated from a more conservative rank and file (Fletcher and Hurd, P. 64). If the members do not respect or agree with the leaders there is little reason for them to get involved in union activities. Radical leaders can alienate more conservative members and cause them to withdraw from participation.

Demographic variables can also become barriers to participation. Demographics of a union can especially damage participation if the members are highly dissimilar. Demographic dissimilarity along lines such as gender, race, or age can lead to negative effects on member's attitudes and perception of the union (Bacharach and Bamberger, 2004, P. 388). This can be related to the similarity attraction theory. This theory states that similar demographic characteristics mean that individuals will be more likely to have common experiences and attitudes. In turn this will create more personal interaction between members and increase their solidarity and cohesiveness (Bacharach and Bamberger, P. 390). Recent information still shows this to be true. Racial homogeneity has positive consequences for union participation and active participation (Bacharach and Bamberger, P. 387). It is also noted that when a group is dominant within the union that group tends to participate more. When women constitute a large proportion of a union, their participation is generally higher than when they are outnumbered. Even more pronounced is the willingness for women to lead when there is little male competition (Nelson, P. 26). Gender consciousness and solidarity between women tends to get more women involved. Women recruiting women also helps females to become more active in trade unions (Bulger and Mellor, Pp. 38-39). This may also be true for other minority groups. Union participation can be affected by the characteristics of the groups that unions represent.

However, there is some evidence that these demographic obstacles can be overcome. This is extremely important because if diversity is a barrier to participation, we need to address and change this problem. Fletcher and Hurd assert that the more events that members attend the more that gender and race constructs can be broken down. Unity can be built and attitudes can be changed through events and interaction (Fletcher and Hurd, P. 66). Kurtz also shows us how multi-identity movements can be built (Kurtz, 2002). It should also be noted that participation is affected by the degree to which members are a majority, or conversely a minority, within a work group. The majority tend to participate at a higher rate than the minority (Bacharach and Bamberger, P. 388).

In addition, there needs to be some attention given to the work environment itself when looking at barriers to participation. Some literature has explained the link between militancy among professionals and the organizational context in which they work

(Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley, 1990, P. 585). It is likely that this analysis could be extended to all types of jobs although the specific influences would likely differ. The organizational context of the workplace can be a barrier to participation. For example, part time workers exhibit very low participation (Lawrence, P. 15).

#### *Gender Barriers*

Overall, studies show that women's participation, in unions is lower than men's. The participation of women is low in absolute, as well as in relative terms. A national survey in the US showed that 90.3 percent of top union officers were men (Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton, 1999, P. 334). So what are the main reasons for the lack of participation of women? There are four main barriers to women's participation in union affairs: community, family, union, and work barriers (Bulger and Mellor, 1997, P. 936). According to Bulger and Mellor, family barriers dominate the other barriers (Bulger and Mellor, P. 938). An example is child care. Women may feel that participating in union activities is worthwhile, but lack a babysitter and adequate daycare arrangements. In the end she must not participate despite the desire to do so (Zinni, P. 17). Zinni shows that members with children under twelve years old participate less than members without children under twelve (Zinni, P. 133). Kyllonen echoes this sentiment by asserting that members without children are more likely to participate (Kyllonen, 1951, P. 530). Traditional gender roles (e.g. the triple day) can make it difficult for women to find time to participate (Kirton and Healy, 1999, P. 36).

There are some specific characteristics that some women possess that seem to overcome the barriers to participating. Women leaders tend to be single and without young children (Lawrence, P. 15). Women union leaders are also usually economically independent. They usually have no spouse or a spouse with a lower income than they (Lawrence, P. 16). Finally, women leaders usually identify with feminist politics. This can lead them to seek union leadership (Lawrence, P. 17). It is important to look at the demographics of union members in order to better understand their participation decisions.

There are some family barriers that can affect the participation of both men and women. Of course these barriers are more pressing for women, who usually undertake more than their fair share of domestic chores. Those who lack family or kinship relationships are more likely to participate in union affairs (Kyllonen, 530). People who are single and childless are also more likely to participate (Kyllonen, P. 530). However, Fosh states that marriage leads to higher participation (Fosh, P. 18). Kyllonen also notes that the more time members spend with relatives, the less they will participate (Kyllonen, P. 531). Community aspects can be important as well. Members who share geographic and community closeness are likely to participate more in union affairs. Members who are in contact when not at work also tend to participate more (Spinrad, P. 240).

The time and place of meetings can also inhibit women from participating. The times and places that unions schedule meetings can make it very difficult for women to attend (Munro, 1999, P. 19). Meetings are often in the evening, which can conflict with the domestic role many women take on. Some union meetings are also held in locations women might feel uncomfortable (e.g. bars, etc, although this practice was probably

much more common in the past). This can be amplified in some areas by the fear of walking the streets or subways at night once a meeting is over (Nelson, 1975, P.32).

There can also be a problem with women having a lack of confidence and experience in trade unions (Munro, P. 19). Unions have traditionally been male dominated and have excluded issues important to women (Munro, P. 1). Because women have been excluded from union activities and therefore lack experience leading and participating, this results in a vicious circle of low participation as women withdraw their participation (Munro, P. 18). This idea can be illustrated through several responses obtained in Nelson's research. When asked why they do not run for election, women gave responses including feeling inferior to men, feeling they are not natural leaders, and feeling that men dominate. Strangely enough not a single respondent cited not winning as a reason for not running in the election (Nelson, P.34). There is also a possibility put forward by Nelson that women do not participate because they are not interested. Women may be uninterested because the issues the union takes up are not "women's issues". They may also lack interest because they feel ineffectual. Finally, Nelson proposes that many were not interested in the "same way as men", i.e. they are simply not interested in unions and/or participating in general.

The socialization of women could also play a part in the lack of participation they show. Women are not socialized to be assertive and competitive, which are traits often associated with union participation (Bulger and Mellor, P. 936). This fact coupled with the systematic discrimination, lack of confidence, and lack of experience can further limit active participation by women in unions (Bulger and Mellor, P. 939). Clearly extra barriers exist for women in unions, and these barriers need to be addressed.

### *Minorities*

Ethnic minorities also have notoriously low participation rates. This is especially true in regards to formal activities (Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton, P. 334). Getting any member to participate is a difficult task, but it is even more difficult to get minority members to participate (Hoyman and Stallworth, 1987, P. 324). Yet research by Hoyman and Stallworth seem to contradict this argument. Hoyman and Stallworth note that blacks participate in politics more than the average white person with comparable education, income, and occupation. They explain this with reference to the group consciousness that blacks have built up over time. Blacks identify closely with one another and their common problems and believe that group participation can bring about group gain. However, Hoyman and Stallworth note that most theories on union participation show the opposite, i.e. whites participate more than blacks. However, in their study they found this to be untrue. Blacks participated about equally to white members, although they were slightly under-represented in top positions (Hoyman and Stallworth, P. 325). It is possible that this under-representation in top leadership could be what deters many minorities from participating. However, leadership and participation may not be that tightly linked in this way. Lack of minority leaders is not just a phenomenon apparent in one specific union, but is an institutional problem. In a national US survey it was shown that 92.3 percent of top officers were of Euro-American descent. This suggests that there

are systemic barriers prohibiting minorities from participation in unions. Racism, sexism, and classism still exist within unions and can prevent the participation of certain individuals.

### **Motivators of Participation**

This next section will outline factors that motivate member participation in union activities. Through a review of the literature, three broad categories that increase participation can be outlined, that is, individual factors, group factors, and leadership/union factors.

#### *Individual Factors*

There are many traits that individuals may possess that make their participation in union affairs more likely. For example, attitudes, demographics, and socialization can all affect participation in union affairs. Personal attitudes can be a large motivating factor for individuals. Union loyalty is one trait that may trigger participation (Metochi, P. 102). Favourable attitudes towards a union tend to increase participation, especially if members believe that the union is effective and democratic (Anderson, P. 23). It is also important that members believe in unionism, that is, they have a pro-union attitude. An intrinsic belief in trade unionism tends to increase participation, as well as lead to longevity of participation (Fosh, P. 72).

