

## **Grievance Initiation and Resolution. A Test of the Behavioural Theory**

### **Apparition et règlement des griefs : une vérification de la théorie behavioriste**

Jeffrey Gandz

Volume 34, numéro 4, 1979

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/029014ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/029014ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Gandz, J. (1979). Grievance Initiation and Resolution. A Test of the Behavioural Theory. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 34(4), 778–792.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/029014ar>

#### Résumé de l'article

Cette analyse vise à vérifier la double hypothèse que le nombre de griefs est moindre dans le cas des unités de négociation où existent de bonnes relations entre les parties que dans celles où elles sont tendues et que, dans les mêmes conditions, on a moins fréquemment recours à l'arbitrage. Les données recueillies portant sur un échantillon non aléatoire de 118 unités de négociation représentant 51 entreprises et 24 syndicats; la cueillette s'est effectuée à partir d'un questionnaire fort élaboré remis aux responsables des relations professionnelles dans chaque unité de négociation.

Aux fins d'analyse, les griefs furent divisés en deux catégories selon qu'ils se rapportaient ou non à des mesures disciplinaires. La moyenne des griefs à la suite de mesures disciplinaires s'établissait à 17.0 par 1,000 salariés tandis que, pour les griefs d'une autre nature, la moyenne était de 108.3 par 1,000 salariés également.

Dans 42% des unités de négociation, aucun grief n'a été porté à l'arbitrage; dans 25% d'entre elles, il y eut au moins un grief qui fit l'objet d'un arbitrage et dans 33% des unités de négociation, on a relevé au moins un grief de nature non disciplinaire qui s'est rendu à l'arbitrage. Toutefois, seulement 1.3% de l'ensemble des griefs a été l'objet d'arbitrage et, fait à noter, dans les 17 groupes de cols blancs, il n'y eut que 2 griefs qui ont atteint le stade de l'arbitrage.

D'une façon générale, le nombre de griefs est moindre là où la direction du personnel considère le syndicat d'une façon positive. Plus le taux des griefs est bas, plus les relations sont bonnes entre les parties.

Comme il est établi que chaque grief coûte en moyenne \$160.00, que le coût moyen de ceux qui sont portés à l'arbitrage est estimé à \$1,950.00, qu'il faut faire entrer en ligne de compte certaines autres pertes et que le taux des griefs affecte le climat des relations de travail, il y a lieu de prendre les moyens d'en éliminer le plus possible, même s'il faut parfois aller jusqu'à remplacer les préposés au personnel qui sont à couteaux tirés avec les syndicats.

# Grievance Initiation and Resolution A Test of the Behavioural Theory

Jeffrey Gandz

*The Author puts Walton and McKersie's behavioural theory of labour negotiations to test in a study of a non-random sample of 118 bargaining units.*

In *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations*<sup>2</sup>, Walton and McKersie propose a typology of Union-management relationship patterns in which four attitudinal dimensions covary. These are: the motivational orientations and action tendencies the parties have toward each other; the beliefs they hold about the other's legitimacy; the level of trust that exists in the conduct of affairs; and the degree of friendliness that exists between the parties. Furthermore, the relationship pattern is hypothesized as having, among other consequences, an impact on the administration of the collective agreement although the authors are not specific about the nature of this impact.

Peterson and Tracy<sup>3</sup> note that despite its influence on the industrial relations field, Walton and McKersie's work has not stimulated a substantial number of empirical studies. Many of their propositions, derived from experience, observation, and limited empirical studies, remain untested.

## MODEL

In part of a larger study of factors associated with grievance rates and the use of arbitration,<sup>4</sup> the attitudes held by union and management person-

---

\* GANDZ, Jeffrey, Professor, School of Business Administration, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

1 This study was supported by a grant from Labour Canada and a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship. The author is indebted to Jim Rush for his comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

2 WALTON, R.E. and J.B. MCKERSIE, *A Behavioural Theory of Labor Negotiations*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

3 PETERSON, R.D., and Lane TRACY, "Testing a Behavioral Theory Model of Labour Negotiations", *Industrial Relations*, 16, No. 1, (February) 1977, pp. 35-50.

