

Chapter 1: The Lenin Problem

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Left-wing longshore union members give up time and money to fight on behalf of social justice causes from which they can expect no material return. Basque nationalists make vulnerable their freedom and their lives for the sake of seemingly unattainable goals. Parishioners at churches throughout the United States risk jail to shelter political asylum seekers. Altruism is common enough, and so are volunteering, political commitment, and unselfish service to others. Yet, we know that there are environments that evoke such behavior and those that depress it. Why and how do some organizations produce membership willingness to self-sacrifice on behalf of a wide range of political and social justice issues? In some instances, the answer may be simple: self-selection. Those who want to act on behalf of others join the church or the interest group or the activist organization that encourages, indeed advertises, such behavior. The more interesting cases are those in which individuals join the group for one reason but come to pursue goals they may not have considered previously. The organization changes them.

Organizations successful at encouraging costly actions that transcend narrow self-interest are worthy of note in their own right. They also offer insight into the processes that foster aggregate changes in behavior and, possibly, beliefs and preferences. Our research contributes to the political economists' investigation of possible endogenous sources of preferences, the psychologists' of the causes of prosociality and organizational citizenship behavior, and the sociologists' of the origin, maintenance, and reproduction of

norms. However, while much of this literature focuses on the factors affecting individual choice, the “Lenin problem” concerns a group’s determination to pursue costly goals and the factors that encourage individuals to act in ways they may not have considered, let alone gone along with, prior to their engagement in a particular organization.

The puzzle is how organizations transform the bases for individual action and therefore alter aggregate behavior. In *What is to be Done?* Lenin (1963 [1902]) proposed political education through training and information as the way to inspire workers to seek fundamental societal change. Workers are easily persuaded to fight for improvements in wages, hours, and working conditions. For Lenin, such goals constitute “economism,” a focus on the narrow economic interests bound up in the job. Lenin wanted workers to think beyond their own immediate needs and to imagine a society in which a different life was possible. His aim was to create class conscious workers who understood their fate as bound up with each other across occupations and even borders, workers who realized their struggle had to be over far more than their working conditions and pay. Lenin held that only in this way could the proletariat become victorious, significantly improving their material well being while also achieving a more equitable society.

Mobilizing the proletariat to engage in revolution is not what is at issue for us in this book. That is a subject that has already fueled a rich and sufficient literature. There are strategic issues raised by those who shared Lenin’s commitment to revolutionary change. Rosa Luxemburg argued for mass action and general strikes as a better course of action (Luxemburg 1971). Antonio Gramsci distinguished between democratic and non-democratic regimes and then suggested the most appropriate strategies for each

(Gramsci and Buttigieg 1992). There are also analytic questions raised by social scientists. The bases of collective action in revolutions have received considerable scrutiny (see, e.g., Lichbach 1995; Taylor 1988; Tilly 1978). So have the grounds for presuming revolutionary change by means of electoral victories in capitalist democracies; middle class and well-off proletariat voters reveal little interest in overturning the economic system (Przeworski and Sprague 1986).

While we can dismiss Lenin's model of revolution, we cannot so easily dismiss the central question he raises: What are the mechanisms that transform the thinking of individuals so that they come to believe that another way of acting is possible and even preferable? Nor can we easily dismiss some of Lenin's insights, namely the critical role of leadership and information.

The emphasis by Lenin and many social movement and collective action theorists is aggregate behavior. Much work focuses on the structural factors and political opportunities that make it more or less likely for a group to act and to act in a certain way. The most important contemporary variant of this analytic tradition is the resource mobilization literature (Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1978; Zald and McCarthy 1979) and its more recent contentious politics variant, which emphasizes mechanisms as well as structures (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001).

A second approach, the one we are pursuing here, is to identify the processes and interactions that transform individual decisions into a behavioral outcome. It is a highly contextual approach and one that emphasizes the ways in which people interact in given settings. It shares much in common with the contentious politics perspective, but has a

greater emphasis on the micro-foundations of the aggregate outcome. Game theory and economic models provide the means to identify the processes that produce a particular group outcome and in identifying testable propositions and alternative explanations.