An individual's union commitment is related to union participation (Tetrick, 1995, P. 586). Union commitment is generally perceived as a two-dimensional construct. It is comprised of an attitudinal dimension and a behavioural dimension (Sverke and Kuruvilla, P. 507). Union commitment is defined as the extent to which members want to maintain membership in the union, members are willing to work for the union, and members believe in the objectives of organized labour in general and of specific unions on a microcosmic level (Sverke and Kuruvilla, P. 506). In order for a union to build commitment and maintain that commitment in the long term it must provide evidence that the union values and is committed to its members (Tetrick, P. 584). Early union commitment has been shown to be related to commitment ten years later. Early participation, however, does not necessarily mean participation ten years later, but early commitment is indicative of participation ten years later (Fullagar, Gallager, Clark, and Carroll, 2004, Pp.731-734). Therefore, early union commitment is very important. Early commitment predicts later citizenship behaviours, which are essential to union revival (Fullagar et al, P 734). The level of union commitment is fundamental to the perceived strength, internal governance, and democracy of trade unions (Fullagar, Gallager, Gordon, and Clark, 1995, P. 147). It is very important for unions to foster certain attitudes in order for participation to be increased. If unions can get members to be loyal, committed, and supportive of unions in general, they will see an increase in participation.

Younger union members also can exhibit different rates of participation. An especially relevant example to this study shows that young teachers are more militant than older teachers. This is thought to be because older teachers are more conservative and that younger teachers are aware of the successes of more militant unions (Bacharach, Bamberger, and Connely, P. 571). However, militancy is not the only, nor necessarily the most important, dimension of participation. Kyllonen asserts that the longer a person

is a member of a union the more they will participate (Kyllonen, P. 529). Anderson, also contradicts this, stating that the older the member is the more likely he/she will participate (Anderson, P. 24).

There are several characteristics of the workplace and work in general that affect participation. Kyllonen shows that better jobs tend to garner more participation. Higher wages, higher production rates, higher quality of work (that is work done by the worker) (Kyllonen, Pp. 528-530), and higher job satisfaction all lead to higher participation (Spinrad, P. 241). It should also be noted that smaller factories tend to have higher participation rates. High participation is also apparent in workplaces that allow social interaction between employees on a regular basis (Spinrad, P. 239).

How members are socialized can also affect their participation decisions. Members who tend to involve themselves in voluntary associations or more social activities are more likely to participate in union activities (Fosh, P. 27). Activist members are more likely to have more union friends, more interest in political issues, and are more likely to have a social democratic political stance (Flood, Turner, and Willman, P. 110). It seems that people who are brought up in union families and with values that are complimentary to organized labour are more likely to participate. However, there is some evidence that a new order is emerging in which members become active on an issue-specific basis (Flood, Turner, and Willman, P. 113). Politics may be heading from a solid organized mass to more fluid alliances between people. How this would play out in a union is still uncertain.

#### *Group Factors*

Other factors that affect union participation have to do with group dynamics. Unions with members that favour collective forms of representation and action in order to solve problems or achieve desired ends are more likely to be active (Metochi, P. 102). Groups that are cohesive and favour solidaristic orientations are also more prone to participate (Inkson, P. 430).

#### *Leadership and Union Factors*

Union leadership is vital for fostering positive attitudes about a union and translating these attitudes into participation within the union (Metochi, P. 88). Day to day activities, such as consulting members, influences and motivates participation (Metochi, P. 102). Accessibility of leaders and stewards is important for influencing participation (Bulger and Mellor, P. 95, Perline and Lorenz, P. 437). Leaders must also be sure to accept and encourage initiative, and to recognize individual contributions (Gruelle and Parker, P. 99). It is also important for leaders to organize events so that they are easy to attend. It is also helpful to involve families in some union activities (Gruelle and Parker, P. 100). It can also be very helpful if leaders personally invite members to events and to show appreciation for all levels of participation (Gruelle and Parker, P. 102).

It is also important that leadership ensures that members perceive the union as just and fair. Leaders need to be concerned with undertaking morally appropriate conduct while working in the name of the union. This is referred to in the literature as

interactional justice (Fuller and Hestor, 2001, P.1100). Members need to perceive the union as fair or else they will not participate. This is especially true for groups that are at a high risk for injustice (e.g. women and minorities) (Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton, P. 332). Minorities and women will perceive justice as an important consequence of participation. If they feel that justice will come out of participation, they are much more likely to participate (Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton, P. 335). Mellor et al. found that this link was strongest with minority women and still strong with white women. However, they found no link for ethnic men (Mellor, Barnes-Farrell, and Stanton, Pp. 341-342).

Workplace justice is also important for union participation. Workers are more likely to be active in their union if they feel that management is treating them unjustly (Brown, Johnson, and Jarley, P. 544). However, workplace injustice is not sufficient to produce group action. Leaders must build individual injustice perceptions into group action. They must promote group identity and cohesion and legitimate the actions the union undertakes as promoting justice or redressing an unjust act (Brown, Johnson, and Jarley, P. 545).

Individual socialization has already been covered, but socialization into the union is also important to encourage participation. Organizational socialization practices that communicate the values, norms, and expected roles of the organization tend to increase commitment and hence participation. There are two types of socialization: individual and institutional. It has been shown that individual socialization is more effective. Hence, it is important for individual members who are active to try and get new members involved. New members involved in participation through a mentor are more likely to continue participating (Fullagar, Gallager, Gordon, Clark, Pp. 147-155). Skarlicki and Latham also find that individual and institutional actions are required to promote participation (Skarlicki and Latham, P. 162).

### **Solutions**

When studying union participation, and particularly when studying how participation can be increased, it is important to look at some solutions that have been proposed by previous academic works. Some findings suggest that union commitment will lead to union participation. This means that the way forward would be to appeal to members on the basis of solidarity and effective commitment (Redman and Snape, P. 863). Redman and Snape also assert that through an analysis of US literature they found that pro-union attitudes have a stronger impact on union commitment than instrumental attitudes. Therefore, in order to foster commitment and participation, unions should move away from their traditional servicing logic (Redman and Snape, P. 846). In a similar vein, Brown, Johnson, and Jarley argue that the organizing model can lead to higher participation. This model involves decentralized decision making, the use of more volunteers, and strategic grievance filing that helps build a working class consciousness. The organizing model helps members to identify with, and participate in their union (Brown, Johnson, and Jarley, 544).

There are also more specific solutions proposed for the problem of low participation by women. Lawrence suggests that unions need to do two things to get women to participate more effectively. First, they must teach women to participate in

union structures. Second, unions must change their structures to be more conducive to female participation (Lawrence, P. 23). She also suggests that unions find a way to alleviate child and home responsibilities. For example, unions could provide daycare, hold meetings during work time, and make meetings in more accessible locations for women (Lawrence, P. 30). Finally, unions could create some kind of a quota system to ensure an adequate number of women in leadership (Lawrence, P. 33).

### **Methodology**

The union studied in this paper was accessed through a field placement courtesy of McMaster University. The union needed a student to look into the problems they were experiencing with participation. A paper was written previously and this is a continuation of this previous research. The survey was originally administered in early 2004 (January-February).

This study utilizes a survey as its main research tool. The survey questions were developed based on literature on union participation, ideas from the leaders of the union being studied, as well as other relevant surveys. Given that this survey was conducted initially as part of a placement the questions were approved by the president of the union before being distributed. The surveys were distributed at a general membership meeting to all that attended. Members who did not attend were given surveys by their union stewards. The union members were given a brief explanation of the survey and the goals of the research. The survey involved 28 questions of varying formats. The union members were able to fill the surveys out and return them to their steward. However, many members also mailed surveys directly to me. The response rate for this survey was very good. Approximately two thousand surveys were distributed to the members of this union. Four hundred and four surveys were returned. This is a return rate of about twenty percent.