4 GANDZ, J., "Employee Grievances; Incidence and Patterns of Resolution". Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. York University, Toronto, Canada, 1978.

nel toward each other were seen as variables which might be related to the initiation of formal grievances and the ways in which they are resolved.

Where there is distrust, dislike, and suspicion of management, managerial actions are more likely to be perceived as oppressive or inequitable and a grievance may be lodged to redress the perceived inequity. Such prevailing attitudes may block or distort communications between employees and management so that the reasons underlying managerial actions may be unknown and a grievance may be lodged to obtain information. Conflicts which may in fact represent common problems will tend to be viewed as zero-sum situations and a grievance may be lodged rather than a discussion initiated. Where distrust, and dislike prevail, informal, problem-solving discussions will be neither initiated nor fruitful. Where competition exists between union and management the prosecution of grievances becomes an important union tactic for winning the loyalty of employees.

When union-management relations are conflictful, rather than cooperative, grievances may be used as pressure tactics. Overloading the grievance procedure, imposing a heavy load for management and thereby providing an opportunity for haranguing and confronting management in grievance meetings, may be tactics used in exerting pressure on managements between successive rounds of negotiations or before new formal negotiations are scheduled to commence<sup>5</sup>.

It is hypothesized, therefore, that the attitudinal components of union-management relationships will be related to both grievance incidence and grievance resolution. Using Walton and McKersie's terms of Conflict and Cooperation to denote attitudinal states,

- H1. Grievance rates will be lower in bargaining units with a cooperative union-management relationship than in those in which the relationship is one of conflict.
- H2. Bargaining units with cooperative union-management relationships will be less likely to resort to use of arbitration than those with conflict relationships.

It is recognized that establishing causality in these propositions will be extremely difficult since conflict relationships may be a consequence of grievance activity as well as a cause.

---

<sup>5</sup> STAGNER, R. and Hjalmar ROSEN. *Psychology of Union-Management Relations*, Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1965.

## METHOD

A non-random sample of 118 bargaining units, representing 51<sup>6</sup> corporate entities and 28 trade unions, were recruited for this study. 98 were industrial, blue collar units, 17 were technical/professional/white collar units, and 3 were a mixture of both blue and white collar employees. The bargaining units varied in size from 3 to 14,500 employees and were in industries as diverse as petrochemicals, food retailing, automobile assembly, and mining.

Data on grievance incidence and patterns of grievance resolution were gathered from grievance logs, reports, or files; grievance rates and concession ratios were then computed<sup>7</sup>.

A multi-part, self administered questionnaire was completed by the executive responsible for industrial relations in each bargaining unit. The identity of the respondent was secured so as to ensure that, in multi-unit corporations, responses were obtained from a unit executive rather than multiple responses from a corporate executive. Four sets of items concerned union-management relations.

- (i) A battery of 11 items related to day-to-day union-management relations and were designed to tap the four attitudinal components of the relationship identified by Walton and McKersie<sup>8</sup>.
- (ii) A second set of 10 items tapped respondents' views about the helpful or harmful impact of the union on such organizational process and performance aspects as productivity, discipline, and communications.

Both of these item batteries are shown in Figure 1.

---

6 A total of 68 corporations were approached and asked to participate. 9 refused and 8 did not provide the required data by the time data collection was shut off.

7 Grievance rate = Number of grievances filed per 1000 employees in the bargaining unit per year.

Arbitration rate = Number of arbitration cases per 1000 employees in the bargaining unit per year.

Concession ratio =  $\frac{\text{Number of grievances allowed or compromised}}{\text{Number of grievances filed}} \times 1000$

8 Items for this set were suggested, in part, by the work of TRACY and PETERSON and TRACY on testing the Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations in contract negotiations.

TRACY, Lane, "The Influence of Non-economic Factors on Negotiators", *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 27, No. 2, (January), 1974, pp. 204-215.