Unlike most of the work in the literatures from which we primarily draw, we do not presume that individuals already have clear preferences. We are open to the possibility that preferences change as a consequence of membership. At the least, preferences are clarified and, possibly, reordered as members come to believe that certain goals are actionable and potentially achievable.

Our first step is the development of a formal model that specifies the relationships between leaders and members. The model reveals the informational conditions for belief change and clarifies the role of institutions. As in all formal models, particularly those intended as part of an analytic narrative (Bates et al. 1998), the game lays out the paths not taken as well as the one that is followed. This allows us to derive alternative hypotheses and testable implications, which we then delve with both qualitative and quantitative data.

We see our work as contributory to a growing research tradition that integrates interpretative perspectives with game theory (See, e.g., Bates, de Figueiredo, and Weingast 1998; Bates et al. 1998; Brady, Ferejohn, and Pope 2005; Chandra 2004; de Figueiredo and Weingast 1999; Ferejohn 1991; Sanchez-Cuenca 2001). We have immersed ourselves in the history and governance details of the organizations we study. This enables us to identify precisely how leadership builds a trustworthy reputation, the nature of the institutions and how they operate to constrain or enable behavior, the

processes of socialization and education, the focal points for coordination, and the triggers for action. The formal model sensitizes us to the dynamics of a given situation and allows us to derive testable propositions. The contextual and historical material provides the basis for interpreting the motivations of the actors and their beliefs.

Statistical analysis of electoral and survey data offers additional evidence for our claims. Statistics can confirm that there are indeed correlations among the factors we hypothesize as being related, and they suggest some relationships that compel us to probe our cases further. However, statistics cannot provide the in depth understanding of the organizations and the processes that our questions demand. For a fuller explanation, we rely on the combination of our formal models and contextual detail. The end product, we hope, is an account that resonates with the experiences of the actors we describe as well as with our social science models.

Beyond economism

Our initial fascination with the larger question of belief change began with observations of behavior among longshore workers in the West Coast ports of the United States. The creation of the Harry Bridges Chair in Labor Studies at the University of Washington in 1992 and Margaret Levi's appointment to it in 1996 led to regular contact with the history of a famous left-wing labor leader and the union's organizational culture Bridges did so much to create. The endowment for the chair itself was the product of multiple contributions from pensioners who believed that Bridges had transformed them from "wharf rats to lords of the docks".

This is a union which in 1937 chose to prevent ships from transporting scrap iron

from the US to Japan for fear that the iron would return in the form of bullets and arms aimed at Americans. The union's actions were not against the employers but represented an intervention in the foreign policy of the labor-sympathetic government of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The ILWU still actively engages in national and international political and social conflicts. Some of those are on behalf of other workers, as in the refusal to load grapes that did not bear the United Farm Workers' seal and the 1997 worldwide boycott of the cargo ship, Neptune Jade, loaded by non-union labor.

However, it also closed ports on May 1, 1999 to protest the death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal and on November 30, 1999 during the demonstrations against the WTO Ministerial in Seattle. Most recently, the ILWU International has taken action against the war in Iraq, passing resolutions condemning the occupation and calling for immediate troop withdrawal. Thousands of ILWU members shut down the ports to protest the war in Iraq during a West Coast work stoppage on May Day of 2008.

The ILWU offers a relatively rare but not unique example of a union with an organizational culture that seems to evoke behavior not easily characterized as economic. Another American example is the International Typographical Union (ITU), made famous by Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1956) in their important book, *Union Democracy*. The ITU presents a counter-example to what Robert Michels (1919 [1962]) observed of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the period leading up to and including World War I. Michels argued that all social movements have a tendency to oligarchic governance and displacement of their original goals in order to ensure organizational survival. The study of the exceptions to the rule, be it the ITU or the ILWU,

are revealing of the conditions in which Michels' model holds—or not.

Nor are these the only unions with long-surviving organizational cultures so different than the one Michels predicted would evolve. Another example is the Waterfront Workers' Federation of Australia (WWF), now the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). This union also prevented shipments of pig iron to Japan in 1937, and they engage in other actions similar to those of the ILWU. Most recently, they have refused to load ships with live sheep destined for Saudi Arabia out of objection to the way the sheep are slaughtered there; they'll only permit the loading of dead sheep.

