SHOP STEWARDS
IN THE
LATROBE VALLEY

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND COMMERCE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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PART ONE: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

1. UNDERSTANDING SHOP STEWARD BEHAVIOUR: THE LITERATURE
   Definitions of Shop Stewards
   Shop Stewards in Australia
   Shop Stewards in the United Kingdom
   Conclusion

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
   Shop Steward Typologies
   Determinants of Shop Stewards' Role Definition
   Role Definition and Shop Steward Behaviour
   Conclusion

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
   Population Under Study
   Data Collection Methods
   Computing and Statistical Procedures
   Instrumentation
   Conclusion

PART TWO: THE LATROBE VALLEY SHOP STEWARDS

4. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE LATROBE VALLEY
   The Economic, Social and Political Contexts
   The Parties
   Industrial Action and Dispute Resolution
   Conclusion

5. SHOP STEWARDS: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES
   The Emergence of Shop Stewards
   Characteristics of Shop Stewards
   Stewards' Satisfaction and Attitudes to Industrial Action
   Stewards' Community Involvement
   Conclusion
6. SHOP STEWARDS' ROLE DEFINITION
   Role Classification of Shop Stewards
   Determinants of Role Type
   Conclusion

PART THREE: SHOP STEWARDS AT WORK

7. FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF SHOP STEWARDS
   Duties of Shop Stewards
   Initiation and Referral of Issues
   Conclusion

8. SHOP STEWARD ORGANISATION
   Formal Shop Steward Organisation
   Assistance from and Influence of the Steward Network
   Other Forms of Organisation
   Conclusion

9. INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND SHOP STEWARDS
   Militancy and Forms of Industrial Conflict
   Use of Procedures
   Strikes and the Role of Shop Stewards
   Conclusion

PART FOUR: RELATIONSHIPS AT THE WORKPLACE

10. SHOP STEWARDS AND MEMBERS
    Stewards' Interaction with Members
    Members' Influence and Expectations
    Stewards' Influence and Range of Arguments to Members
    Involvement of Members
    Conclusion

11. SHOP STEWARDS AND MANAGEMENT
    Contact with Management
    Management Influence and Expectations
    Stewards' Range of Arguments to Management
    Manager-Shop Steward Consultation
    Conclusion

12. SHOP STEWARDS AND THEIR UNION
    Involvement of Full-time Union Officials
    Shop Stewards' Wider Union Involvement
    Conclusion
PART FIVE: SHOP STEWARDS IN ACTION

13. THE 1977 MAINTENANCE WORKERS' STRIKE
   The Strike
   Strike Leaders
   Shop Stewards' Duties During the Strike
   Strike Organisation
   Stewards' Relationships with Members, Union
   Officials and Management.
   Conclusion

14. THE 1984 LOY YANG UNIT ATTENDANTS' DISPUTE
   The Dispute
   Shop-floor Leaders
   Shop Stewards' Duties During the Dispute
   Shop-floor Organisation
   Stewards' Relationships with Members, Union
   Officials and Management
   Conclusion

PART SIX: CONCLUSION

15. CONCLUSION
   Summary of Findings
   Validity of Typology
   Future Research

APPENDIX A: The Questionnaire

APPENDIX B: The Interview Schedule

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ABSTRACT

In Australia, industrial relations research has focused almost exclusively on the major industrial relations institutions and their role in the determination of the rules of the workplace. Local workplace industrial relations and the interaction between worker representatives and enterprise management has been a neglected area of research. This study attempts to rectify this situation. By focusing attention on the workplace a number of important questions are raised that have not been systematically addressed in Australian industrial relations research. In particular, what, if any, is the role of shop stewards in a centralised system dominated by unions, employers and tribunals organised on a state and national basis? If there is a role for shop stewards, how does this role manifest itself in terms of the stewards' relationships with members, fellow shop stewards, union officials and management? Finally, what factors explain variations in role perceptions? and how does the adoption of a particular role affect the behaviour of shop stewards?

This thesis will address these questions. It examines in some detail the behaviour of shop stewards in the coal winning and power generation industry in the Latrobe Valley. After reviewing the existing literature, a model of shop steward behaviour is proposed based on the stewards' leadership style and orientation to unionism. This model, in conjunction with union and employment variables, is then used to analyse differences in levels of bargaining, shop-floor organisation and industrial action as well as stewards' relationships with members, management and their union.
By utilizing a survey questionnaire, interviews and two case studies the thesis demonstrates that the shop stewards of the Latrobe Valley play a significant role in workplace industrial relations. Further, it is argued that variations in stewards' behaviour are, at least in part, explained by the stewards' orientation to unionism, their leadership style, the type of union they belong to and their place of work.
This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree or diploma at any University and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis.

John W. Benson
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this kind owes a debt to many people. First and foremost I would like to gratefully acknowledge the co-operation I received from the shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley. This thesis is about these people. Their willingness to answer a seemingly endless number of questions with patience and good humour made this study possible. Equally, I would like to express my appreciation to the full-time union officials, both those located in the Latrobe Valley and those based in Melbourne. Their readiness to provide data, answer questions and comment on the research findings was invaluable. Unfortunately my commitment of confidentiality does not allow me to name these stewards and officials.

My supervisor, Gerry Griffin, provided guidance and advice throughout the entire period of research. His enthusiasm for the topic and his willingness to read endless drafts of the thesis was greatly appreciated. Special thanks must also go to my academic colleagues, Peter Fairbrother, Joe Isaac and Mike Quinlan for their willingness to discuss and debate various aspects of the research.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Ross Williams, Chairman of the Economics Department, for his generous financial support, to my colleagues in the Economics Department for their continuous encouragement and support and to Annette, Margaret, Sally, Liz and Rosemary for their high level of tolerance and competence in typing this thesis. Finally, although not least, I would like to thank Odellie for her support and encouragement throughout the entire period of the research.
### TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Response to Questionnaire Survey</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Comparison of Respondents and Non-Respondents by Type and Size of Union and Place of Work</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Items Used in Constructing Orientation to Unionism and Leadership Scales</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Distribution of Responses to Unionism Scale Items</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Factor Analysis of Items Making Up Orientation to Unionism Scale (Varimax Rotation)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Distribution of Responses to Leadership Scale Items</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Factor Analysis of Items Making up Leadership Scale (Varimax Rotation)</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Distribution of Responses to Militancy Scale Items</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Factor Analysis of Items Making Up Militancy Scale (Varimax Rotation)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Unions and Shop Stewards in the Latrobe Valley SECV Operations, April 1985</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Working Days Lost Due to Industrial Disputation in the SECV</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Reasons for Joining the Union by Type of Union</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Reasons for Becoming a Steward by Type of Union</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Method of Assuming Shop Steward Office by Type of Union</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Election Procedure by Type of Union</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Shop Stewards' Level of Education by Type of Union</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Shop Stewards' Political Preference by Type of Union</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Shop Stewards' Satisfaction by Type of Union</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Circumstances Under Which Strike Action is Justified</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Shop Stewards' Community Involvement by Type of Union</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Role Classification of Latrobe Valley Shop Stewards</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Determinants of Stewards' Orientation to Unionism</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Determinants of Stewards' Leadership Style</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Determinants of Stewards' Role Type</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Distribution of Steward Types by Age</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Distribution of Steward Types by Type of Union</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Distribution of Steward Types by Place of Work</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Mean Hours Spent on Stewardship Duties by Role Type</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Time Spent on Stewardship Duties by Role Type</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Issues Negotiated with Management</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Comparison between Latrobe Valley and U.K. Stewards on Range of Bargaining</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Frequency of Bargaining by Place of Work</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Issues Negotiated with Management by Role Type</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Stewards' Involvement in Non-Industrial Issues</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>Involvement in Non-Industrial Issues by Role Type</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Initiation of Industrial Issues</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>Frequent Sources of Industrial Issues by Role Type</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>Referral of Issues to Senior Stewards, Branch Officials or Full-Time Officials</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>Frequent Referral of Issues to Senior Stewards, Branch Officials and Full-Time Officials by Role Type</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>Responsibility for Actions by Role Type</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Frequency of Meetings with Stewards from Own Union</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Attendance at Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Value of Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Initiation of Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Frequency of Meetings with Stewards from Other Unions</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Attendance at Inter-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Value of Inter-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Stewards' Attendance at Meetings by Level of Assistance Received</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Major Influences on Stewards by Role Type</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>Involvement in Joint Consultation by Role Type</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Forms of Industrial Action Used</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Forms of Industrial Action by Type of Union</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Involvement in Industrial Action by Role Type</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Stewards' Perception and Preference of the Level of Strike Decision by Role Type</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Involvement of Senior Stewards and Full-Time Union Officials in Strike Action by Role Type</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Key Officials in the Organisation of a Strike by Role Type</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>Proposers of Strategy During Industrial Disputes by Type of Union</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>Proposers of Strategy During Industrial Disputes by Role Type</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Key Negotiators During Strike Action by Role Type</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>Stewards' Role During Strike Action</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>Function of Steward During Strike Action by Role Type</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Frequency of Formal Membership Meetings</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Frequency of Membership Contact</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Frequency of Formal Membership Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Frequency of Membership Contact by Role Type</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Value of Membership Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Perceived Members' Expectations of Stewards</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Perceived Members' Expectations of the Union</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.8 Perceived Members' Expectations of Stewards by Role Type
10.9 Stewards' Attempts to Influence Members by Role Type
10.10 Stewards' Range of Arguments to Members
10.11 Stewards' Range of Arguments to Members by Role Type
10.12 Involvement of Members in Negotiations by Role Type
11.1 Nature of Stewards' Contacts with Supervisors by Role Type
11.2 Nature of Stewards' Contacts with SECV Management by Role Type
11.3 Level of Steward-Management Negotiations by Role Type
11.4 Frequency of Stewards By-passing their Supervisors by Role Type
11.5 Perceived Management Attempts to Influence Shop Stewards by Role Type
11.6 Perceived Management Expectations of Shop Stewards
11.7 Perceived Management Expectations of Shop Stewards by Role Type
11.8 Stewards' Range of Arguments to Management
11.9 Stewards' Range of Arguments to Management by Role Type
11.10 Manager-Steward Consultation by Role Type
11.11 Stewards' Contribution to Solving Problems by Role Type
11.12 Effectiveness of Joint Consultation by Role Type
12.1 Source of Initiative to Involve Full-Time Officials
12.2 Source of Initiative to Involve Full-Time Officials by Type of Union
12.3 Acceptance by Stewards of Strategy Proposed by Full-Time Officials by Role Type
12.4 Usefulness of Involving Full-Time Officials
12.5 Difficulties Experienced with Full-Time Officials
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>Difficulties Experienced with Full-Time Officials by Place of Work</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>Attendance at Branch Union Meetings</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>Value of Branch Union Meetings</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>Official Positions within the Union by Type of Union</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>Attendance at Branch Union Meetings by Role Type</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.11</td>
<td>Official Positions within the Union by Role Type</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>Type of Position within the Union by Role Type</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Shop Steward Functions During 1977 Strike</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>Shop Steward Functions During 1984 Dispute</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Steward Types</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Steward Types (Modified)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Typology of Steward Types</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Predictors of Shop Stewards' Role Definition</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Predictors of Orientation to Unionism and Leadership Style</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADSTE</td>
<td>Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMPE</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMWU</td>
<td>Amalgamated Metal Workers’ Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>APEA</td>
<td>Association of Professional Engineers, Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>APSA</td>
<td>Association of Professional Scientists of Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASCJA</td>
<td>Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>Australian Society of Engineers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATWU</td>
<td>Australian Timber Workers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWU</td>
<td>Australian Workers’ Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLF</td>
<td>Australian Building Construction Employees and Builders Labourers’ Federation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWIU</td>
<td>Building Workers’ Industrial Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETU</td>
<td>Electrical Trades Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEDFA</td>
<td>Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen’s Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIA</td>
<td>Federated Ironworkers’ Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLAIEU</td>
<td>Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMNU</td>
<td>Federated Miscellaneous Workers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSPU</td>
<td>Federated Storeman and Packers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTLC</td>
<td>Gippsland Trades and Labour Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOA</td>
<td>Municipal Officers’ Association (SECV Branch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPDU</td>
<td>Operative Painters and Decorators’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGEU</td>
<td>Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECV</td>
<td>State Electricity Commission of Victoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWU</td>
<td>Transport Workers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBEF</td>
<td>Vehicle Builders Employees’ Federation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOBS</td>
<td>Victorian Operative Bricklayers’ Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPS</td>
<td>Victorian Plasterers’ Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTHC</td>
<td>Victorian Trades Hall Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Some unions have changed their titles over time. The present title is used throughout this study.
This study examines workplace industrial relations in the coal winning and power generation industry of the Latrobe Valley. More specifically, the thesis focuses on the role of the honorary workplace union official, the shop steward. This level of union official has not been the subject of a significant volume of academic research in Australia. This lack of interest is in direct contrast to the situation overseas, in particular, the United Kingdom. Two reasons may explain this lack of interest. First, the centralised nature of industrial relations in Australia has fostered a belief that little industrial relations activity occurs at the workplace. Accordingly, the role of shop stewards is normally conceived in terms of their formal duties which, in the majority of unions, is primarily restricted to enlisting members, collecting dues and providing a means of communications between the union and the membership. Second, research focusing on the shop-floor level presents problems of a practical nature that can prove difficult to overcome. These problems or as Davis claims the "... difficulty of discovering very much about shop stewards" include gaining access to shop stewards and their members and the restrictions placed upon the researcher by the employer who does not want disruptions at the workplace and by union officials who wish to maintain control at the central level. The effect has been for industrial relations

research to neglect and underestimate the importance of industrial
relations activity at the shop-floor and to devalue the part played by
human actors. Yet, as Rimmer pointed out:

The growth of over-award pay, the application of job control
and several features of the Australia strike pattern, are all
consistent with the existence of a significant volume of
workplace bargaining between shop stewards and manager.

To focus attention at the shop-floor level raises a number of
important questions which have not been systematically addressed in
industrial relations research in Australia. First, is there a role for
shop stewards in a centralized system, dominated by trade unions,
employer associations and industrial tribunals? If so, what is this
role? and how does a perceived role manifest itself in terms of the
stewards’ relationship with members, fellow shop stewards, union
officials and management? Second, if stewards do have a role beyond
that contained in the union rulebook do they define this role
differently? and if so, what factors explain the variation in role
perceptions between stewards? Third, will distinctly different
behaviour result from the various perceptions?

This thesis will attempt to answer these questions. The central
focus will be the behaviour of shop stewards and the relationship
between shop stewards and their trade union, managers, other shop
stewards and the union membership. The diversity of relationships and
the difficulties in the stewards’ role are succinctly expressed by
Brown:

2. R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction (London:

3. M. Rimmer, Union Shop Floor Organisation in Australian Unions:
An Industrial Relations Perspective, ed. Bill Ford and David Plowman.
Members require the favourable settlement of their grievance; full-time officials require him to maintain union organisation and uphold union policy; managers expect him to act 'responsibly' and to go through procedure and to be able to predict their members' reactions to their innovations; other shop stewards expect solidarity and support for agreed policies.

It is from these four groups that shop stewards derive the power to act as workplace representatives. The particular union the steward belongs to will provide the basic authority to act as a shop steward, whilst other stewards and management can, by their actions, grant further authority to the role of the steward. It is the membership, however, which in the final analysis can broaden the power of stewards to carry out activities on their behalf. The different needs and foci of these groups underscore the dilemma facing shop stewards and the essentially contradictory nature of the stewards' position. Accordingly, shop stewards will continually be under pressure to renegotiate their roles and in the process they will place considerable emphasis on the reconciliation of the inherent conflicts between the various groups, without losing the fundamental support of the membership.

The context of this study is the Latrobe Valley operations of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. Traditionally, union members have been militant in the Latrobe Valley, often in defiance of the policies and direction of their union. It is not, in this sense,

typical of Australian industry in general, although other regional areas such as Broken Hill, Mt. Isa and the Pilbara have experienced similar situations. Focusing on the one region and the one industry will allow for a detailed understanding of the behaviour of shop stewards and their role in workplace industrial relations. This limitation, however, does not allow for an examination of the relevance of institutional and structural factors on shop steward behaviour. Thus, this study should be conceived of in terms of analysing the influence of factors internal to the organisation in understanding shop steward behaviour.

The importance of this study is twofold. First, the commonly held views concerning shop stewards can be investigated and the behaviour of shop stewards can be placed in the context of the social organisation. Second, and more importantly, the study will answer some fundamental questions about the nature of Australian workplace industrial relations and should act as a foundation for future research into the behaviour of shop stewards.

5. The role of shop stewards may, however, be substantially greater in many industries than has traditionally been assumed. For example, both Charleston and Sharman found shop stewards operating in a range of industries. See D.F. Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia: An Analytical Survey of Role Perceptions and Activities' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1977); K.J. Sharman, 'Tuta General Shop Steward Course 1979: Participants 'Response' (A Survey Commissioned by the Australian Trade Union Authority, November 1980).

The thesis is divided into six parts. Part One delineates the theoretical framework and research methodology adopted in this study. Chapter 1 reviews both the Australian and British literature on shop stewards which determined the theoretical framework and the models to be tested. These matters are considered in chapter 2. Chapter 3 outlines the research procedures adopted to test the usefulness of the theoretical framework and to explore the behaviour of shop stewards.

Part Two of the thesis examines in detail the shop stewards employed in the coal winning and power generation industry in the Latrobe Valley. Chapter 4 outlines the industrial relations system in the Latrobe Valley and provides background information on the shop stewards and their community. Chapter 5 answers the question 'Who are the shop stewards?' and pays particular attention to how they became shop stewards and their personal characteristics and attitudes. Chapter 6 uses data from the shop stewards' survey to test the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2 and to determine factors that explain variations in stewards' role definition.

Part Three analyses shop stewards' industrial relations activities at the workplace. Chapter 7 discusses the various functions of shop stewards and examines how they initiate and process issues. Chapter 8 explores the network of stewards' organisation both within their union and between unions. Chapter 9 raises the subject of industrial action and, in particular, strikes and the role of shop stewards.

Part Four considers relationships at the workplace. Chapters 10, 11 and 12 explore shop stewards' behaviour in terms of their relationships and dealings with union members, management, and the wider union respectively. In this context the background information on the Latrobe Valley, provided in chapter 4, situates the study and provides
the basis for a more informed understanding of the actions of shop stewards.

Part Five of the thesis provides two case studies of shop stewards in action in an attempt to integrate the findings of the preceding chapters. The first case study, contained in chapter 13, analyses the role of shop stewards in a lengthy strike in 1977. This particular strike became notable for the control exercised at all stages by the shop stewards and the support received from the community. The second, in chapter 14, examines a dispute over staffing levels that occurred at a new power station site in 1984. The key feature, once again, was the involvement of shop stewards throughout the dispute and the speed with which the stewards were able to develop a strong shop-floor organisation.

Part Six presents the conclusions of this study. Chapter 15 summarises the research findings and comments on the validity of the typology used in terms of its usefulness and applicability for future research into the role of shop stewards in Australia.

To conclude this introduction it is necessary to make some comments on terminology, methodology and the style of presentation. First, a variety of terms, such as shop steward, job delegate, shop/job representative and contact officer are used by unions in the Latrobe Valley to describe the voluntary, workplace union official. These terms reflect, in part, differences in formally specified roles and functions and, in part, the acceptability of the term shop steward to a particular union or their membership. In this study the term shop steward encompasses all these titles and designations. Second, the design of the study is primarily based on the perceptions of shop stewards. These stewards present a particular view of industrial relations in the
Latrobe Valley, a view which may differ from that of the other major participants. This approach, however, was adopted as the aim of the thesis was to build up a picture of the role of the shop steward. In this context the stewards' own perspectives assume paramount importance. Third, where the initials of a union form an acronym the use of 'the' immediately preceding the title will be dispensed with. Fourth, as the vast majority of the tables presented in this thesis are based on the data collected from the questionnaire survey only those tables not based on such data will be sourced. Fifth, throughout the thesis conventional style and symbols are used in the presentation of statistical information.
PART ONE

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING SHOP STEWARD BEHAVIOUR: THE LITERATURE

This thesis is about shop stewards in the coal winning and power generating industry in the Latrobe Valley. Specifically, the thesis aims to identify the roles played by stewards in the Latrobe Valley industrial relations system and to explore and analyse the factors explaining these different roles. This initial chapter examines the existing literature on shop stewards. It is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the definitions of stewardship found in the literature and examines the sources of power, both formal and informal, which give substance to the stewards' position. The second and third sections review the Australian and United Kingdom literature on shop stewards, focusing on the factors which may explain the variation in shop stewards' roles and behaviour. Explicitly the chapter argues for a broad definition of stewardship and the need to go beyond macro-level factors to explain stewards' behaviour.

Definitions of Shop Stewards

Three distinct views characterise the role of the shop steward in workplace industrial relations. In part, this reflects the evolving nature of the stewards' role and, in part, a judgement on what their role should be. The first is succinctly expressed by Clegg, Killick and Adams who defined the shop steward as being "... elected by his fellow trade unionists in his shop to represent them to management." 1 In a

similar vein Monaghan suggested that "... as long as workers have been free to join trade unions it is probable that they have deputed one of their members to act as their spokesman or steward." 2 This view of shop stewards locates their role as representatives of the union membership at the workplace, speaking and acting on their behalf. As Parker concluded "... the crucial relationship is between the steward and the members he represents." 3 In terms of the perceptions of the members, at least in the early days of unionism in Australia, Hince argued "... these representatives were, in the absence of full-time officers, to all intent and purpose the 'union'." 4

The notion of shop stewards as representatives of the membership overlooks the official relationship stewards have with their union and the part they play in the wider organised trade union movement. Indeed, the perception of shop stewards as worker representatives has been disputed by Biggs after an examination of the early shop stewards' movement in Coventry. Biggs claimed "... there was no concept of the collector as a workers' representative or even as a link between the factory floor, the branch and the District Committee." 5 What then was their role? The second view maintains shop stewards are "... the trade

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union lay representatives at the place of work. In this case the emphasis is on the relationship between the union and the shop steward. That is, the focus is on the formal, official role of the shop steward. The major problem with this definition is that it excludes the stewards' relationship with their members and suggests that their role is limited to that prescribed in official documents such as the union rule book.

Goodwin focused on this dual function by posing the question whether shop stewards should be 'representatives of the union' or 'defenders of the workers'? This alludes to the potential conflict facing the steward. As Hince has pointed out, the "... steward and in particular the committees represent alternative centres of power and authority." It is clear that workers will see the shop steward as their representative whilst the union will consider the steward as their agent at the workplace.

The third view of the role of shop stewardship is provided by Lane who argued that the shop steward "... was simultaneously a rank and file leader, an unpaid personnel manager, and an agent for his union." Similarly Lover suggested "... the shop steward is in a trinity of


employee, workers' representative and trade union agent. Both Lane and Lover suggested a wider and more complex definition of shop stewardship. In particular, the concept of an unpaid 'personnel manager' adds a new dimension to the definition. In the Latrobe Valley, shop stewards are increasingly being consulted by management, participating in committees and being involved in the decision making process. At a more general level the process of successfully taking up a grievance is clearly participating in the management of the enterprise.

It is clear that no simple definition of shop stewardship will adequately describe the role and function of shop stewards. Shop stewards do represent their members to management and the union, they are agents of the union, communicating with members and management and they are employees and part of the employer's organisation. Foenander, in an attempt to accommodate the three views expressed above, considered the liaison role the shop steward is often expected to perform. In this context a shop steward is:

... a member of a trade union appointed under its rules whose function broadly speaking, is to act as an intermediary between fellow members of the union employed in a shop or department in an establishment on the one part, and the higher executive authority of the union or employer management on the other.

As Charleston commented, this definition "... imputes an essentially neutral function to the shop steward... [and] ... such a definition is


also unnecessarily restrictive. On this latter point, Foenander's definition would view the shop steward as a communicator and perhaps facilitator rather than as a leader or representative, initiating action, making decisions and negotiating changes.

From the above discussion it appears necessary to define shop stewardship in terms of the relationships inherent in the stewards' position, and the actual functions they perform. To this end Goodman and Whittingham offered perhaps the most complete definition of a shop steward. A shop steward is defined as:

(a) A representative of trade union members at the place of work where he himself is employed.

(b) Someone who is tacitly or explicitly accepted as such by management and his trade union.

(c) Someone who has a de facto responsibility for the conduct of the initial stages of negotiations in the workplace.

(d) Someone, however, who is not a recognised full-time official of his trade union and whose recognition is not the result of his, possibly, holding branch office.

This definition recognises the dual role of the shop steward, the need for formal and informal recognition, the distinction between being a branch official and a shop steward and specifies the major function and responsibility of stewardship. It does, however, as Kessler notes, assert that negotiation is "... the 'only function regarded as essential' to the definition of the shop stewards' role." Therefore it is necessary to extend this definition to include a range of duties.


such as grievance handling, recruitment of members, monitoring work practices and providing a point of reference for the union and the membership. This multi-activity approach will be adopted in this thesis.

The degree to which shop stewards in Australia meet this definition will depend upon the power conferred upon them from a variety of formal and informal sources. For the purposes of this research, formal power will be taken as congruous with authority, namely "...the power which accrues to a person by virtue of his role, his position in an organised social structure."¹⁶ The sources of formal power or authority for the steward include the responsibilities and obligations specified in trade union rule books, state and federal awards, collective agreements, shop steward handbooks and the internal regulations of the organisation. However, power can take on a much broader meaning and can stem from a variety of informal sources.¹⁷ The major source of this informal power is the willingness of members to 'back-up' their steward during times of stress or crisis. This form of power is, in turn, dependent upon the stewards' ability to foster a particular ideology amongst their members concerning the stewards' role and behaviour, and the need for collective


¹⁷. The terms authority and power are subject to a variety of definitions and interpretations. For an interesting debate on the meaning of authority and power see G.W. Dalton, L.B. Barnes and A. Zaleznick, The Distribution of Authority in Formal Organizations (Boston: Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1968).
action.\textsuperscript{18} The remainder of this section will consider, in more detail, these various sources of shop steward power.

The first source of authority for shop stewards are the rule books of their respective union. Trade union rules are often silent on the recognition, standing and functions of shop stewards, presumably preferring to conduct shop-floor activities through the local branch or full-time paid union officials. Where mention is made of shop stewards, functions are usually restricted to recruitment of new members, collection of union dues and maintaining record books.\textsuperscript{19} Some rule books also specify a commission for shop stewards who perform the collection function.\textsuperscript{20} Few rule books provide clear guidelines on the election or appointment of shop stewards, the most common rules being 'the union may appoint a responsible delegate' or 'shop stewards may be elected by a ballot of all financial members'. Even fewer provide details on how the appointment of a shop steward may be terminated. Two unions that provide substantial detail on shop stewardship are the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Building Workers' Industrial Union (BWIU). The AMWU rules allow for the appointment of shop stewards, shop committees and convenors, however the authority of each of these groups is not specified, although they can be defined by the State Council with the approval of the Federal Council. It is made

\textsuperscript{18} A consideration of the creation of ideology as a source of power is discussed by S. Lukes, \textit{Power: A Radical View} (London: Macmillan, 1974).


\textsuperscript{20} For example, the Hospital Employees Federation of Australia specifies that the shop steward may receive up to 15 per cent of all fees collected, \textit{Branch Rules}, Melbourne, n.d., section 18.
clear that "... all disputes shall come immediately under the control of the State Councils."

21. The BWIU, apart from specifying much of the detail given above, directs its organisers to "... co-operate with all shop and job stewards."

22. A second source of authority can be found in the awards of both state and federal tribunals. These tend to be vague and concentrate on facilities to be provided, for example, the provision of a place to meet full-time union officials, and the right to discuss with the employer matters affecting union members. In terms of negotiations over wages and conditions these institutional arrangements provide little scope for shop-floor involvement. Equally, privately negotiated agreements tend to concentrate on facilities (room, telephone) and rights including time off during working hours to carry out the tasks of the shop steward.