Delbert Miller has written a book that sets out guidelines for research design and social measurement. According to Miller's research many surveys have higher response rates than this one; however this relates to mail-in surveys, which may not be totally comparable. It is also notable that when return postage was not provided the rate of response was similar to what was experienced here (Miller, 1991, P. 147). Nonetheless, many of the returned surveys in this case were not mailed in at all, but given to the stewards, who returned them to the union office. The number of surveys collected is also high enough that valuable information can be extracted from them.

The surveys were conventionally coded in order to be analyzed using SPSS statistics software. The methods of analysis were simple frequencies and cross-tabulations done through the SPSS software. These results are the main data used in the following analysis.

The survey data is supplemented with research conducted using other methods. Qualitative observations made from meetings with union leaders also provided some relevant information. Numerous executive meetings, steward meetings, and one general membership meeting were attended by the researcher. Observations from these meetings provide some useful information and will be included in the results and analysis of the research.

There were also some open ended questions on the survey that allowed members to write in responses. These results were grouped into certain categories in order to be analyzed. For example, the question “do you attend social functions? Why or why not?” had responses grouped into categories such as “not interested,” “no time,” “I never hear about them,” etc. This data was helpful in interpreting the empirical data.

Finally, the surveys were also studied for written responses that were not direct responses to any of the survey’s questions. Many members found it necessary to write in additional comments on their surveys. These comments were often very intriguing and informative; hence, they are included in the findings and discussion. Next, the findings of the survey will be presented and analyzed in order to shed some light on the main research questions.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Why do union members participate? What are the barriers to participation? How can participation be increased? This section will outline the findings related to the survey information, as well as other information gathered during this study in order to answer the relevant questions about union participation. This section will look at the demographic makeup of HWETL, overall participation trends, participation trends in relation to gender, race, and disabilities, the structure of the union, and how the leadership of the union affects participation. These results should give some insight into how participation works.

#### *Demographics*

This section will present the overall demographic makeup of the members who responded to the survey. It will cover statistics on age, marriage and family, and years in the union.

One demographic factor that might be linked to the issue of union participation is age. 49.5% of the respondents were 45 years old or older. This left 50.5% under 45 with only 0.8% or 3 respondents who were under 25 years old. It seems that the average age of the members is fairly high. According to the literature this could mean a couple of things. Generally, many studies found that older members tend to participate more than younger members. This should mean a higher rate of participation in this union than unions with a younger membership. Yet, Bacharach, Bamberger, and Connely assert that younger teachers should be more militant. This might mean more participation by older members in this union but less militant behaviours. These issues will be examined further.

Another demographic factor that influences participation is family status. This survey examined two dimensions of this issue: marital status and the presence of dependents, i.e. children or other dependents. 68.9% of respondents were married, 14.3% were single, 9.9% were divorced, and 6.9% had long term partners. The majority of respondents had children. 65.7% have at least one child. Of the members with children 78.9% had at least one child living with them. Of the adults with children 42.8% of the children were 15 and over, 14.1% were 5 and under, 8.2% were 8-12, 7.7% were 12-15, and 7.4% were 5-8 years old. The vast majority of the children were over 15. This might imply that members could participate at a higher level. Children of that age could be left

alone for an evening in order for the member to attend a union event. However, the second highest percentage was of those under 5 years old. Although a significantly smaller group than 15 and over, this group would certainly be expected to find family responsibilities a constraint on participation. There are some conflicting accounts in the literature concerning the impact of marital status and children on participation. Some studies (Anderson, 1979) found that marriage increased participation, while other studies (Kyllonen, 1951) found that single members were more likely to participate. Similar disagreement exists on relationships between children and participation. Some assert that members with no children or older children will participate more (Kyllonen, 1951). However, one study found that members with younger children participate more (Spinrad, 1960). Other dependents may also have important effects on participation. 7.4% of members have dependents that are not children. 71.3% of these dependents are elderly people versus 21.4% who are other dependents. It would be expected that members with dependents would have a harder time finding the time and will to participate.

Finally it is important to look at the length of time each member has spent in the union. Generally, the literature tends to argue that members who have been in the union longer tend to participate more often than new members. See Table 1 for information on members' tenure in the union. Table 1 shows that 41% of members have been in the union longer than 15 years. It seems that there is a concentration of new members, but it is relatively small. Most members have been in the union longer than 10 years. This should lead to more participation if the literature is correct.

**TABLE 1**

Number of Years in the Union	Percentage of Respondents
0-5	23.3%
6-10	16.4%
11-15	19.3%
16-20	12.7%
21-25	11.1%
26-30	11.6
31-35	5.1%
36+	0.5%

### **Member Participation**

To assess the relationship between the above factors and participation, I need a general picture of participation in this union. This can be determined by looking at certain measures of participation. My survey used union attendance, voting, running in elections, various measures of participation members undertook in the last 5 years, as well as various measures of activities members were undertaking currently, the filing of grievances, the reading of bulletins, social activity attendance, socializing with union members outside work, and talking about union issues outside of the workplace as measures of union participation.

#### *Member Participation*

In the following discussion, survey results on participation are presented. By comparing the results of this study with findings in other literature it should be possible to establish whether the teachers union in question actually has a low rate of participation. It is important to remember that participation is considered a minority pursuit by most academics writing on the subject. Participation activities cover a broad range, from actions that are relatively passive to actions that are highly active. Some participation, such as reading union literature are relatively easy and not very time consuming, while other activities like being on the local executive involve a great deal of dedication. This section will start with the more passive forms of participation and move its way to more active forms.

One aspect of participation that is strikingly high is the reading of union bulletins. 75.8% of members often or always read the union newsletter. Only 4.7% never or rarely read the newsletter. Kelloway and Barling state that 90% of members will often read union literature (Kelloway and Barling, P. 264). Anderson found that 85.8% of respondents read the union newspaper in the last year (Anderson, P. 23). However, he did not test how often members read the newspaper in the last year so this rate is probably artificially high. Kuruvilla and Fiorito found that 20% read the union newspaper in the last year (Kuruvilla and Fiorito, P. 557). It certainly seems that this union is comparable to previous findings. One aspect that should not be overlooked is whether teachers are reading this literature for union information or for more general professional information on teaching. However, by looking through a copy of the bulletin it is clear that it is almost purely information on union affairs. Clearly members are interested and seemingly supportive of their union, but many of these supporters are not willing to be more actively involved. They can read the bulletin in the comfort of their home and when it is convenient for them. It is also important to note that these bulletins contain important union information that most members would probably want to be aware of. For example, a newsletter that was reviewed contained information regarding the annual general meeting, collective agreement information, the new teacher orientation, and information on social events. Reading the newsletter may be a way to get this information without having to attend meetings. Having said this, a very small number of respondents to the survey complained about the union literature. One member stated that the union was too confrontational and that the memos are negative and do not just state facts or positions. However, the majority of members seemed interested in the union newsletters.

Meeting attendance is one important measure that can establish levels of participation in a union. Kelloway and Barling state that 90% of members do not attend meetings or participate in union affairs (Kelloway and Barling, P. 262). In his study, Kyllonen found that the average meeting attendance was only 40 members out of 208 or about 19%. Flood, Turner, and Willman found that 20% of members attend union general meetings (Flood, Turner, and Willman, P. 111). Inkson's study of four unions had varied results as far as meeting attendance was concerned. The members in the four unions attended meetings regularly at a rate of 88%, 59%, 96%, and 19% respectively,

while the rest of the members never or rarely attended meetings. In his study, timing of meetings was an important determinant of meeting attendance; the two unions with the highest participation rates held their meetings during work hours at the workplace (Inkson, P. 447) Therefore, participation rates in the other two unions (59% and 19% above) in Inkson's study are more relevant to any comparisons done here. How does participation in HWETL compare with these findings? Unfortunately, the union does not collect data on participation. Therefore it is necessary to rely on my survey results. According to the survey, 20.9% of members always or often attended union meetings whereas 52.3% never or rarely attended union meetings, and 26.7% sometimes attended union meetings. The meeting attendance statistics found here seem to be close to those found in the literature and a little higher in some cases. The one example in Inkson's study (59% attendance) is the only major outlier. So it seems that HWETL is not facing especially low rates of attendance at meetings compared to many other unions. However, this does not necessarily mean that participation is not low. Many academics studying participation are doing so because they perceive participation as low. The leaders of the union involved in this study certainly considered the participation of their members to be low. This is relevant in several ways. First, if the leaders consider participation to be low and are concerned with encouraging more participation, then studies such as this may aid in identifying ways of increasing participation. Secondly, I think it is always a positive change if participation becomes more of a majority pursuit because this will strengthen unions, workers, and the working class by increasing their solidarity and power. Even if this union is not really doing that badly in comparison to other unions, there is still plenty of room to improve meeting attendance.