The Cases

The cases that interest us are those organizations that ask individuals to engage in actions that require self-sacrifice, sometimes to the point of death, and where personal payoffs and selective incentives appear to be an insufficient explanation of behavior. We examine how organizations induce members to take costly personal actions that do not seem to have connection to the reasons people joined the organization initially.

We investigate a specific type of organization: labor unions in democratic countries. We chose unions for several reasons. First there is variation among them in terms of the demands on membership and the value commitments of leaders. Both "business unions," those whose sole commitments are to the welfare of members, and "social movement unions," those committed to the social welfare of members and the larger society, have been successful in improving the material conditions of dues-payers. Almost all unions (and certainly those we examine) ask members to contribute personal time and money or approve organizational resources for charitable purposes, electoral

campaigns, and lobbying. Only a very few, however, advocate political and social justice causes that seem unrelated to the achievement of better wages or working conditions. Second, for a union to control the supply of labor, it must recruit a large number of workers in a firm or industry. It therefore cannot rely on the strict rules and steep demands as a tool to screen for only the most motivated, as may occur in smaller groups (Iannaccone 1992).¹ Third, the unions we study all have periodic elections, thus allowing us to explore what leaders do to retain their positions and with what success.

Our cases include the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), and Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) of Australia—now known as the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). The IBT and ILA exemplify unions that ask their members to act consistently with a relatively narrow concept of self-interest; the other two unions elicit from members not only effort to improve their own well-being but also sacrifices of time and money in support of social and political causes.

We have selected unions that share certain features but whose organizational cultures vary. All are in the transport sector. Their membership, at least at the beginning of the 60 plus years we study, was largely drawn from a labor pool of casual, i.e. temporary, low skilled workers chosen more for their brawn than their brains. There is considerable evidence that the same workers sometimes were employed as truckers, sometimes as warehousemen, and sometimes as dockworkers. Yet, the workers also

¹ We thank Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca for emphasizing these points.

come from a diversity of religious, ethnic, and political backgrounds. Some have considerable exposure to and experience with radical unionism, and some have none.

The Argument Previewed

Voluntary organizations exhibit tremendous variation in their expectations of adherents, and members differ in their willingness to comply with organizational demands. We argue that, in appropriate circumstances, organizational membership changes the beliefs of constituents about the nature of the world and subsequently reveals a preference for actions on behalf of others or for a cause, actions that entail unrequited costs in time, lost income, and possible bodily harm. This seems to be what is happening within a subset of religious, political, and labor organizations.

We are hardly the first to observe that some unions and voluntary organizations sustain political, economic, or justice commitments that other similar organizations do not even consider. However, we are not compelled by the dominant extant explanations. The first is that it is unions formed and initially led by Communists that display such characteristics (Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 2002). It may prove to be the case that radical leadership is the key to the way the union begins its life, but a founding ideology in and of itself cannot account for why some of these unions maintain such commitments and others do not. Some scholars argue that certain national cultural characteristics and religions, generally those that are Protestant and either Anglo-Saxon or Nordic, are more likely than others, generally Catholic and either Irish or Southern European, to engender strong allegiance to democratic and social justice practices (Lipset 1994). Howard Kimeldorf argues that the demographic differences between the largely Scandinavian

protestant dockworkers of the West Coast and the Italian Catholic dockworkers of the East Coast contributes to the distinctive contrast of the ILWU with the corrupt and hierarchical International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), from which the ILWU splintered in 1937 (Kimeldorf 1988). There are many reasons to doubt this explanation, but one is the fact that the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) of Australia shares the ILWU viewpoint but has a membership that is disproportionately Catholic and Irish.

Kimeldorf's primary explanation is the structure of the industry and the way the employers are organized and empowered. He and other structuralists emphasize economic and governmental factors outside the control of a particular union but highly determinative of what the union's bargaining and political possibilities are. Some of these accounts emphasize the institutional features of government policies and employer initiatives (Ebbinghaus and Visser 2000; Iversen 1999; Mares 2003; Streeck 2002; Swenson 1989; Wallerstein and Western 2000; Western 1997), but all emphasize features that have little to do with endogenous sources of union governance and style.