23. This latter source of authority tends to be restricted to industries that operate under collective agreement, for example, the building industry. It should be noted that the power industry in Victoria operates under what is termed the 'power industry approach' which includes negotiated agreements between unions and the state government on conditions of work.

24. A third source of authority for shop stewards, and perhaps the most important in understanding union strategy at the workplace, can be found in the handbooks issued to shop stewards by their union. These provide

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considerably more detail on the functions of shop steward, their rights
and their obligations. For example, the Municipal Officers' Association
(SECV Branch) provides a 'Charter of Rights and Functions' for shop
stewards. Included in the functions of the shop steward are: the
recruitment of non-members, the monitoring of changes and developments
in the work area, the distribution of union literature, to be the first
point of contact for members, to encourage participation in union
activities and the compilation of information and evidence for new
claims.25

A final source of authority is that granted to shop stewards by
their employer. This is usually formalised through various documents
and regulations. One source within the SECV is the handbook issued to
all supervisors. Apart from a section dealing with the rights of shop
stewards the guide makes reference to the need for supervisors to
consult with shop stewards over such matters as discipline, grievances,
closed-shop policies and dismissals.26 It should be recognised,
however, that these sources of authority are not static over time. This
is particularly the case with shop steward handbooks and management
regulations.

The foregoing gave some indication of the functions of shop
stewards via the authority vested in them from a variety of formal,
usually written, sources. Wider power can be achieved through the
willingness of members to 'back up' their stewards and the willingness
of individual full-time union officials and management personnel to
concede a certain amount of their authority. This is, of course, the

25. Municipal Officers' Association (SECV Branch), Shop Stewards
Handbook, Melbourne, n.d.

process underlying all collective industrial activity, but can also become institutionalized over time as 'custom and practice'. In the case of the SECV's operations in the Latrobe Valley, many of the functions of shop stewards flow from this source. Stewards' participation on various committees and working parties, their involvement in a range of collective negotiations, the recognition by SECV Management of the need to consult with shop stewards, and the more general role of the shop stewards in the wider community are indicative of the need to define shop stewardship in a wider context than that given in the formal documents such as the union rule book.

Shop Stewards in Australia

This section reviews the literature on shop stewards and workplace organisation in Australia. Little research has been conducted into shop stewards and their behaviour within the workplace. What research has been carried out has consisted almost entirely of small-scale case studies or impressionistic and usually descriptive accounts of the role of the shop steward, particularly during industrial disputes. The emphasis in most studies has focused on the formal or official aspects of shop-floor organisation and the delegated role of the shop steward. Little is known about the actual behaviour, role and function of shop stewards and even less is known about their impact on industrial relations. Factors influencing the behaviour and actions of shop stewards remain largely an unresearched area. This review will be broken into three areas: the incidence of shop stewards and shop-floor

27. The only long term, systematic study of shop stewards has been that conducted by N.F. Dufty in Western Australia. His research will be discussed later in this section.
organisations, the role of the steward in the workplace and factors that have been proposed to explain the variations in stewards' role and behaviour.

*Shop-Floor Organisation in Australia*

Foenander writing in 1965 argued "there is certainly nothing in Australian industrial history to compare with the shop steward movement (as it is called) in Great Britain during World War I and the years immediately following." 28 This comment followed an earlier study by the then Department of Labour and National Service conducted in the early 1950s which reported that "... there was very poor development of shop organisation in which workers could responsibly participate." 29 As late as 1975 a Jackson Committee commissioned study asserted that "a large number of plants have no shop stewards at all. An active shop steward is a rarity." 30 Taylor, although more cautious, suspected "... that workplace organisation is not well developed, nor perhaps very widespread in Australia today." 31

These comments would suggest that shop steward activity is limited in Australia. However, a number of other studies give weight to the view that the situation is far from uniform. As Hince commented "... although (shop) committees do exist they are accorded either very

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limited or no recognition by union rule books, by management or the law...[nevertheless]... they represent a strong and potent force in industrial relationships." 32 This is particularly true of the meat, rail, power and shipbuilding industries. In each industry there has been a long history of workplace organisation. Davis cited the role of the shop committee spelt out in the Butchers Journal of 1923; Rimmer referred to the criticisms of shop stewards made by the 1903 Royal Commission into the Sydney Cockatoo Island Dockyard; Warburton outlined the development and formation of shop committees in 1926 in the New South Wales Railways; whilst Rimmer and Sutcliffe make mention of the formation of the Power Station's Combined Delegates Organisation (NSW) in 1945. 33 Perhaps the most detailed research into the origins of Australian workshop organisation is provided by Rimmer and Sutcliffe.

They concluded that:

There is a long tradition of shop committee organisation in Australian industry...[and]... that the establishment of permanent shop committees depended upon their ability to regulate industrial conditions outside the influence of interests of trade unions and the Labour Party, although the support of these parties has usually proved a condition for shop committee success. 34


It is clear, therefore, that in a number of industries strong shop-floor organisation has prevailed, at least for certain periods. Several studies have also shown that shop stewards play an important role in plant-level industrial relations. Derber's research into the metalworking industry over the period 1969 to 1976 led him to conclude that within this period "... both unions and managements in the metalworking industry have turned increasing attention to plant-level relations." \(^{35}\) Charleston's Australia-wide survey of shop stewards confirmed this result. He reported that shop stewards in the manufacturing section had negotiated with management on a range of issues which included wages, working conditions, hours of work, discipline and employment matters. This, however, was not uniform across all industries considered (public utility, transport, communications and banking), particularly with reference to the setting of wage rates. \(^{36}\)

More recent studies would confirm the trend noted in Derber's research. Mason and Muller, for example, researched workplace industrial relations in two Brisbane manufacturing plants and found that in both cases a sophisticated system of industrial relations existed at the shop-floor level. \(^{37}\) Similarly, a study of seven unions by Davis confirmed the existence of shop steward organisation in all but one of

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36. Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia.' Charleston's results should be treated with caution. The method of sample selection (stewards who undertook a trade union postal course) and the low response rate (17.9 per cent) raises the distinct possibility that the results may not be representative.

the unions. Further, stewards representing four of the unions (ADSTE, the AMWU, the BWIU and the Victorian Printers Operative Union) have been involved in considerable bargaining at the local level.  

The present situation with respect to industrial relations practices at the shop-floor level are best summed up by Lumley, who conducted a series of research projects into workplace industrial relations in Australia in the period 1981 to 1982. He concluded the "... characterisation of workplace level industrial relations in Australia by an absence of developed shop steward organisation and little union involvement in job regulation conceals a diversity of practice." Indeed to Lumley "... the situations differ in degree rather than kind from what might be found in similar British workplaces."  

*Shop Stewards' Role in the Industrial Relations Process*

Given the existence of shop stewards and workplace organisations, what are their role in the industrial relations process? At the formal level this may involve the collection of dues, negotiation with management over minor grievances and providing a communication channel between the union and their members, and management and their employees. However, a number of studies have illustrated that shop stewards often extend this role into developing strong workplace


40. Ibid., p.315.

organisations. For example, a study of shop-floor organisation in the vehicle industry illustrated the role of the steward in prosecuting a victimisation case of a fellow steward. This involved organising members, planning direct action, including strikes, and mobilising support for their aims both within and outside the union. Phelan concluded "the ability and preparedness of the shop floor organisation to plan and act was the principle reason the Gnatenko sacking didn't stick." Research carried out on the 1973 and 1981 strikes at the Ford Motor Company's Broadmeadow plant in Victoria demonstrated a similar role for the stewards.

Studies by Casey and Rimbault focus on the development of site committees and the role these collective bodies of shop stewards play in the industrial relations processes. Their role, in the construction industry, included encouraging workers to express their views, raising finance for strike funds, conducting their own disputes and providing a mechanism for uniting all workers on site. Shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley have adopted a similar role. In the lengthy Latrobe Valley Maintenance Workers' strike stewards extended this role by formulating


43. Ibid., p.20.


and serving a log of claims on the SECV independent of their unions and represented members at the subsequent Arbitration Commission hearings.  

Several shop stewards and former shop stewards have written on the role of the steward. Baird contended that the shop steward has two leadership roles: "... firstly for the union to which he belongs and secondly in the role as a co-ordinator or participant in the shop committees and site committees which embrace a number of unions." Armstrong, a retired AMWU steward in the Latrobe Valley, pointed out that the AMWU actively encourages its stewards to join with other stewards to collectively deal with a range of issues. This attitude by the AMWU to its shop stewards was confirmed by research conducted by Davis into the AMWU decision making structure. A further point to come out of this research was that many full-time officials have served a 'defacto apprenticeship' as a shop steward and local branch official.

What is clear from these studies is that the role of the shop steward will vary between industries, organisations and unions. For


instance, Lumley found in his study of five worksites that in some "... there are no negotiated substantive or procedural agreements specific to the workplace, while in others there is considerable workplace bargaining."\textsuperscript{51} Where workplace bargaining occurred it involved the use of industrial sanctions (bans, strikes) and presentation of the case by shop stewards to bodies such as boards of reference. In these cases the role of the steward extended beyond that specified in the union rules and resembled that of a full-time official.

The studies by McBeath and Charleston provide some useful insights into what shop stewards actually do. McBeath, for example, found stewards negotiated with management on a variety of issues (safety, general pay problems, overtime), although the frequency of this activity was not given.\textsuperscript{52} Stewards also received advice and guidance from their union on particular issues, although it was not clear whether this was in the context of carrying out negotiations with management or part of the stewards' role in providing a link between the union and the membership. Charleston, in his survey of shop stewards, asked a number of similar questions to McBeath and confirmed the above findings.\textsuperscript{53} Both studies, however, made little attempt to break down their findings by categories such as age of steward, organisation or issues, although McBeath categorised his findings by each of the four unions he studied. Further, no attempt was made to discuss the stewards' behaviour in the context of theory.

\textsuperscript{51} Lumley, 'Control Over the Organistion', p.308.


\textsuperscript{53} Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia.'
Two studies that have explored the role of the shop steward in a more theoretical perspective are those by Taylor and Dufty. The theoretical aspects of both studies will be considered in chapter 2. The limited nature of Taylor's research (twenty-two stewards, one union, two plants) and the failure to relate the orientations of stewards to the roles adopted, meant that little insight was gained into the behaviour of shop stewards and the part they play in industrial relations. Dufty's research, on the other hand, represents the most comprehensive Australian attempt to relate a theoretical discussion of role with the actual behaviour of the steward. Important findings on the role of the steward included provision of leadership to the rank-and-file, representation of the steward's constituency and modification of membership demands. On this latter point Dufty found that nearly half of the issues raised by members would be squashed by the steward with another quarter of the issues modified. Stewards also felt the need to develop strong shop-floor organisations. Ninety per cent felt that they should be involved in all matters covered by awards and agreements and ninety-two per cent saw a role in protecting the welfare of the rank-and-file.

From the responses to a number of attitudinal statements, Dufty was able to identify nine role orientations of stewards. These were: management orientation, militant negotiation, pragmatic materialism, union commitment, pastoral care, strong leadership, organisation, activation and consultation. Although these results were based on

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responses to attitudinal statements, Dufty pointed out the stewards' "... attitudes to his leadership role, for example, are inextricably bound up with what he actually does in performing this role." If this is the case it is clear, given the variations in attitudes, that the role and behaviour of shop stewards will vary within the workplace.

Factors Explaining the Variation in the Role of the Shop Steward.

In the previous section it became clear that the role of the shop steward in Australian industry varied considerably between unions, workplaces and industries. Five broad factors have been put forward in the literature in an attempt to explain this variation: union rules and attitudes, attitudes of employers and management, the degree of commitment/dependency on industrial tribunals, characteristics of the workplace and the background of the steward.

Union Rules and Attitudes: Australian unions have generally been reluctant to allow shop stewards a role beyond that specified in the union rules. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this role tends to be one of assisting the union in a range of administrative duties. Hince suggested a major reason for unions restricting the activities of their stewards is the recognition that strong shop committees "... represent alternative centres of allegiance ..." Other reasons relate to their potential to disrupt arbitral proceedings and associated union activities such as membership meetings. Certainly, when stewards adopt an active role it can cause friction with full-time officials who see the "... developing shop steward movement as challenging their own...

56. Ibid., p.379.
positions within the union movement."\textsuperscript{58} Nevertheless, in recent years
the stewards' role has become far from uniform.

Derber, noting the changes in the period 1969 to 1976, commented
that "a number of unions, for either tactical or ideological reasons or
both, had built up their shop steward organisation, developed steward
training programmes, and encouraged greater activity on the part of the
steward in the workplace."\textsuperscript{59} Perhaps the best documented example of
strong union support for the steward is that of the Amalgamated Metal
Workers' Union (Victorian Branch). Davis examined the decision-making
structures within this union and concluded that whilst "the Rules give
little space to defining the role of the steward ... the shop steward is
viewed by the union as the key agent to the mobilization of the
membership." Further:

The Leadership has unceasingly sought to involve the steward
in the broad campaigns undertaken by the union, and it has
become usual for the State Council to call for a Meeting of
the Shop Stewards to discuss pressing industrial and political
issues.\textsuperscript{60}

This view confirmed the research of McBeath who pointed out that the
Western Australian branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (now part
of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union) encouraged its shop stewards to
take a leading role in shop-level industrial relations. This attitude
was not uniform across the unions studied by McBeath. The Australasian

\textsuperscript{58} Murphy, 'Changing the Union', p.31.
\textsuperscript{59} Derber, 'Changing Union-Management Relations', p.6.
\textsuperscript{60} Davis, 'Decision Making in the Amalgamated Metal Workers and
Shipwrights' Union', p.357.
Society of Engineers for example, "... endeavours to keep its stewards in a strictly subordinate position within the union's structure." 61

This latter view reflects the attitude of the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation during the 1973 dispute at the Ford Broadmeadows plant. Action emanating from the shop-floor level was considered by the union to be "... unofficial and the work of a few rebel shop stewards." 62 Shop stewards were seen to be "... motivated by a desire to gain union office." 63 In a study of the role of stewards in seven blue and white-collar unions, Davis noted that the attitude of the union and its full-time officials were crucial to the development of shop stewards and shop-floor organisation. 64 Whereas four of the unions had, to varying degrees, incorporated shop stewards and shop committees into their organisational structure and encouraged stewards to take an active part in workplace bargaining, the remainder had deliberately discouraged shop-floor activity by centralising bargaining, providing few duties for the steward and limiting the designated number of stewards. Even where unions have, however, actively encouraged a key role for its shop stewards it remains problematic as to whether shop-floor organisation will be strong. For example, Frenkel and Coolican found within the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union a wide diversity in the level of shop steward organisation at the workplace. 65

63. Ibid.
64. Davis, 'Shop Stewards in Australia', pp.22-23.
Attitudes of Employers and Management: It was suggested in section one of this chapter that one source of authority for shop stewards is that granted by their employer. It does, however, remains difficult to assess the impact of the employers'/management attitude on the activities of shop stewards and on the development of their organisations. In general, employers have been reluctant to legitimise the activities of shop stewards and there is little evidence to suggest that management is willing to incorporate stewards into the plant-level industrial relations. On this latter point Taylor argued that the limited recognition given by management, in two Newcastle steel plants, to shop stewards of the Federated Ironworkers' Association contributed to the absence of a recognised workshop organisation. The instrumental position held by the employer is reinforced by the research of Warbuton who claimed, with respect to shop committees within the New South Wales Railways, that "... it is doubtful that the shop committees could have reached this stage of cohesion in their early development without having the recognition of the Railways Commissioners." Equally, Kriegler found shop-floor organisation poorly developed at the Whyalla Shipyards and suggested this was due to management's unwillingness to involve shop stewards in industrial issues. Rimmer and Sutcliffe also consider the role of the employer and suggested that the decline in the shop committee movement, particularly post-1945,

68. Warbuton, 'Shop Committees', p.256.
could be indirectly traced to the increasing reluctance on the part of the employers to deal with shop committees.\(^{70}\)

Is management/employer support, therefore, a necessary precondition for the development of a strong shop-floor organisation? There is little evidence available to answer this question. As Davis correctly pointed out, even where management opposition is observed, other factors may be responsible for a poorly developed shop stewards' organisation.\(^{71}\) It would seem reasonable, however, to suggest that negative attitudes by both management and union officials would make the development of a strong shop-floor organisation extremely difficult. The events of 1973 and 1981 at the Ford Broadmeadows plant would suggest that these two factors in combination may not be sufficient to prevent, at least in isolated cases, the development of strong stewards' organisation.\(^{72}\)

*The Degree of Commitment/Dependency on Industrial Tribunals:* The Australian industrial relations system is characterised, both at the state and federal levels, by a commitment to and a dependency upon centrally negotiated/determined terms and conditions of employment. The argument then is advanced that where this commitment/dependency is strongest little activity will take place at the workplace level. Nevertheless, McBeath and Charleston showed that shop stewards, across a number of industries, have been involved in negotiating a range of

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72. See Lever-Tracy, 'A New Australian Working Class'; Murphy, 'Changing the Union'. 
issues. Further, even in those instances where management and/or the unions are committed to a centralised industrial relations system, the attitudes of the individual conciliator/arbitrator will be important in determining the level at which negotiations take place. Thus, whilst a centralized arbitral system may limit the areas or scope of negotiations it does not rule out all activity at the shop-floor level. However, given a reliance on centralised determined wages and conditions the development of a strong shop-floor organisation becomes problematic. The research by Davis supports this proposition. In general he found that the weakest workplace organisation occurred where there was "... no scope for any bargaining at a decentralised level."  

Characteristics of the Workplace: A number of factors have been considered in relation to the influence of the workplace on the development of shop stewards and shop committees. Of particular importance are the size and location of the workplace and the type of industry.

Hince suggested that "... the increasing size, complexity and bureaucratization of industrial organisations" is one argument frequently advanced to explain the re-emergence of strong shop-floor organisation. That is, as workers become increasing alienated from the decision making mechanisms and the work processes they respond by forming units at the shop-floor level for their protection and to regain their lost influence. It may, however, be that large organisations place greater demands on the shop stewards as representatives of the

73. McBeath, 'The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations'; Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia.'

74. Davis, 'Shop Stewards in Australia', p.20.

workplace. Lumley conducted his research on the assumption that larger workplaces offered the greatest potential for the development of workplace union organisation. Davis pointed out that the role of the steward will vary according to the size of the workplace, with stewards in small workshops acting as a contact point for full-time officials whereas in larger work sites their role will include handling a range of grievances and being involved in workplace negotiations. A heavy concentration of a union's membership in a limited number of establishments may also serve as a barrier to the development of shop stewards: in these cases, the union's full-time officials can service the members adequately. This explanation can, at least partially, explain the small number of stewards in the Victorian Printers' Operative Union. The concentration of members in three establishments appears to have allowed union officials to maintain close contact with their members and handle the day-to-day issues that arise. This argument can be extended to a consideration of the geographical location of the plant. A review of the literature on regional industrial relations systems, for example Broken Hill, the Pilbara and the Latrobe Valley, suggested that isolation from the mainstream of industrial life has been instrumental in workers developing their own system of

77. Davis, 'Shop Stewards in Australia', p.12.
78. Ibid., p.22.
industrial relations, one that centred around shop stewards and shop-
floor organisations. 79

It also appears that the nature and type of industry may have some
impact on steward organisation. Davis, as discussed earlier, found
differences between the various industries he studied and Rimmer and
Sutcliffe argued "before the 1950s, shop committee organisation was best
developed in five industrial sectors." 80 These were the railways,
dockyards, electricity generation, private engineering works and
meatworks. This may reflect the influence of union policies and
structure, historical influences in terms of accepted practices and
employee encouragement, and the nature of work within the industry
itself. Nevertheless, in terms of this study, it is important to
recognise that the power generation industry has been traditionally
strong in terms of shop-floor organisation in both Victoria and New
South Wales.

The Background of the Steward: Two factors that are often used to
explain the growth in shop stewards and shop steward activity are the
influence of the British migrant and the influence of the extreme
left. Hince, although not advocating either explanation, summed up the
debate on the influence of the British migrant as

... the growth of shop committee activity is a direct result
of the wave of post World War II immigration from the United
Kingdom. The movement to a centralised, arbitral and
legalised form of industrial regulation, it is argued, is lost
on the new arrival. He is more familiar with power and

79. J. Benson and K. Hince, 'Understanding Regional Industrial
Relations Systems' in Australian Labour Relations: Readings, 4th ed.,
ed. G.W. Ford, J.M. Hearn and R.D. Lansbury (Melbourne: Macmillan,
1987), pp.129-146.

80. Rimmer and Sutcliffe, 'The Origins of Australian Workshop
activity at the shop level and seeks to re-create this situation in the new environment ... 81

On the latter point the argument proceeded as follows:

... the struggle of the extreme left to control the industrial destiny of the nation through the official union hierarchy was resisted and repelled in the 1950s and the movement has shifted ground to the "grass roots" level of the industrial scene. 82

Whilst both of these arguments may have some appeal, they do not explain the growth and development of shop stewards and their committees prior to World War II. Further, whilst undoubtedly a number of British born unionists are shop stewards and the political leanings of stewards would include a number from the left of the political spectrum, no research has been conducted that would indicate their influence is overall proportionally greater than other groups. On the question of the influence of the British migrant, Dufty found no evidence to suggest they were more militant or active than their Australian-born counterpart. The only significant difference reported was that British born stewards had higher levels of formal education, but had attended fewer trade union training courses. 83

Rimmer and Sutcliffe devoted some attention to the influence of politics upon shop committees. Whilst accepting that from the beginning shop-floor organisation had been supported by left wing political groups, and some industries (for example, the railways) had seen major communist successes at the shop-floor, overall they maintained that shop

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82. Ibid.
committees had developed for a variety of reasons and had acquired a mixed political character.84

Summary and Assessment

This section has reviewed the Australian literature on shop stewards and shop-floor organisation. From this review the following generalizations can be advanced. First, the existence of shop stewards and shop committees varies between unions, industries and plants. Second, a diversity of practices exist at the shop-floor level. The stewards' role at this level can vary from providing basic administrative services for the union to the active conduct of bargaining and negotiations. Third, a number of factors were identified which may explain the variation in the stewards' role. In general, however, the paucity of research into shop stewards in Australia, the lack of theoretical perspectives and the concentration, in the main, on factors external to stewards and their workgroups to explain stewards' behaviour, necessitates examining the overseas literature.

The review of the overseas literature will be limited to that originating in the United Kingdom (U.K.). Although a body of literature exists on shop stewards in other countries (in particular, North America85 and some European countries) the research tends to be fragmented, limited in scope and difficult to relate to the Australian context. Notwithstanding that industrial relations in the U.K. and


Australia differ substantially, there are two reasons that make a review of the British literature imperative for those undertaking research into workplace industrial relations in Australia. First, the structure of trade unions in both countries is similar, with some Australian unions being originally set up as branches of British unions.\(^8^6\) This has meant that many Australian trade unions have developed organisational structures which necessitates the development of workplace representatives. Local branch structures are one clear example of this development.

Second, the volume of research into British workplace industrial relations and the attempts to locate this research within a theoretical perspective will provide important directions to Australian researchers. Even a cursory examination of the Australian literature reveals that the British research has already begun to provide an intellectual reference point for Australian scholars. Recent examples include the research by Davis, Rimmer, Taylor and Duffy.\(^8^7\) To gain a clear understanding of the Australian research, therefore, requires researchers to consult the British literature. Recognition, however, must be given to the fact that shop stewards in the U.K. operate essentially in the context of collective bargaining.\(^8^8\)

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86. For example, the Australian Amalgamated Engineering Union was a branch of the British Amalgamated Engineering Union until 1968.

87. Davis, 'Shop Stewards in Australia'; Rimmer, 'Union Shop Floor Organisation'; Taylor, 'Researching Australian Shop Stewards'; Duffy, 'The Shop Steward in Western Australia.'

88. Some commentators have argued this difference can be overstated as stewards in both countries tend to operate within a nationally dominated system. See, for example, D. Yerbury, 'Union/Management Relations at the Shop Floor', in Review of Industrial Relations in 1972, ed. G.W. Ford and T.J. Murphy (Sydney: Law Book Company, 1973), p.28.
Shop Stewards in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom a considerable volume of research has been conducted into workplace industrial relations. In part this is a recognition of the shop stewards' role in the formal system of industrial relations, for example collective negotiations, and in part due to the 'discovery', during the 1960s, that at the shop-floor level an informal system of industrial relations was in operation. It is not, however, intended to review all the research on shop stewards that has been conducted in the U.K., but rather focus on that research that has relevance to the subject of this study, namely the behaviour of shop stewards in the workplace. In this section only the broad conclusions will be discussed. The specific findings will be included where appropriate in subsequent sections of this thesis. This review will be broken into three areas: a brief historical overview of shop steward organisation, a discussion of the principle findings of the Donovan Commission\(^8\) as they relate to shop stewards and the direction of shop steward research over the past two decades.

**Historical Overview**

It is clear from a number of studies that the shop steward has a history dating back to the beginnings of industrial unionism. Turner, for example, found that the early cotton unions, formed in the late eighteenth century, were based on the 'shops' with each shop sending a

\(^8\) Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, U.K., 1965-1968.
delegate to the monthly meetings of the society.\textsuperscript{90} Goodman and Whittingham reviewed the early history of shop stewards and suggested that "there has probably always been a spokesman for the unions inside an establishment once organization has started."\textsuperscript{91} A similar view is held by Monaghan who claimed that although "shop stewards have been known to exist in British industry since the closing years of the 19th century ... it seems likely that they existed for a considerable length of time before they became known to the public."\textsuperscript{92} These comments imply that the shop steward had a role beyond acting as minor administrative functionary of the union. Clegg found that shop stewards in the Tees District of the Tyneside and National Labourers' Union played an active role in negotiations as early as 1872\textsuperscript{93} whilst Gleeson noted that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers' stewards, prior to World War I, had the responsibility to "... get together temporary shop committees to take up some plant grievance with the employer."\textsuperscript{94}

Thus, whilst no comprehensive history of shop stewards in British industry up to World War I has been written it is clear that their role often, although usually unofficially, extended beyond mere


\textsuperscript{91} Goodman and Whittingham, \textit{Shop Stewards in British Industry}, p.23.

\textsuperscript{92} Monaghan, 'The Shop Steward in British Industry', p.75.


administrative duties. The literature on shop steward activity during and post-World War I is more detailed and it is possible to discern a number of phases in the level of workplace activity. Of particular importance are World War I, the 1930s depression, World War II and the post-World War II period of economic growth.