Voting in union elections is also an important indicator of union participation. 63.2% are active voters, i.e. always or often vote versus 14.4% who vote on a sporadic basis (sometimes). Finally, 22.4% of members never or rarely vote in union elections. Inkson's study showed that in the two unions members voted regularly or occasionally 78% and 38% of the time respectively in her study of a refrigeration workers union and an assemblers union (Inkson, P. 447). Anderson found that 83.4% of members voted in the last election (Anderson, P. 23). Flood, Turner, and Willman found that 62% of members voted in the election of stewards (Flood, Turner, and Willman, P. 110). It seems that the union in question has voting rates that are consistent with that found in the literature. In fact, the average percentage of voting rates in the reviewed literature was around 64%. This is very close to the 63.2% who voted often or always in this study. Once again it seems that the participation in this teachers union is not low in comparison to other unions studied.

Yet, there is concern amongst the leaders of HWETL that voting rates are low and reflect a lack of interest in union affairs. A survey respondent stated: "The last union election was terrible. We had a majority of our staff out to vote. The voting started after many people had left. It was a very 'curious' situation to say the least." The question remains: however, whether this reflects a lack of interest or the existence of flaws in this union's voting procedure.

The grievance procedure has traditionally been very important to unions. Anderson argues that this is another important variable to look at in order to gauge union participation (Anderson, 1979, P 19). 5.8% of respondents had filed a grievance. Out of those who had filed 78.9% of those grievances were won. This seems to imply that the grievance procedure is relatively smooth running for the union. Leadership claims that many members are afraid to file grievances because they feel that they will face retribution from the employer. The leadership also claims that they try to solve some problems outside of the official grievance procedure, hence leading to lower levels of grievances. However, it is odd that there were no respondents to this survey who had served on the grievance committee in the last 5 years. There was also an interesting comment by one of the respondents about the grievance procedure. "The money I pay in dues is too much for the service I have been given. Twice in the last 15 years I have been forced to defend myself (with my lawyer at my expense) because my local didn't have the balls to stand up for 1 member who was put under siege by a principal. My lawyer ended the problems quickly in both instances, but let's concentrate on our gay picnic and parade participation." Another member stated "minorities need rights too. Not everyone cares about extended retirement but to us few it is crucial to our wellbeing. Abolish the 65 age limit- minorities still have no voice." It certainly seems that to some, the grievance procedure is not addressing their concerns. The union should take this into consideration and attempt to correct problems like these. The employer could be intimidating and thus grievances are not filed, but there is also evidence that some of the hesitation members are showing is because of the union and its practices.

The union's leadership is quite concerned with low rates of participation at social functions. The union puts on activities such as dinners, dances, and other recreational activities for members. This helps to form bonds between members. This survey confirms their concern. 75.8% of members never or rarely attended union social functions. Only 6% often or always attend. This rate seems very low, especially considering that these events are supposed to be fun. So why do some members participate in these events while others do not? The survey asked an open ended question about why members attended or did not attend these functions. Reasons why people attended social events included: to see teachers from other schools across the Hamilton area (2), to see off retirees (6), to be informed and socialize (7), networking opportunities (1), and because they liked the activities (2). The reasons members gave for not attending social functions included not being interested (40), childcare or family responsibilities (18), inappropriate time (5), not having enough time (59), not knowing other members (11), not hearing of social functions (3), and bad locations (i.e. members had to travel too far to take part) (4). If the union wants to continue to sponsor social events it needs to revamp its social activities. Yet many of the factors impeding member attendance are out of the union's control. The union cannot create more time for members or take care of their children. However, some of the reasons given can easily be addressed. Many members are not interested in these activities. The union should try to find activities that will interest more members. The union can also try to make sure these activities take place at times and places that are appropriate for more members. The low

rate of participation could also be indicative of changing relations in society. Many people no longer base their social life around their work life. One comment by a respondent said they purposely separate their work life from their social life. This is an interesting finding because traditionally people of similar professions or people working in the same workplace were relatively strongly related socially. Are members disassociating or are they just avoiding these specific social events? 14.4% of members often or always see other members outside of work and 40.2% of members sometimes see other members outside of work. This does not seem overly low. However, there were many responses that specifically stated that they saw other members outside work because they were family/friends not because they were union members. This may indicate that they are not socializing because of their common membership in the union, but because they know each other in ways unrelated to the union. 45.5% of members never or rarely see each other outside of work. It does seem that members may be disassociating. It seems that social relations have changed over time and that work related social relations have become less important. 43% of members never or rarely talk about union issues outside work, 10.2% always or often do, and 46.8% sometimes do. These statistics are closely related to seeing members outside work. So it seems that even if members are less social with each other, when they are they do talk about some union issues. It may also be important to note that 58.3% of respondents claim they do have time for social activities. However, it seems they would rather spend this time doing activities unrelated to the union.

As would be expected, a much smaller proportion of members ran for office than voted in elections. Only 4.3% of respondents to the survey reported having ever run in a union election. Unfortunately, none of the reviewed literature had statistics that could be compared with this. It is therefore impossible to say whether this rate is low in comparison to other unions or not. However, there are a couple of factors that suggest this could be a low rate of willingness by members to take on leadership positions. The survey (SEE APENDIX) asked about several types of leadership, ranging from steward to health and safety officer to the executive. Further, a high proportion of members have belonged to this union for more than 10 years. The combined effect of these two factors suggests that this is a relatively low rate of participation in leadership, something the union may want to analyze further.

This survey looked at participation in a number of committees over the last five years and asked a similar question concerning the time period the survey was taken. Specifically, the survey asked about participation on the local executive, the grievance committee, the women's committee, stewardship, the bargaining committee, the occupational health and safety committee, as well as providing an open space for members to report other forms of participation. 46% of the respondents held at least one of these positions; 2.2% served on the local executive in the last 5 years, compared to the 1.2% currently on the executive. 2.5% served on the women's committee, 20.5% were union stewards, 2% were on the bargaining committee, 4.2% were on the health and safety committee, 1.2% were on the political action committee, 7.9% were on the strike

committee, and 5.4% reported other participation (which was heavily dominated by being a delegate to a national or provincial conference or meeting). Anderson found in his study that only 7.1% of members had been active on any committees in the last year (Anderson, P. 23). Yet, in my analysis of HWETL there is a rate of 18% membership participation on at least one committee in the last 5 years. This statistic seems to indicate fairly high participation, although these stats are not entirely comparable. The survey showed that 5.9% of members were currently involved with a committee. This result is more comparable to Anderson's. Regardless, it seems that participation on union committees is fairly high in this union. When we probe deeper, there emerge some interesting trends in this data. First, there were no respondents who had served on the grievance committee. It is interesting to see the high rate of participation on the strike committee in the last 5 years. 7.9% of respondents were on the strike committee in the last 5 years. This is because of the teachers' strike that took place. Members are clearly willing to participate when they feel that important issues are at stake. This could be supportive of Flood, Turner, and Willman's assertion that there have become an increasing number of selective activists. Selective activists become active within unions when a specific issue that is a concern to them arises. For example, many teachers may have felt that the strike was representative of a better education for children and became active in the union. However, these same members might not ever go to a union meeting otherwise. It is possible that these members became active in order to fight for a specific issue and then stopped their participation when this issue was solved.