The final explanation has to do with the nature of the work and the labor market. Maritime workers, including longshoremen, tend to be internationalist in perspective. They come into contact with individuals from many different countries, they are exposed to a wide-range of ideologies and belief systems, and they recognize that they are part of a network of ports whose workers can make a big difference during job actions and contract disputes. Moreover, the team nature of the work on the docks, particularly before containerization, made the workers interdependent in ways that should facilitate solidarity. While these factors certainly help explain why longshore workers are likely to

be more militant and rely on international connections more than many others in the labor movement, they do not provide a sufficient account of the beliefs and preferences. The organizational culture and aggregate behavior of the ILA is closer to that of the Teamsters than to that of the ILWU and WWF.

Our alternative explanation emphasizes the processes by which leadership earns the confidence of members and then succeeds in persuading them that goals and actions, previously believed inaccessible, are possible. Those leaders able to change beliefs do not do so through personal charisma but, rather, through a three-step process: 1) success at achieving the economic goals of the union; 2) the announcement of principles the leaders pledge to uphold; and 3) the creation of institutions that, simultaneously, make leadership commitments credible and offer members the opportunity to learn, influence each other, and consensually maintain the principles. The combination of principles and institutions that define a union are what we mean by its organizational culture.

We are interested in both the foundational moment of an organizational culture and its reproduction over time. Somewhat different processes are involved in each.

Establishing an organizational culture

In addressing the issue of revealed organizational preferences, we build on economic theories of the firm, extending and modifying them to look at how organizations with different types of goals come about. In so doing, we present a basic framework for examining an organization's "culture". Our focus is on the role of leaders in shaping and transmitting information to the membership through organizational rules and the leaders' actions. Members, for their part, come to accept the leaders' positions so long as the

organization continues to deliver good basic outcomes. We argue that where there are costly actions exerted in support of causes that have no direct material benefit to union members, we will be able to demonstrate that: leadership abided by the principles established in the organizational culture; some members' beliefs about the world were transformed by their participation in the organization; and leaders' demands were rewarded with large-scale contingent consent (Levi 1997).

The role of leadership is key to the process of both belief change and preference provocation. Leaders can influence preferences and beliefs by credibly conveying the corporate culture and through personal acts that exemplify an alternative set of beliefs about what is feasible and right. There was once a keen interest in leadership among those studying the relationship between managers and employees (Barnard 1938; Blau 1964; Simon 1947) and among those investigating how political entrepreneurs encourage collective action (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young 1971). Although there is some new and innovative work on leadership (Dirks and Skarlicki 2004; Hermalin 1998; Keohane 2005; Miller 2000, 2004), most of the work focuses on firms. There is still considerable empirical research and theoretical development that needs to be done to understand more fully the role that leaders play in changing beliefs and provoking preferences in voluntary organizations. This research contributes to that effort.

From our perspective, the process that produces revealed organizational preferences begins with a credible leadership able to establish what economists call a corporate culture (Hermalin 2001; Kreps 1990) and we, in consistency with political science and sociology, label organizational culture. An organizational culture combines management

principles and institutional design. The leader moves first and, often, at a personal cost. Once constituents have confidence in the leader's commitment to her principles and in the viability of the institutions, the organizational culture is instantiated.

In the research on firms, there is evidence that a leader who stays true to her principles is perceived as trustworthy and thus able to evoke effort and commitment from constituents beyond what standard rational choice models can explain (Cook, Hardin, and Levi 2005; Miller 1992). In our research on voluntary organizations, we find that some leaders, particularly ideological leaders committed to major societal change, are able to create a climate of persuasiveness that facilitates belief change. The extent to which they are successful depends as much, if not more, on institutional arrangements they create and the credibility of the information they provide as on the attractiveness of their personal appeal and rhetoric, however.

All the leaders we investigate are asking members to act in their private interests, but some are also asking members to act on behalf of political or ethical goals that have little or nothing to do with the reasons for joining the voluntary organization. Why some leaders do one thing and some the other is not the object of explanation here. We start with two different leadership types: the conventional manager whose goal is to improve the net pay-off to those to whom he is beholden; and the "transformational"² manager whose aim is to improve the pay-off but also change the nature of the organization itself.

² This is the language now in use in psychological studies of leadership. See, e.g., Avolio, Walumba and Weber 2009.