The impetus to the growth of shop steward activity was World War I. Cole suggested two factors could account for this growth. First, the weakening of the national trade union movement due to the war and, second, the industrial unrest that occurred in organisations suitable to the development of workshop organisation. Pribicevic's detailed account of the shop stewards' joint workers committees in engineering in the war years confirmed this view. The committees were largely unofficial, in conflict with the trade union machinery and grew out of the conditions imposed on the engineering workshops by the war effort. The strength and influence of shop stewards during this time was considerable. As the Webbs reported "in some big industrial concerns, composed of a large number of workshops, the committee of

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95. The Webbs 'The History of Trade Unionism' is a valuable source material but lacks detailed discussion on shop stewards' activities. See S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London: Longmans, 1920).


stewards from the various shops very largely took over the whole conduct of negotiations and arrangement of shop conditions."^99

In the post-war period, particularly 1920 to 1935, little activity at the shop-floor level took place. This was due both to the decline in the economy and the restrictions placed upon workplace representatives as the unions "... took steps to bring the shop stewards movement under the control of the official trade union once more."^100

The decline in unemployment and the onset of World War II saw the re-emergence of a strong shop-floor organisation. A key to this growth was the 1941 Essential Work Order which protected shop stewards from dismissal.^101 The increasing workload thrust upon shop stewards during the war, for example Joint Production Committees, provided further stimulus to this growth.^102

In the post-World War II period, the economy remained strong and further growth in the significance and influence of workplace organisation occurred. Brown argued that this growth had been influenced by "the spread of single-employer bargaining, the increased professionalism of industrial relations management and the reform of disputes procedures."^103 Monaghan suggested the increase in the influence of the steward also related to the increasing complexities of production and "... the virtual elimination of branch life in most

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unions ... [that left] ... the shop steward as the link between the member on the shop floor and his union.\textsuperscript{104}

This period of sustained shop steward activity led to increased scrutiny of stewards by industrial relations academics. For example, Roberts focused on workplace organisation; Sykes investigated domestic bargaining in the printing industry; Clegg, Killick and Adams conducted a survey of shop stewards; and Marsh and Coker examined shop steward organisation in engineering.\textsuperscript{105} The research of Clegg et al., almost certainly for the first time, gave some indication as to the numbers of shop stewards, size of constituencies and, their duties, social origins, selection procedures and role in industry. On this last point, one important finding was that most personnel officers preferred to deal with shop stewards than full-time union officials.\textsuperscript{106}

From this brief overview a number of observations relevant to this study can be made. First, the growth in shop stewards and their subsequent influence can be related to a number of structural and economic factors as well as institutional factors such as the acceptance of stewards by employers and the unions. During periods of recession shop stewards tended to be relegated to carrying out minor administrative duties in contrast to their active role in the bargaining process during periods of expansion. These factors must be kept in mind.

\textsuperscript{104} Monaghan, ‘The Shop Steward in British Industry’, p.77.


\textsuperscript{106} Clegg et al., \textit{Trade Union Officers}, p.175.
when undertaking research into shop stewards in Australia. In terms of this study the economic factors are probably of limited significance due to the continuous and increasing demand for electricity and security of employment within statutory authorities. Second, much of the research up to the mid-1960s concentrated on the macro-level with the focus on shop steward organisations and their role in industry. Little research was carried out where the individual stewards were the unit of analysis. This meant that little was known about who the stewards were, how they assumed office and what activities they engaged in. This is a similar situation to the present state of research in Australia, which was outlined in the previous section. Third, the subsitained growth in the influence of stewards and their organisations post-World War II led to concern being expressed in terms of the ‘challenge from below’. 107 This challenge, in terms of increased shop steward activity, was visible in terms of wages drift, shop-floor sanctioned industrial action and the level of workplace bargaining. These factors coupled with the search by governments for alternate economic strategies led to considerable debate concerning union activities at the workplace. The quest for reform and the recognition that little was known about shop-floor activities led, in part, to the establishment in 1965 of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers’ Associations.

The Donovan Commission

The Royal Commission on Trade Union and Employers' Associations (The Donovan Commission) presented its report in 1968. The Commission was concerned with the perceived shift of power towards the workplace and identified shop stewards as key participants in this process. On this basis, the report provided the foundation for a model of shop steward behaviour and workplace industrial relations. This section will provide a brief background to and outline of the findings of the report with respect to shop stewards.

Of particular importance to the understanding of the conclusions reached by the Commission are two research papers published prior to the report itself. The first of these papers surveyed the existing literature and research on the role of the shop steward. The areas examined included shop stewards' functions, bargaining strategies, the relationship between shop stewards and their union and factors that might explain the behaviour and influence of shop stewards. On this last point McCarthy concluded "there is nothing approaching a generally accepted theory of the factors which determine shop steward behaviour and govern the extent of their influence in different industries and firms." In the historical overview provided earlier in this section it was clear that the growth in shop steward activity could to some


109. Other studies carried out around the same time arrived at similar conclusions, for example Goodman and Whittingham, Shop Stewards in British Industry.

110. McCarthy, The Role of Shop Stewards in British Industrial Relations.

111. Ibid., p.58.
degree be related to the existence of tight labour markets. However, as McCarthy argued, "... it is difficult to explain all the variations in behaviour and influence to this factor alone." Other factors mentioned earlier in this chapter and considered by McCarthy included the form of collective agreements, and the attitudes of employers and union officials. McCarthy also placed considerable emphasis on one further factor, namely the socio-technical system of the plant. This factor is based on the premise that the production process requires both a technical system (equipment, work processes) and a social organisation (work arrangements). The interaction between various technical and social systems, it was argued, will create different outcomes in terms of industrial relations issues. McCarthy concluded that this factor "... probably has a considerable effect on the overall differences in the pattern of behaviour between industries."

Given the tentative and limited nature of the literature surveyed, the Commission instigated a nationwide survey of workshop relations. The research produced detailed information on negotiation and representation at the workshop level, systems of wage payment, the

112. Ibid., p.3.


role of strikes and other sanctions, and the use of disciplinary penalties. The results of this survey will be reported in subsequent sections of this thesis, although it is important at this stage to note the major findings. First, there appeared to be a system of shop-floor representation in most plants, although considerable variation existed. Second, stewards were seen to be the crucial point of contact between members, full-time officials and their union. Third, the system of workshop relations was in most cases relatively self-contained and self-regulating. Fourth, most participants were reasonably satisfied with the present system and fifth, unions depended heavily on the shop stewards to maintain membership and meet their demands at the workplace.\textsuperscript{116}

These findings led the Commission to conclude that "Britain has two systems of industrial relations."\textsuperscript{117} The first was embodied in the official institutions (for example trade unions and employers), the second was "... created by the actual behaviour of trade unions and employers' associations, of managers, shop stewards and workers ... [and that] ... the informal system is often at odds with the formal system."\textsuperscript{118}

The report of the Donovan Commission and its subsequent recommendations have been the subject of criticism due to its simplistic approach, the narrowness of its perspectives and its strong reliance on

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., pp.4-6.

\textsuperscript{117} Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, p.261.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
institutional reform.\textsuperscript{119} Nevertheless most academics have recognised the influential nature of the report and its centrality to the discussion of industrial relations in Britain.\textsuperscript{120} More specific to this thesis, the research underlying the report widened the range of possible explanations of shop steward activity and behaviour.

\textit{New Directions for Industrial Relations Research}

Since the Donovan Commission, industrial relations research has increasingly focused attention on the workplace. The recognition by Donovan of both formal and informal systems of industrial relations, the latter operating at the workshop level, led researchers to view the workplace as the key unit of analysis. In the two decades following the report, research has progressed from charting the main components of workplace bargaining (for example, the scope and content of agreements and the bargaining process) to a concentration on explaining the key industrial relations processes at the workplace. In particular, the role of the shop steward in workplace industrial relations came under close scrutiny.

The major studies of shop stewards include those by McCarthy and Parker; Goodman and Whittingham; Warren; Pedler; Nicholson; Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel; Partridge; and Armstrong and


Marchington. To this can be added studies by Brown; Terry; and Brown, Ebsworth and Terry on shop steward organisation. A number of case studies concentrating on the industrial relations process at the workplace have provided further insight into the role of the shop steward. These include the research of Lane and Roberts; Beynon; Brown; and Boraston, Clegg and Rimmer. Useful overviews of the developments of shop steward organisation and activity since Donovan has been provided by Batstone and Terry. This section will concentrate on reviewing those aspects of the above research which might provide some direction to research into shop steward activity in


Australia. The theoretical aspects will be discussed in chapter 2 with the more specific findings being referred to in subsequent chapters.

McCarthy and Parker's research for the Donovan Commission provided the first comprehensive picture of shop steward activity and influence in British industry.\textsuperscript{126} For example, they provided background information on shop stewards (age, gender, experience, education, ambition and outside interests), how shop stewards became stewards, their duties, their role in the bargaining process, the types of arguments used in negotiations, the structure of workplace organisation and the level of influence obtained by shop stewards. In brief, they found that some 175,000 shop stewards existed in the U.K. with one shop steward for every sixty members. The typical steward went through no form of election and spent about six hours a week on the job. The majority of stewards had negotiated a range of issues with management and senior stewards were found to be as widespread as joint committees of stewards and management. Shop stewards were found to be the main source of information for members with regard to union matters and most stewards were reasonably satisfied with the way industrial relations was conducted at their workplace. Similar results were reported by Goodman and Whittingham in their study of shop stewards.\textsuperscript{127}

The large number of stewards found to exist and the recognition of the key role they played in industrial relations at the plant-level spawned a number of research projects. These projects either attempted

\textsuperscript{126} McCarthy and Parker, \textit{Shop Stewards and Workplace Relations}. The earlier study by Clegg, Killick and Adams, \textit{Trade Union Officers} provided some information on shop stewards' activities, although their research methodology lacked randomness and representativeness.

\textsuperscript{127} Goodman and Whittingham, \textit{Shop Stewards in British Industry}. This study, however, is based on an unrepresentative sample of 100 stewards.
to place the research on a theoretical foundation or to provide more information on the activities and functions of shop stewards. The theoretically based studies can be broken into two groups. First, several studies argued that an understanding of the behaviour of shop stewards required comprehension of how shop stewards interpreted their particular role. The studies by Warren and Nicholson typified this approach.128 This methodology drew heavily on role theory and focused on the psychological aspects of the individual, thereby implicitly rejecting the influence of the interaction between individuals at the workplace. Second, a number of studies argued that the behaviour of shop stewards is inextricably tied up with the social dynamics of the workplace. Pedler and Partridge adopted this approach with the emphasis on the relationship of the steward with the workgroup.129 Pedler went further and suggested that a shop steward's leadership role is essentially a property of the group.130

The research of Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel developed a theoretical perspective based on a combination of role orientations (pursuit of union principles) and patterns of leadership.131 In this sense they drew upon both schools of thought outlined above. The major difference, however, from Warren's and Nicholson's research is that Batstone et al. were concerned with explaining differences in behaviour rather than the different motivational forces that led a steward to


129. Pedler, 'Shop Stewards as Leaders'; Partridge, 'The Activities of Shop Stewards'.

130. Pedler, 'Shop Stewards as Leaders', p.43.

accept office. The detailed nature of Batstone et al.'s research has provided a focal point for research into shop stewards. With a distinction between stewards on the basis of leadership style and the pursuit of union principles they examined differences in the activities of stewards and the relationship between stewards, their members and management. This approach also proved fruitful in examining the shop stewards' role in the organisation of strike action. The theoretical approach by Batstone et al. proved to be influential in setting the scene for subsequent studies of shop stewards. For example, this methodology was refined and utilized by Armstrong and Marchington in their research into shop stewards and worker participation. It nevertheless attracted debate concerning its applicability to an analysis of shop steward behaviour. The major criticism of this approach was that Batstone et al. failed to take account of the influence of structural factors in explaining shop steward behaviour. Hyman, for example, criticizes this methodology for having a 'highly idealistic problematic.' Edwards and Scullion concur and argue that Batstone et al. used "... a mode of explanation which treats actors as free agents and which does not relate behaviour to its structural conditions." Shop stewards' choices concerning action occur in the context of restraints, restraints that may reflect the legitimation of


133. Armstrong and Marchington, 'Shop Stewards and Employee Involvement'.


their position, the market situation and management and trade union policies and practices. These criticisms were rejected by Batstone who provided several examples of how Shop Stewards in Action took account of structural factors and their interaction effect upon shop steward activity.\textsuperscript{136} Whilst a detailed discussion of this debate is beyond the purpose of this chapter it is important to acknowledge the limitations placed upon any study that attempts to exclude structural factors from its analysis.

An alternate approach to the study of shop stewards is to locate their role and activities within more general studies of workplace industrial relations or industrial disputes. A number of these studies have provided useful empirical data and insight into the role of the steward. Lane and Roberts provided a detailed account of the dynamics of local strike action in the context of opposition from the national union. The inability of shop stewards and local officials to provide the necessary leadership led directly to the formation of a rank-and-file strike committee and ultimately a breakaway union.\textsuperscript{137} Beynon studied workshop relations in a car plant and examined the organisational aspects of stewards' behaviour and the level of consciousness developed by stewards. The shop steward movement was found to be largely autonomous from the official trade union movement.\textsuperscript{138} Brown, in his study of engineering works, found the degree of organisational integration of shop stewards varied considerably as did the willingness of stewards to take up bargaining opportunities.


\textsuperscript{137} Lane and Roberts, \textit{Strike at Pilkingtons}.

\textsuperscript{138} Beynon, \textit{Working for Ford}.
Brown concluded that the more highly integrated the steward body the more likely it was able "... to pursue the implicit principles of unity, equity, a good bargaining relationship and the reduction of uncertainty." Boraston et al., in their study of unions at the workplace, concluded that company action may prevent the formation of a local union or influence the degree of unity or focus of power within that union.

Several other studies have specifically focused on shop steward organisations. Brown, for example, provided an overview of trade union organisation at the workplace, noting that the larger the plant the more organised were the stewards. Having allowed for size, Brown concluded that his survey revealed similarities between industries. This confirmed the findings of an earlier study by Brown, Ebsworth and Terry. The study by Terry on combine committees, committees made up of stewards from the various plants of the one company, suggested shop stewards could see value in such organisation but did not see them as crucial to the pursuit of union principles. More recently Terry has explored shop steward organisation during the 1980s recession in the U.K. Management was found to have continued to influence the structure

140. Boraston et al., *Workplace and Union*.
142. Ibid., p.78.
143. Brown, Ebsworth and Terry, 'Factors Shaping Shop Steward Organisation in Britain'.
144. Terry, 'Combine Committees', p.376.
and role of shop steward organisations\(^{145}\) and, in terms of their bargaining strength, steward organisations have become weaker.\(^{146}\)

The diversity of the U.K. research is also evidenced in the underlying research methodologies adopted. Beynon used action research techniques, that is, direct involvement in the workplace and with shop stewards; Pedler utilised a survey questionnaire; Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel’s major technique was observation; Nicholson interviewed directly a number of shop stewards whilst Partridge used a diary technique to record the behaviour of stewards.\(^{147}\) This makes difficult direct comparisons between the findings of the research as the measurement technique could become a major factor in explaining differences in stewards’ behaviour.

Summary and Assessment

The major explanation of shop steward activity pre-Donovan was the state of the economy. However, this factor alone could not explain the observed variations in steward organisation and behaviour. Other factors considered included the relationship stewards had with their union and the acceptance of their position by management. The Donovan Commission ‘discovered’ an informal system of industrial relations in Britain and noted the major role of the shop steward. Research generated for the Commission suggested a major explanatory factor in trade union activity at the workplace was the socio-technical system of


146. M. Terry, ‘How Do We Know If Shop Stewards are Getting Weaker?’ British Journal of Industrial Relations 24 (July 1986), p.176.

147. For details of references see footnotes 121 and 123.
the plant. The findings of the Donovan Commission signalled a new direction for industrial relations research in the U.K. The emphasis was to be placed on the workplace and the factors that could explain variations in the behaviour and activity of shop stewards.

This review of the U.K. literature highlights some important considerations for the conduct of research into shop stewards in Australia. First, there is a need to situate the study of shop stewards within a theoretical perspective if we are to move away from mapping shop steward activities and move towards a focus on factors which may explain differences in stewards' behaviour. Second, many of the case studies will provide useful comparative statistics. If similarities are found, the conventional wisdom concerning the uniqueness of the Australian system of industrial relations, in particular the limited role of the shop steward, can be challenged. Third, the variety of methods used to collect data on shop stewards in the U.K. and the accompanying limitations of each method would suggest the need to adopt a research strategy that includes a number of these techniques.

Conclusion

This chapter, after considering the definition of the term shop steward and stewards' sources of power, reviewed the literature on shop stewards in Australia and the U.K. The Australian literature was found to be poorly developed both in terms of empirical research and theoretical perspectives. The situation in the U.K. was similar up to the period of the Donovan Commission. Following the Donovan Commission, research became more theoretically based and a number of significant and subsequently influential studies undertaken. These studies provide a firm basis on which to build Australian research and are discussed in
more detail in chapter 2. Equally important to an understanding of the stewards' role was a number of detailed case studies. These studies gave some idea of the complexity and dynamic nature of the position of shop steward.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter reviewed both the Australian and United Kingdom literature on shop stewards. The focus of the review was on factors that could explain stewards' behaviour at the workplace. A number of macro-level factors were advanced that could account for general levels of shop steward activity. Few studies, however, focused specifically on differences within individual workplaces. It was noted that only since the early 1970s have researchers in the U.K. directed their attention to understanding the behaviour of shop stewards at this level. It was argued that a more explicitly theoretical foundation for research on shop stewards needs to be adopted to enable a move away from the essentially descriptive approach that has characterised much of the research in this field.

This chapter will review a number of studies that have developed theoretical frameworks which may be used to examine and explain the behaviour of shop stewards. The usefulness and relevance of a particular typology will depend both on the objectives of the research and also on the perspectives the researcher feels is essential to an understanding of stewards' behaviour. It is, therefore, necessary to briefly re-iterate the aims of this thesis. This study is primarily concerned with examining and analysing the differences in behaviour of shop stewards in one industry and in one organisation. As such, external macro-level factors, such as the level of economic activity, structural factors and institutional policies, whilst undoubtedly
important in explaining the overall level of shop steward activity, will need to be relegated to a minor role in the explanation of variations of stewards' behaviour at the plant level. Rather, the focus will be placed on factors specific to the workplace, such as the role orientations of the stewards, union and workplace characteristics and the formal and informal levels of power conferred upon the steward. The value, to this study, of the typologies reviewed are judged by these criteria.

Once having selected/developed an appropriate typology by which to classify stewards, the chapter will review the literature for factors that may explain why stewards adopt a particular role definition. In doing so it will be argued that the major determinants will be personal and environmental factors internal to the organisation. The chapter will conclude by outlining the areas of shop steward activity that will be examined in terms of the behaviour of the various steward types.

**Shop Steward Typologies**

Two early American studies were perhaps the first to attempt a classification of union leaders. Gouldner suggested two extreme types of leaders based on how they regarded their office. The first type is the 'business unionist' who primarily sees his role in terms of achieving the best price in the selling of labour. As such Gouldner argued he is subject to much the same pressure as other entrepreneurs and sees his office in terms of pecuniary rewards, security and status. The second type is the 'progressive unionist' who is the direct

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opposite of the 'business unionist', and who sees trade union office as a calling. The key characteristics of the progressive leader are a high commitment to principles, a belief that leaders should come from within the union, and an indifference to personal status or gains. Chinoy in his study of local union leaders suggested that there are three distinct ways that "...men come to assume positions as leaders." The 'accidental' leaders are those who were persuaded to accept nomination for office but were in general reluctant to do so. Over time, these stewards may begin to experience considerable satisfaction in the job and perhaps aim for higher office, or alternatively, find stewardship too demanding and consequently stand down from their position. 'Ideological' leaders are those who accepted office on the basis of their strongly held social and economic beliefs. They, in effect, hope to actualise those beliefs by their position in the union. The third group are the 'ambitious' leaders, who accept office to further their own needs of status and recognition. For this group, local union leadership is the first step in achieving a full-time career with the union. Chinoy's ideological leader would seem to correspond with Gouldner's 'progressive unionist', at least in a broad sense. Both Gouldner's and Chinoy's classifications explain why unionists may accept union office but provide little insight into the functions and behaviour of leaders once they have achieved office. Further, in the case of Chinoy's classification the categories may not be mutually exclusive. It may be possible and indeed likely that the ideological leader, for example, may also fall into the ambitious type.

In contrast to the Gouldner and Chinoy classifications, Miller and Form suggested three types of steward orientation based on the approach taken in the performance of their duties. The first is the 'job or management-oriented steward', who may not choose the position of steward but accepts office under pressure. In this regard he is similar to Chinoy's 'accidental' leader, but if he takes office to further his prospects with management he may fall within Chinoy's classification of 'ambitious' leader. The second type is the 'union-oriented steward' who recognises his future lies with the union and not with management. This is similar to Chinoy's 'ambitious' leader, but the 'union-oriented steward' can also hold strong social beliefs which places them in Chinoy's 'ideological' classification. The third type is the 'employee-oriented steward' who has a genuine desire to help fellow workers. In many ways this type of steward is similar to the ideological leader in that he has strong beliefs about the way people should be treated. He does not, however, necessarily subscribe to the view that the union is always correct and will take up issues with the union if the need arises. This tends to reinforce his position amongst his work group but will hinder any career aspirations he may have within the union. The value of this classification is that it recognised three levels of allegiance for shop stewards: the workgroup, management and the wider union. It could also help to predict whether shop stewards will display initiative and whether they will support management in a crisis or pursue the sectional interests of the shop-floor.

Poole used a similar approach to that of Miller and Form by asking shop stewards to define their primary duties. The responses yielded four types: a representative of members; a representative of the union; an active negotiator or protector of members; and an active conciliator, peace maker or dispute solver. These all fall within Gouldner's 'progressive unionist' category and parallel Miller and Form's three classifications, although the active negotiator or protector of members would cut across both the 'union-oriented' and 'employee-oriented' classification. Poole found from his study the majority of stewards fell into the 'representative of members' (27.6 per cent) and the 'active negotiator' (35.4 per cent) categories. The distinguishing feature between these two groups was that the former saw their role as 'spokesman for the men' or 'the mouthpiece of the shop' whilst the latter felt it appropriate to be active leaders in their respective workplaces.

The above studies have identified clear differences between shop stewards in terms of why they seek union office, who their allegiance is to and what are their primary functions. It was not, however, until the study by Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel, that an attempt was made to relate the various types of shop stewards to the way in which stewards led their members and the sorts of goals which they attempted to

5. Ibid., p.62.
pursue. In their study Batstone et al. categorised stewards' behaviour in terms of the emphasis placed on representatives rather than a delegate role and the pursuit of union principles. Stewards were classified as representatives rather than delegates if they shaped the majority of issues they dealt with, and if they tended to handle issues themselves without reference to more senior stewards. The representative/delegate role dichotomy is similar to the 'representative of members' and 'active negotiators' distinction proposed by Poole and also to the work of Pedler who argued it was possible to view union representatives as leaders or delegates. From his research, however, Pedler concluded that union representatives do not "...have one style of leadership but several depending upon which groups they have to deal with." For example, if a steward had the necessary information, a leader role tends to be adopted, if the issue is central to the norms of the group, the steward may simply be a 'mouthpiece'. Batstone et al. recognised that the form of leadership may change according to circumstances and accordingly categorised stewards on the basis of how they handled the majority of issues. On the second dimension, pursuit of trade union principles, the emphasis was on unity, collectivity and social justice coupled with the norms of steward leadership. Stewards were classified as pursuing union principles if their "...system of


7. Ibid., p.35.


9. Ibid., p.56.
argument to all audiences more frequently refers to the norms of steward leadership than members wishes. Taking these two dimensions, representative versus delegate and pursuit of union principles, Batstone et al. proposed a four-fold typology of shop steward behaviour. The four 'ideal' types are given in figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1

Steward Types

Pursuit of Union Principles

High

'Leader'

Representative

'Nascent Leader'

Delegate

Low

'Cowboy'

'Populist'

The 'leader' plays a representative role as he attempts to implement union principles. The 'nascent leader' also has a high commitment to union principles but for a variety of reasons adopts more of a delegate role. Batstone et al. argued these types are often taken under the wing of a more experienced steward until they are able to build up the necessary confidence to act in a representative fashion. The 'cowboy' adopts a representative role but rather than pursue union principles concentrates on short term benefits, such as wages and

conditions. The 'populist' adopts a delegate role and exhibits a low commitment to union principles. In their study, Batstone et al. found that the largest single type of shop steward was the 'populist' accounting for some 45 per cent of shop-floor stewards and some 78 per cent of clerical staff stewards. The only other significant type were the 'leaders' who accounted for 38 per cent of shop-floor stewards and some 18 per cent of staff stewards.

Due to the small numbers classified as 'cowboys' and 'nascent leaders', coupled with the view that both these types are transient, Batstone et al. developed their work on the basis of the two extreme types, the 'leader', high on representativeness and pursuit of union principles, and the 'populist', low on both dimensions. Batstone et al. recognised that the small numbers in the 'cowboy' and 'nascent leader' types may not be typical, but suggested that over time the 'nascent leader' who does not get the support of other 'leaders' will revert to a 'populist', whilst the 'cowboy' will be given little support from other stewards, and in the event of failing to make gains for his members will most likely be replaced.

Underpinning this typology are the concepts of power and trade union ideology which are combined to explain the leadership style of shop stewards in the workplace. Power was defined broadly to include not only manifest decision making, but also the initiation and processing of issues and the instilling and maintenance of organisational priorities. The ideology, however, adopted by the steward will "... foster particular views of the workplace and particular patterns of behaviour"\(^{11}\) and in this context, will set limits to the exercise of that power. Power defined in this sense closely

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p.11.
resembles the third dimensional view as described by Lukes. Thus, the representative leader will attempt to utilize all forms of power and will rely on the broad acceptance of a particular ideology for the control of their members. On the other hand, shop stewards who adopt the delegate role will rely on their authority and will defer the broader aspects of power to their constituents.

Nicholson is critical of the above typologies and suggested:

...the major difficulties with all these systems are conceptual, ones that arise from any system of 'ideal types' that attempt to collapse a wide range of complex psychological and situational factors into a classification of people.

Nicholson argued that human personality and characteristics are too complex to categorise and a more fruitful approach would be to use role theory based on the earlier work of Chinoy. Nicholson proposed that the path to accepting a steward's position can be either externally directed or internally directed. The former corresponds to Chinoy's 'accidental' type and is broken into 'union occupancy', 'accidental occupancy', 'popular occupancy' and 'nominated occupancy'. In these cases, the forces that impinge on a worker to accept stewardship are external to his/her own wishes or desires. Those who are motivated internally to accept stewardship are broken into 'ideological occupancy', 'ambitious occupancy' and 'task-oriented occupancy'. The first two categories are similar to Chinoy's 'ideological' and 'ambitious' types whilst the third

12. S. Lukes, Power: A Radical View (London: Macmillan, 1974). It should be noted that this view is based on the work of Bachrach and Baratz who bring into the discussion of power the idea of the 'mobilization of bias'. See P. Bachrach and M.S. Baratz, Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.43-44.

'task-oriented occupancy' overlaps to some degree with Miller and Form's job-oriented steward. It is difficult, however, to envisage how in practice Nicholson's classification overcomes the criticisms he made of earlier studies. Further, whilst Nicholson focused on the forces on workers to become shop stewards he does not relate this to differences in stewards' behaviour. More importantly, his reliance on role theory has meant that, as Partridge notes, he "...under-estimates and under-values the social dynamics of a steward's position."\textsuperscript{14}

Partridge adopted a similar approach to Batstone \textit{et al.} but concentrated on the activities of the steward. The emphasis was on the relationship between the steward and his work group, with the steward being seen as the 'linking pin' between the workgroup and its organisational environment.\textsuperscript{15} Willman argued that both this approach and that of Pedler offers the possibility of a more discriminating analysis than that of Batstone \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{16} That is, by viewing leadership in terms of activities rather than individual orientation one is more likely to be able to accommodate the complexities inherent in the stewards' role and move towards understanding why stewards behave differently in different circumstances. Willman's criticism was not directed solely at the representative/delegate dichotomy:


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.30.