PETERSON, R.D. and Lane TRACY, "Testing a Behavioral Theory Model of Labor Negotiations", *Industrial Relations*, 16, No. 1, (February), 1977, pp. 35-50.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Union-Management Relations Battery**

Indicate the extent to which the following statements characterized the day-to-day relationships between union and management officials during the last completed collective agreement:

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Dimension</i>
1.1 Both parties showed respect for the goals and objectives of the other	—	—	—	—	2.2	.69	Legitimacy
1.2 Union and management personnel trusted each other	—	—	—	—	2.2	.71	Trust
*1.3 Both union and management tried to compete for the loyalty of employees	—	—	—	—	2.3	.88	Motivational orientation
1.4 The union influenced management decisions	—	—	—	—	2.8	.53	Legitimacy
1.5 When conflicts arose, negotiations between union and management took place with a spirit of cooperation.	—	—	—	—	2.3	.74	Motivational Orientation
1.6 Both sides believed that the tactics used by the other were legitimate	—	—	—	—	2.2	.67	Legitimacy
1.7 Union and management personnel were friendly to each other	—	—	—	—	1.8	.63	Friendliness
1.8 Each side showed an understanding of the other's position	—	—	—	—	2.1	.66	Friendliness
*1.9 There was personal animosity between union and management officials	—	—	—	—	1.7	.52	Friendliness
*1.10 Each side tended to suspect the intentions or honesty of the other	—	—	—	—	1.9	.51	Trust
*1.11 Interactions between union and management officials tended to be hostile	—	—	—	—	1.6	.87	Friendliness

\* Reversed scoring

FIGURE 1 (Cont'd.)

## Union Impact Battery

In your opinion, what was the extent to which the union filled the following roles during the last completed collective agreement.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Slightly agree</i>	<i>Slightly disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
*2.1 The union interfered with discipline	—	—	—	—	2.6	1.01
*2.2 The union was responsible for reducing worker productivity	—	—	—	—	2.8	.98
2.3 The union was valuable in communicating workers' views to management	—	—	—	—	2.9	.87
*2.4 The demands of the union tended to endanger the competitive position of the firm	—	—	—	—	2.1	1.00
2.5 The union helped management maintain discipline	—	—	—	—	2.3	.98
2.6 The union represented the views of the employees	—	—	—	—	2.8	.85
2.7 The union was valuable in assisting in communications between management and employees	—	—	—	—	2.7	.88
2.8 The union promoted harmony between workers and management	—	—	—	—	2.5	.94
*2.9 A lot of union demands were influenced by union politics rather than by members' wishes'	—	—	—	—	1.8	.81
*2.10 The union made it difficult to reward employees on the basis of merit	—	—	—	—	1.7	1.03

\* Reverse scoring

- (iii) A third set of 23 items was abstracted from Derber *et al.*'s grievance questionnaire<sup>9</sup>. They sought respondents' assessment of a number of aspects of grievance discussions such as the tone of discussions, the exhibition of anger, distrust, empathy, and the use of threats. Other items in this set related to the openness of the grievance procedure to complaints as well as narrowly defined grievances, constructionism in contract interpretation, reliance on precedent, concession to grievances which were creating problems for the other party, and overall satisfaction with the grievance procedure.
- (iv) The fourth set of items asked respondents to indicate the extent to which consultation took place between union and management on a variety of work-related issues such as transfers, contracting-out, promotions, discipline, and technological change<sup>10</sup>.

The inter-item correlation matrix for the 11 Union-Management Relations items (Table 1) showed that items 1.3 (competition for employee loyalty) and 1.5 (union influence on management decisions) correlated weakly with each other and with the remaining nine items in the battery.

**TABLE 1**  
Inter-item correlations<sup>1</sup> in Union-Management  
Relations Battery  
(n = 118)

	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	1.11
1.1											
1.2	.68										
1.3	.25	.37									
1.4	-.19	-.20	-.28								
1.5	.64	.67	.29	-.20							
1.6	.65	.62	.40	-.36	.62						
1.7	.55	.62	.19	-.08	.57	.54					
1.8	.57	.62	.33	-.30	.58	.58	.64				
1.9	.38	.33	.19	-.05	.41	.36	.51	.25			
1.10	.40	.52	.28	-.11	.36	.44	.42	.26	.32		
1.11	.36	.32	.25	-.06	.26	.26	.48	.37	.34	.27	

1. Pearson product moment

<sup>9</sup> Items for this set are adapted from DERBER *et al.*'s investigations of Plant union-management relations. To save space they are not shown in full in this paper.