If successful, both will produce material benefits for their constituents and both will establish an organizational culture that would survive their departure from leadership roles. However, the two types should also systematically vary in their behaviors, the principles they espouse, and the institutions and organizational culture they create and sustain. These variations should in turn produce systematic variation in the aggregate preferences of their constituents.

Our primary analytic focus is on organizational leaders and how they use information, values, rules and operating principles to alter beliefs, evoke reciprocity among members, and promote contingent consent. We specify several conditions. First, leaders have access to information about the state of the world that is valuable to both the leader and the membership. Second, leaders must be able to credibly transmit this information to members. Reputation is one source of credibility. Equally important are institutional arrangements within the organization that facilitate dissemination of information and that make the leader accountable if the information is poor. When enough members come to believe certain goals are attainable, goals they had either previously not considered or thought not feasible, a change in group-level revealed preferences results.

The possession of valuable and credible information may be the sine qua non of leaders in any organization, not just those in which leaders ask for actions that go beyond self-interest. So is the demonstrated effectiveness of leadership in securing the basic bread and butter demands of members—and then some. Only leaders who have satisfied those conditions can ask members to sacrifice private benefits for larger non-union collective ends. But to even consider asking, equally necessary is a leadership cadre

whose preferences include a wider range of commitments beyond those that serve membership interests narrowly conceived. The leaders have ideologies and goals that include changes in the larger political and economic system and not just in the union's relationship with its employers.

The second part of the argument involves belief change itself. Leadership credibility in terms of principles, information, and bargaining success needs to be followed by processes that reveal and reinforce the appropriate norms of action for the membership. This requires the development of institutions that provide education about the norms and ideas about when those norms should be acted upon. They are the forums for obtaining the knowledge that transforms perceptions. As the beliefs are altered about what the options are and which are feasible and normatively appropriate, a new set of preferences are provoked. The experience of one retired Sydney dockworker we met exemplifies the process. He followed us out of a meeting to tell us he had never cared about that "Communist stuff" the leaders talked about. However, when he heard—during a stop work meeting over lunch one day-- about what the Dutch were doing to the Indonesians, there was no way he was going to load Dutch ships with guns to shoot the rebels. His experience is consistent with the Bicchieri (2006, 6-7) argument about norms, "the default rules that we automatically follow are accompanied and supported by beliefs and desires that we become aware of only when challenged. Surprise in this case breeds awareness of our underlying motives." However, we think that surprise must also be accompanied by a realistic assessment of feasibility: Becoming conscious of an individual's normative position only leads to a change in aggregate organizational

preferences when it is evident that enough of the group share that norm, will act upon it, and might even succeed in realizing the goal of the action. The retired dockworker may have discovered his norms through surprise, but the union then provided him an opportunity for collective action and convinced him and others that it might make a difference.

In the chapters that follow, we focus on several institutional arrangements prevalent in those unions able to evoke aggregate behavior that transcends economistic interests and absent from those not trying to change beliefs. There are many we shall discuss. However, the most important are the hiring hall and rank and file democracy. The hiring hall provides a locus for socialization but also exemplifies the practice of fair distribution of jobs and income among members (Larrowe 1955; Wellman 1995). A vibrant rank and file democracy offers a forum for debate and information but also puts into practice the norm of the rights of all to a voice and an opinion on a wide range of issues with significant political and economic impact, both personal and societal (Levi et al. 2009).

These institutions are essential for creating the beliefs, but they also play a role in ensuring the conditions for the third element in our argument, contingent consent with the leadership's demands (Levi 1997). Contingent consent implies that rational actors will comply (behaviorally consent) with demands that do not conform with narrow, material self-interest, if they are assured that others in their group will also conform and if they believe that the demands being made of them are consistent with the standards of fairness that reign in their relevant social group. Contingent consenters may include those whose beliefs have changed, but it may also include those who held such beliefs

prior to membership and those who have experienced no belief revision yet wish to be solidary with others.