Representative behaviour is especially compounded in 'leadership' with a particular policy stance - the pursuit of trade union principles - and they find it impossible to define such principles in a non-ambiguous way.\textsuperscript{17}

He also argued that Batstone et al.'s failure to codify these principles and to illustrate how these principles would dictate action in terms of specific issues, has led to "...saying more about the structure and stability of steward organisation than about the policies pursued."\textsuperscript{18}

On both dimensions Willman suggested that the Batstone et al. typology is in need of considerable modification for it to become workable and applicable in more wide ranging studies. Accordingly, he offered an alternative framework which would "...distinguish between shop-floor organisation in terms of policy and in terms of leadership success in pursuit of policy."\textsuperscript{19} Two types of policy were identified: those which assist in the rationalization of personnel administration and those which seek to exert worker influence in the effort bargain. Willman suggested that "...management sponsored organisations will overwhelmingly pursue policies of the first type, whereas independent organisations will pursue both types."\textsuperscript{20} Insofar as management sponsored and independent organisations are 'qualitatively different phenomena' the distinction will allow for the interpretation of particular policies pursued by shop stewards. Marchington and Armstrong, however, argued that Willman's approach "...appears to offer less analytical value in attempts to categorise stewards than the one

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.40.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p.41.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.42.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p.45.
offered by Batstone et alia". They gave two reasons: first, it would be naive to assume that management can maintain influence over stewards in management sponsored organisations, and second, that a desire for similar policies by stewards and management does not mean absolute control by management. Willman recognised this aspect when he stated:

...the complexity of shop stewards' roles may cause them to act inconsistently - in supporting or opposing managerial policy - over a range of issues. Moreover, 'independent' and 'sponsored' stances may change over time in response to shifting labour market conditions, and as the personnel involved in the shop steward organisation change with job changes and electoral contests.

Having made these criticisms, Willman conceded that the Batstone et al.'s framework is plausible in practice and is "...very useful to describe a domestic organisation." That is, in a study that concentrates on understanding the behaviour and actions of stewards in their local organisations, as opposed to the total union, the Batstone et al. framework may well be appropriate. Even under these conditions, Batstone et al. recognised the usefulness of their model would vary. For example, they suggested that:

Where organization is strong, it is useful. But where organization is weak, so that members are very dependent upon the larger union, it will be less rewarding to study the domestic organisation in isolation.

In a detailed examination of the Batstone et al. model, taking into account Willman's criticisms, Marchington and Armstrong suggested that

23. Ibid., p.41.
the Batstone et al. four-fold typology "...offers the most appropriate base upon which to build up our conceptual understanding of the role of the shop steward." They did, however, note a number of criticisms of the Batstone et al. model. First, as argued by Willman, a typology based on a representative/delegate dichotomy does not recognise the need for stewards to vary their style of leadership to meet prevailing circumstances. The focus on activities can conceal the underlying strategies employed by the shop steward. The activity can vary, for example, from consultation with members to unilateral decision making by the shop steward, but all that the steward may have done is to choose the most appropriate strategy to achieve certain objectives. It does not mean that a steward has abandoned a particular leadership style by adopting different strategies. Indeed as Marchington and Armstrong concluded "...the leader steward is distinguishable precisely because he is able to vary his style..." Marchington and Armstrong point out that a closer reading of the work of Pedler, Partridge and Batstone et al. illustrates this point clearly. Terms such as "...adopts, selects, uses, chooses..." are used to describe the leader shop steward. Pedler, for example, claimed the leader has a "...repertoire of styles to be used in appropriate situations" whilst Batstone et al. gave several examples of the strategies leaders may adopt in processing issues.

26. Ibid., p.36.
27. Ibid.
Second, a number of criticisms have been made concerning the methodology underpinning the model. The most important of these is directed at the criteria used to measure ‘pursuit of union principles’ and the ‘representative/delegate dichotomy’. In the former it is clear that the scale is actually measuring integration into the steward network. This cannot be used as a defacto measure of union principles as not all workplaces will have a strong steward community. In the latter case, the representative/delegate dichotomy, Batstone et al. appear to be measuring two distinct concepts. On the one hand they measure stewards’ willingness to lead their own members, whilst on the other, their willingness to go along with decisions and actions of the steward organisation. As Marchington and Armstrong claimed "... it is clearly inappropriate to ask questions about the JSSC (Joint Shop Stewards’ Committee) when one is trying to correlate factors concerning leading one's own members."²⁹

Third, criticism has been levelled at Batstone et al. for their neglect of ‘cowboys’ and ‘nascent leaders’, the generalisability of their established differences between blue and white-collar stewards, and their lack of recognition of the effect of management sponsored unionism. The first two points are research questions that will need to be addressed in subsequent studies. The validity of the third criticism, the conceptual issue of management sponsorship, is dismissed by Marchington and Armstrong:

"...it is naive to assume that merely because management have assisted in the development of steward organisation and

individual stewards, that their influence will remain as the stewards become more experienced.30

To overcome these criticisms, Marchington and Armstrong made three significant modifications to the Batstone et al. typology reproduced in figure 2.1. First, the vertical axis was relabelled 'orientation to unionism', with stewards high on this dimension inclined to see the importance of collective action, unity and local union involvement. Second, the horizontal axis, the representative/delegate dichotomy, was limited to leadership and disregarded relationships with the steward organisation. Both these modifications were achieved by tightening up the scales used to measure the dimensions, although the problem of scoring individual stewards remained. Third, they renamed 'cowboy' and 'nascent leader', 'work group leader' and 'cautious supporter' respectively as their research indicated the terms did not adequately describe the stewards who fell into these categories. In particular, they were not necessarily transient or militant. The revised typology is given in figure 2.2 below. It should be added that Batstone et al. considered their distinctions to be relatively crude and open to further refinement. Equally, Marchington and Armstrong recognised that the measurement aspect of their two dimensions could be improved upon.

In the main, the importance of a theoretical framework to the study of shop stewards has been overlooked by Australian researchers. Two studies, however, have attempted to place the behaviour and actions of shop stewards into an analytical framework. Taylor, on the basis of the research of Batstone et al. and Poole, developed three categories of a stewards' orientation that may explain the role adopted by shop stewards. The three categories were:

30. Ibid., p.39.
...an administrative orientation where the prime concern was to operate in line with positions defined by either lay or full time union officials, a representative orientation where the desires of rank and file were seen as foremost, and an efficiency/managerialist orientation... to take account of those respondents who saw their prime purpose as that of promoting good industrial relations.  

![Figure 2.2: Steward Types (Modified)]

Orientation to Unionism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>'Leader'</th>
<th>'Cautious Supporter'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>'Work Group Leader'</td>
<td>'Populist'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a more recent study Dufty developed a typology of shop stewards based on a survey of some 260 shop stewards in Western Australia.  

Using a questionnaire based partly on the interview schedules of Batstone et al., Dufty found six distinct groups of stewards which he termed 'time server', 'stirrer', 'committed unionist', 'shop floor organiser', 'plant militant' and 'good shepherd'. After a review of the literature Dufty concluded that "...Miller and Form's three broad types,


oriented towards management, the union and the work group, proved a useful way of interpreting the clusters."33 This is, in effect, a similar classification to that developed by Taylor. Inherent in both models is a rejection of the dichotomy between representative action and pursuing a delegate role. Whilst these classifications may be potentially useful, neither Taylor or Dufty has applied their model to an analysis of the differences in the behaviour of shop stewards within a particular workplace. Further, the limited nature of the research, twenty-two shop stewards from one union in Taylor's case and primarily blue-collar stewards in Dufty's research, raises doubts about the applicability of these models in a wider context.

From the studies reviewed, a number of factors emerged which are important in the development of a theoretical perspective. First, studies by Miller and Form, Poole, Batstone et al., Marchington and Armstrong, and Taylor have stressed the importance of stewards' role orientation to an understanding of why unionists seek stewardship and how they approach their duties. Second, the research of Pedler, Partridge and Batstone et al. suggested that the style of leadership, which is inextricably tied up with role orientation and the level of conferred authority and assumed power, is an important element in explaining industrial relations behaviour. With respect to the measurement of leadership, Pedler, Willman, Taylor and Dufty warn of the problems of conceiving leadership in terms of a simple dichotomy between representative and delegate styles. Further, Willman suggested the need to separate leadership from role orientation and to consider leadership

33. Ibid., p.70.
in terms of activities undertaken if a meaningful understanding of
stewards behaviour is to be achieved. Third, the studies of Batstone et
al. and Marchington and Armstrong focus on the stewards pursuit of, or
orientation towards, union principles. Those who espouse union
principles would "...place greater emphasis upon workers' rights and
social justice rather than to express a concern simply with wages and
conditions." 34 Batstone et al. clearly demonstrated the different
strategies adopted and resources utilized by stewards whose allegiance
was to the workgroup rather than to the wider union movement.

It seems clear, therefore, that the objectives of this study, the
understanding of differences in internal steward organisation and
behaviour, will be best served by the adoption of an analytical
framework which incorporates the concept of role orientation in terms of
leadership style and the stewards' beliefs about unionism. The concept
of leadership, as suggested by Pedler, must accommodate a variety of
styles and strategies which depend upon the issue and the constraints
imposed by the workgroup. At a more subtle level the steward is, over
time, able to influence the constraints of the workgroup by the
development of a particular bias concerning the role of the steward.
Unlike Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong, this study will
not, therefore, adopt the representative/delegate dichotomy, but will
consider leadership in terms of the stewards' preparedness to take
action independent of the membership with respect to initiating issues
themselves or, at times, modifying or squashing issues raised by their

34. Marchington and Armstrong, 'Typologies of Shop Stewards', p.35.
members. In this context this role can be regarded as a measure of the stewards' assessment of the most appropriate strategy to pursue.

The stewards' role orientation must also accommodate the focus of stewards' leadership efforts and the values concerning unity and collective action the stewards bring to their position. That is, are stewards pursuing the wider principles of unionism or are they limiting their concern to their particular workgroup? Certainly the stewards' level of orientation to unionism will reflect personal values, but recognition must also be given to the ability of the workgroup to modify these values and ultimately, if necessary, replace the steward. Equally, however, the steward can attempt to change the expectations and attitudes of the workgroup and, once again, this raises a question concerning the exercise of power and influence by the steward. In this process, the stewards' orientation to unionism will determine the relationship the stewards have with their workgroup and the objectives they are likely to aim for.

To a large degree these concepts, leadership, beliefs and the exercise of power, underpin the model developed by Batstone et al. and modified by Marchington and Armstrong. Acknowledgement, however, must be given to the problems inherent in the representative/delegate dichotomy and the need to develop scales that incorporate strategies, rather than simply classifying behaviour. Based on the literature review and subsequent discussion with shop stewards the following model (figure 2.3) is proposed. Like the models proposed by Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong the framework involves two dimensions to create a four-fold typology of ideal types.
Figure 2.3
Typology of Steward Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Leadership</th>
<th>Type II Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Type IV Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Leadership</td>
<td>Type I Delegate</td>
<td>Type III Committed Delegate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Orientation to Unionism

After a consideration of the concepts involved and discussions with a wide range of stewards and full-time union officials some changes to the titles of the ideal types was considered necessary. Type I has been renamed a delegate. These stewards do not demonstrate leadership and are not committed to the broad principles of unionism. It will be recalled that Batstone et al. termed this steward a populist. This label does not adequately describe these stewards and leaves the impression that their major aim is to achieve and/or maintain popularity with the workgroup. Yet as Batstone et al. demonstrated the gains they made were of less value than their leader counterparts. The delegate takes a narrow view of their position and they prefer to see unionism and stewardship in terms of their immediate constituency. Wider responsibility and combined action are seen as neither desirable nor appropriate. Their legitimacy to act as stewards is therefore limited to that granted by the membership. The delegate will only take up issues when they are initiated by their members and will only undertake activities that directly benefit their own constituency. This role orientation can lead to their own demise as they constantly react to events and tend only to fight rear-guard actions. As Marchington and
Armstrong concluded: "...many of our populists would resign, and quite a few only remained in the job because no-one else would do it."\textsuperscript{35}

The direct opposite to the delegate is the leader. These stewards are well integrated into the union movement and provide leadership to the rank-and-file. In particular, their own members demands must be balanced against the needs of the wider union membership. This is achieved by providing a high level of leadership, where they will raise issues themselves and suppress or modify issues raised by their members if they believe it may not be in the best interests of the wider union. Their legitimacy to act as stewards is, therefore, more broadly based: from the union, stewards and the membership.

In terms of leadership style the work group leader is similar to the leader steward. The difference between these two types lies in the recipients of this leadership: the stewards own constituency in the case of the work group leader, the wider union movement in the case of the leader. The work group leaders are intent on maximizing the short term benefits to their members. This led to Batstone \textit{et al.} labelling these stewards as 'cowboys'. However, as Marchington and Armstrong found, this title could be misleading as these stewards "...were not overtly keen on challenging managerial prerogatives nor committed to the wider orientation of the union, although they were active within their own constituencies and crucially aware of unity at that level."\textsuperscript{36}

The final steward type, those stewards who were committed to the principles of unionism and yet exercised little leadership, was renamed

\textsuperscript{35.} Ibid., p.42.
\textsuperscript{36.} Ibid., p.43.
the committed delegate. This group, as suggested by Marchington and Armstrong, was not transient, yet the title of cautious supporter did not describe them adequately. They were, in leadership style, similar to the delegate, however their union perspectives were far wider. They were committed unionists, believed in collective action and would process issues raised by their members. They were unlikely, however, to raise issues themselves. This may be due to a lack of confidence in their leadership abilities, as suggested by Batstone et al., but may also represent firm beliefs concerning the role of the steward, principles of democracy and accountability to membership.

The adoption of this model has limitations which, at this stage, need to be clearly articulated. First, a model that does not consider structural and institutional factors as possible explanatory variables may overlook key factors that, by themselves or due to their interaction effects with variables specific to the workplace, are important determinants of shop steward behaviour. However, the central purpose of this study is to explain why shop stewards in the one enterprise and in the one location behave differently in terms of industrial relations practices and processes. Therefore, it is the problematic which could be classified as 'idealistic' and as Edwards and Scullion concede with reference to Shop Stewards in Action "... it deliberately set out to answer certain questions, which can be best tackled using an idealistic approach." Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the possible interaction effects of these structural and institutional factors with factors internal to the workplace. Accordingly, it is necessary to

situate this analysis of shop steward behaviour and organisation within the particular environment in which they operate. This will be undertaken in chapter 4.

Second, a note of caution should be sounded as to the general applicability of this model. Batstone et al. developed their typology within a factory context, in the engineering sector, where identifiable workgroups existed, bargaining took place at the workplace and shop stewards had, in most cases, daily contact with their constituents and fellow shop stewards. Thus, whilst this model would appear to be eminently suited to an analysis of shop steward behaviour in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV it may not necessarily be applicable to shop stewards in other contexts where such conditions may not exist.

**Determinants of Shop Stewards' Role Definition**

What is a stewards role? and why do shop stewards adopt different roles in their approach to stewardship? Gross, Mason and McEachin defined role as ". . . a set of expectations applied to an incumbent of a particular position."38 Katz and Kahn argued that ". . . roles are standardized patterns of behaviour required of all persons playing a part in a given functional relationship, regardless of personal wishes or interpersonal obligations irrelevant to the functional relationship."39 In terms of shop stewards the above definitions express the formal role as laid down in the union rule book, awards,


collective agreements, and management developed regulations. These factors were discussed in chapter 1. However, as Warren pointed out the concept of role can involve the stewards own definition of the situation.

...there is not only a set role, but also a received role, consisting of his perceptions and understanding of what was sent, as well as his own conceptions of his office and a corresponding set of attitudes, developed through a long process of socialization...⁴⁰

In addition, the stewards' role can be more complex than many other positions in industry due to the "...pressures which arise out of his position at the crossroads between union members and their union and employees and the management of the firm."⁴¹ To understand differences in role definition it is, therefore, necessary to consider the personal characteristics of the steward and the environment the shop steward operates within, in particular, the interaction the steward has with members, other stewards, his/her union and management. In terms of the model proposed earlier in this chapter, this may be represented diagramatically as figure 2.4 below.


Personal Characteristics of Stewards: A number of studies have provided a profile of the shop steward. McCarthy and Parker listed details of stewards' age, experience, gender, education, ambition and outside interests. The latter two variables, ambition and outside interests, are worthy of further comment. Chinoy argued there are those who viewed union leadership as "...a means for satisfying ambitions that had been frustrated or were out of reach." It may well be that a similar attitude is prevalent with shop stewards involvement in other organisations. That is, stewardship is but one outlet for employees to satisfy their latent ambitions. Others may take up stewardship to enhance their prospects of promotion within the organisation. However, little, if any, attempt is made to relate these factors to the role shop stewards adopted in carrying out their duties. One exception is Partridge who pointed out that "experienced stewards spend


43. Chinoy, 'Local Union Leadership', p.165.

44. Poole, 'Towards a Sociology of Shop Stewards', p.63.
proportionately more time in leadership activities ..."  


be closely related to the ideal types. The age and experience of stewards did not appear useful determinants, although experience did seem to have some effect on the distribution of stewards if only the leader-populist dichotomy was considered.

In Australia, little research has been conducted into why stewards may adopt different roles. Two studies, however, suggest possible answers. Johnston researched the question of why workers become union officials and concluded that British immigrants represented a higher proportion of union officials than their percentage in the workforce. Other factors considered by Johnston included age, years of schooling, occupational grouping of the official's father and the time spent in carrying out duties. In terms of both manual and non-manual officials these factors did not appear significant. Sheridan also suggested that the influence of skilled British migrants, bringing with them traditions of shop-floor activity, was a key factor in the development of shop stewards in the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Dufty, in a detailed study of shop stewards in Western Australia, included age, country of birth, education, skill level and union background as predictor variables in the adoption of various roles. Age, union background and skill level were found to be significant determinants.

50. Marchington and Armstrong, 'Typologies of Shop Stewards', p.46.
From these studies thirteen factors emerge as possible predictors of shop stewards' role definition. These are age, gender, education, community involvement, fathers' occupation, union background, ambition, length of stewardship, length of union membership, length of employment, political preference, country of birth and skill level. Discussions with shop stewards and management in the Latrobe Valley indicated that the measurement of skill level would be difficult due to the complex and varied nature of the work undertaken. Accordingly, it was decided to exclude this variable from the study. Further, as only five shop stewards at the time of the survey were female, gender was excluded as a predictor of stewards' role definition. In addition, there is considerable overlap between some of the variables, particularly with respect to the SECV. The stability of employment in the Latrobe Valley, for example, would tend to yield a high correlation between length of stewardship, union membership and employment. Accordingly it was decided to only include length of stewardship in the model.

Discussions with shop stewards indicated that three additional factors, marital status, income and place of work should be included in the analysis. Single shop stewards claimed that not having family responsibilities allowed them time to attend union functions, trade union education courses and to become more closely involved with their members. As Gouldner commented, family demands may conflict with the demand of union office.54 Chinoy is more direct. "The union often becomes a man's second wife, and the first one may object strongly to

bigamy. Income was also seen as an important factor as within the SECV it could be used as a defacto measure of the job status and skill level of the employee. In the former sense, it could be that the formal authority conferred upon stewards in their capacity as employees may carry over in terms of the stewardship role. As Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton concluded "...higher (job) status enhances the likelihood of a white collar union member not only becoming active in his union, but also advocating and moving into a leadership role within it." This is similar to the findings of Sayles and Strauss that high pay and seniority within the firm favour election to union office.

Place of work (Yallourn, Morwell, Loy Yang) was the final variable to be included. It was clear that Yallourn, in particular, had a well developed shop-floor organisation. In contrast, at the time of the survey, Loy Yang had been operational for less than three years. Further, each production centre is self-contained and stewards' activities in one centre are often isolated from stewards in the other centres. As Batstone et al. suggested "in some strongly organised plants, sections within the manual labour-force, for example, may be so isolated from each other that it is more useful to focus attention upon the various sections than the 'organization' as a whole."

55. Chinoy, 'Local Union Leadership', p.159.


58. Batstone et al., Shop Stewards in Action, p.3.
Environmental Characteristics: By studying a single industry, comprised of one enterprise in the one region, four main factors which influence the internal environment that each shop steward operates within can be identified: the union the shop steward belongs to, other shop stewards, the characteristics of the workgroup the shop steward represents and the nature of management both at the supervisory level and the more senior policy making level. In each case, with the exception of some of the union characteristics, it will be the shop stewards' perception of each factor that will influence the adoption of a specific role. Other environmental factors such as economic, social, political, geographical and historical influences will, in this case, be more or less constant across all shop stewards employed by the SECV in the Latrobe Valley.

The research undertaken by Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong partially explored the relationship between environmental factors and the adoption of a particular role. Both studies limited the environmental factors to characteristics of the union. Batstone et al. focused on the size of the stewards' constituency and the type of union. With respect to the stewards' constituency they claimed "there is an association between constituency size and steward leadership on the shop floor." Further, they concluded "...shop floor stewards tend to place a greater emphasis upon the need to adopt a leadership role in relation to their members." 

In contrast, Marchington and Armstrong found that there was no difference in the distribution of ideal types between stewards from blue

60. Ibid., p.52.
and white-collar unions. With respect to the Batstone et al. finding they stated that their results may "...have been obscuring the influence of another variable such as the degree of steward organisation." This suggestion arose out of their earlier study of white-collar and manual stewards in both the private sector and local authorities. They found that although leaders and populists were distributed randomly, populists tended to be concentrated in organisations where the membership were apathetic and local shop steward organisation weak. On this latter point, the strength or otherwise of local steward organisation will initially, at least, be dependent upon the presence of stewards from the same and/or other unions.

Goodman and Whittingham also considered the constituency size and concluded "our sample shows that the white collar group had the largest constituency..." McCarthy and Parker, and McBeath also reported the constituency size of the steward, with McBeath suggesting that the size of the workplace may explain the variations between unions. On this point Brown et al. found that the constituency size was significantly related to the size of the workplace, with the larger the

62. Ibid.
65. McCarthy and Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations, p.15; McBeath, 'The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations', p.121.
workplace the more formal the shop steward organisation. A related factor to constituency size is the contact members have with full-time union officials. Sheridan suggested that the infrequent contact members had with full-time officials was a partial explanation of the growth of the shop steward organisation in the Amalgamated Engineering Union. It would, therefore, appear that type of union, presence of full-time union officials, constituency size and the presence of stewards from the same and/or other unions may be important determinants of role definition.

Farnham and Pimlott considered the relationship between the steward and the workgroup. They argued that stewards faced with conflicting choices between the interests of the workgroup or the union will generally side with the workgroup. This raises the question of which characteristics of the membership may be important in shaping the stewards' role. Goodman and Whittingham suggested "a study of primary work groups reveals an important source of pressure on shop stewards." Few studies, however, have attempted to examine the influence of the membership or the workgroup on the stewards' role. Batstone et al. claimed "the extent to which stewards can act as leaders


68. Sheridan, Mindful Militants.


70. Goodman and Whittingham, Shop Stewards in British Industry, p.87.
is influenced by their members."71 Of considerable importance was the members' expectations of stewards. They found that "...one third of shop floor comments stressed steward leadership, compared with only 8 per cent of those on the staff side."72

The relationship between a steward and his membership is not clear cut. The role adopted, as pointed out by Warren, may be influenced by a number of factors. First, the steward "...remains accountable to those who have elected him."73 This poses the question do shop stewards adopt different leadership roles if they are not subject to regular re-election by the membership or are appointed by the union? Second, the steward will need to recognise that members will have specific expectations of the steward and may attempt to influence how this expectation is to be achieved. Third, there exists an assumption that the steward "...is the representative of a single, clearly defined group of workers but this may not necessarily be the case."74 The degree of unity of the workgroup may, therefore, be an important determinant of stewards' leadership style.

Member apathy will also influence the role adopted by the shop steward. Most officials, in Johnston's study, claimed that workers "...showed little interest in Union work... this applied mostly to young workers who take conditions for granted being ignorant of the Unions'
past struggles." 75 In these cases Goodman and Whittingham suggested that "...stewards may have more freedom of manoeuvre, and forceful leadership and demography may well produce the results desired by the leader." 76 That is, member apathy may lead stewards to adopt a representative role. One shop steward, describing his role to Johnston, stated "we go around every month, collect dues and talk to all members. They decide on the issues on hand, but we lead them." 77 Key variables for consideration, therefore, would appear to be age of membership, degree of workgroup unity, the stewards' frequency of contact with members, members' expectations of their steward and whether the steward is subject to regular re-election.

In discussing the influence of management upon the role of the shop steward Warren suggested "management may, in fact, enhance the scope, power and authority of the stewards' role..." 78, a view also shared by Goodman and Whittingham. 79 Brown, after examining the role of the shop steward in piecework bargaining, is more definite and suggested "... in the long run, management itself is the most important influence in shaping the behaviour of its shop stewards." 80 More recently Terry suggested that "... managements in many industries pursued quite

76. Goodman and Whittingham, Shop Stewards in British Industry, pp.81-82.
explicit reform strategies with respect to shop stewards. For example, Terry argued, firms with little or no history of shop-floor organisation "... encouraged, or even deliberately fostered, the emergence and development of shop steward organisations." McBeath found considerable variation, among stewards from five unions, to questions concerning perceived attitudes of management, management obstruction and incidences of victimization. On this last point, for example, levels of victimization varied between 9.8 per cent to 50.0 per cent (all stewards 21.6 per cent). However McBeath did not relate this to the role or behaviour of shop stewards. These results are similar to McCarthy's study of shop stewards in the United Kingdom, although Davis suggested that it is "...possible that Australian managers have, in general, been more hostile to the development of shop stewards than their British counterparts."

Brown et al. also considered the influence of management on shop steward organisation, although they limited their discussion to bargaining levels, management co-operation and joint consultation. On these aspects the results were mixed. For example:

...sophisticated steward organisation can exist where there is no workplace bargaining... joint consultative arrangements appear to have a more clear cut effect, stimulating both steward organisational development and inter union


82. Ibid., p.81.


conflict...(and) management resistance could be a stimulus or a response to powerful steward organisation.  

Although not directly related to the roles adopted by individual shop stewards, it is clear these factors may be important influences on the steward. For example, Dufty pointed out that management would prefer "...to deal with strong shop stewards, leaders who can control their members to the extent of ensuring adherence to any agreement reached..." Discussion with shop stewards tended to confirm the findings of the literature. Of particular importance were the general age level of the supervisor and their style of management, and the attitudes of more senior line management.

Models: From the literature reviewed, some twelve personal factors and eleven environmental factors have emerged which may determine the adoption of a particular role by stewards. As the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis is based on the stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style, it is necessary to examine the determinants of role definition with respect to these two dimensions. The literature clearly suggested that many of the factors related only to orientation to unionism or to leadership style. Several factors,
however, were considered only in the context of a more general discussion of the stewards' role.

After discussions with shop stewards it was possible to develop two models that would be expected to explain a significant proportion of variance in stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style respectively. These are presented in figure 2.5 below.

It is, however, not possible with any degree of certainty, to express the expected relationship between these factors and the adoption of a specific role. In many cases the literature was inconclusive, for example, as Warren pointed out, stewards may not be representative of a single, clearly defined workgroup, but does not suggest in what direction this factor may affect the role adopted by the steward. As a consequence the models to be tested will be expressed in terms of their ability to predict significant amounts of variance in the measures of role definition, namely orientation to unionism and leadership style.

Role Definition and Shop Steward Behaviour

In this study, four aspects of shop steward behaviour will be considered in detail. First, the function and duties of shop stewardship; second, the internal organisation of shop stewards; third, the stewards' role in industrial action; and fourth, the type of relationships that shop stewards develop with their members, management and their union. These areas were chosen due to their frequency of

Figure 2.5

Predictors of Orientation to Unionism and Leadership Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Orientation to Unionism</th>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fathers’ Occupation</td>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union Background</td>
<td>Ambition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of Stewardship</td>
<td>Length of Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Preference</td>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place of Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Type of Union</td>
<td>Type of Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence of Full-time Official</td>
<td>Presence of Full-time Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Constituency Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steward Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Presence of Stewards—Own Union</td>
<td>Presence of Stewards—Own Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence of Stewards—Other Unions</td>
<td>Presence of Stewards—Other Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Age levels</td>
<td>Frequency of Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of Workgroup Unity</td>
<td>Subject to Regular Re-election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members’ Expectations</td>
<td>Frequency of Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Attitudes of Management</td>
<td>Supervisors’ Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisors’ Management Style</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
discussion in the literature\textsuperscript{89} and the importance given to them by Latrobe Valley shop stewards.\textsuperscript{90}

\textit{Functions and Duties of Shop Stewardship}

In examining the duties of shop stewards two aspects are important. First, how do shop stewards spend their time? and second, the methods by which shop stewards process issues relevant to their membership. In particular, do the various steward types differ with respect to the issues they handle, their use of senior stewards and full-time union officials and to whom they feel responsible to?