DERBER, M., W.E. CHALMERS, M.T. EDELMAN and H.C. TRIANDIS, *Plant Union-Management Relations; From Practice to Theory*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> These issues were suggested in preliminary interviews with industrial relations managers and by a previous study of consultative practices (MIKALACHKI, *et al.*).

The remaining nine items inter-correlated highly ( $\bar{r} = .50$ ). These 9 item scores were summed to give a score on a scale of Union-Management Relations with a mean inter-item correlation of .50 and internal consistency (Standardized item alpha) of .90. A high score on this scale indicates a conflict relationship, a low score indicates cooperation.

Factor analysis of the inter-item correlation matrix for the 10 items relating to the union's impact on the organization was necessary in order to clarify the relationships between the items; the factor structures are shown in Table 2, below.

**TABLE 2**  
**Union Impact on Bargaining Unit**  
**Factor Structure Following Quartimax Rotation**

	<i>Factor 1</i> <i>Union Harm</i>	<i>Factor 2</i> <i>Union Value</i>	<i>Communalities</i>
2.1	<u>.60</u>	.26	.43
2.2	<u>.84</u>	.23	.75
2.3	.18	<u>.76</u>	.61
2.4	<u>.62</u>	<u>.08</u>	.39
2.5	<u>.32</u>	<u>.45</u>	.31
2.6	.27	<u>.60</u>	.43
2.7	.13	<u>.86</u>	.76
2.8	.48	<u>.60</u>	.60
2.9	<u>.44</u>	.01	.20
2.10	<u>.57</u>	.17	.35
Eigenvalue	3.78	1.06	.35

Items stating the adverse impact of the union on the organization loaded on the first factor; those describing the beneficial effects of the union loaded on the second. Two items, both rather extreme statements about the value of the union, loaded moderately on both factors, but more heavily on the second, Union Value factor.

Two scales, Union Harm ( $\bar{r} = .40$ ;  $\alpha = .77$ ) and Union Value ( $\bar{r} = .50$ ;  $\alpha = .83$ ), were developed by summing item scores of the items loading on each of these factors. A high score on the Union Value scale indicates the respondent feels the union is valuable to the organization. A high score on the Union Harm scale indicates that the union is not harmful.

In the set of 23 items relating to the grievance procedure respondents were asked about their own behaviors and the behaviors of the union officials. For example, they were asked if they (always, usually, sometimes, never) displayed anger and if the union officials (always, usually,

sometimes, never) displayed anger. Scores on the dimensions of anger (GTONE), suspicion (GSUSP), empathy (GEMPATH), use of threats (GTHREAT) and reliance on precedent (GPREC), were the sum of the respondents' scores on own behaviors and union behaviors, which were highly correlated. The measure of the openness of the grievance procedure to complaints (GPROC) was a single item measure.

The item scores on the Consultation battery were summed across the 12 issues to give a score on an overall Consultation scale. ( $\bar{r} = .28, \alpha = .82$ )

## RESULTS

### Grievance Rates and the Use of Arbitration

Grievances were categorized as either "Disciplinary", arising from a disciplinary action taken by management such as a reprimand, suspension or discharge, or "Non-Disciplinary".

The mean disciplinary grievance rate was 17.0 per 1000 employees per year with a standard deviation of 30.7. 24 of the 118 bargaining units had no disciplinary grievances, including 12 of the 17 white collar groups. The mean non-disciplinary grievance rate was 108.3 with a standard deviation of 168.5. Only six of the 118 bargaining units had no non-disciplinary grievances, four of them being white collar units.

42% of the bargaining units used arbitration at all in their last, completed collective agreements; 25% had at least one disciplinary grievance arbitrated and 33% had at least one non-disciplinary grievance heard at arbitration. Only 1.3% of all grievances in the whole sample actually reached arbitration and only 2 of the 17 white collar units had an arbitration during their last collective agreements.