Members may want (or come to want) to comply with leaders' requests to put effort into strikes and other job actions as well as in support of social justice and political causes leaders value, but members will do so only if they have confidence that others will do the same and that leaders are credible in their commitments to provide promised material benefits. Sometimes the assessment of the probability of others complying results from the coercive practices of a union, which—as with a national state—enforces on free riders the obligations members as a whole have approved. Sometimes, it is members themselves who exert social pressure directly on those who seem reluctant to go along. Institutional arrangements are critical here; they are the source of rules, external enforcement by the union officials or other members, and, in many cases, internalization of norms. A combination of coercive practices towards free riders and the existence of institutions that create regular interactions among members may create common expectations of behavior and facilitate member ability to observe that others do in fact conform.³

³ One possibility we shall explore in later chapters is the role played by “strong reciprocity” Gintis 2000; 2003. Strong reciprocity is distinct from social pressure. Motivated by neither fear of ostracism nor hope of acceptance but from the desire to be just or fair, the reciprocity is “strong” because those who act according to the norm of fairness are also willing to expend effort in punishing those who do not conform. Strong

Democratic electoral processes increase membership compliance by compelling leaders to deliver or lose office. Democratic participatory practices may have additional effects on the willingness of members to be persuaded by leaders' ideological positions. Democratic processes increase the capacity of members to challenge leaders' ideas and demand reasons for believing them; they also provide evidence of leadership respect for and accountability to members.

Maintaining the organizational culture

If we understand the production of the organizational culture as the result of a kind of contract between leadership and members, then at issue is how it is reproduced through time. As new members join, they will likely view the culture of the union as so many norms of behavior. They will comply, i.e. engage in social justice actions, so long as there are sufficient numbers around them visibly engaging in that behavior. Initially, we expect that compliance is supported by some combination of sanctions and expectations about others. Over time, however, the new recruits may come to reconsider their beliefs and preferences. They may begin to develop new normative motivations as the basis for their compliance.

We suspect that the workers come to the job with beliefs about what it is attainable through a union and what the union has a right to expect of them. Some of these beliefs are crystallized before joining; others are evoked in the process of belonging. We suspect

reciprocators are the providers of social pressure, not its recipients.

that new workers with earlier familial connections with the union will have some prior socialization and will be more willing than other new recruits to sacrifice for social justice causes—but possibly less so than the older workers. We suspect that most new workers without prior union socialization will initially be concerned only with economic well-being. If the organizational culture is as strong as we believe it is, expectations about the union and preferences should converge over time.

Reinforcing these expectations and the socialization process are the institutions that helped create belief change in the first place. They provide locations for learning, norm transmittal, and social pressure. However, the extent to which the institutions are effective mechanisms of cultural reproduction may depend on how new members of the union are recruited. If jobs are obtained through family and network connections, there is a higher probability of pre-socialization into the union's organizational culture than if the jobs are widely dispersed throughout the population at large.

Our data and approach

We investigate the four unions over time so that we are able to identify the extent and nature of any belief change that takes place and the process by which it is reproduced, if it is, despite demographic and leadership changes within the union and technological, economic, and political changes affecting the industry. All the cases are considered at significant moments of transformation and growth. A focus on critical organizational shifts permits before and after documentation of members' preferences (as revealed in actions and debates). Focusing on historical cases enables us to: 1) trace changes in members and their preferences; 2) document the selection of the initial leaders and the

institutions and cultures those leaders create within the organization; 3) follow the consequences of the leadership style and institutional arrangements over time, in particular clarifying how the organizational cultures they create mold preferences; 4) investigate what happens to the institutions and group values when that leader leaves office; and 5) determine how the union reproduces (or why it fails to reproduce) the organizational culture.

Our data come from written records of union meetings and decisions, membership rolls, electoral rolls, and oral histories that date from the 1920s through the early years of the 21st century. By considering arguments about and willingness to engage in organizational actions, we are able to illustrate and understand belief change. By considering votes for (and against) leadership policies and for and against incumbents remaining in office, we can investigate the degree of contingent consent with actions even among those who disapproved. The data also permit us to observe how the institutions produce and reproduce group norms and choices.

None of these unions is homogenous. Thus, we have identified a series of paired locals that share many characteristics in common but appear to differ in organizational culture and revealed organizational preferences. The Tacoma and Seattle locals of the ILWU have members with similar ethnic, religious, and political characteristics, but Tacoma stayed in the ILA until the 1950s. The Melbourne local of the WWF had fewer members who accepted and a significant number who opposed the organizational culture that the national leadership was trying to build than did its Sydney counterpart. During the 1930s the Minneapolis and Seattle locals of the Teamsters appeared to attract men

with similar backgrounds, but Minneapolis practiced a radical social movement unionism not wholly dissimilar from that of the Seattle local of the ILWU. On the other hand, the Seattle IBT was as confirmed a business union as they come.