#### *Gender, Race, Disability, and Participation*

This Hamilton Wentworth Elementary teachers union is very heavily female dominated. 81.8 percent of the respondents were female. This statistic is representative of the overall union make up, which is approximately 80% female, which is information given to me by the union's president. This number is very high compared to many other unions. The main question is what does this tell us? There are findings in previous literature showing how group homogeneity can lead to higher participation (Bacharach and Bamberger, P. 388). If the similarity attraction theory is accurate then ultimately women should participate more in this union than they would in other non-female dominated unions. As well, women in this union would be expected to participate more than the men. It is also true that the demographic majority in a work group will participate more (Bacharach and Bamberger, P. 388). So women should be participating at a higher level. It should also be noted that females tend to participate more when they are recruited by other females (Bulger and Mellor, P. 38). Overall, according to many findings in the literature, the vast dominance of women in this union should mean that they would participate more, and be represented more at every level of the union.

The literature on gender and participation clearly asserts that women are less likely than men to participate in union affairs. Much of the literature identifies childcare and housework as major inhibitors of women's participation. This survey certainly showed that women were responsible for more housework and childcare than their male counterparts. 85.5% of women respondents do half of the housework or more. Only 14.5% of women respondents do less than half of the housework in their home. 46.5% of

women who responded to the survey do over 75% of the housework in their home. This is much higher than the statistics reported by men. Only 44% of male respondents report doing more than half of the housework, with 18% reporting doing 75% and above. 56% of men who responded do less than half of the housework in their home. Women are also responsible for much more childcare than men. 40% of women reported being responsible for more than 50% of childcare while only 12% of men reported doing more than 50% of the childcare in the family. 78% of men reported doing less than half of the childcare while only 60% of women reported the same. 18% of women do more than 75% of the childcare, while only 7% of men do the same. It is clear that women are responsible for much more domestic work than men. However, an important question is whether this affects their participation in the union. First, it is useful just to look at how having children affects participation without relation to gender. 50.5% of people with children never or rarely attended meetings compared to 54% of members with no children. 20% of members with children always or often attended, while 24% of members without children often or always attended union meetings. It would be assumed that men should participate more because of their lighter domestic responsibilities. Is this true? 50% of men with children are highly inactive, while 25% are highly active. Women with children are active in 18% of the cases, while 50% are inactive. This shows that men are slightly more likely to be highly active, but are just as likely to be inactive. This suggests that although domestic responsibilities may be a barrier to women's participation, it is not an incredibly large barrier in this case. Hence, there must be other reasons to explain why members are not participating. That is not to say that domestic responsibilities should be dismissed as a barrier to women's participation. One respondent claimed "that doing 100% of the housework and being a single parent with three children means I am swamped." Gender is also argued to play a role in shaping what kind of roles and responsibilities women take on in unions. As a whole, the literature suggests that women have overall lower rates of participation. They are more likely to hold lower level positions in the union, while men are disproportionately found in the positions of power. If our findings are consistent with the literature we should expect to find men in the positions of power and more heavily represented in all areas. However, the data found here seems to contradict these assertions. All of the members of the executive that responded to this survey were women. This is true of the data for the last 5 years as well as the current involvement data. This should be considered the most powerful position tested for, and according to the data it is heavily female dominated. It is also important to note that the president and the two vice presidents of this union are women. Another position that many may consider powerful is being delegated to attend conferences or conventions. All the respondents who reported doing this were women.

All the committees tested for showed women participating at a higher rate than men in both current and past involvement. This same trend held for shop stewards. Meeting attendance showed very little variation between women and men. Both had very similar percentages of active and non-active members. Women were more likely to vote in elections. 67% of women always or often voted, while only 58% of men do the same. Men were also more likely to never or rarely vote (30%), compared to 20% amongst

women. Women were also more likely to run in union elections. 5% of women had run in a union election, while only 1% of men have ever run in an election. 77% of women were active readers of the union bulletin, while only 3% were inactive. This was higher than men of whom 71% were active and 10% were inactive. Women dominated participation in this union despite their domestic responsibilities. It seems that the literature may not properly explain participation in this union. However, my survey results do lend further evidence to claims that in female-dominated unions women will hold positions of power and participate more. It supports the ideas that i) women will participate more when there are more women than men in the union; ii) that women will participate to a greater degree when they are recruited by women; and iii) that majority members of a work group are more likely to participate than minorities

Race is also considered a barrier to participation in the literature. The literature on participation asserts that minorities are less likely to participate in union affairs. The racial diversity of this union, like the gender diversity, is very limited. 98.3% of the respondents are white. This is also representative of the overall union, which is approximately 95% white (again, information from the president). Of those who responded to the survey 0.5% identified themselves as Japanese, 0.5% as South Asian (i.e. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.), 0.3% as Black, 0.3% as Latin American, and 0.5% as other. Does this racial homogeneity mean that participation is higher in this union than more racially diverse unions? Does this racial makeup cause the minorities to withdraw from participation? Does the union value the opinions of racial minorities when the vast majority is not directly affected by these opinions? These questions will be analyzed further below.

Another important issue that can only be speculated on here is why there is such low racial diversity in an area (Hamilton) that is fairly racially diverse. According to Statistics Canada in 2001 nearly 10% of Hamilton's population was composed of ethnic minorities. This is a much higher number than the 1.7% of survey respondents. It is also relevant that there are many groups listed in the Statistics Canada data that did not appear at all within the respondents of this survey. This is an issue that should be looked into by further studies. Are there barriers to education that keep minorities out of teaching? Are there racial practices that prevent them from getting jobs? It is possible, considering that the ages of members tend to be fairly high, that the current teachers have been teaching since before i) a lot of racial minorities arrived in the area and ii) racism was considered to be inappropriate. However, there is no evidence supporting this theory; it is simply a possibility. Another explanation is that there could be a lack of interest in teaching by these minorities. Although the union was more ethnically diverse than racially diverse, the ethnic groups represented were largely Western European and British. Over 50% of the respondents were of English descent. There were many other ethnicities cited at much lower levels such as, Scottish (19.3%), Italian (9.1%), Irish (13.3%), German (7.4%), and Dutch (3.7%). Although this is technically a diverse list of ethnicities, there is a startling lack of non-European ethnicities. Even eastern European ethnicities are notably low. Like the issue of race, this needs to be studied further in terms of explaining why the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers in Hamilton is so low.

HWETL has a very homogenous membership with respondents to the survey reporting 98% as white. This, according to some literature, should mean a higher overall participation rate. What is important here is whether race is a barrier to participation. Hoyman and Stallworth's study had some very interesting results. They found that blacks and whites participated almost equally. They were surprised by the rate of participation by blacks. One of the less discouraging findings they produced was the lack of blacks holding office. They concluded that there may be barriers to participation for blacks at higher levels of the union. However, they were very active in lower levels of union participation (Hoyman and Stallworth, Pp. 333-334). With such a small number of racial minorities in this study (only 7) it is nearly impossible to make any useful inferences from the survey concerning race as a barrier to participation. However, there was a useful comment that could give us some insight. "Why is there no antiracism/equity committee in our local? The representation of different races and ethnicities in the school population is not reflected in our union membership or leadership. In other words when I go to the staff room I hear discussions which do not involve my experiences or perspective." Clearly, this respondent sees race as an important issue that is being neglected. Non-white members are a minority in this union, but that does not mean that their participation is not important. Implementing an antiracism/equity committee would be a good idea for this union if the interest is there. This may increase participation by minorities who feel excluded. The question remains open and warrants further study. Interviews or more focused surveys could obtain valuable information related to race and union participation in this union.