### Inter-scale Correlations

The Union-Management Relations scale correlated highly with the Union Harm and Union Value scales as well as with the items in the grievance procedure battery which related to anger, the use of threats, suspicion, and empathy. These correlations are to be expected since respondents viewing the union-management relationship as cooperative are also likely to view the union as having a beneficial, or at least not harmful, impact on the organization. Furthermore, cooperative relationships should result in grievance discussions which are free of anger, threats, suspicion and in which participants exhibit interpersonal empathy.

**TABLE 3**  
**Inter-scale Correlations<sup>1</sup>**  
**(n = 118)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 UNION HARM									
2 UNION VALUE	.49**								
3 UNION-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS	-.60**	-.65**							
4 CONSULTATION	.08	.25**	-.19*						
5 GTONE	.37**	.25**	-.43**	.14					
6 GSUSP	.37**	.45**	-.58**	.13	.54**				
7 GEMPATH	-.31**	-.26**	.35**	-.01	.08	-.24**			
8 GPROC	.03	.11	-.07	.43**	.19*	.12	.01		
9 GPREC	.30**	.20*	-.29**	.14	.29**	.27**	-.20*	.04	
10 GTHREAT	.40**	.43**	-.57**	.05	.40**	.47**	-.19*	.16*	.09

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$  one tailed test.

1. Pearson product moment.

The fairly low order correlation between the Union-Management Relationship and the Consultation scales ( $r = -.19, p < .05$ ) confirms the findings of Mikalachki *et al.*<sup>10</sup> that cooperative union-management relationships are not necessarily associated with extensive consultation. However, the data indicated a moderate association between the amount of Consultation and the extent to which the union was seen as valuable to the organization ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ).

### Grievance Rates and Union-Management Relations

Table 4, below, shows that there were significant rank order correlations between both disciplinary and non-disciplinary grievance rates and the four scales developed from the items in the questionnaire. We see that lower grievance rates are associated with organizational units in which the industrial relations managers view the union as more valuable and less harmful to the organization than higher grievance rate units. The lower grievance rate units tended to have more cooperative relationships and there was greater union-management consultation on a variety of issues in the lower grievance rate units.

**TABLE 4**  
Correlations<sup>1</sup> between grievance rates and  
Union-management relations scales  
( $n = 118$ )

	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Non-discipline</i>
UNION-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS	.31**	.28**
UNION HARM	-.30**	-.35**
UNION VALUE	-.33**	-.33**
CONSULTATION	-.18*	-.18*

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$  one tailed test.

1. Spearman rank order correlation.

There was no evidence that the more cooperative relationship were typified by greater concessions by management in grievance proceedings. The rank order correlations between the Union-Management Relations scale and the disciplinary and non-disciplinary concession ratios were insignificant ( $\rho = .04$  and  $.03$  respectively).

MIKALACHKI, A., G. FORSYTH and J.J. WETTLAUFR, "Management's View of Union-Management Relations at the Local Level", Study No. 17, *Task Force on Labour Relations*, Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 1968.

### Arbitration Use and Union-Management Relations

Classification of the bargaining units into those which had used arbitration during their last contract and those which had not, showed significantly different union-management relations (Table 5).

Users of arbitration over disciplinary grievances had more conflictful union-management relations and reported greater anger and suspicion in the grievance procedure as well as more threats of industrial action. Users of arbitration for non-disciplinary grievances also reported more conflictful union-management relations as well as more anger, suspicion, and threats, and less empathy in grievance discussions.

### DISCUSSION

This study has a number of weaknesses imposed by constraints associated with organizational access and the gathering of data at the bargaining unit level. The sample is non-random, making generalizations dangerous. Data have been gathered only from management personnel, rather than from both union and management representatives and attitudinal data collection was restricted to a single, albeit knowledgeable and involved, industrial relations manager in each bargaining unit.