\textit{Shop Steward Organisation}

The value individual shop stewards place on their contact with other shop stewards and their involvement in the collective body of shop stewards will in many cases determine the course of action they will take. The steward network can also provide considerable resources to facilitate planned action. These resources include information, interpretation and advice. In some cases the resources could also include support for planned action. One institutionalised way for stewards to meet collectively is to participate in a range of committees and working parties. This often is the most convenient way for stewards to meet on a regular basis.

\textsuperscript{89} See, for example, Batstone et al., \textit{Shop Stewards in Action}; McCarthy and Parker, \textit{Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations}; Goodman and Whittingham, \textit{Shop Stewards in British Industry}; McBeath, 'The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations'; Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia'.

\textsuperscript{90} Interviews with Latrobe Valley Shop Stewards.
Stewards' Role in Industrial Action

Different stewards will pursue different goals and possess different attitudes to the value of dispute procedures and the usefulness of industrial action. Some stewards play an integral role during a strike in terms of organisational duties, mobilization of support and negotiations. Other stewards will prefer to provide a link between the full-time officials and the membership, or act purely as an interested member. In particular the following will be considered: the level of militancy of stewards, the use of formal dispute procedures, the raising of issues and the organisation of strike action.

Shop Steward Relationships with Members, Management and Their Union

The relationships a shop steward has with union members, management and their union is based on the steward's own individual perceptions. It is these perceptions that determine their behaviour and give some insight into the influence shop stewards have at the workplace. The relationship with members must be examined at two levels. First, the level of contact a shop steward has with his members and the perceived value the members place on regular and frequent meetings. Second, the expectations of the membership as perceived by the shop steward and how far they can influence the actions and decisions taken by the shop steward.

The relationship and dealings with management represents an important part of the role of a shop steward. Management can influence shop steward behaviour by the type of workplace policies they implement and the way they deal with individual shop stewards. The level of managerial influence will vary between shop stewards as will the type and function of contact with management and the level of consultation.
The type of relationship a shop steward has with their individual union, in particular full-time officials, represents the degree of external influence the union can achieve at the workplace. Some unions have clear policies on the role of the shop steward and have integrated the shop steward into the formal union structure. In other unions the position and functions of shop stewards are not so clear. Regardless of the official policies, this relationship is also dependant upon the attitude of full-time officials and the shop stewards themselves. In each case the level of contact with full-time officials, acceptance of the unions policies and strategies and the degree of independence from the union experienced by shop stewards will influence how a shop steward behaves in a particular situation.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed a number of studies that have developed theoretical typologies to assist in the understanding of the behaviour of shop stewards. It was argued that the model developed by Batstone and his colleagues, based on leadership style and pursuit of union principles, offered the most utility in studying the internal dynamics of shop steward organisation and behaviour. Limitations as to the general applicability of such a model were, however, pointed out. The chapter also reviewed the literature so as to construct models that could explain significant proportions of variance in stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style. The chapter concluded by outlining areas of shop steward activity that will be examined for differences in stewards' behaviour. Chapters 7 to 12 will consider these in some detail.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines in detail the research procedures adopted in this study. Four main aspects are examined. First, the population under study is defined and the limitations, in terms of the general applicability of the findings that are imposed by focusing on the Latrobe Valley shop stewards, are considered. Second, the data collection methods, in particular the development and administration of the questionnaire, are discussed. Third, the computing and statistical procedures employed are outlined and, fourth, the development and testing of the orientation to unionism, leadership style and militancy scales are reported.

Population Under Study

The nature of the research problem has largely determined the population to be studied. The aim of this research is to achieve a detailed understanding of the practices and processes involved in shop-floor industrial relations. The central focus will be shop stewards and the relationships and interaction between themselves and members, management and full-time union officials. These relationships can be affected by a number of factors. For example, the nature and structure of the industry (type, structure, ownership and markets), the degree of reliance on industrial tribunals for wage outcomes, the number and types of unions represented, the individual unions' policy towards shop stewards and shop-floor organisation and how these policies are interpreted by full-time union officials, the background and skills of
the workforce and the general characteristics of management are all factors which will significantly affect the pattern and importance of shop-floor involvement in the industrial relations processes. A general survey of shop stewards is therefore ruled out. The behaviour of shop stewards in one region, industry or firm could not be compared with the behaviour of shop stewards in another region, industry or firm as the behaviour may be as much a product of the characteristics of the environment as of the nature and characteristics of the shop stewards themselves.

Any attempt, therefore, to research the behaviour and actions of shop stewards must attempt to limit the possibility of 'extraneous' variables becoming alternate, major explanatory factors. Consequently, it was decided to limit the study to a single organisation operating in an identifiable region. The SECV proved to be a convenient organisation, particularly if limited to the Latrobe Valley operations. The SECV in the Latrobe Valley has a well established shop-floor industrial relations system and a single management hierarchy. Variations in the behaviour of shop stewards will thus more likely be attributable to internal factors such as attitudes, leadership styles and type of union than to the nature and structure of the organisation itself. It should be noted, however, that two caveats must be placed on this contention. First, the particular structural and institutional factors may interact with the internal factors in such a

1. Extraneous variables in this context should not be considered as unimportant but merely outside the aims of this particular study.

2. The SECV employs some 23,000 employees of which 9,000 are employed in the Latrobe Valley, primarily in coal winning and power generation, 4,000 at Monash House, the SECV's headquarters in Melbourne, with the remainder scattered throughout the state.
way as to produce a unique form of shop steward activity and organisation. Second, within the one organisation differences in managerial styles may be evidenced and sectional variations may occur. This may have some effect on the behaviour of shop stewards.

The population under study are all shop stewards employed within the SECV coal winning and power generation sections in the Latrobe Valley. SECV construction activity has been excluded because:

(i) the SECV sub-contracts construction to over one hundred different employers;

(ii) the nature of the construction industry has led to vastly different processes being introduced at the shop-floor level, for example, the appointment of a combined unions' steward to represent all workers on site; and

(iii) the transient nature of the industry leads to a high turnover of staff and thus little stability in steward relationships.

The selection of shop stewards employed in the SECV's Latrobe Valley operations as the population under study has imposed three specific limitations as to the extent the findings may be generalised. First, the results obtained from this research cannot be generalised to the behaviour of shop stewards throughout Australia. The shop-floor organisation within the SECV is well developed and, as such, will certainly not be representative of all industries, regions or organisations. It is maintained, however, that the research will provide valuable insights into shop-floor industrial relations that may be utilized in future research. Second, shop stewards employed by the SECV operate within a major statutory authority. Accordingly, it is likely that many of the shop-floor structures will be influenced by the particular government of the day and the ethos and practice of public
employment. One example is the structure and functioning of the working party concept introduced into the SECV in the late 1970s. Third, as most SECV employees are covered by awards of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission (The Arbitration Commission), much of the dispute settling process will reflect, at least in part, the procedures of the federal tribunal. This is the case with many major Australian companies but not applicable to all state electricity instrumentalities.

These limitations do not render the study invalid or prevent generalisations from being made. They do, however, place a caveat on the extent to which the findings of this study can be used to understand the behaviour of shop stewards in other contexts.

Data Collection Methods

The research was undertaken over a five year period commencing in 1982. Some twenty-four unions represent SECV employees in the Latrobe Valley. Accordingly, it was necessary to have discussions with officials of each of these unions to gain support for the project. Following these discussions, background reading on the subject of shop stewards was undertaken which gave rise to the theoretical framework of the study. The strategy decided upon to test the applicability and value of this theoretical framework and to explore the extent of shop steward activity in the Latrobe Valley was four-fold:

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4. Of the twenty-four unions, twenty have shop stewards representing members. Four unions have only a small number of members who are scattered throughout the SECV.
(i) An examination of various union and SECV documents concerning shop steward activities and any external documents such as SECV consultant reports, government documents and press reports;

(ii) a questionnaire survey of all shop stewards employed within the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV;

(iii) formal and informal interviews with a number of full-time union officials, local branch officials and individual shop stewards; and

(iv) attendance at, and observation of, a number of key activities. These included mass meetings, strike meetings, local branch activities, informal gatherings of shop stewards and observation and discussions with stewards within the work environment.

More detail on each of the above procedures is provided in the following paragraphs.

1. Examinations of Relevant Documents: Union documents examined included minutes of local branch meetings, files on industrial campaigns, union journals, newsletters and records of the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council. Strike diaries kept by several shop stewards were also perused. SECV documents examined included newsletters, annual reports, summary minutes of SECV board meetings and an assortment of documents provided by SECV personnel. A number of external documents and sources of information were also utilised. These included: newspaper articles, principally the Latrobe Valley Express and to a lesser extent the Melbourne Age, government reports, both at the state and federal level, and transcripts of hearings before the Arbitration Commission.
2. Questionnaire Survey: A questionnaire was sent to all shop stewards employed by the SECV in the Latrobe Valley. The first draft of the questionnaire was developed during January to June 1984 after an extensive period of reading Australian and overseas literature, interviews with Latrobe Valley based union officials (including shop stewards) and SECV industrial relations officers, and an examination of shop steward questionnaires used previously in Australia and overseas. The draft questionnaire was submitted to six academics who were asked to comment on wording, validity in terms of the proposed model and completeness. Alterations were subsequently made to the wording, presentation and content of the questionnaire. The revised questionnaire was given to four Latrobe Valley full-time union officials and four Melbourne-based union officials. This led to further changes being made and a third draft of the questionnaire being developed. The revised questionnaire was then pilot tested on twenty former shop stewards and branch officials in the Latrobe Valley. Seventeen of the questionnaires were returned and these led to further refinements being

5. A condition of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union participating in the survey was the deletion of fourteen questions from the questionnaire (questions 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 66, 70, 71, 79). This required questionnaires to be printed separately for this union with these questions deleted. All other unions accepted the questionnaire in full.

6. Overseas questionnaires examined were those developed/used by Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel (1977), Goodman and Whittingham (1969), McCarthy and Parker (1968) and Pedler (1973). Australian questionnaires included Dufty (1980) and Charleston (1977). Moore's (1978) interview schedule of shop stewards was also examined. Boraston, Pedler and Dufty provided the author with copies of their questionnaires. In all other cases the questionnaires had been published.
undertaken. The final questionnaire was precoded to facilitate the entry of data onto the computer.\(^7\)

The questionnaire was mailed to three hundred and forty-six shop stewards in the period March to May 1985. It was not possible to mail all questionnaires at exactly the same time as several unions undertook the mailing task themselves so as to ensure the names of shop stewards did not become publicly available. No significant industrial relations developments took place in the Latrobe Valley SECV operations during this period. Included with each questionnaire was a reply-paid addressed envelope\(^8\) and a covering letter. The letter explained the purpose of the study, guaranteed the confidentiality of responses and invited shop stewards to contact the writer if they had any queries or problems. Three weeks after the initial posting a follow-up letter was sent to all possible respondents. By the end of June 1985 some 209 shop stewards had returned their questionnaire which represented a response rate of 60.4 per cent\(^9\) (see table 3.1). Given the general apathy to mail questionnaires this rate was considered more than satisfactory. More importantly the twenty unions with shop stewards all participated in the study and questionnaires were received from shop stewards representing the twenty unions. This has ensured representativeness in terms of unions and coupled with the overall response rate has meant that confidence can be placed in the coverage of the survey. However, some 39.6 per cent of shop stewards did not respond to the questionnaire and, as a consequence, some bias may be present in the results.

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7. See Appendix A for a copy of the final questionnaire.

8. The free-post permit system was used.

9. In five cases the questionnaire was returned due to being incorrectly addressed. These were subsequently sent to the new address.
Table 3.1
Response to Questionnaire Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Number of Shop Stewards</th>
<th>Response before reminder</th>
<th>Response after reminder</th>
<th>Total Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOA</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEDFA</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEA</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMWU</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETU</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMPE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS *</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>346</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
<td><strong>46.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* OTHERS include BWIU(6), FMWU(4), VOB(1), AWU(6), FLAI(2), OPDEU(2), PGEU(2), AFSA(1), FSPU(5), BLF(6), VBEPA(1), TWU(1) and ASE(9). As each of these unions had less than 10 shop stewards it was felt that an individual response rate would be misleading.

To improve confidence in the representativeness of any sample survey Kerlinger suggested it is desirable "... to learn something of the characteristics of the nonrespondent." As Moser and Kalton pointed out, making comparisons between respondents and non-respondents on several characteristics "... can reassure the researcher that the final sample is not badly out of line." In this study it was possible to compare respondents and non-respondents on the type and size of the


union they belonged to and their place of work. These comparisons are
given in table 3.2. From these results it is clear that, on these
characteristics, respondents and non-respondents are similar. Whilst
this provides further confidence in the representativeness of the final
sample it does not prove that the respondents are similar to non-
respondents on other criteria such as orientation to unionism,
leadership style and level of militancy.

One further word of caution must be given concerning the
interpretation of the survey results. The reasons an individual
respondent has for giving a certain answer are unique to that person and
their experiences. By quantifying and averaging these responses this
uniqueness is lost. These limitations are systematic features of
sociological research, and what is represented by a significant
variation in statistics must be viewed in this light.

Table 3.2
Comparison of Respondents and Non-Respondents
by Type and Size of Union and Place of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Non-Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of union</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of union</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 250</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 or more</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yallourn</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwell</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loy Yang</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Refers to the number of members of that union working in the SECV in
the Latrobe Valley.

* Only includes stewards from the MOA, PEDFA and the APEA.
3. Interviews: Interviews were conducted with thirty shop stewards, ten Melbourne-based union officials, two Melbourne-based SECV industrial relations officers, three Latrobe Valley SECV industrial relations officers and eight full-time Latrobe Valley based union officials. These interviews were mainly unstructured as continuous close contact with stewards, union officials and SECV personnel obviated the need for formally structured interviews. The range of issues discussed in these interviews are listed in the Interview Schedule provided in Appendix B. It should be noted that not all these questions may be applicable to all interviewees, for example, only those stewards involved in a particular dispute would be asked to comment on the role of the shop steward. Further, interviews were often extended over two or more sessions depending on the time available in the initial interview. Finally, interviews were also conducted with members of the Arbitration Commission who were involved in settling disputes in the power industry.

Meetings with the local branches of the AMWU and the MOA allowed for groups of shop stewards to give feedback on the results of the questionnaire. This was part of the process adopted to disseminate information to the participating unions. This feedback often differed from the individual interview situation in that debate between shop stewards often provided further explanations.

4. Attendance at Shop Steward Activities: The major activities attended included two mass meetings, several stopwork/strike meetings and local branch meetings of unions and the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council. During the entire study the author maintained partial residence in the Latrobe Valley which facilitated invitations to a range
of social functions involving shop stewards. The ability to meet with
shop stewards socially, in their homes, hotels, at community activities
and sporting events provided insight into a range of issues that could
have been overlooked in a more formal study. This was particularly the
case in ascertaining shop stewards relationships with their union, SECV
officials and between themselves.

Computing and Statistical Procedures

The questionnaire consisted mainly of pre-coded questions, although
some eighteen questions required categories to be developed from the
responses. Once coded, the responses were then entered into the
computer in fixed format and stored on magnetic disc. Considerable
attention was paid to checking the data for errors introduced at the
entry stage. This involved undertaking simple frequency counts of each
variable and correcting cases that fell outside the possible range. All
computing and statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical
Package for the Social Sciences (Version X).12 This package was
selected because of its wide acceptance, data management capabilities
and range of statistics offered. A number of statistical procedures
were used to analyse the data. These included factor analysis, t-tests,
chi-squared tests and multiple regression techniques. The rationale,
basis and use of each of these methods are discussed in more detail
below. Further comments are also included in later chapters where the
procedures are actually employed.

The questionnaire contained a number of questions designed to
measure specific attitudes of the shop stewards, in particular, their

degree of militancy, orientation to unionism and style of leadership. In each case several questions were included to measure each concept. The development of these scales will be discussed later in this chapter, however, it should be noted that the aim was to develop scales that could have wider application. Before each scale was developed it was necessary to check that each item was primarily measuring the same construct. The most appropriate statistical method was factor analysis coupled with item analysis. Item analysis involved three stages. First, the validity of each item, in terms of content, was examined prior to being included in the questionnaire. This involved six academics examining each item in terms of the particular construct under investigation. Second, the distribution of responses to these items was examined to ensure they do in fact discriminate between respondents. Third, the reliability of the scale was estimated by the calculation of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient.\(^{13}\) Further, the reliability of each item making up the scale was estimated by reference to the communalities calculated during factor analysis.

Of the various forms of factor analysis available, component factor analysis was deemed the most suitable as it "... does not require any assumptions about the general nature of the variables."\(^ {14}\) Further, component factor analysis is concerned "... with patterning all the

\(^{13}\) L.J. Cronbach, ‘Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Structure of Tests’, *Psychometrika* 16 (September 1951), pp.297-334.

variation in a set of variables, whether common or unique and thus simply defines the basic dimensions of the data. It is also necessary in most cases to rotate the factors to allow for each variable to be accounted for by a single common factor. Varimax rotation was utilized as it is "...generally accepted as the best analytic orthogonal rotation technique."

Frequency distributions, crosstabulations and related statistics (mean, standard deviation, t-test and chi-squared) were used to describe the shop stewards and their activities. In calculating the significance of the differences between two groups only, and where the responses form an interval scale the t-test was used. In all other cases the chi-squared test ($x^2$) was applied. In the case of 2x2 crosstabulation, where $n > 20$, Yates corrected $x^2$ was used. In all cases results will be considered statistically significant when the probability of accepting that a difference exists between stewards, when in fact it does not, does not exceed .05 ($p < .05$). Where the probability lies between .05 and .10 this will be considered as suggestive of a particular relationship. Any probability greater than .10 will be considered statistically insignificant although some trends may be identifiable. In the presentation of frequency distributions for particular variables, either for all shop stewards or sub-groups of stewards, some discrepancies may occur between the sums of component


16. In the case of unrotated factors each variable will be accounted for by two significant factors.


items and totals. This is due to the rounding of figures to one decimal place. All totals, however, will be presented as 100 per cent.19

To test the models proposed concerning the determinants of role definition required the adoption of multiple regression techniques. This procedure can be represented mathematically as

\[ Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \ldots + b_i X_i \]

where \( Y \) is the dependent variable, \( X_1, X_2, \ldots X_i \) are the independent variables, \( b_1, b_2 \ldots b_i \) the regression coefficients and \( a \) the intercept constant. This method analyses the "...the collective and separate contributions of two or more independent variables, \( X_i \), to the variation of a dependent variable, \( Y \)."20 The contribution is assessed by calculating the amount of variance explained in the dependent variable by the independent variables.

This procedure offers more flexibility than the generally accepted analysis of variance techniques. Continuous variables do not need to be categorised as is the case with analysis of variance techniques. This practice "...has a direct consequence in the loss of statistical power."21 In the case of dichotomous variables dummy coding was used. In these instances the variables were recoded one or zero depending on the presence or absence of the required property. Of more importance in studies of this kind is the fact that multiple regression techniques offer a variety of solutions for the analysis of data in unequal cell situations.

19. This convention is adopted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their reporting of census and other data.


To conclude this section a brief outline of the reporting procedures adopted in the testing of the models of the determinants of role definition is provided. The amount of variance explained by the model ($R^2$) will be reported and the significance of $R^2$ is tested using an overall F statistic. For each variable the regression weights, the t-statistic and the significance levels associated with each t-statistic will be reported.

**Instrumentation**

**Orientation to Unionism and Leadership Scales**

The theoretical framework used in this study is based on the work of Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel. The criticisms and suggestions by a number of researchers, in particular Marchington and Armstrong, were taken into account in the development of a revised model. The revised model was presented in chapter 2. The major changes included 'pursuit of union principles' being renamed 'orientation to unionism' and the representative/delegate dichotomy being redeveloped to measure leadership style. The questions used by Marchington and Armstrong to classify stewards on these two dimensions are presented in table 3.3.

They made four significant changes to the Batstone et al. methodology. First, the answers to all items came from direct questioning, unlike Batstone et al. where the classification was based upon direct observation. Second, the statement 'a steward should support joint shop steward committees (JSSC) resolutions even if they are against the best

---


interest of his own members' was used to measure orientation to unionism rather than to measure leadership style. In terms of theoretical underpinning this item appears to be saying more about a stewards' belief in the need to accept decisions taken at a wider level than that of the stewards own constituency. Third, the question of 'referring issues to other shop stewards' was rejected in terms of measuring leadership. Given the range of ways a steward may pursue issues, Marchington and Armstrong concluded "...it became problematic to establish whether a leader or populist would be more likely to refer things to a more senior steward." Fourth, the questions, 'what do you think are the main trade union principles?' and 'how often do you go to branch meetings?' were included to measure orientation to unionism.

In this study all items included in the Batstone et al. and the Marchington and Armstrong typology were included with the exception of attendance at branch meetings. This item was rejected on two practical grounds. First, sixteen of the twenty four unions represented in the SECV do not have local branches. Second, a considerable number of shop stewards of several larger unions (FEDFA, the MOA and AIMPE) work on a rotating shift basis which can and does prevent them from attending many meetings. In its place the statement 'I think of myself as primarily belonging to the trade union movement than to my own union' was included as it was felt that this would gauge their underlying philosophy and attitudes to unionism. It would take them above the constituency level and would indicate a commitment towards, and an incorporation into, the wider union movement.

24. Ibid., p.37.
Table 3.3
Items Used in Constructing Orientation to Unionism and Leadership Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel</th>
<th>Marchington and Armstrong</th>
<th>Shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 'A steward is a representative, but he is also a leader; sometimes he has to tell his members they're not on, sometimes stir them into action'</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 'A steward should support JSSC resolutions even they are against the best interest of his own members'</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 'Generally you can't act according to union principles - they don't feed the family'</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 'JSSC are of considerable importance to the union movement'</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 'I think of myself as primarily belonging to the trade union movement than to my own union'</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. 'When issues arise at the workplace I refer them to other stewards or the union organiser'</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 'As a steward I have to raise issues myself'</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 'As a steward I often amend, change or squash issues raised by members'</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 'What do you think are the main trade union principles?'</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Attendance at local branch meeting of union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Orientation to Unionism
* Leadership

a. As explained later these questions were included in the orientation to unionism scale but were subsequently rejected.

b. As explained later these questions were included in the leadership scale but were subsequently rejected.
A major criticism of both Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong is that having developed criteria for classifying stewards their actual procedures for collecting and assessing data were neither rigorous nor statistically valid. Batstone et al. based their classification on observation; for example, if a steward shaped the majority of issues he handled he would be classified as a representative. This requires constant vigilance on the part of the observer as well as recognising that an experimental effect may have been introduced. Further, given that much of a steward's activity can occur outside of the formal work environment it becomes difficult to be highly confident in the final results. It also has the added problem that the arguments can become tautological and the research findings descriptive. If a model is developed on the basis of observed behaviour then it should not be a surprise when different steward types behave in certain ways.

Marchington and Armstrong, whilst overcoming many of the conceptual problems inherent in the Batstone et al. typology, did not improve on the validity, reliability and measurement aspect of the scales. In terms of validity and reliability no statistical procedures were carried out to ensure the scales were both unidimensional (measuring a single construct) and reliable (providing consistent results over repeated application). The measurement aspect of each scale was relatively crude as, with one exception, only broad agreement or disagreement with each item was used to score stewards. This was exacerbated by categorizing the stewards on the basis of scoring a positive response to a simple
majority of items making up each scale. As mentioned in chapter 2 it is desirable to conceive of leadership in terms of a continuum rather than a simple dichotomy. To achieve a continuum it was necessary to provide a range of possible responses to each of the items given in table 3.3, such as strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. The one exception to the above is the classification of the responses to the question 'what are the main trade union principles?' In this case the responses were coded, there are no trade union principles, management oriented, worker oriented, union oriented and socialism. Within each question a range of views can be discerned and if subsequent analysis indicates a high correlation between questions, then for each dimension it becomes possible to add the responses to form a scale.

Once a scale has been developed, a high or low for each dimension can be related to above or below the mean to enable each steward to be classified on that dimension. Adoption of the mean criteria relieves the researcher from having to make subjective judgements as to what constitutes high or low on each dimension. The two criteria for the construction of the orientation to unionism and the leadership scales are that they are internally reliable and unidimensional. In this study, the former will be measured by traditional item analysis techniques, the latter via factor analysis.

*Orientation to Unionism Scale:* Items 2,3,4,5 and 9 (see table 3.1) were included in the survey to measure stewards' orientation to unionism. On the basis of simple observation the responses to item 9, main trade

25. This latter point was recognised by Marchington and Armstrong. See Marchington and Armstrong, 'Typologies of Shop Steward', p.40.
union principles', proved less than satisfactory. First, some 20.1 per cent (N=42) of stewards did not respond to the question and accordingly would be excluded from the study if this question was included in the scale. Subsequent interviews confirmed the view that many stewards had difficulty articulating what they saw as the main trade union principles. Second, a majority of stewards, 59.3 per cent (N=124) expressed trade union principles in terms of winning improvements in the wages and conditions of employment. Only some 16.2 per cent (N=34) of stewards mentioned the wider union movement and concepts embracing aspects of workplace control. Responses to the remaining four items could range between strongly agree to strongly disagree (see Appendix A). The responses to these items were spread relatively evenly over the available categories. Results are provided in table 3.4.

Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refers to item numbers given in table 3.3

The reliability (alpha coefficient) of the four items taken as a single scale was considerably improved by the exclusion of item 3 (.3118 to .4141). Given the small number of items contained in the scale and the homogeneity of the respondents this level of reliability was deemed
satisfactory. The decision to exclude item 3 from the orientation to unionism scale was confirmed by factor analysis where items 2, 4 and 5 loaded heavily on factor one whilst item 3 loaded heavily on factor two (see table 3.5). Factor one, the major factor, accounted for some 57.6 per cent of common (explained) variance and 34.6 per cent of total variance. Given the relative high loadings on factor one for items 2, 4 and 5 (.542 to .740) these items can be conceived as being unidimensional and their relatively high communalities (.408 to .563) indicate a reasonable degree of reliability.26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.542</td>
<td>-.338</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % Total Variance | 34.6 | 25.5 |
| % Common Variance | 57.6 | 42.4 |
| Eigenvalue       | 1.382 | 1.019 |

* Refers to item numbers given in table 3.3

On this basis, the orientation to unionism scale consisted of three items (2, 4, and 5) that had reasonable levels of reliability and could

26. Communalities can be conceived as the lower bound estimate of reliability for each item.
be conceived as substantially measuring a single construct. The scale was constructed by the addition of the three items, 2, 4 and 5, weighted by the factor loadings given in table 3.5. The scores for this scale ranged from 2.01 to 10.05 with a mean of 6.21 and a standard deviation of 1.60. Shop stewards with scores below 6.21 on this scale were considered low on orientation to unionism, whilst those above 6.21 were deemed to be high on this dimension. Relating these scores to the statements given in table 3.3, shop stewards who have a high orientation to unionism are more likely to believe stewards have a wider responsibility than to their own constituency, believe in collectivity and unity and feel part of the wider trade union movement. Unlike the Batstone et al. study, the orientation to unionism scale excluded integration into the local steward network.