Disabilities are another barrier to participation according to the previous literature (Zinni, P. 15). The number of respondents with disabilities makes it possible to analyze how disabilities affect participation. People with disabilities are often understudied in academic works about union participation. From my survey, 9.8% of the respondents were disabled in some way. Of the disabled 76.3% had a medical disability, 10.5% were blind or visually impaired, 7.9% were deaf or hearing impaired, and 5.3% had a mobility disability. The issue of disability is important in a study of union participation as it would be expected that the disabled would have more barriers to participation, and hence would participate less. Whether this is the case in this union will be analyzed shortly. This study may have enough respondents who are disabled in order to make some important inferences in this understudied area. Surprisingly, disabilities do not appear to be a barrier to participation in this union. In fact, respondents with disabilities showed much higher rates of participation in all categories. 30% of the disabled attended meetings always or often, compared to the 41% who never or rarely attend meetings. Non-disabled members were less likely to be active and more likely to be inactive. 53% of non-disabled members never or rarely attended and only 19% always or often attended. Disabled members were also more likely to vote. 79% of disabled members voted often or always, while only 61% of non-disabled members did the same. 8% of disabled members ran in a union election, while only 3% of non-disabled members ran in elections. Disabled members also showed the highest level of union bulletin readership. 90% of disabled members often or always read the union literature, while none never or rarely read the union literature. 74% of Non-disabled members read the bulletin always

or often and 5% never or rarely read the bulletin. Finally, disabled members were more likely to attend social functions. 7% did very actively while 58% were inactive. 35% of disabled members sometimes attended social functions. However, of non-disabled members only 5% were highly active and 71% were inactive. This may imply several things. I) Disabled people may need or be aware of union protection and of a union's role in getting an employer to accommodate them. Therefore they would be more involved. II) There may be other characteristics of the disabled that lead them to participate at higher levels. This question should be addressed further. Participation and disabilities is an understudied dimension of union participation that should be given more thought. These results certainly show an opportunity for further research.

### *Union Structure*

One of the barriers to participation that the literature identifies is the size of unions. The literature unequivocally argues that when unions become too large this can inhibit participation. The participation in this union is normal when compared to previous studies; however, could a different structure for HWETL improve participation? The union in question has approximately 2000 members, which is fairly large. With this many members there may be a lack of interpersonal relationships between union members and leaders and amongst members themselves. Yet only one respondent commented on the union being too large. The respondent believes that he/she would participate more if the union was smaller, as it was in the past. It is also true of a teachers union that the members are spread throughout numerous workplaces despite being part of the same local. This could be a barrier to some members participating. "The union office is too far from the school I work at. Participation is less appealing. The school is removed from participation and involvement." It seems that the geographic spread of the local is a problem for some members. Both of these problems are difficult to solve. The local could be split into multiple smaller locals. However, there are problems with this as well. There is strength in numbers and smaller locals would undermine this. Moreover there is no guarantee that smaller size on its own would have much of an impact on union participation. There were some respondents who claimed to live too far from the school they worked to even participate in union/school events there. Commuting can inhibit the participation of members. If union members already have a significant amount of time taken up getting to and from work they may not feel that participating in union events is worth it. If members live far from the school they work at it also implies that they live far away from the union office and other areas the union might meet. This would certainly make participation more difficult.

### *Leadership and Participation*

Leadership effectiveness is identified in the literature as a factor that can increase participation (Bulger and Melor, 1997)). Good leadership will increase participation because members will feel more attached to the union and more motivated to help the union. As well as effectiveness, leadership that is dependable, honest, and just will

promote members to participate. The vast majority of members in this union see the leadership as effective. 87.5% felt that the leadership in general was effective, 85.3% thought that local leadership was effective, and 85% thought that provincial leadership was effective. This number seems to be incredibly high. How does this affect participation? Meeting attendance certainly is affected by the effectiveness of leadership. 50% of those that thought leadership was effective were inactive, compared to 58% of those who thought leadership was ineffective. 23.4% of members who thought leadership was effective were active, while only 13% of those who thought that leadership was ineffective actively attended meetings. This suggests that members who believe that leadership is effective are more likely to participate. However, does this trend hold for other measures of participation? Ironically, it holds up for union elections. 65.5% of members who thought leadership was effective voted often or always compared to 53% of those who found leadership ineffective. One would think that if members believed leadership to be ineffective they would be more likely to vote for leaders they felt would be effective. However, this could also be seen from a different angle. If members feel that their vote won't make a difference, because most members will vote for current leadership, they may withdraw from voting and in turn other forms of participation. From this data it is impossible to tell if members participate because they see the leaders as effective or if they cultivate a positive view of leadership through participation. What is certain though is that a positive view of leadership seems to lead to a cycle of positive views of the

union and activism. Yet 50% of those who see the union leaders as effective still participate at very low levels. This implies that there must be other barriers preventing them from participating.

Another contributing factor to participation is leadership's communication with members. A lack of communication tends to result in lower rates of participation. If leadership does not communicate effectively members may not know how to get involved or may not hear about events. Almost 50% of members never or rarely talk to leaders about working conditions. About 6% often or always talk about working conditions with leaders. It seems that communication between members and leaders may be sparse; however, 44% sometimes talk to leaders about working conditions. This could indicate that members are comfortable and willing to talk to leaders, but only do so when they have reason. Members who bring up working conditions to leaders are probably often bringing up problems they are having in their workplace. If there are no problems, communication of this nature should be expected to go down. It is also relevant that many members read newsletters and bulletins. It seems that this type of communication is very successful and that may explain less face to face interaction.

Communication is also linked to participation in so much as members need to know about what is going on in their union. The survey asked how members found out about union affairs. 68.3% found out through co-workers (often a steward) and 69.6% found out through union literature. One member claimed that "communication of union

material through representatives is excellent.” The communication about union affairs seems pretty adequate considering only 1 member claimed that “I don’t” find out about union affairs. However, one curious finding is that only 6.9% of members found out about union matters through e-mail. This is not a huge problem considering that members are informed about union affairs. However, in the modern age of computers and internet communication, it seems that leadership would take advantage of e-mail. E-mail may be the simplest, least time consuming way of communicating with such a large membership base. Despite members being well informed, it would probably be to the union’s advantage to increase their communication via e-mail because a) it might get to the minority of members who do not find out about union affairs, and b) it is easy and cheap.

Another question that might affect union participation is whether leadership is approved of by the members. Although the survey does not give any direct insight into this question, there were comments and a question that can shed some light on the issue. Nearly 15% of respondents felt that leadership at the local level was ineffective. This shows that some members are probably dissatisfied with leadership. There are also written comments that concern leadership. It is important; however, to note that while some members may genuinely oppose the current leadership, others may just be griping. First, many members consider the leadership to be too adversarial and confrontational. “Union attitude is very poor. We need a positive and professional approach. We are not steel workers and our union needs to see that. We are salary employees who are committed to kids and teaching and believe it or not we are willing to do extra. Our union needs to stop making us punch a clock. Aggression is not the answer. We should improve our relations with administration.”; “I don’t want controversy- we need harmony.”; “The union is too antagonistic. The board and teachers should cooperate for the students.”; “The union is too heavy handed and too militant.”; “The union creates a hostile, negative environment between the board, principals, and teachers.” It is clear that some members believe leadership is taking the wrong direction. There are also members that believe the union only represents certain interests. “The union does not always ask our interests. Therefore they do not represent what we want.”; “The union must listen to all members not just those that agree with the leaders’ ideas.” It seems that at least some members within this union feel that they are not adequately represented by the leadership. This certainly could have a negative effect on union participation. Another group of members was concerned with the union’s concentration on persuading members to think and act a certain way. “It is inappropriate for the union locally or provincially to take a political stance.”; “ETFO needs to focus on teaching and working conditions, not telling me how to think, vote, or shop.” This type of political maneuvering may elicit some positive results for the union, but it also clearly causes some negative reactions. Finally, there were comments that were less specific, but clearly anti-leadership. “I think that Kelly Hayes is only concerned with her interests and keeping her position. The union has a personal agenda.”; “Leadership is so far off some days I wonder why I pay into that.”; “Leadership is very useless, since the walkout I resent them.”; “I do not care for many of the union leaders’ methods or personalities (as