By focusing on the aggregate beliefs and preferences of members at the level of locals, we are able to get a very concrete grasp of demographic variables, working class culture, and even the thinking of leaders and members. We are thus able to achieve a detailed understanding of individual interactions and decisions, as well as the development of the institutional arrangements and collective identity of the local. This approach permits us to hold industrial structure and labor market somewhat constant, while being able to attain a sense of whether there is significant variation in these factors and how it might affect local behavior. We have varied working class culture, demographic characteristics, and leadership ideology.

Sometimes there is no puzzle as to why organizational culture and the beliefs of its adherents take the form that they do; the beliefs and preferences that seem to be shared by the group reflect a process of self-selection. Individuals join political parties, labor unions, churches, activist groups, and even soccer clubs in which the organizational expectations are consistent with their interests and leave ones that make demands that are too onerous. In other cases, individuals fear ostracism if they deviate from the group norm and hope for social acceptance if they acquiesce. Selective incentives provide sufficient explanation for the collective actions produced by voluntary organizations relying on self-selection or social pressure. This is the most parsimonious explanation of what may be happening and therefore the one we must disprove in the cases we identify

as evidencing belief change.

For the founding moments of organizational culture, our data allow us to determine whether the union's organizational culture reflects self-selection. It does not. As the unions develop over time, many increasingly rely on self-selection, however. The motivation may be nepotism, or it may be political. The cause is of less import than the effect: It becomes relative easy to reproduce the organizational culture within the unions whose employers choose job applicants from among the family and neighbors of those already working there.

Self-selection of members is certainly part of the explanation of the survival of the organizational culture of the ILWU, but history may prove no guide to the future here. In the last decade, a series of court cases concerning gender discrimination on the docks required consideration of new hiring practices. Employer interest in undermining the militancy of the union added to the pressure for change. The employers and the ILWU subsequently negotiated a new hiring system based on two quite distinct pools of job applicants. The first would be among those who responded to advertisements. An initial lottery would produce a number equal to those who had received "industry cards," given out by employers but mostly by current union members. There would then be a final lottery to determine the order in which new workers would be called up to take available positions. The lottery produced a natural experiment in which two very different sets of applicants would begin working on the docks simultaneously and in relatively equal numbers. But who would have more influence on the union over time? Would those who came via advertisements be transformed by the union or transform it?

This natural experiment provided us with an opportunity for an exciting source of data. We were able to obtain permission to run a panel survey among lottery winners and more senior workers. We also did a survey, based upon random digit dialing, among those who live in the neighborhoods from which the lottery winners largely come. The first phase of the survey will be completed by the end of 2008 (or early 2009), and the second a year or two later.

The Chapters

As noted earlier, the argument and hypothesis testing—be it by narrative, statistics, or survey evidence—is informed by a game theoretic model that highlights key components of the relationship between leaders and constituents in the process of belief change. That is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 provides a background in labor history and situates our cases within the larger national and political context. With chapters 4 and 5, we consider the cases themselves. Chapter 4 focuses on the development and maintenance of organizational cultures of “meat and potato” unions, the IBT and the ILA, and chapter 5 on the organizational cultures of unions with commitments that extend beyond economism, the ILWU and WWF. Chapter 6 addresses the reasons for the local variations within the larger unions and what those variations reveal about organizational culture, the processes of belief change, and aggregate behavior. In Chapter 7, we turn to the findings of the survey.

Chapter 8 represents our efforts to pull our findings together and to generalize about the possibilities for belief and, possibly, preference change. Our theoretical emphasis is

on leadership, union institutions, and the organizational culture that the members come to accept and help reproduce. All successful unions, indeed all successful voluntary organizations, most likely have an organizational culture, but they vary in terms of the aggregate behaviors they encourage. By uncovering the processes that account for why some unions go beyond economism when others do not, our intention is to offer a more general explanation of the observed diversity among religious, political, and even nationalist groups. Our first job, however, is to understand unions. It is to that task we now turn.

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