The support for the hypothesized relationships between Union-Management Relationships, grievance rates, and the use of arbitration is a contribution toward developing some empirical support for parts of Walton and McKersie's theory. The low order of the correlations is not unexpected; clearly many factors enter into grievance rates and their resolution other than interpersonal relationships between union and management officials<sup>2,11</sup>. Nor can one say, on the basis of these data, that there is any support for a causal relationship between the union-management relationship and grievance rates and arbitration use, since a case could be made for each leading to the other. Attitude-behaviour confounding is minimized by obtaining data by different means (questionnaires and archival analysis) but cannot be completely eliminated in a cross-sectional study of this type. Indeed, a process view of conflict, which suggests that the aftermath of the manifestation affects the genesis of a subsequent episode, means that a search for causation in this inter-relationship will almost certainly be a frustrating one.

---

<sup>11</sup> PEACH and LIVERNASH propose a complex contingency framework with several groups of factors involved in the initiation and resolution of grievances.

PEACH, D.A. and E.R. LIVERNASH, *Grievance Initiation and Resolution: A Study in Basic Steel*, Boston, Mass.: Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1974.

**TABLE 5**  
**Comparison of scores on union-management  
relations scales and grievance procedure scales  
of users and non-users of arbitration**

Arbitration Use						
	Use (n = 29)	Discipline Non-Use (n = 89)	F	Use (n = 39)	Non-Discipline Non-Use (n = 79)	F
UNION-MANAGEMENT						
RELATIONS	19.9	17.3	8.2**	19.4	17.2	7.0**
UNION VALUE	12.0	13.5	4.0*	12.2	13.7	4.5*
UNION HARM	10.6	11.3	.8	10.2	11.5	3.8
CONSULTATION	20.4	23.2	5.2*	20.7	23.3	5.8*
GTONE	9.3	10.0	5.0*	9.2	10.2	10.7**
GSUSP	4.9	5.8	7.5**	5.1	5.8	4.3*
GEMPATH	4.0	4.0	0	4.3	3.8	7.0**
GPROC	3.2	3.6	2.7	3.2	3.7	4.5*
GPREC	3.0	3.4	2.1	3.1	3.4	1.2
GTHREAT	6.4	7.1	6.0*	6.6	7.1	5.2*
<hr/>						
	*p<.05	**p<.01				

Grievances cost management money. There are the tangible expenses associated with grievances such as any costs involved in the settlement itself, costs of managerial salaries while attending grievance meetings, the overhead costs of an industrial relations department, costs of the wages paid to grievors and union officials for time spent in pursuing grievances, costs of lawyers and Counsel in arbitration cases. One organization in this study has estimated that grievances cost an average of \$160 for each case that is processed to the last internal grievance procedure stage and \$1950 for each case that goes to arbitration. In addition, there are the intangible costs that are believed to exist in high grievance rate organizations. There is the reduced amount of work that the aggrieved employee contributes, the contagious effect that such an employee can have on a whole work unit, and the impact of that effect on morale that may be related to productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and even sickness and accidents.

There would be little argument from management that a desirable organizational objective is the elimination of non-meritorious written grievances, those that emanate from intra-union political forces, tactical manoeuvres prior to formal collective negotiations, misunderstandings of managements' actions or intentions, or antipathy between union and management personnel. There would also be substantial agreement that it is functional for the organization to have employees' complaints and grievances resolved at the earliest possible stage, with the minimum time delay, provided that the resolution was satisfactory for the employee and the organization. Furthermore, there would be consensus among management that they do not want first line supervisors turning a blind eye to provisions in the collective agreement because they wanted to avoid a grievance or because they felt that their actions would not be supported by management.

It is clear, from this and other studies, that grievance rates and the resolution of grievances both affect, and are affected by, the climate of industrial relations in the organization. The relationships between employees and their supervisors, between union and management officials at the shop floor level, and between professional industrial relations managers and their counterparts in the union hierarchy will be influenced by grievance activity within the organization and will exert an influence on both the generation and resolution or regulation of subsequent issues.

Good industrial relations climates are not created overnight, although a good one can deteriorate into a poor one as a result of a single incident. Nor is it a simple matter to "change attitudes" of personnel, either union or management, when those attitudes have developed over a number of years

and have been reinforced on a continual basis. It is naive to think that someone who has fought union encroachment on managerial rights for 10 years or more, is suddenly going to turn into a cooperative, problem-solving, union respecting manager. It is equally as naive to expect a dyed-in-the-wool union officer, with years of confrontation behind him, to suddenly turn into a collaborative, integrative bargainer.