Leadership Scale: Items 1, 6, 7 and 8 (table 3.3) were designed to ascertain the degree to which stewards were willing to take action independent of the membership. As discussed earlier in this chapter it was decided to develop a continuous scale and thus five possible responses for each item were provided, ranging from either strongly agree to strongly disagree (item 1) or always to never (items 6, 7 and 8). As with the orientation to unionism scale, responses to the four items were reasonably evenly spread over the possible categories (see

27. This scale differs substantially from the scales used by Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong. The problem of scales not being adequately tested for unidimensionality and reliability must throw doubt on the subsequent findings of such research.

28. Items expressed in the negative were recoded to ensure compatibility.

29. See Batstone et al., Shop Stewards in Action, p.35.
table 3.6). The reliability of the items taken together (the alpha coefficient) was .2099. This index was dramatically improved if item 6 was deleted (an increase to .3798). This level of reliability for a three item scale (1, 7 and 8) was considered acceptable if the size of the scale and the homogeneity of respondents were taken into account. Factor analysis of the four items confirmed the decision to delete item 6 from the scale. Items 1, 7 and 8 loaded heavily on factor one (.563 to .763), with this factor accounting for 56.8 per cent of common (explained) variance and 34.0 per cent of total variance (see table 3.7). These items had relatively high communalities (.415 to .658) which indicate a reasonable level of reliability.

The leadership scale accordingly consisted of items 1, 7 and 8 and hence is identical to the questions used by Marchington and Armstrong to locate stewards on the representative/delegate activity (see table 3.3). The rejection of item 6 — referring issues to other stewards — confirmed the view expressed by Marchington and Armstrong that it is difficult to predict whether delegates or representatives are more likely to refer issues to more senior shop stewards.30 As with the orientation to unionism scale, the leadership scale was constructed by the addition of three items (1, 7 and 8) weighted by the factor loadings given in table 3.7. From the survey results scores ranged between 2.55 and 9.95 with a mean of 6.38 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Shop stewards with scores below the mean were deemed to be low on leadership whilst those above the mean high on leadership. Thus, shop stewards will be considered to have adopted a leadership role if they not only make decisions on behalf of their members, but influence the agenda by

Table 3.6

Distribution of Responses to Leadership Scale Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refers to item numbers given in table 3.3

Table 3.7

Factor Analysis of Items Making Up Leadership Scale (Varimax Rotation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>-.313</td>
<td>.415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Total Variance 34.0 25.9
% Common Variance 56.8 43.2
Eigenvalue 1.358 1.038

* Refers to item numbers given in table 3.3
initiating issues and instilling organisational priorities by amending
and sometimes squashing issues they feel are inappropriate or
unwinnable.\textsuperscript{31} Unlike those stewards low on leadership these stewards
are not merely a 'mouthpiece' for the workgroup.

\textit{Militancy Scale}

The concept of militancy has been defined in a variety of ways.
Marsh and Evans referred to a range of activities designed to "... bring
pressure on employers" whilst Griffin preferred to limit the concept of
militancy to "... any collective action which prevents, hinders or
delays the normal flow of production."\textsuperscript{32} This latter definition has the
effect of excluding action such as demonstrations, protests and other
social action that do not, of themselves, affect the employer
directly. Both the definitions rely on actual behaviour to construct a
measure of militancy and, accordingly, disregard a potential, on the
part of the employees, to engage in industrial action under certain
circumstances. In this study, this broader approach will be adopted and
the degree of militancy will be measured by asking stewards whether they
felt workers would be justified in withdrawing their labour or using
other forms of industrial action. In particular, stewards were asked to
relate this to improving wages and conditions, the breaking of
agreements by management, the speeding up of the negotiating process,
the prevention of unfair dismissals and to demonstrate the seriousness

\textsuperscript{31} This is similar to the Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel study where
the representative exercised power at a number of levels. See Batstone
et al., \textit{Shop Stewards in Action}, p.35.

\textsuperscript{32} A.I. Marsh and E.O. Evans, \textit{The Dictionary of Industrial Relations}
(Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), p.xii.
of an issue to the Arbitration Commission. By defining militancy in this way it becomes an attitudinal concept rather than a measure of actual behaviour.

Table 3.8 provides a distribution of responses to each of the five items. With the possible exception of item 5, items were poorly spread over the range of responses, although the reliability of the five items (the alpha co-efficient) was .7427. This coefficient would only be increased marginally by the deletion of item 5 (.7473). Factor analysis of the five items suggested the need to delete item 5 from the scale. Items 1 to 4 loaded heavily on factor one (.610 to .839) with this factor accounting for 77.6 per cent of common variance and 51.6 per cent of total variance (see table 3.9). These items had relatively high communalities (.582 to .704) which tend to confirm their reliability. It is clear from table 3.9 that item 5, whilst a reliable item, is actually measuring something other than militancy. Thus, the militancy index will only consist of items 1 to 4, although given the poor spread of responses to these items it is to be expected that scores will cluster around the more militant end of the scale. The scale is hence a measure of more or less militant attitudes.

The scale was constructed by the addition of the four items weighted by their factor loadings given in table 3.9. Scores ranged between 2.79 and 10.74 with a mean of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 1.55. The lower the score the more militant the attitude of the shop steward. Stewards who scored below the mean would be classified as militant, whilst those above considered non-militant. In this context, militant shop stewards are likely to strongly agree that workers are justified in withdrawing their labour or using other forms of industrial action to achieve their objectives. Non-militant stewards on the other
hand whilst generally accepting the legitimacy of these actions are less willing to sanction such actions.

Table 3.8
Distribution of Responses to Militancy Scale Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refers to items listed in Question 34 of the Questionnaire (See Appendix A).

Table 3.9
Factor Analysis of Items Making Up Militancy Scale (Varimax Rotation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No*</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Communalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.709</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>.582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>-.020</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.926</td>
<td>.875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % Total Variance | 51.6 | 14.9 |
| % Common Variance| 77.6 | 22.4 |
| Eigenvalue       | 2.582| 0.747|

* Refers to items listed in Question 34 of the Questionnaire (see Appendix A)
Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research procedures adopted in this thesis. It was argued that the nature of the research problem, the understanding of the internal dynamics of steward behaviour, determined the need to study a group of stewards in the one industry, the one enterprise and the one location. Stewards employed in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV were considered ideal for this purpose. Data collection methods, which utilized a variety of techniques, were then outlined. The emphasis was, however, placed on a questionnaire survey of shop stewards. The high response rate to the questionnaire allowed for considerable confidence to be placed in the representative nature of the results.

The method of computer analysis was also outlined and the rationale for a variety of statistical tests, used later in the thesis, was provided. The chapter concluded by outlining the development of the scales used throughout the thesis, namely the orientation to unionism, leadership and militancy scales. Each scale was developed on the basis of each item primarily measuring the construct under consideration with each item being weighted according to their contribution to that construct.
PART TWO

THE LATROBE VALLEY SHOP STEWARDS
CHAPTER FOUR

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE LATROBE VALLEY

This study focuses on internal workplace factors in explaining the role and behaviour of shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley operations of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. However, as noted in chapter 2, a number of structural and institutional factors may interact with these internal factors in such a way as to influence the behaviour of stewards in general and the various role types in particular. The major aim of this chapter is, therefore, to locate the environmental context within which the stewards were operating at the time of the research. It will be argued in this chapter that a number of factors have been instrumental in shaping the industrial relations environment of the Latrobe Valley. These include the policies and actions of the Victorian Government, the approach adopted to dispute resolution by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, the domination by a single employer, the strategic nature of the power industry, the relatively isolated nature of the community, the social background of the population and the structure of the local trade union movement.

The chapter is broken into three sections. The first section outlines the economic, social and political contexts of the coal winning and power generation industry in the Latrobe Valley. Section two examines the major actors in the industrial relations arena, whilst the final section discusses the level and forms of industrial action and the methods of dispute resolution.
The Economic, Social and Political Contexts

The Latrobe Valley is situated in the south-east of Victoria. It is a highly industrialised region and presently is the source of some 85 per cent of Victoria's electricity production. The Valley was a rural area devoted to dairy and grazing interests until the commencement of the Yallourn Power Station and open cut mine in 1921.\(^1\) In 1937, the Maryvale Paper Mill commenced operations. Agriculture still accounts for some 60 per cent of land use, but its primary influence on the area has gone. Power generation and paper manufacture are the two major industries in the region.

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) employs approximately 9,000 people in the Latrobe Valley and the Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM) some 1,100 people; together, these organisations account directly for one third of the Valley's employment and employ in excess of 40 per cent of all male workers, although only about 5 per cent of all female workers. Other smaller, resource-based industries include a char manufacturing plant, a coal to oil conversion plant and various agricultural industries, including dairy cooperatives, timber mills and abattoirs.

In the manufacturing sector there are a number of clothing, textiles, footwear and electrical companies. The region is also serviced by a number of local industries - bread, soft drink, printing, bricks, cement, furniture and joinery works, metal fabrication and earth moving. These last two industries, together with the mainstream

---

1. Coal had been mined in the region since the late eighteen hundreds by the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company. The mine was closed in 1899 due to fire and was reopened for a short period during World War I. Commercial power production began at Yallourn in June 1924.
construction industry, are primarily dependent upon SECV projects. In almost all cases the major organisations, including the SECV, are owned and/or controlled by interests outside the Latrobe Valley. As a consequence, many major policy and management decisions are made elsewhere, giving rise to the concern that the social and economic needs of the residents of the Valley are often subjugated to the needs of distant organisations.

The population of the Latrobe Valley is approximately 83,000 with more than half residing in three towns, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.\(^2\) These towns are the centres for the supportive industries to the SECV and together with several smaller towns service the surrounding agricultural and forestry activities. The population is similar to that of Victoria as a whole in most respects. Compared to state averages, however, the Latrobe Valley population has a higher proportion of teenage and young children, fewer residents over 65 years of age and a lower proportion of residents born overseas. The number of single males resident in the region is also higher than the state norm. Over 68 percent of the workforce is male,\(^3\) with the greatest employment opportunities existing in the manual, trade and technical occupations. Fewer opportunities exist in the clerical and sales categories thus limiting opportunities in many traditional female employment areas.

Two of these differences require further comment. The above-average proportion of young, male workers is attributable largely to


\(^3\) This brief profile of the residents of the Latrobe Valley was compiled from the ABS, Census of Population and Housing, Canberra, 1981. The following municipalities were included: Traralgon Shire, Traralgon City, Morwell Shire, Moe City and the Shire of Narracan.
construction activity; the composition of the SECV workforce is quite different, reflecting a more even age distribution. The number of residents born overseas does have, however, some importance to this study. In 1961 some 25.0 per cent of residents in the Latrobe Valley had been born overseas.  

This figure was above the state average and indicates a primary source of labour for the SECV was newly arrived migrants.  

However, by 1981, the percentage of overseas born residents had fallen below the state average: 18.6 per cent compared to 22.8 per cent.  

This, in part, reflects the lack of employment opportunities in the Latrobe Valley and, in part, a policy of hiring children of employees before seeking recruits elsewhere.

One further aspect of importance to this study is the general stability of the SECV workforce. In 1981, some 66.5 per cent of the population had resided in the Valley for 5 or more years. This figure is marginally higher than the 64.6 per cent of Victorians who resided in the same locality during the same period. In terms of employment, in 1975 it was estimated that some 91 per cent of all SECV employees had been with the SECV for at least the previous three years. APM had a figure of 69 per cent for the same period. The stability of the SECV workforce coupled with higher than average numbers of migrants who


5. For an interesting study of the social consequences of this immigration see: J. Zubrzycki, Settlers of the Latrobe Valley (Canberra: The Australian National University; 1964).


7. Ibid.

arrived primarily in the 1950s and who worked to establish themselves in a new country has led to a tradition of high levels of solidarity and community involvement.

The Latrobe Valley has witnessed a series of developments in the power industry over the past sixty years and with each successive project the population increased dramatically, placing considerable pressure on housing, education, transport, medical and welfare services.\(^9\) This pressure has contributed significantly to the Latrobe Valley residents adopting a 'them and us' mentality in terms of their dealings with Melbourne-based bureaucracies. The attitude is reinforced in times of industrial disputation which tend to unite the Valley's residents. This was clearly demonstrated during the lengthy 1977 SECV Maintenance Workers' Strike.\(^10\) A study of this dispute noted:

(i) the general community support for the action of the strikers;
(ii) that members of the community assisted one another through their hardships; and
(iii) that business people were sympathetic to people affected by the strike and to those on strike.\(^11\)

The support given to the maintenance workers came from all sections of the community: unionists, farmers, business people, storekeepers and church leaders. In one sense, the dispute developed into a struggle

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9. For example, in the period 1947-1954, the development period for the Morwell Project, the population of the Latrobe Valley increased by 77.8 per cent.


between the Latrobe Valley community and Melbourne-based interests. Unlike strike action in metropolitan areas, which, in general, tends to divide the community, in the Latrobe Valley industrial action has had, over time, a unifying affect.

This unity, however, is not solely attributable to industrial action that occurred from time to time. Other important factors include: the isolation of the Valley, particularly in terms of decision making; the perceived years of neglect by successive Melbourne-based state governments; the dominance of the SECV in all aspects of the resident's life; the high rate of unionisation and the high level of involvement in community activities.  

The Victorian Government and its departments have dominated decision making in respect to regional development in the Latrobe Valley, although mechanisms have been set up which allow for consultation to take place. In 1985 two formal avenues existed. The Latrobe Valley Ministerial Committee's social planning committee, comprised of representatives from Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley, acts as an advisor on social development. The Latrobe Regional Commission, established in 1984, is made up of representatives from local councils, statutory authorities, unions (in 1985 an AMWU steward), employers (including an SECV representative), and the community. It is charged with the responsibility for the development of a regional strategy plan consistent with government policy and an infrastructure co-ordination plan for prescribed projects.


The Parties

Trade Unions

The commencement of the SECV operations at Yallourn in 1921 and the large influx of labour provided the impetus for trade union organisation in the region. Unions such as the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths' Society, the Australian Society of Engineers and the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association established local branches. The Yallourn and District Trades and Labour Council (the forerunner of the present-day Gippsland Trades and Labour Council) was formed in 1928 as an offshoot of the Wonthaggi Trades and Labour Council. Estimates of 96 per cent union density in the SECV, 72 per cent in the APM, 70 per cent in textiles and 67 per cent in local government represent high levels of penetration, even by Australian standards. A substantial number of migrants from both English and non-English speaking backgrounds have strongly identified with the local union movement.

Within the SECV's Latrobe Valley operations twenty-four unions represent employees. These include the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) with some 1,500 members; the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA), 2,300 members; the Municipal Officers' Association - SECV Branch (MOA), 2,100 members; the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), 700 members; and the Federated Ironworkers' Association


15. Migrants born in the United Kingdom have about the same unionisation rate as Australian born residents, migrants from other countries have a considerably higher rate of trade union membership (Ibid., p.17).

16. For complete details see table 4.1.
(FIA), 800 members. The other major unions with significant numbers
employed by the SECV in the Valley are the Federated Storeman and
Packers' Union (FSPU), the Australian Society of Engineers (ASE), the
Association of Professional Engineers of Australia (APEA) and the
Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers (AIMPE). With the
exception of the APEA and the FSPU, all these unions maintain offices in
the Latrobe Valley and five employ local full-time organisers.¹⁷

Of the twenty-four unions involved in the SECV operations eight
have local branches with FEDFA being broken into three sub-branches,
Yallourn, Morwell (including Loy Yang) and 'Staff'. In each case the
membership of the local branch committee is dominated by shop stewards
employed in the SECV.¹⁸ Twenty of the twenty-four unions have formally
designated shop stewards. In April 1985 a total of 346 shop stewards
were employed within the SECV. Some 87 per cent of these stewards were
members of seven unions, namely the MOA, FEDFA, the APEA, the FIA, the
AMWU, the ETU and AIMPE. Of these, the MOA and FEDFA accounted for 57
per cent of all shop stewards. The ratio of shop stewards to union
members varies considerably between unions but the overall average is
one shop steward for every twenty-five members (See table 4.1). The
official functions of the shop steward also varies considerably between
unions and range from being a distributor of union material to active
negotiators with management on a range of issues. The stewards do not,
however, see themselves as subservient to state union officials and
often take action independent of the wishes of the central union.

¹⁷. AIMPE, as from September 1985, employed a part-time organiser
responsible for members in the Latrobe Valley.

¹⁸. The MOA, AIMPE and FEDFA sub-branches are exclusively for SECV
employed members.
Table 4.1
Unions and Shop Stewards in the Latrobe Valley
SECV Operations, April 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Number of Shop Stewards</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Number of Members per Shop Steward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEDFA</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOA</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETU</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMWU</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEA</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMPE</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWU</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSPU</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLF</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWU</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWIU</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMWU</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOBS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLAIEU</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPDUA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGEU</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VBEF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCJA</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASDTE</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATWU</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPS</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>346</strong></td>
<td><strong>8734</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Union documents and interviews with union officials.

* Some of these data are estimates only as not all union records broke down membership by employer.

The role of the shop stewards within the SECV is firmly established. Their participation in a variety of activities, for
example, working parties\textsuperscript{19}, further consolidates their position. Shop stewards are entitled under most awards to paid leave to undertake trade union training. This has been expanded in recent years to provide training for and allow input into the SECV industrial democracy project. Some of the more senior shop stewards have considerable demands placed on them, in the form of committees, consultation mechanisms and dispute procedures, that they are virtually paid, full-time shop stewards.

As at April 1985 some fifteen of the twenty-four unions were affiliated with the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council (G TLC). Notable exceptions were the MOA, AIMPE and the APEA, although the MOA subsequently affiliated in September of that year. The GTLC provides a local focus for unions. It is governed by a Council which meets once a month and an Executive Committee which meets bi-monthly. It is financed through affiliation fees and all positions are honorary. The GTLC lost almost half of the affiliated unions during the 1955 split in the labour movement. Hampered by this narrow affiliate base and the consequent shortage of funds, the Council was for many years restricted to providing a forum for the SECV maintenance work unions. In recent years there has been a number of re-affiliations\textsuperscript{20} and the emergence of a stronger central organisation. The Council has moved towards the pre-1955 position of a co-ordination role for inter-union industrial action within the SECV and within the wider Latrobe Valley community. The


\textsuperscript{20} In particular PEDFA, the FIA and the Pulp and Paper Workers’ Federation of Australia.
vehicle for this co-ordination role within the SECV, given the
broadening of the affiliation base of the GTLC, was achieved by
establishing the SECV sub-committee. This committee, made up of the
SECV shop stewards of affiliated unions, meets monthly to discuss
industry specific problems and forwards recommendations to the Council
of the GTLC on the most appropriate courses of action.

Employers

The range of industries operating in the region was referred to
earlier in this chapter. The SECV is the dominant employer in the
Latrobe Valley and the impact of actions at the SECV on industrial
relations in the region is equally significant. Two distinct aspects of
SECV operations exist within the Latrobe Valley: power generation and
construction. In the latter case the SECV contracts its major projects
out to private enterprise. Because of the size and continuing nature of
the SECV's capital works projects in the Valley, the various
construction contractors constitute what is virtually a self-contained
industry.

The SECV's coal winning and power generation operations are located
in three main areas of the Latrobe Valley. The Yallourn undertaking
includes an open cut mine,21 several older and smaller power stations
and the recently completed Yallourn W Power Station that has a capacity
of 1,450 megawatts. With over sixty years of continuous operations at
Yallourn, unions are well entrenched and the shop steward network well
developed. The Morwell operations also include an open cut mine, the
small Morwell Power Station and the 1,600 megawatt Hazelwood Power

21. Excluding the small Yallourn North Extension mine.
Station. A briquette factory, producing blocks of compressed dry coal, is located adjacent to the Morwell Power Station. The briquettes are used in firing up several of the power stations and are sold to local industry, for example, the char plant and cement works, and the general public. The SECV’s regional headquarters is also located within the Morwell complex. The third area of the SECV’s operations is Loy Yang which includes a recently commenced open cut mine and a partially completed, although operational, power station of 2,000 megawatts (Loy Yang A). The Victorian Government, in August 1985, gave approval to commence work on Loy Yang B, a second 2,000 megawatt power station. Although industrial relations at Loy Yang are similar in style to Yallourn and Morwell, shop stewards have yet to develop strong networks. The size and complexity of the Loy Yang operations has, at various times, led to demands for special allowances which, if granted on a permanent basis, would have the potential to create divisions with the Yallourn and Morwell workforce. This may, however, strengthen the Loy Yang shop stewards’ organisation.

The Latrobe Valley operations come under the responsibility of the Deputy Chief General Manager\(^{22}\) who has overall responsibility for design and construction, production, supply and transmission. The majority of staff in the Latrobe Valley are employed in the production group which is broken into the Yallourn, Morwell and Loy Yang production centres, and the engineering services, production services and area administration departments. Terms and conditions of employment in the SECV’s Latrobe Valley operations, at the time of the survey, were

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22. The organisation of the SECV is broken into four functional areas: those of Operations, headed by the Deputy Chief General Manager, Corporate Planning, Finance and Administration, and Human Resources.
determined by some ten federal and six state awards. The major awards for blue-collar employees are the Metal Industry (SECV) Award and the Engine Drivers and Firemen's (SECV) Award whilst for white-collar employees the Municipal Officers' Association (SECV) Award dominates. These three awards are federally determined and cover some 88.2 percent of all SECV employees in the Latrobe Valley. Industrial relations are the responsibility of the line manager, although managers are assisted by industrial relations officers who report through a principal industrial relations officer to the Manager – Area Administration. On the shop-floor it is the responsibility of supervisors to solve their industrial relations problems (in conjunction with shop stewards) and it is not until a full-time union official is involved that an industrial relations officer is brought in to deal with a matter. Industrial relations outside of the Latrobe Valley comes under the authority of the Director, Human Resources. Accordingly within the SECV, industrial relations is not vested in any one section, with the consequence that co-ordination of industrial relations activities is made more difficult.

The other major employers in the Latrobe Valley are the APM, Ericssons, and the Yarragon Textile Mills. With the exception of the APM the industrial relations aspects interact little with the SECV. Traditionally, the APM workers had received higher wages than SECV personnel although in recent years the position has reversed. Unionisation is high within the APM with the production employees belonging to the Pulp and Paper Workers' Federation of Australia (PPWFA). Maintenance employees belong to the AMWU, FEDFA, the ETU, the FIA, the FSPU and a variety of building unions. The operations of the APM are located at one plant, the Maryvale Mill, and all blue-collar employees operate under the Pulp and Paper Industry Agreement. All
unions are signatories to this agreement which is negotiated by the local unions (shop stewards) and the APM management every three years. This is in direct contrast to the SECV which currently operates under some sixteen awards. Staff personnel at APM are not members of a union. The adoption of different procedures for the setting of terms and conditions of employment has meant that little interaction has occurred between shop stewards at the APM and the SECV.

Five employer associations are represented in the Latrobe Valley. The Metal Trades Industry Association had, in 1985, a full-time site officer at the Loy Yang power station construction site as did the Master Builders’ Association (MBA). In addition, the MBA, the Victorian Employers’ Federation, the Australian Chamber of Manufactures and the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce have regional offices to service Latrobe Valley members. However, in many instances industrial relations matters are dealt with by specialists from Melbourne.

The Victorian Government

The SECV, as a statutory authority, is directly influenced by and responsible to the Victorian Government. In industrial relations matters the Victorian Government’s Industrial Relations Task Force, which includes a number of Ministers and reports directly to State Cabinet, plays a key role. Industrial liaison officers carry out the day-to-day work of the Task Force. Although the Task Force was established in 1982 by the then newly-elected Labor Government, government involvement in SECV industrial relations has a far longer history. The Office of Industrial Relations Co-ordination (Public Employing Authorities) had been formally established in 1972, after a quarter of a century of pervasive but less formalised co-ordination.
The Office did not have a formal constitution, but its functions, duties and responsibilities have been clearly spelt out. They included the provision of an information centre, a discussion forum and a source of advice, each geared "... as far as practicable to relieve the Government from the stress of industrial action ... [and] ... to avoid the creation of unjustifiable anomalies in industrial conditions."\(^{23}\) It appears that the Task Force has extended the role of the Office of Industrial Relations Co-ordination. It has developed as a centre of power and authority, playing a major role in formulating policy and tactics in any substantial dispute involving state departments and instrumentalities, including the SECV.

**Industrial Action and Dispute Resolution**

**Industrial Action**

Industrial action can take a variety of forms. As noted by Kerr it not only includes strikes, but also may take the form of "... peaceful bargaining and grievance handling, of boycotts, of political action, of restriction of output, of sabotage, of absenteeism, or of personnel turnover."\(^{24}\) The most conspicuous of these actions, particularly in the case of the Victorian power industry, is the strike as this has wide ranging effects on industry and the general public throughout the

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state.\textsuperscript{25} The more frequent forms of industrial action, however, are the bans on overtime, on specific tasks and on the issue of permits; work to rule; and stop work meetings.\textsuperscript{26}

An examination of dispute statistics for the SECV provides an indication of patterns of industrial conflict in the Latrobe Valley.\textsuperscript{27} Table 4.2 gives the number of days lost due to industrial disputes for the period 1973–1974 to 1985–1986. Three significant points emerge from these data. First, in four of the thirteen years a considerable number of working days were lost due to events originating outside the SECV. These included the national Medibank strike (1976), a campaign for a 35-hour week (1977), arrests of unionists in Western Australia (1979), and opposition to amendments to the Victorian Workers' Compensation Act (1980). These disputes, in the main, were directed by state union officials and the Latrobe Valley shop stewards played only a marginal role in the conduct of the strike. Second, in most years the majority of days lost can be attributed to one or two major industrial disputes. Again this is most clearly illustrated in 1977–1978 where 121,988 of the 123,438 days lost resulted from the Maintenance Workers' strike. Third, since the 1977 Maintenance Workers' strike the SECV has experienced a period of relative industrial stability. Industrial disputation still remains, but the manifestations of conflict have


\textsuperscript{26} Information provided by shop stewards and SECV industrial relations officers.

\textsuperscript{27} These figures will include some disputes that occurred in SECV operations outside of the Latrobe Valley.
Table 4.2

Working Days Lost Due to Industrial Disputation in the SECV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lost Days</th>
<th>Lost Days Per Employee</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973-1974</td>
<td>21,855</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1975</td>
<td>48,375</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1976</td>
<td>18,750</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>17,700 days lost due to statewide action in support of Geelong Harbour Trust employees and a national Medibank strike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1977</td>
<td>24,545</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>12,875 days lost over claim for a 35-hour week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1978</td>
<td>123,438</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>121,988 days lost due to the 1977 Maintenance Workers' Strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-1979</td>
<td>14,966</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>8,258 days lost due to a national 24-hour stoppage over the arrest of unionists in Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1980</td>
<td>33,121</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>10,596 days lost due to statewide opposition to amendments to the Workers’ Compensation Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1981</td>
<td>3,883</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1982</td>
<td>10,820</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-1983</td>
<td>1,909</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1984</td>
<td>3,047</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-1985</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1986</td>
<td>2,249</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>815 days lost due to a strike over disciplinary action at Loy Yang open cut and a further 569 days were lost due to a national stoppage relating to the national wage case.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

shifted from the strike to alternate forms of action, for example, work bans, such as occurred in the 1984 FEDFA dispute over staff levels at the newly constructed Loy Yang A Power Station. These forms of action have proved effective in terms of benefits gained and the reduced cost to individual workers. The SECV has also recognised the impact of work bans and, in 1985, management included a reduction in days lost due to work bans as one of their performance objectives.²⁸

Dispute Resolution Processes

Prior to 1980 the SECV industrial relations policy, for the Latrobe Valley, was characterised by two key factors: a need for SECV policies to accommodate both direct and indirect forms of government intervention and the reference of disputes to the formal conciliation and arbitration system. Direct government involvement took the form of specific policy directives, for example, non-payment of over-awards and the introduction of the State Incremental Payment Scheme (SIPS), the enactment of special legislation such as the Vital State Projects Act, Government appearances at tribunal hearings and in some cases direct Ministerial handling of dispute negotiations.²⁹ Indirect government involvement centred around the Office of Industrial Relations Co-ordination and its


²⁹. SIPS is an over-award payment based on length of service and is negotiated from time to time by the Victorian Trades Hall Council and the Victorian Government for all StateInstrumentalities. The Vital State Projects Act, 1976 gives power to the Victorian Parliament to declare a project vital to the future of Victoria. Under this legislation it becomes unlawful for any organisation or person to boycott or induce other persons or organisations to boycott the project. It is possible for the body responsible for the project to recover the amount of the loss or damage by action against that person or organisation.
predecessors. A major function of the Office was to ensure that state instrumentalities did not make concessions to employees that could have repercussions on other instrumentalities. In effect, the authority of the SECV to negotiate directly with the power workers was weakened and in some cases removed.