they are conveyed to the public). Their P.R. needs work.”; “I think that the union tries, but it is ineffective. It means well, but leadership is weak. We do not need social worker types leading the union. We need tough, resolute people who do not crack under pressure. Unions are dying, and union leaders are holding ‘spirit meetings’ so that people can ‘find themselves’. I hold the views of many teachers I speak to. Fight for us or you will become useless to us.” There are certainly some members that hold the leadership in low esteem. This could cause them to withdraw from participating in the union. However, there are also positive comments (although vastly outnumbered by the negative comments). One member, when asked do you think union leadership is effective? responded “VERY!!!” It almost seems like there are two factions within this union. One which is supportive of leadership and one that is disdainful of leadership. If this is true, then members who are not supportive of leadership need to be addressed and brought into the union in a more meaningful way. It would be a good idea for the leadership of this union to take a serious look at some of these issues. How can they represent the members more fairly? How can they adjust their position to include the maximum number of members in the union? It seems that leadership problems could be one of the barriers to participation that members in this union are facing.

### **Conclusion**

The leadership of HWETL has shown interest in increasing the levels of participation in their union. They feel they can strengthen their union by getting more members involved. Involvement by the members will lead to a broader set of discourses, more solidarity, and a stronger more powerful union. They also feel they can represent more members fairly by having a larger group of active members.

This study has shown that participation in this teachers union is fairly high. The participation rates are comparable to unions studied by other scholars. It seems that the leadership’s perception of low participation was misguided. The union has shown to have participation rates that are reasonable. Participation rates for meeting attendance, voting, reading bulletins, and serving on committees proved to be comparable to previous literature. This union might be experiencing high rates of participation because of the homogenous nature of the union. The high rates of participation might also be a reflection of the vast majority of members who saw the leadership as effective. Nevertheless, participation rates could be increased. Participation is important to the success and survival of unions and is an issue that should not be ignored. Therefore, it is important to look at what barriers to participation might be playing a role in this union.

The literature is helpful, but clearly the findings here contradict some of the literature. Gender is not a major barrier to participation. In fact, women are more likely to participate in this union than men. Having children and domestic work also had a negligible effect on union participation. Unfortunately, there were not enough racial minority respondents to make any concrete inferences about barriers for minorities. Disabilities proved not to be a barrier. Similar to gender, this study found that disabled

individuals actually participated more than non-disabled members. The leadership in this union could take some of the blame for the lack of participation. Although the majority of members supported the leadership, there were a portion of members who did not. The leadership seems to be ignoring some opinions and these members have probably started to withdraw from union participation. If two factions exist within the union, the problem is getting both to participate. The leadership has also angered some people with their political/social stance. This may also alienate members from participating. However, some of these positions/actions may have positive results. The size of the union could also be a major barrier to participation. Previous literature has shown that large unions will have lower participation rates and this could be the case for this union. The spread out geography of the union could also be a major barrier. It is clear some members find it too time consuming/difficult to make it to the areas that some union activities take place. Finally, one of the barriers could be a growing attitude of anti-unionism. Although there is not a great deal of evidence of this, there is some. One member stated "I don't think we need a union. I would like to opt out." Members such as this obviously will not be active in the union. However, there are some members with the opposite sentiments. "We are too vulnerable on our jobs without our union." It is possible that some of the membership, even if not anti-union per se, is simply not interested in participation in union activities.

The goal of this research is to find out why members were not participating and to find out how to increase participation rates. In order to increase participation some concrete prescriptions must be made.

First, the size of the union should be looked into. The size of the union causes some problems. First, the people in the union often do not know the majority of the other members. Second, the size and nature of the union mean that it is very geographically disperse. This has implications for participation. It is also true that the size of the union benefits it in some ways. The union has more bargaining power with its current size. I would not prescribe splitting the local without further research. However, this may be something leadership could look into.

Next, leadership should try to address some of the issues brought up in this study. If they are disliked and not representing some members this must be looked into. Obviously it is not possible to please everyone all of the time nor is it reasonable for leadership to expect to, but there are certainly some interesting comments by respondents that should be considered by leadership. More in depth research into the relationship between the leadership and the members would be a good step for the leaders to take. If they can improve their reputation and represent more members adequately participation should increase. These suggestions must be taken in context. The majority of the members do support the leadership.

Although there are few non-whites in this union, an antiracism/equity committee would be a positive development. If it is viable and enough interest is created, a

committee of this kind should be constructed. This could help racial minorities obtain more of a voice. This would not make a huge difference in participation because of the lack of minority members. However, an antiracism committee is still warranted for several reasons. First, there may be more racial minorities inducted into the union in the future. It would be advantageous to already have proper avenues set up for their inclusion. As well, this is the fair thing to do. If there is interest, racial minorities should have a right to such a committee.

Attendance at social functions was one of the union's biggest concerns. Judging by the survey results some of this phenomenon is certainly out of the union's control. Members that have no time or members that have family responsibilities are unlikely to attend no matter what. However, a large number of members cited a lack of interest. The union should try to find out what members would be interested in and cater to the members' interest. If the union wants to keep having social events they must cater to what will interest members. It might be good to have more events that include children and spouses. One member cited always going to the 'breakfast with Santa.' Events like this might get more members who have children to participate in social activities. They also need to find activities that members are interested in order to have well attended 'adult' activities. However, it is also possible that members are not interested no matter what activities are being offered. If this is the case the union would be better off putting resources into other areas and abandoning social activities.

The union needs to find ways to increase interest in the union and the activities it undertakes. The union may not be able to increase participation. The steps prescribed could help, but this is not certain. Participation is a minority pursuit, but it would be great news if this could be reversed.

**Appendix 1:**  
**Survey Questions**

**Background Information**

1. What is your:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you:

Married

Divorced

Long term partner

Single

3. Do you have children?  Yes  No **If no, go to question 4.**

**If Yes, how old are they?**

0-5

5-8

8-12

12-15

15 and over

Do your children live with you?  Yes  No

4. Do you have other dependants?  Yes  No **If no, go to question 5.**

**If yes, are they:**

Elderly Persons

Sick Relatives

Physically/Mentally Disabled Persons

Other

5. What percentage of house work would you say you do?

0-25%

- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%

6. What percentage of child care or care of other dependents are you responsible for?

- 0-25%
- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%

7. What Race are you?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White  | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black  | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> West Asian (Iranian, etc)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sir Lankan, etc.)              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South East Asian (e.g. Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese, etc.) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |   |

8. What ethnicity are you (Check off your origin)?

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese    | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French     | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cree       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese | <input type="checkbox"/> Micmac     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chilean    | <input type="checkbox"/> Inuit      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian    | <input type="checkbox"/> German     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese   |

- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish    | <input type="checkbox"/> East Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Métis       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch       | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek       |                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |                                      |

9. Do you have a disability?  Yes  No **If no, go to Section B.**

**If yes, indicate your disability:**

- I am blind or visually impaired
- I am deaf or hard of hearing
- I have a medical disability (including arthritis, diabetes, epilepsy, hemophilia, heart condition, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, psychiatric illness)
- I have a mobility disability

**Section B:**

10. Do you attend union meetings?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

11. How do you find out about union matters?

- I don't
- Co-worker tells me
- E-mail

Union literature

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you vote in union elections?**

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

**13. Have you ever run in a union election?  Yes  No**

**14. In the past five years have you held any of the following positions or been a member of the following committees?**

Local Executive

Grievance Committee

Women's Committee

Shop Steward/ Floor Representative

Bargaining Committee

Health and Safety Committee

Political Action Committee

Strike Committee

Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. In what ways are you currently involved in your local union? (check all that apply):