But there are steps that management can take to improve the industrial relations climate in the long term. Serious consideration should be given to improving the degree of consultation over such issues as over-time scheduling, transferring of employees, and technological change. Before "joint decision making" is rejected out of hand, on a doctrinaire basis, some consideration should be given to the possible impact of such activities on grievance rates and the overall union-management, employee-supervisor, relationships.

Where there are personal feuds, antipathy based on dogma, or a basic denial of the rights of the other person to fulfill his function, low grievance rates cannot be expected. Here management has to look to drastic remedies, including the replacement of personnel who cannot work together with the union. Where the relationships result from ignorance of the activities, responsibilities, and philosophies of the other, education and training can sometimes help improve the relationship. There have been efforts to help union and management officials work together in improving their relationships that have met with success (e.g., Blake *et al.*, 1965)<sup>12</sup> although such programs are believed to be rare. There are sufficient cases however, such as the International Harvester case reported by McKersie and Shropshire<sup>13</sup> (1962) or, in Canada, the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting case (U.W.O., School of Business Administration), to show that commitment to the improvement of union-management relationships by senior management can bring results. It is predicted that among the results of such improvements will be the reduction in numbers of grievances and the ability to resolve differences without recourse to arbitration.

---

<sup>12</sup> BLAKE, R.R., J.S. MOUTON, and R.L. SLOMA, "The Union-Management Intergroup Laboratory; Strategy for Resolving Intergroup Conflict", *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 1, 25-27.

<sup>13</sup> MCKERSIE, R.B. and W.W. SHROPSHIRE, Jr., "Avoiding Written Grievances; a Successful Program", *Journal of Business of the University of Chicago*, 35, 135-152.

## Apparition et règlement des griefs: une vérification de la théorie behavioriste

Cette analyse vise à vérifier la double hypothèse que le nombre de griefs est moindre dans le cas des unités de négociation où existent de bonnes relations entre les parties que dans celles où elles sont tendues et que, dans les mêmes conditions, on a moins fréquemment recours à l'arbitrage. Les données recueillies portant sur un échantillon non aléatoire de 118 unités de négociation représentant 51 entreprises et 24 syndicats; la cueillette s'est effectuée à partir d'un questionnaire fort élaboré remis aux responsables des relations professionnelles dans chaque unité de négociation.

Aux fins d'analyse, les griefs furent divisés en deux catégories selon qu'ils se rapportaient ou non à des mesures disciplinaires. La moyenne des griefs à la suite de mesures disciplinaires s'établissait à 17.0 par 1,000 salariés tandis que, pour les griefs d'une autre nature, la moyenne était de 108.3 par 1,000 salariés également.

Dans 42% des unités de négociation, aucun grief n'a été porté à l'arbitrage; dans 25% d'entre elles, il y eut au moins un grief qui fit l'objet d'un arbitrage et dans 33% des unités de négociation, on a relevé au moins un grief de nature non disciplinaire qui s'est rendu à l'arbitrage. Toutefois, seulement 1.3% de l'ensemble des griefs a été l'objet d'arbitrage et, fait à noter, dans les 17 groupes de cols blancs, il n'y eut que 2 griefs qui ont atteint le stade de l'arbitrage.

D'une façon générale, le nombre de griefs est moindre là où la direction du personnel considère le syndicat d'une façon positive. Plus le taux des griefs est bas, plus les relations sont bonnes entre les parties.

Comme il est établi que chaque grief coûte en moyenne \$160.00, que le coût moyen de ceux qui sont portés à l'arbitrage est estimé à \$1,950.00, qu'il faut faire entrer en ligne de compte certaines autres pertes et que le taux des griefs affecte le climat des relations de travail, il y a lieu de prendre les moyens d'en éliminer le plus possible, même s'il faut parfois aller jusqu'à remplacer les préposés au personnel qui sont à couteaux tirés avec les syndicats.