The SECV industrial relations policy has historically relied on reference of disputes to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for arbitration. This ‘automatic referral’ strategy was partly a reflection of the then Liberal state government’s attitude to industrial relations; it was, however, strongly supported by central management, although opposed at the Latrobe Valley management level. Limited decentralisation of responsibility for action in localised dispute resolution occurred post-1977. Examples included the use of working parties and the development of industrial relations policies at the local level. The trend accelerated with the change from the ‘no-negotiation on key issues of principle’ rule to the ‘negotiation within limits’ approach, with the 37½-hour working week negotiations in 1980 being the first significant example of this attitudinal change by the government. A change also occurred in the role of the Office of Industrial Relations Co-ordination from a co-ordination function via promulgation of government policy position, either direct to authorities or in submissions to industrial tribunals, to a wider and more direct


role in the actual negotiations of the terms of settlement. This role has been maintained by the Industrial Relations Task Force.

This trend towards negotiations in the early 1980s was supported by members of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. During the period 1981-1986 Commissioner Brown assumed responsibility for disputes that arose in the Latrobe Valley power industry. His approach was to conduct the majority of 'hearings' on-site in the Valley. The impetus for this departure from the more usual Melbourne-based 'hearings' was the recognition of the strength of the Latrobe Valley stewards due to their strong shop-floor organisation and local leadership, and the strategic nature of the industry. By his new approach he enabled many of the stewards to play a direct role in the negotiations and increased the likelihood of the final decisions being accepted by the membership.32

The emphasis on direct negotiations, both inside and outside of the arbitration framework, has obviously meant an increased role for Latrobe Valley shop stewards. Apart from participating in a range of working parties, primarily examining problem areas, shop stewards are now engaged in negotiations concerning wages and working conditions. This latter responsibility was clearly illustrated in the role several senior shop stewards played in the attempt to establish a power industry

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agreement. Although not all unions are signatories to the agreement, the partial success of moving towards one agreement to cover all SECV employees in the Latrobe Valley depended significantly on the actions and attitudes of the shop stewards. The agreement, it is argued, will lead to a reduction in demarcation disputes and relativity problems that inevitably arise with changes to individual awards.

Conclusion

In this chapter it was argued that a number of factors had influenced the pattern of industrial relations in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV. Of particular importance has been the various policy decisions and actions of the Victorian government. The reliance for many years on a policy of formal reference to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and the tight control exercised by the office of Industrial Relations Co-ordination were consequences of governmental attitudes, but these in turn severely affected the industrial relationships at the local level. Other important influences on industrial relations in the Latrobe Valley included the approach adopted by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, the domination by a single employer, the strategic nature of the power industry, the relatively isolated nature of the community, the social background of the population, and the structure of the local union movement. These factors have inspired workers to be active and vocal in matters which affect their conditions of employment and the wider issues

33. Notable exceptions as at 1985 were FEDFA and the ETU. The failure of these unions to sign the agreement led to the Victorian Government abandoning, for the present, the concept of a 'power industry agreement' and adopting a broader, less specific 'power industry approach'.
associated with the quality of life. It should, however, be noted that whilst a consideration of these factors is necessary to an understanding of the level of shop steward activity in the Latrobe Valley, they do not, of themselves, explain variations in behaviour of shop stewards within the SECV. In this latter case emphasis will need to be placed on factors internal to the SECV and the shop stewards. This aspect was discussed in chapter 2 and will be explored in depth in subsequent chapters.
CHAPTER FIVE

SHOP STEWARDS: CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES

This chapter provides a range of data on shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley. Specifically, it focuses on the emergence of shop stewards — how and why they come to be stewards; on their personal characteristics such as age, nationality, education, political affiliation, class background and income; on their attitudes to industrial action and their satisfaction in the stewards' role; and on their involvement with the broader community. The data is also presented in disaggregated form by type of union (blue/white-collar) and place of work (Yallourn, Morwell and Loy Yang). This is done in the belief (based on interview evidence) that these variables will prove to be major factors in explaining shop steward behaviour. Further, where appropriate, comparisons are also made with other Australian studies and the major studies conducted in the U.K.

1. The distinction between blue and white-collar unions is problematic. The definitional problems associated with this distinction is covered by E. Davis, Democracy in Australian Unions (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp.15-18. Further, with the incorporation of white-collar unions into the ACTU in recent years and the growing militancy of white-collar unions many of the traditional differences have diminished. Nevertheless, with respect to the white-collar unions in the Latrobe Valley, three differences are still apparent. First, the three white-collar unions were not, at the time of the survey, affiliated with the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council. Second, white-collar union members are generally under a different payment and superannuation system than their blue-collar counterparts, although within some blue-collar unions similar variations exist. Third, the local leadership of the white-collar unions are perceived (by themselves and others) as being more conservative than their blue-collar counterparts.
The Emergence of Shop Stewards

From the survey it was found that shop stewards had joined their particular union for one of three major reasons (see table 5.1). First, some 37.1 per cent had joined because they thought it was appropriate in terms of their trade or profession. This was particularly the case with those stewards working at Loy Yang of whom 54.8 per cent claimed this was their reason for joining a union. Second, within the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV, union membership is essentially compulsory and 31.7 per cent felt they were compelled, initially at least, to join a union. This feeling was more prevalent amongst Morwell stewards (38.6 per cent). Third, 23.4 per cent of respondents joined their union because of a belief in the principles of unionism. Yallourn stewards were higher on this dimension (29.2 per cent) which in part reflects the long standing traditions of unionism at that centre.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in union principles</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions performance &amp; policies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed shop</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate for my trade/profession</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

White-collar stewards were also more likely to join their union due to union principles (28.9 per cent). When unions were formed to cover
'staff', membership remained voluntary for many years. The decision to join was, therefore, based on other factors such as a belief in the principles of unionism. In recent years this has changed considerably and trade union membership is compulsory for all employees irrespective of the staff/wages dichotomy. This is born out by the results of the survey where 39.5 per cent of white-collar stewards over the age of 40 years had joined their union on the basis of trade union principles, compared to 18.4 per cent of white-collar stewards under 40 years of age.

Once having joined the union, the decision to seek or accept union office becomes more problematic. In the main stewards took on office for one of four reasons: general interest in matters affecting workers (32.8 per cent), belief in union principles (16.2 per cent), no-one else willing to accept the position (14.7 per cent) and general dissatisfaction with the way matters were being handled (13.2 per cent). Similar results were found by McBeath and Charleston. Moore found that unionists were primarily motivated to become a shop steward due to their dissatisfaction with the existing leadership or because no-one else was willing to do the job. Stewards may, of course, accept office for a combination of reasons. For example, several stewards

2. Staff refers to those employees who until recently had superior working conditions and were paid on a fortnightly basis. Staff would join a white-collar union. Wages personnel would join the appropriate blue-collar union. Membership is compulsory in that all unions operate a closed shop policy. This policy has the support of SECV management.


defined union principles in terms of helping their fellow worker and hence saw little conflict with accepting office on the basis of general interest in matters affecting workers. In a sense, the latter was seen as the practical outcome of the former. General interest in matters affecting workers was the major reason given by both blue and white-collar stewards and stewards from each of the work centres. In the case of white-collar stewards this accounted for nearly half the stewards (44.6 per cent). In contrast, general interest in matters affecting workers was only cited by 24.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards. Of nearly equal importance to this group was a belief in union principles (19.0 per cent), dissatisfaction with the way matters were handled (17.4 per cent) and no-one else willing to take on the position (16.5 per cent). Results are presented in table 5.2 and proved to be statistically significant ($x^2 = 13.49$, df=5, $p = .019$).

The majority of respondents (76.0 per cent) had taken office upon the resignation or defeat of the incumbent. This was, however, less likely to be the situation with white-collar stewards (65.5 per cent) and stewards working at Loy Yang (60.0 per cent). This latter result is to be expected as the Loy Yang power station and open cut mine has only been operating with SECV employees since 1983. As successive stages of Loy Yang become operational more steward positions will be created. The major reasons for incumbents relinquishing their position included changing sections (21.0 per cent), leaving the SECV (18.5 per cent), wanting a break (17.2 per cent) and being promoted (13.4 per cent). Only 7.0 per cent of the respondents defeated the incumbent at an election. One other way the membership can remove a shop steward is via

5. This information is based on the present stewards' perception of why the previous steward relinquished his position.
a vote of no-confidence. This occurred in at least three cases (1.5 per cent). In two further cases the membership had expressed their dissatisfaction in a less formal way. In sum, the membership by their actions removed 9.5 per cent of all previous incumbents, a relatively insignificant figure.

Table 5.2
Reasons for Becoming a Steward by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General interest in matters affecting the union and workers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in union principles</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-one else</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with the way matters were handled</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from workers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

White-collar stewards were more likely to give up their positions due to changing sections (30.6 per cent) or upon leaving the SECV (29.0 per cent). In contrast their blue-collar counterparts more frequently resigned because they had gained promotion (14.7 per cent) or were dissatisfied in their role as a steward (11.6 per cent). Those stewards who resigned upon accepting a promotion may re-emerge later as a steward in their new union. This is particularly the case with those stewards in the MOA. Loy Yang stewards were also more likely to relinquish office due to changing sections (33.3 per cent) or merely wanting a break (22.2 per cent).
The majority of stewards (73.9 per cent) had gained office without having to stand for election. Most of this group, some 63.3 per cent (46.8 per cent of all respondents), had gained office when the previous incumbent resigned. Of the 26.1 per cent that faced an initial election only 18.8 per cent (4.9 per cent of all respondents) had stood against the incumbent. The remaining cases were where the previous steward had resigned (64.0 per cent) or a new position had been created and a number of potential candidates had sought office (17.2 per cent). This is similar to the situation in the United Kingdom, reported by McCarthy and Parker, where only 29.0 per cent of stewards had gained office by an election, and similarly, the majority had gained office upon the resignation of the incumbent.\(^6\) In contrast, Charleston found that nearly half of the stewards he surveyed (49.9 per cent) had gained office by an election and in the majority of cases this was after the previous steward had resigned (63.9 per cent).\(^7\)

Blue-collar stewards were more likely to have faced an initial election as were stewards based at the Yallourn production centre. In the former case, although only statistically significant at the .10 level \(x^2 = 3.40, \text{df}=1, p = 0.065\), it does point to differences in the methods of selecting stewards in blue-collar unions compared to white-collar unions. Full details are provided in table 5.3.

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7. Charleston, ‘Shop Stewards in Australia’, p.439. Note that these figures have been adjusted to allow for non-responses.
Table 5.3

Method of Assuming Shop Steward Office by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defeated previous steward</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contested election (incumbent resigned)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contested election (new position)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(incumbent resigned)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First shop steward in section</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed by union</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If stewards faced an initial election, this would normally take place in the particular shop or section (84.6 per cent) and usually by a show of hands (85.7 per cent). Blue-collar and Loy Yang stewards had a slightly higher percentage of colleagues elected at branch meetings, although these results were not statistically significant (see table 5.4). This reflects, in the case of blue-collar unions, the importance attached to branch meetings. At Loy Yang, where the steward organisation is still in its developmental stages, new positions are often created at the branch meeting and would probably also be filled, at least initially, at that meeting. Only in 14.3 per cent of the elections was a secret ballot conducted. This figure is considerably
lower than the 30.4 per cent reported by Charleston.\textsuperscript{8} White-collar stewards were more likely to have gained office via a secret ballot (20.8 per cent) than were blue-collar stewards (10.9 per cent). The vast majority of stewards at Loy Yang who faced an election had gained office upon a show of hands (95.5 per cent).

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop/section</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch meeting</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show of hands</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret ballot</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every three years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregularly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minority of stewards (30.0 per cent) were subject to regular re-election. This is in direct contrast to the findings of McBeath (50.0 per cent) and Charleston (62.6 per cent).\textsuperscript{9} A partial explanation of this difference is that those studies focused primarily on blue-collar stewards. In this study some 43.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards were

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p.440.

\textsuperscript{9} McBeath, 'The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations', p.127; Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia', p.443.
subject to regular re-elections compared to only 9.8 per cent for white-collar stewards. This difference proved statistically significant ($x^2=25.36$, df=1, $p=.000$). Yallourn stewards were also more likely to face regular re-elections (36.8 per cent) with Morwell stewards the least likely (25.0 per cent). The difference was not statistically significant. The Morwell figure, in part, reflects the higher number of white-collar stewards located at the Morwell centre.

For those stewards who faced regular re-elections ($N=73$), these were, in 54.8 per cent of the cases, held annually (see table 5.4). This is slightly lower than Charleston’s figure of 64.2 per cent, although this in turn is lower than for stewards at Loy Yang (75.0 per cent). This latter result is to be expected due to the instability of the Loy Yang workforce when contrasted to Yallourn or Morwell. Only 6.9 per cent of stewards had actually been opposed, a figure which is substantially less than the results of studies conducted by McBeath in Australia (between 13.0 to 20.0 per cent) and Clegg et al. and Goodman and Whittingham in the United Kingdom (23.0 per cent and 24.0 per cent respectively). Of the stewards that had been opposed only 25.0 per cent ($N=6$) were regularly opposed. This figure is slightly higher than the 15.0 per cent reported by McCarthy and Parker in the U.K. The small number in this group suggests the likelihood of a steward resigning office if faced with persistent challenges. Given the small


12. McCarthy and Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations, p.16.
number of stewards involved it is not useful to break down this group by union type or place of work.

**Characteristics of Shop Stewards**

The average age of the stewards was 39.15 years. This is similar to the findings of McBeath and Charleston (40.3 and 39.4 years respectively) but considerably lower than the average age of 45 years found by McCarthy and Parker in the U.K.  

Some 58.3 per cent of the stewards were under the age of 40 years which is similar to the overall percentage of all SECV employees being under the age of 40 (61.7 per cent).  

Within the steward body some significant differences in the age profile existed in terms of union type and work location. More than half the white-collar stewards (53.1 per cent) were over the age of 40 years compared to 31.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards ($x^2=12.28$, df=3, p=.007). Moreover, at Loy Yang 41.9 per cent of stewards were under 30 years of age compared to 23.6 per cent and 18.8 per cent at Yallourn and Morwell respectively ($x^2=11.86$, df=6, p=.065). This, in part, reflected the willingness of the younger employees to transfer to and/or accept promotion to Loy Yang.

Most of the stewards were born in Australia (72.9 per cent) with 16.9 per cent being born in the U.K. and Ireland. This latter figure is considerably higher than the 8.3 per cent of residents of the Latrobe


Valley who were born in the U.K. and Ireland although substantially lower than the 36.0 per cent and 34.6 per cent reported by McBeath and Dufty respectively. Charleston, in his nationwide survey, recorded a figure of 22.8 per cent. Overseas born stewards were more highly represented in white-collar unions (29.3 per cent compared to 25.6 per cent) although this difference was not statistically significant. When broken down by place of employment, overseas born stewards were, approximately, equally distributed between Yallourn and Loy Yang (22.2 per cent and 19.4 per cent) but significantly more highly represented at Morwell (35.3 per cent). This reflected, at least in part, post-war migration and the attraction to the newly arrived migrants of the then new, but developing Morwell project.

The education standards of stewards in the Latrobe Valley are considerably higher than reported by other studies. For example, whilst 68.9 per cent had completed studies beyond form 4 (Charleston 31.3 per cent and Dufty 50.6 per cent beyond form 3) some 49.0 per cent had continued their studies beyond secondary school. In contrast, Charleston found only 10.2 percent of the stewards had continued their studies beyond secondary education. As was to be expected stewards from white-collar unions had significantly higher levels of education


18. Ibid., p.421.


than their blue-collar counterparts ($x^2=37.74$, df=5, $p=.000$). For example, some 28.0 per cent of white-collar stewards had completed a tertiary level course compared to 5.6 per cent of blue-collar stewards. Details are presented in table 5.5. When broken down by place of employment, 29.0 per cent of Loy Yang stewards had completed a tertiary course compared to 8.9 per cent and 15.5 per cent of Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively.

Table 5.5
Shop Stewards’ Level of Education by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year ten or lower</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year eleven</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year twelve</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical certificate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Membership of political parties was not a common occurrence. Only 9.8 per cent of stewards reported such membership with some 7.3 per cent nominating the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Charleston found 27.5 per cent of his respondents belonged to a political party (24.1 per cent to the ALP). Only 3.7 per cent of white-collar stewards reported membership of a political party compared to 14.3 per cent of blue-collar stewards.

21. Ibid., p.415. As previously noted, however, Charleston's respondents were drawn from a sample of shop stewards undertaking a correspondence course in trade unionism. This, in itself, would tend to suggest a more active political interest.
unions. Interestingly, in terms of work location, Loy Yang had a higher representation on this variable (16.1 per cent) than Yallourn and Morwell (10.8 per cent and 6.3 per cent respectively). Some 12.9 per cent of Loy Yang stewards belonged to the ALP, although overall only 41.9 per cent of Loy Yang stewards would normally vote for the ALP. This is considerably lower than the overall average of 62.7 per cent of stewards indicating support for the ALP. This latter figure is similar to the actual poll results for the electoral district of Morwell in the Victorian state elections. In four of the five elections since 1976 the ALP has recorded in excess of 60.0 per cent of the primary vote.\textsuperscript{22} Blue-collar stewards were more likely to vote for the ALP (69.0 per cent compared to 53.8 per cent) and were less likely to be influenced by particular issues (20.4 per cent compared to 25.0 per cent of white-collar stewards). These differences did not prove to be statistically significant. Results are presented in table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Democratic Party</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National/Country Party</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinging voter</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{22} In 1985 this figure fell to 52.7 per cent, primarily due to the gains made by an independent candidate campaigning on a local issue.
The majority of stewards came from a 'working class' background with 63.1 per cent of stewards reporting their father held a manual job. This was only slightly more so for blue-collar stewards (65.0 per cent compared to 60.5 per cent of white-collar stewards) and for Yallourn stewards (69.4 per cent compared to 58.3 per cent and 58.1 per cent of Morwell and Loy Yang stewards respectively). Some 69.5 per cent of the stewards had fathers who were also union members with just under half playing an active role within the union (30.7 per cent of total sample). This is higher than that of Dufty's sample where 59.1 per cent of respondents had fathers who were union members; slightly more than half of those who were union members (26.1 per cent of total survey) were also active within their union. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to have a father who was a union member (73.6 per cent compared to 63.4 per cent of white-collar stewards), although the percentage of fathers' active in the union was slightly higher for white-collar stewards. Stewards from Yallourn were significantly more likely to have fathers who were union members (81.6 per cent compared to 61.9 per cent of Morwell stewards and 58.1 per cent of Loy Yang stewards – \( x^2 = 11.22, df=4, p=.024 \)), however, Loy Yang stewards whose fathers were union members were more likely to have been active in that union (36.8 per cent compared to just under 28 per cent for Yallourn and Morwell).

22. A further 9.9 per cent of respondents were unsure about their fathers' union activities.

The average income of the shop stewards was approximately $25,800. This is higher than the average total earnings of male employees throughout Australia which was $22,646 per annum as at the June quarter 1985. As was to be expected white-collar shop stewards had a significantly higher income than their blue-collar counterpart ($28,536 compared to $23,546) and Loy Yang stewards had higher incomes than their colleagues elsewhere. For example, some 58.1 per cent of Loy Yang stewards had incomes in excess of $30,000 compared to 23.9 per cent and 37.4 per cent of Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively. For most shop stewards this represented the total income available, although some 24.5 per cent of shop stewards had a second source of income in the form of their spouses' earnings.

The stability of the steward population is clearly evident from the statistics relating to length of residence in the Latrobe Valley, years of service with the SECV and length of union membership. The average shop steward had resided in the Latrobe Valley for slightly more than 26 years. Given the relatively low average age of the stewards (39.15 years), the time spent in the Latrobe Valley represents a significant proportion of their life. Little difference was displayed by blue-collar and white-collar stewards on this variable, although Loy Yang stewards tended to have lower lengths of residence. Given the age differential that exists between white and blue-collar stewards, it would have been expected that white-collar stewards would have had longer periods of residency. That they did not can be partially

25. This figure may be understated as respondents were asked to indicate ranges their income fell within. The top of the range, which included 18.7 per cent of respondents, was income over $33,000.

explained by their movement into the Latrobe Valley at an age when they are seeking employment (for example engineers) or wishing to gain experience and/or promotion before returning to Melbourne.

The average steward had worked for 15.89 years with the SECV and had been a member of their present union for just over 12 years. The discrepancy between these two figures is primarily accounted for by the movement of stewards between unions who have similar coverage (for example, AIMPE and the MOA) and the necessity to join a new union on promotion (for example, an AMWU member upon promotion to supervisor would normally join the MOA). It is of interest to note that in McBeath’s study 49.5 per cent of stewards had worked for their present employer for more than 5 years.27 The comparable figure for stewards in the Latrobe Valley was 84.0 per cent. Some differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards on these measures, with white-collar stewards having worked significantly longer with the SECV ($x^2=18.85$, df=2, p=.000) and having longer union membership than their blue-collar counterparts. This latter figure did not prove statistically significant. Similarly, Yallourn stewards had longer periods of employment with the SECV, whilst Loy Yang stewards had shorter periods of union membership. These figures were not statistically significant although some 53.3 per cent of Loy Yang stewards had been union members for less than 6 years compared to 34.4 per cent and 31.8 per cent of Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively.

The typical steward has occupied office for just over 5 years (5.29 years), although if allowance was made for periods of stewardship in

other unions this figure would certainly be higher. This is in contrast with figures of 1.67 years and 4.0 years in McBeath’s and Charleston’s studies respectively and reflects the stability in the SECV’s Latrobe Valley workforce in general. This result is slightly lower than the 6.5 years of service reported by Wanna for shop stewards in three unions in South Australia and the 6.0 years and 7.0 years reported by McCarthy and Parker and Clegg et al. in the U.K. Pedler, however, reported a figure of only 3.2 years length of stewardship despite the average length of union membership of 16 years. Interestingly, slightly more white-collar stewards had served for a period of 5 or more years than blue-collar stewards (34.1 per cent compared to 29.0 per cent). As was to be expected Loy Yang stewards had significantly less years as a shop steward with only 16.1 per cent having served for 5 or more years (the figures for Yallourn and Morwell stewards were 37.1 per cent and 29.8 per cent respectively).

The average size of a steward’s constituency was 38 members. This result is consistent with the finding of a Trade Union Training Authority survey that found there existed one job delegate for every 40

28. For example, a number of MOA stewards had held office in other unions before they obtained a ‘staff’ position and hence were required to join the MOA.


members. McBeath reported that each steward in his study represented only 23 members, a result similar to the average constituency of Latrobe Valley shop stewards when union data is employed (see chapter 4). In the main the difference between actual and perceived constituency size can be attributed to many senior stewards reporting the number of members they felt responsible for (for example, a whole workshop) rather than the size of their own constituency. In the U.K. constituency size varied considerably between 60 and 327 (McCarthy and Parker and Clegg et al. respectively). Brown, Ebsworth and Terry more recently found a median figure of 39 members to each shop steward. Blue-collar stewards had significantly larger constituencies than their white-collar counterparts ($x^2=15.78, df=2, p=.000$). For example, 44.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards reported responsibility for over 40 members in contrast to only 19.0 per cent of white-collar stewards. Loy Yang stewards reported smaller constituency sizes, with nearly half (46.7 per cent) reporting responsibility for less than 20 members. Given the state of the technology employed at Loy Yang with the corresponding smaller workforce, this result was not unexpected.

**Stewards’ Satisfaction and Attitudes to Industrial Action**

The substantial majority of stewards (77.8 per cent) appeared satisfied in their present job with the SECV, with white-collar stewards


33. McBeath, ‘The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations’, p.120.

34. McCarthy and Parker, *Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations*, p.15; Clegg et al., *Trade Union Officers*, p.150.

appearing more satisfied than blue-collar stewards. Yallourn stewards were less satisfied than other stewards (16.6 per cent compared to 7.1 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively for Morwell and Loy Yang stewards). Neither result, however, proved to be statistically significant. Similarly, over two-thirds of the stewards who responded to the questionnaire found the job of being a shop steward satisfying (68.2 per cent). Only 8.2 per cent found the job dissatisfying, although 23.6 per cent were undecided. This is similar to the findings of McBeath’s study where 72.9 per cent found stewardship satisfying.36 Slightly more blue-collar stewards were dissatisfied (9.6 per cent in contrast to 6.0 per cent for white-collar stewards) and a higher percentage of Morwell stewards were satisfied (73.0 per cent compared to 67.8 per cent and 54.8 per cent of Yallourn and Loy Yang stewards respectively). In both cases the differences were not statistically significant. Blue and white-collar stewards’ levels of satisfaction in their job are presented in table 5.7.

Table 5.7
Shop Stewards' Satisfaction by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 125 100.0 83 100.0

A complementary approach to assessing satisfaction in the role of shop steward is to ask stewards if they would seek a further term of office. Some 58.3 per cent of stewards indicated they would actively seek another term, 23.1 per cent would do so if pressed by members, fellow shop stewards or officials, 12.3 per cent would be reluctant and 11.3 per cent would definitely not accept another term. McBeath found only 37.8 per cent of his respondents would actively seek another term, although 51.3 per cent would reluctantly accept a further term as a shop steward if pressed. Responses were uniform across white and blue-collar stewards and, although no significant differences existed between stewards from different workplaces, Yallourn stewards were more likely to willingly accept another term (57.8 per cent in contrast to 50.0 per cent and 48.3 per cent of Morwell and Loy Yang stewards respectively).

In carrying out their duties, the majority of stewards (66.3 per cent) felt that they were, by acting as a shop steward, helping the SECV solve its problems and improve its efficiency. Stewardship was not seen, therefore, as dealing with the sectional interests of members only. This view was uniform across blue and white-collar stewards and stewards from each of the work centres. Slightly more than one-quarter of stewards reported they had been victimized by management for carrying out their stewardship functions (25.4 per cent), with the most common form being denied promotion (48.1 per cent). Stewards who had been victimized tended to be blue-collar stewards (32.0 per cent compared to 15.2 per cent of white-collar stewards) and were slightly more likely to work at Loy Yang. Those stewards who had experienced victimization tended to find the job of being a shop steward more satisfying and were

37. Ibid., p.135.
more likely to seek another term as a shop steward when their present term expired. These same stewards, however, claimed they found their employment with the SECV less satisfying. In short, management by punishing shop stewards for their activities tended to re-inforce, in the minds of stewards, the value of unionism whilst at the same time providing a climate which is less conducive to improving efficiency and performance. With the exception of the relationship between number of times victimized and lower job satisfaction ($r=.28, p=.000$) these relationships did not prove to be statistically significant.