Attend General membership meetings

Delegate to Provincial/National conventions/conferences

Shop Steward/ Floor Representative

Member of Local executive [

Member of local committee (e.g. Health and Safety Committee, Bargaining Committee, etc). Please indicate which committees: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you attend union social functions?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Have you ever filed a grievance?  Yes  No

If yes, did you win the grievance?  Yes  No

18. How often do you see fellow union members outside work?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

19. How often do you talk about union issues outside work?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

20. How often do you talk to union leaders or representatives about working conditions?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

21. How often do you read union bulletins?

- Never
- Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

22. Do you have enough time for recreational activities?  Yes  No

**SECTION C:**

23. How long have you been a member of the union? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Do you like your job?  Yes  No

25. Do you think union leadership is effective?  Yes  No

At the local level?  Yes  No

At the provincial level?  Yes  No

26. Do you think your union plays an important role in your workplace?

Yes  No

27. Do you think union success in bargaining and representing your interests depends on your participation in the union?  Yes  No

28. Would you be willing to be contacted for further discussion of these issues?

Yes  No

**If Yes, How can you be contacted?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Consent to Participate in Survey Research**

Dear Union Member, I would like to ask you to be part of a study called **Union Members and Local Participation**, which will explore your opinions regarding issues within the union. Participation is an important and pressing issue for unions at the present time. This study is being conducted by Brett Schoenfeldt, a labour studies student at McMaster University in cooperation with your union, the Hamilton-Wentworth Elementary Teachers Local. It will only take a short time to complete.

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS ENTIRELY VOLUNTARY.** If you agree to participate, please complete the survey enclosed.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Individual questionnaires are confidential. Only overall results will be reported. Your confidentiality will be maintained and respected.

**RISKS AND BENEFITS:** There are no real risks to participation in this study. Whether or not you choose to participate, you will not be penalized in any way. Benefits include the opportunity to reflect on the experiences you have had.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS:** Please feel free to ask Brett Schoenfeldt any questions you may have at any time.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

**Brett Schoenfeldt  
13 Cloverlea Cres.  
St. George, Ontario**

**N0E 1N0  
(519) 448-4220**

**[waterhead\\_brett@hotmail.com](mailto:waterhead_brett@hotmail.com)**

**Sincerely, Brett Schoenfeldt**

### Bibliography

- Anderson, Jon C. 1979. "Local Union Participation: A Local Re-examination." *Industrial Relations* 18(1): 18-31.
- Bacharach, S.B. and P.A. Bamberger. 2004. "Diversity and the Union: The Effect of Demographic Dissimilarity on Members' Union Attachment." *Group and Organization Management* 29(3): 385-418.
- Bacharach, S., P. Bamberger, and S. Conley. 1990. "Professionals and Workplace Control: Organizational and Demographic Models of Teacher Militancy." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 43(5): 570-586.
- Barling, J., C. Fullagar, and E.K. Kelloway. 1992. *The Union and Its Members: A Psychological Approach*. New York: University of Oxford Press.
- Bulger, C.A. and S. Melor. 1997. "Self-Efficacy as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Perceived Barriers and Women's Participation in Union Activities." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82(6): 935-934.
- Dickenson, M. 1982. *Democracy in Trade Unions*. New York: University of Queensland Press.
- Fletcher, B. and R. Hurd. 2000. "Is Organizing Enough? Race, Gender, and Union Culture." *New Labor Forum* Spring/Summer 2000: 59-69.
- Flood, P., T. Turner, and P. Willman. 2000. "A Segmented Model of Union Participation." *Industrial Relations* 39(1): 108-114.
- Fosh, P. 1981. *The Active Trade Unionist*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fullagar, C.J., D.G. Gallagher, P.F. Clark, and A.E. Caroll. 2004. "Union Commitment And Participation: A 10-Year Longitudinal Study." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89(4): 730-737.
- Fullagar, C.J.A., D.G. Gallagher, M.E. Gordon, and P.F. Clark. 1995. "Impact of Early Socialization on Union Commitment and Participation: A Longitudinal Study." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 30(1): 147-157.
- Fuller, J.B. and K. Hester. 2001. "A Closer Look at the Relationship Between Justice Perceptions and Union Participation." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 86(6): 1096-1105.

- Hoyman, M.E. and L. Stallworth. 1987. "Participation in Local Unions: A Comparison Of Black and White Members." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 40(3): 323-345.
- Iverson, R.D. and D.B. Currivan. 2003. "Union Participation, Job Satisfaction, and Employee Turnover: An Event-History Analysis of the Exit-Voice Hypothesis." *Industrial Relations* 42(1): 101-105.
- Johnson, N.B. and P. Jarley. 2004. "Justice and Union Participation: An Extension and Test of Mobilization Theory." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 42(3): 543-562.
- Kelloway, E.K. and J. Barling. 1993. "Members' Participation in Local Union Activities: Measurement, Prediction, and Replication." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 78(2): 262-279.
- Kerr Inkson, J.H. 1980. "Factors Influencing Workers' Involvement in their Unions." *Journal of Industrial Relations* 22(4): 442-452.
- Kirton, G. and G. Healy. 1999. "Transforming Union Women: the Role of Women Trade Union Officials in Union Renewal." *Industrial Relations Journal* 30(1): 31-45.
- Kurtz, S. 2002. *Workplace Justice: Organizing Multi-Identity Movements*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kyllonen, T.E. 1951. "Social Characteristics of Active Unionists." *The American Journal of Sociology* 56(6): 528-533.
- Lawrence, E. 1994. *Gender and Trade Unions*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Mellor, S. 1995. "Gender Composition and Gender Representation in Local Unions: Relationships Between Women's Participation in Local Office and Women's Participation in Local Activities." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 80(6): 706-720.
- Mellor, S., J.L. Barnes-Farell, and J.M. Stanton. 1999. "Unions as Justice-Promoting Organizations: The Interactive Effect of Ethnicity, Gender, and Perceived Union Effectiveness." *Sex Roles* 40: 331-346.
- Metochi, M. 2002. "The Influence of Leadership and Member Attitudes in Understanding the Nature of Union Participation." *The British Journal of Industrial Relations* 40(1): 87-111.

- Miller, D.C. 1991. *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. London: Sage Publications.
- Nicholson, N., G. Ursell, and P. Blyton. 1981. *The Dynamics of White Collar Unionism: A Study of Local Union Participation*. Toronto: Academic Press.
- Parker, M. and M. Gruelle. 1999. *Democracy is Power: Rebuilding Unions from the Bottom Up*. Detroit: Labor Notes.
- Perline, M.M. and V.R. Lorenz. 1970. „Factors Influencing Member Participation in Trade Union Activities.” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 29(4): 425-437.
- Redman, T. and E. Snape. 2004. “Kindling Activism? Union Commitment and Participation in the UK Fire Service.” *Human Relations* 57(7): 845-869.
- Skarlicki, D.P. and G.P. Latham. 1996. “Increasing Citizenship Behavior Within a Labor Union: A Test of Organizational Justice Theory.” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 81(2): 161-169.
- Skarlicki, D.P. and G.P. Latham. 1997. “Leadership Training in Organizational Justice To Increase Citizenship Behavior Within a Labor Union: A Replication.” *Personnel Psychology* 50(3):617-633.
- Spinrad, W. 1960. “Correlates of Trade Union Participation: A Summary of the Literature.” *American Sociological Review* 25(2): 237-244.
- Sverke, M. and S. Kuruvilla. 1995. “A New Conceptualization of Union Commitment: Development and Test of an Integrated Theory.” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 16: 505-532.
- Tetrick, L.E. 1995. “Developing and Maintaining Union Commitment: A Theoretical Framework.” *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 16:583-595.
- Wertheimer, B.M. and A.H. Nelson. 1975. *Trade Union Women: A Study of Their Participation in New York City Locals*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Zinni, D.M. 2002. *Participation Decisions by Local Union Members: The Theory of Planned Behavior and Personality*. Diss. McMaster University.