To measure attitudes to industrial action, stewards were asked whether they believed that industrial action was justified in a number of circumstances. From these responses an index of militancy was developed and stewards, based on their responses, were classified as militant or non-militant.\(^{38}\) Overall, some 55.1 per cent of stewards strongly supported the use of industrial action to achieve improvements in wages and conditions, to force management to abide by agreements, to speed up negotiations and to prevent management from discharging a member unfairly. This support was not, however, uniform across all issues. For example, some 68.9 per cent of all stewards strongly supported the withdrawal of labour in the case of an unfair dismissal, whilst only 36.7 per cent of stewards strongly supported strike action over management delays. Results are presented in table 5.8. Blue-collar stewards were more militant than their white-collar counterparts although this result was significant only at the .10 level ($x^2=3.34, df=1, p=.068$). Blue-collar stewards were, however, significantly more likely to agree that workers were justified in withdrawing their labour

\(^{38}\) See chapter 3 for a discussion on the construction of the index.
in support of improved wages and conditions \( (x^2 = 13.01, \text{df}=4, p=.011) \) and to speed up negotiations \( (x^2=12.59, \text{df}=4, p=.014) \). Yallourn stewards were slightly more militant than Morwell and Loy Yang stewards, although this result was not statistically significant. No significant difference was evidenced on the individual issues when broken down by place of work.

### Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Support</th>
<th>Wages and Conditions %</th>
<th>Broken Agreements %</th>
<th>Speed Up Negotiations %</th>
<th>Unfair Dismissals %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stewards' Community Involvement

Four out of every five stewards (79.9 per cent) belonged to at least one community organisation. This is considerably higher than the general level of community involvement estimated by the Central Gippsland Social Survey. That survey found approximately 60 per cent of
the population were involved in community organisations.\textsuperscript{39} The involvement of a majority of shop stewards in community organisations is in sharp contrast to the situation in the United Kingdom. McCarthy and Parker, for example, found some 69.0 per cent of stewards surveyed did not belong to any community organisations.\textsuperscript{40} This comparison supports the contention advanced in chapter 4 that the Latrobe Valley is a relatively well integrated society. Some 34.8 per cent of stewards belonged to three or more organisations. In many cases these organisations were of a diverse nature. By way of illustration, one MOA steward was chairperson of a large community credit union, deputy chairperson of the community health centre and on the school council of both the primary and secondary schools. White-collar stewards were significantly more involved in the community than blue-collar stewards ($x^2=13.45$, df=4, $p=.009$). For example, 47.6 per cent of white-collar stewards belonged to three or more organisations in contrast to 26.3 per cent of the blue-collar stewards (see table 5.9). Although no significant differences between stewards was evident when classified by place of work several trends could be discerned. Loy Yang stewards had the highest level of community involvement (87.1 per cent belonged to at least one organisation) whilst Yallourn stewards had the lowest level (76.1 per cent). However, Yallourn stewards tended to belong to a multiplicity of organisations with 21.6 per cent belonging to four or

\textsuperscript{39} Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, \textit{Central Gippsland Social Survey} (Melbourne: Town and Country Planning Board, 1975), p.49. In total, the survey found 77.1 per cent of the population belonged to a variety of community groups. If allowance is made for overlapping membership this figure would drop considerably. Sixty per cent would seem a reasonable, although perhaps generous, estimate.

\textsuperscript{40} McCarthy and Parker, \textit{Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations}, p.14.
more organisations (15.5 per cent and 19.4 per cent of Morwell and Loy Yang stewards respectively).

Of those stewards who did belong to community organisations, 84.1 per cent attended meetings at least once a month. For nearly half of these stewards (42.9 per cent) attendance at three or more meetings every month was the norm. This latter group was more likely to be composed of white-collar stewards (44.6 per cent in contrast to 40.0 per cent of blue-collar stewards) and Yallourn and Loy Yang stewards (51.5 per cent and 44.4 per cent) compared to only 33.8 per cent of Morwell stewards. These results were not statistically significant. A substantial number of stewards actually held leadership positions within these organisations. Some 46.8 per cent of all stewards surveyed held at least one official position, with white-collar and Loy Yang stewards more likely to assume a leadership role. Once again these results were not statistically significant.

Table 5.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Organisations</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This chapter provided a profile on how unionists became shop stewards, their personal characteristics, their satisfaction in the stewards' role, their attitudes to industrial action and their level of community involvement. Comparisons made with the results of a number of Australian and U.K. studies tended to suggest that Latrobe Valley stewards are not unique in terms of their characteristics and attitudes. Significant differences in the profile were, however, found when broken down by type of union the steward belonged to and their place of employment.

In summary, the following characteristics describe shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley. Most stewards joined their union because they perceived it as appropriate to their trade or profession or because of a policy of compulsory unionism. Stewards sought office to help their fellow workers and in the majority of cases were appointed to the position. Most stewards were not subject to regular re-elections, although if they were, it would normally take place in the workshop by a simple show of hands.

Stewards in the Latrobe Valley are relatively young, predominantly of Australian origin and well educated. Membership of political parties is uncommon, although a majority are committed ALP voters. Stewards tended to come from working class backgrounds; their father was likely to have been a union member, although, only in a minority of cases would he have been active in the union. Average income was higher than the national average and stewards had lived in the Latrobe Valley, worked for the SECV and been a member of their union for a considerable period of time. The average length of service as a steward was in excess of 5 years, during which time the steward represented approximately 40
members. The majority of stewards appeared happy in their job and were interested in gaining promotion within the SECV.

Finally, most stewards found the job of a shop steward reasonably satisfying, although a smaller number would actually seek another term. Most stewards could be classified as militant, if militancy is defined as a belief in workers' rights to take industrial action in an attempt to improve working conditions or protect fellow members. A high level of community involvement was evidenced, and this extended not only to membership of community organisations but a willingness to attend meetings and accept office.
CHAPTER SIX
SHOP STEWARDS' ROLE DEFINITION

The previous chapter provided details of the characteristics of shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley. In particular, how unionists emerged as shop stewards, their personal characteristics and their attitudes to industrial action were examined. This chapter extends this analysis to a consideration of stewards’ orientation to unionism and the leadership style they adopt in relation to their stewardship duties. It will be recalled from chapter 2 that orientation to unionism referred to the degree to which stewards see themselves as part of the wider trade union movement and their belief in the principles of unity and collective action. The term leadership related to the degree to which stewards are prepared to take action independent of the membership.

This chapter has two aims. First, to use the results of the survey to locate stewards on these two dimensions and to consequently classify stewards in terms of the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2. Second, to investigate the various factors that may determine the adoption of a particular role.

Role Classification of Shop Stewards

Of the 209 shop stewards who responded to the survey some 7 had to be excluded from this aspect of the study as they had failed to respond to at least one of the six questions making up the two scales. Based on the scores gained on the orientation to unionism and leadership scales the remaining 202 shop stewards were able to be placed into one of four role types. The four types are given in table 6.1.
Table 6.1

Role Classification of Latrobe Valley Shop Stewards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Group Leader</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed Delegate</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delegates and leaders accounted for the majority of shop stewards (54.4 per cent), although statistically this did not prove significant. Unlike the studies of Batstone et al., and Marchington and Armstrong, the remaining two role types, the work group leader and the committed delegate, accounted for a significant number of stewards, 21.8 per cent and 23.8 per cent respectively. As a consequence, in this study, more attention will be given to understanding how work group leaders and committed delegates behave in the workplace; in the Batstone et al. study the small number of stewards who fell into the cowboy or nascent leader role (15.3 per cent, N=27) meant that the focus could legitimately be on leaders and populists.\(^1\) They did argue, however, that the concentration of populists and leaders need not be typical of all workplaces.\(^2\) Marchington and Armstrong found some 45 per cent (N=61) of stewards in their sample fell into the leader category, although this was partly due to the methods of assessing stewards which led to 58 per cent being classified as representatives and some 69 per

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2. Ibid., p.35.
cent being classified as high on orientation to unionism and partly due to there being an abnormally high number of senior stewards in the sample. A further 18.9 per cent (N=26) were classified as populists.

Determinants of Role Type

The Latrobe Valley shop stewards are evenly spread between the four role types (see table 6.1). What factors, then, determine the adoption of a particular role? In chapter 2 the literature was reviewed and following discussions with stewards, two models, comprising a number of personal and environmental factors, were developed which, it was argued, would prove significant determinants of a stewards’ orientation to unionism and leadership style respectively. In this section these models will be tested using regression analysis.

Orientation to Unionism

Some fifteen factors were included in the model as likely determinants of a steward’s orientation to unionism. These variables were presented in column 1 of figure 2.5. To avoid the possibility of confounding the regression analysis with ‘independent’ variables that are highly correlated, it was decided that such variables would be deleted from the analysis. Correlational analysis indicated two significant correlations existed. First, age and length of stewardship were substantially related (r=.53, p=.000). As length of stewardship is


4. The procedures to be adopted for the regression analysis were outlined in chapter 3.

5. This became sixteen factors when place of work was recoded into two dummy variables for entry into the regression equation.
often conceived of as a defacto measure of union commitment it was
decided to delete the age of stewards from the regression analysis.
This also meant that lesser, although significant, correlations between
the stewards' age, political preference and the age level of
constituents would be removed. Second, union background and political
preference were also found to be significantly correlated (r=.30,
p=.001). Union background was deleted from the analysis on the grounds
that a higher number of stewards could not recall if their father was
active in his union compared to the number of stewards who were not
prepared to state, or were not asked (see chapter 3) their political
preference (14.9 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively). Accordingly,
some thirteen factors (independent variables) were regressed against
stewards' orientation to unionism (dependent variable). The results are
presented in table 6.2. When taken collectively these factors
explained 17.0 per cent of the total variance ($r^2$) in orientation to
unionism and collectively were significant at the .05 level
(F=2.1312). Thus, the proposed model predicted a significant amount of
variance in stewards' orientation to unionism. Only two variables,
length of stewardship and the presence of a full-time union official,
proved to be individually significant at the .05 level. Marital status
was, however, significant at the lower level of .10. Stewards were,
therefore, more likely to be oriented to unionism (as opposed to
oriented to the needs of their immediate workgroup) the longer they

6. Interviews with shop stewards with reference to their more senior
   colleagues.

7. Note that the sign of the regression co-efficient must be read in
   conjunction with the wording of the particular question. See Appendix
   A.
served as stewards and if a full-time official of their union resided in the Latrobe Valley.

### Table 6.2

**Determinants of Stewards' Orientation to Unionism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>t Statistic</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father’s occupation</td>
<td>-.296</td>
<td>-1.194</td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stewardship</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>2.773</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political preference</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>1.148</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>1.878</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of work - Yallourn</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of work - Morwell</td>
<td>-.227</td>
<td>-0.608</td>
<td>.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of union</td>
<td>-.280</td>
<td>-1.131</td>
<td>.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of full-time official</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>2.002</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of stewards - own union</td>
<td>-.352</td>
<td>-1.354</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of stewards - other unions</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>-0.308</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age level of members</td>
<td>-.246</td>
<td>-1.137</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of workgroup unity</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members' expectations</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>0.928</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of management</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>-0.630</td>
<td>.530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.604</td>
<td>7.359</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**R Square:** .1700  
**Standard Error:** 1.4363  
**F-Statistic:** 2.1312  
**F Significance:** .0132

Both formal and informal interviews/discussions with stewards tended to reinforce these findings. Stewards who had extensive experience as workplace representatives tended, over time, to develop a wider perspective. The experienced and usually older stewards claimed that during their period of service they had come to realise that unity
and collective action is ultimately their only defence against managerial excesses. This attitude is further reinforced by the taking on of extra responsibilities at some stage during their lengthy 'career'. These extra responsibilities have tended to be confined to the branch level. Equally, however, many of these stewards are seen as 'senior stewards' with stewards from their own and other unions seeking them out for advice and guidance. The presence of a local, full-time union official provides stewards with an external reference point. Meeting regularly with these officials, often informally, created an awareness that the issue had ramifications beyond the stewards own workgroup.

One final point needs to be made. Some 83.0 per cent of the variance in orientation to unionism remained unexplained. This raised two possibilities; either a small number of significant variables have not been considered or a range of variables, taken collectively, can account for the unexplained variance. The investigation of further determinants remains a task for future research.

Leadership Style

Some sixteen factors were included in the model as likely determinants of a steward's leadership style. These variables were presented in column 2 of figure 2.5. As with orientation to unionism it was necessary to check the correlations between these 'independent variables' to avoid confounding the results of the regression analysis. Two significant relationships were found to exist. First, level of education was highly correlated to community involvement

8. External to the stewards' immediate workgroup.
(r = .32, p = .000) and income (r = .31, p = .000). To simplify the regression equation community involvement and income were deleted from the model, on the grounds that level of education was a more relevant variable as shift workers are restricted in their participation in community activities and income can vary considerably depending upon the availability of overtime. Second, type of union correlated with education (r = .37, p = .000) and whether the steward was subject to regular re-election (r = .36, p = .000). In this case, given the rationale for retaining the education variable and the perceived importance of stewards being subjected to regular re-election, type of union was deleted. With the deletion of community involvement, income and type of union the remaining thirteen variables were regressed against the dependent variable, the stewards' leadership style. The results are presented in table 6.3. When taken collectively these factors explained 18.6 per cent of total variance in stewards' leadership style and were significant at the .05 level (F = 2.4880). The proposed model, therefore, predicted a significant amount of variance in stewards' leadership style. Once again, it is important to keep in mind that a considerable proportion of the total variance in leadership style (81.4 per cent) remained unexplained. Two variables, presence of a full-time union official and subject to regular re-election, proved significant contributors to the model at the .05 level. Ambition was significant at the .10 level. Accordingly, in general, stewards were more likely to adopt a representative style of leadership if a full-time official was located in the Latrobe Valley and if they were subject to regular re-election.
Table 6.3
Determinants of Stewards' Leadership Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>t Statistic</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>-1.523</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>-.418</td>
<td>-1.949</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of stewardship</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of birth – Australia</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of full-time official</td>
<td>.573</td>
<td>2.195</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of stewards – own union</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of stewards – other unions</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituency size</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.624</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of member contact</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>-.097</td>
<td>.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to regular re-election</td>
<td>.507</td>
<td>2.173</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of membership meetings</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>.447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's age</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor’s management style</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>1.272</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.559</td>
<td>6.410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Square: .1855
Standard Error: 1.1941
F-Statistic: 2.4880
F Significance: .0043

Discussions with stewards also tended to reinforce these findings. It should be recalled that leadership, in this context, refers to the ability of the steward to take action independent of the membership. Given this definition, it is not unexpected that a membership characteristic proved statistically significant. A considerable body of literature relates group properties with leader
characteristics\(^9\) and as Pedler stated "leaders are always subject to
limitation by group norms and role relationships within the Group."\(^10\)
Stewards who were subject to regular re-elections claimed that they saw
their continued re-election as a vote of confidence in the way they
handled matters. Clearly, they perceived members as interested in
outcomes rather than their style of leadership. Once again the presence
of a local full-time union official was an important predictor
variable. In this case stewards claimed that meeting regularly with
their local official allowed them the opportunity to discuss issues of
particular importance to their membership. The success or otherwise of
a particular course of action could be debated, and in the final
assessment, could lead stewards to modify or, in some cases, squash an
issue entirely. Also, at these meetings issues are initiated and the
stewards take these issues back to the membership for their information
and support.

*Role Type*

From the regression analysis three factors were found to be
important determinants of orientation to unionism and/or leadership

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9. For a review of research on this aspect of leadership see B.M.
Bass, *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and

10. M. Pedler 'Shop Stewards as Leaders', *Industrial Relations
style.\textsuperscript{11} Given the statistical significance of these factors, it is possible, although only tentatively,\textsuperscript{12} to predict the role a particular steward would adopt. A summary of the relevance of each of these factors to role definition is provided in table 6.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants</th>
<th>Role Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Stewardship</td>
<td>Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of full-time official</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to regular re-election</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two 'extreme' types are the delegate and the leader steward. Delegates tended to be relatively inexperienced, belong to a union without a local full-time official and not be subjected to regular re-election. Stewardship, for these stewards, is restricted to the taking up of an issue that the members feel is important. There is little attempt, on the part of the delegate, to actively encourage and educate their members. These stewards were more likely to take on stewardship out of a general interest in matters affecting workers (49.1 per cent) or due to there being no other member willing to accept the

\textsuperscript{11} One factor, presence of full-time union official, was found to be a significant determinant of both orientation to unionism and leadership style.

\textsuperscript{12} Due to the small amount of variance explained by each model.
responsibility (16.4 per cent). More than half of the delegates found stewardship satisfying (58.2 per cent), although the majority of delegates would not actively seek another term as a shop steward (54.7 per cent).

In contrast, leader stewards were likely to have served as stewards for a number of years, belong to a union that has a local full-time official and be subject to re-election on a regular basis. To the leader, stewardship tends to be a vocation with the focus on the needs of the wider membership. They will actively seek to promote unionism and will raise issues and involve members when they consider it is necessary. In doing so they are more likely to experience opposition from management (31.8 per cent compared to 19.6 per cent of stewards). These stewards also took on stewardship out of a general interest in matters affecting workers (23.1 per cent) and a commitment to union principles (19.2 per cent), although a dissatisfaction with the way matters had been handled in the past was also an important factor (17.3 per cent). The vast majority of leaders (80.0 per cent) were satisfied with their position as steward and a majority would actively seek another term (61.1 per cent).

The two remaining steward types are the work group leader and the committed delegate. These stewards, in essence, represent two different combinations of the determinants of the delegate and the leader stewards. Work group leaders were likely to be inexperienced stewards, but belong to unions that have a local full-time official and be subject to regular re-election. In many ways they are similar to the leader steward. For example, the major reasons for standing as a shop steward were general interest (25.0 per cent), union principles (18.2 per cent) and dissatisfaction with the way matters had been handled in the past.
(18.2 per cent). One major difference was that a significant number (15.9 per cent) took on stewardship due to pressure from co-workers. Two-thirds of the work group leaders (65.9 per cent) were satisfied in the role of steward although slightly less (57.5 per cent) would actively seek another term as steward.

The committed delegate is the most difficult steward type to characterise. Such stewards are likely to have served as a steward for a number of years. This tends to re-inforce their orientation to the wider union movement. They do not face regular re-election for their position and they tend to belong to a union with a full-time official residing in the Latrobe Valley. The committed delegate took on stewardship out of an interest in matters affecting workers (36.2 per cent) or a belief in union principles (23.4 per cent). Two-thirds (66.7 per cent) gained satisfaction from their position as steward and half (50.0 per cent) would actively seek another term.

The finding that length of stewardship is an important determinant of role definition raises the question of whether the age profile of stewards vary between the four role types? \(^{13}\) Batstone et al. argued that, with the exception of leaders and populists, the other role classifications were transient, made up of the younger and less experienced stewards, and that cowboys and nascent leaders "... tend to continue as stewards for relatively short periods of time." \(^{14}\) Marchington and Armstrong rejected the notion that some roles may be transient and suggested, with respect to the work group leader, that "... they may have operated in a similar way for a considerable period

\(^{13}\) Note that the age of the steward was deleted from the regression analysis due to its significant correlation with length of stewardship.

\(^{14}\) Batstone et al., Shop Stewards in Action, p.35.
of time. With respect to cautious supporters, Marchington and Armstrong concluded:

The young inexperienced steward who was being 'sponsored' and 'brought on' by his more senior colleagues—and particularly convenors—seemed to fit in this section ... but there were other stewards as well who did not fit the leader mould despite having a high orientation to unionism. Similarly, they were not young and inexperienced ...

The results of this study would tend to support Marchington and Armstrong. Table 6.5 provides a distribution of steward types by age, the results of which proved statistically insignificant. In the under-30 years age group there is an even spread between the four types. In contrast, in the over-50 years age group the committed delegates and leader stewards accounted for the highest percentage of stewards. From these findings the only discernable trend is that those steward types based on a high orientation to unionism (committed delegate and leader) tend to be older. Similar, although statistically significant, results were obtained from the regression analysis where length of stewardship proved a significant determinant of orientation to unionism. From these results it is clear that committed delegates are not inexperienced and that committed delegates and work group leaders are similar in age composition to delegates and leaders. The suggestion that these types are transient must, therefore, be rejected.

Of considerable importance in understanding the behaviour of Latrobe Valley stewards is the finding that the type of union and place of work are not significant determinants of role definition. Batstone et al. found that populists were the major steward type in the staff union (78 per cent) and also the major, although much less so, type in

16. Ibid., p.44.
the shop-floor union (45 per cent).\textsuperscript{17} Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton suggested that "... attitudinally, the white-collar stewards are more similar to blue-collar stewards than to their own members."\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, Marchington and Armstrong concluded, with respect to the stewards' role, that there existed little difference between blue and white-collar stewards.\textsuperscript{19} Further, they argued that "... it cannot be taken for granted that white collar stewards will be less committed to union principles and the JSSC, or to leadership strategy, than their blue collar counterparts."\textsuperscript{20} The findings of this research would tend to support the conclusions of Nicholson \textit{et al.}, and Marchington and Armstrong. Details are presented in table 6.6. Stewards in both the

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Distribution of Steward Types By Age}
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
\hline
Age & Delegate & Work Group & Committed & Leader \\
 & \% & Leader & Delegate & \% \\
\hline
Under 30 years & 21.8 & 29.5 & 25.5 & 24.5 \\
31 to 40 years & 43.6 & 40.9 & 36.2 & 26.4 \\
41 to 50 years & 25.5 & 15.9 & 17.0 & 28.3 \\
Over 50 years & 9.1 & 13.6 & 21.3 & 20.8 \\
\hline
Total & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 & 100.0 \\
Number & 55 & 44 & 47 & 53 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{17} Batstone \textit{et al.} \textit{Shop Stewards in Action}, p.36.


\textsuperscript{20} Marchington and Armstrong, 'Typologies of Shop Stewards', p.39.
white and blue-collar unions are relatively evenly spread over the four role types although a majority of delegates are from white-collar unions (52.7 per cent), whilst a sizeable majority of leader type stewards come from blue-collar unions (69.1 per cent). This distribution reflects both the emphasis the blue-collar unions place upon leadership activities and the restricted role placed upon stewards of some white-collar unions (for example, the APEA). The distribution between the other role types are substantially similar.

Table 6.6

Distribution of Steward Types by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Union</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-collar</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breakdown of role type by place of work also indicated little difference between stewards from the three production centres in terms of their role definition although slightly more Yallourn stewards had adopted a leadership role. This partly reflects the traditions that have built up over-time at Yallourn and partly the presence of a strong and stable shop-floor organisation. Results are presented in table 6.7.
Table 6.7
Distribution of Steward Types by Place of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Work</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yallourn</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwell</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loy Yang</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the regression analysis and the above discussion, it is clear that the adoption of a particular role is unrelated, in a statistical sense, to the age of the steward, to the type of union the steward belongs to or to their place of work. These results are important for three reasons. First, the finding that the four role types are unrelated to the age of stewards would suggest that the role definition is of a more permanent nature than the earlier research of Batstone et al. would suggest. It is, therefore, important for subsequent research to examine all steward types in detail. Second, type of union cannot be used as a defacto measure of role definition. That is, behaviour explained by the adoption of a particular role cannot necessarily be attributed to the different policies and practices of white-collar and blue-collar unions. Third, whilst each workplace may vary in tradition, technology and shop-floor organisation there is a relatively even representation of each steward type at each of the production centres.

Conclusion

This chapter empirically tested the typology introduced in chapter 2. The majority of stewards fell into the leader-delegate
dichotomy, although the result was not statistically significant. It was argued that two models comprising a number of personal and environmental factors would explain a significant proportion of variance in stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style respectively. Support for these models was achieved and a number of variables proved to be significant determinants of stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style. It was noted, however, that a substantial proportion of variance in both these dimensions was left unexplained.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the above, three general arguments were advanced. First, that as stewards were spread relatively evenly between the four role types, attention will also need to be given to the work group leader and the committed delegate. Second, on the basis of the regression analysis of orientation to unionism and leadership style a set of factors which may predict the adoption of a particular role was tentatively advanced. These were set out in summary form in table 6.4. It should be noted, however, that other factors not discovered in this research may be important in this regard. Third, given that both the type of union the steward belongs to (blue/white-collar) and their place of work did not prove significant determinants of role type it will be necessary to consider these aspects separately in subsequent analysis. This is based partly on the findings of chapter 5 that differences in steward existed when broken down by these variables and partly on interview evidence from stewards, union officials, management personnel and members of the Arbitration Commission.
PART THREE

SHOP STEWARDS AT WORK
CHAPTER SEVEN
FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF SHOP STEWARDS

Part One of this study reviewed the literature on the role of the shop steward in industrial relations, developed a theoretical framework to underpin the study and outlined the research methodology to be pursued. In Part Two, data was provided on industrial relations in the Latrobe Valley, a profile of the SECV shop steward was developed and the theoretical framework was empirically tested. Part Three will now consider the role of the shop steward at work. In this chapter the focus is on the functions and duties of shop stewards; chapter 8 examines the supporting organisational structures of shop stewards at the workplace whilst chapter 9 considers the part played by shop stewards during periods of industrial action.

A number of Australian and U.K. studies have indicated that shop stewards spend a considerable amount of time on stewardship duties, both at work and outside the workplace. Further, these studies illustrate that the range of duties undertaken by shop stewards is considerably broader than that specified in the union rule book. This is particularly the case with Australian stewards where their formal role is usually restricted to minor administrative tasks. However, very little attempt has been made to understand the processes by which stewards carry out their duties or distinguish between different stewards in terms of the way they approach their job.

This chapter will partly redress this situation. The chapter is broken into two section: the first section examines the duties of stewards, whilst the second discusses the way stewards initiate and
handle issues. Each section provides an overview of the duties and functions of all stewards and subsequently a disaggregated analysis based on the type of union the steward belongs to, their place of work and the stewards' role definition.

Duties of Shop Stewards

Shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley perform a range of duties in connection with their stewardship. These include their formally specified duties of recruitment, handling members' complaints and grievances, monitoring work practices and processes, and providing a communication link between the union and the membership as well as informal duties such as the conduct of negotiations with management over issues relevant to the membership's wages and working conditions.¹

Time Spent on Stewardship Duties

Shop stewards spent an average of 5.8 hours per week during work-time and 3.8 hours per week during their own-time in performing these duties. Most senior stewards spent considerably more time on union duties and 2.9 per cent of stewards (N=6) were effectively full-time stewards.² These results were considerably higher than that found by McBeath (0.7 hours and 0.8 hours respectively) and Charleston (2.3 hours and 3.7 hours respectively), although Charleston found the hours spent

¹. The formal duties of shop stewards varies considerably between the SECV unions.

². This was often with the express approval of SECV management. For example, at the time of the survey, one FEDFA steward had been given leave with full pay by the SECV to act as the union representative on a particular working party. Only two of these stewards held other positions within the union, and in both cases this was at the local branch level.
on stewardship duties both on and off the job varied considerably between industries.³

The results obtained in this study, however, are similar to those obtained in the U.K. For example, Goodman and Whittingham found stewards spent 4.9 hours on their duties during work-time and 4.8 hours during their own-time; McCarthy and Parker 4 hours and 2 hours respectively; Pedler 6 hours and 7 hours respectively and Clegg et al. 6 hours and 4.5 hours respectively.⁴ McCarthy and Parker also found that only about 1 per cent of the stewards were full-time.⁵ Partridge also found that stewards spent about 10 hours per week on their duties, usually during working hours.⁶ A more recent study by Schuller and Robertson, using a diary system, recorded a figure of 2.7 hours spent on stewardship activities during work-time. They argued that whilst this figure is lower than other studies, it probably represents a more accurate picture as stewards were not being asked to estimate the hours

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5. McCarthy and Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations, p.17.

spent on their duties. However, the reliance on stewards from only two unions throws into doubt the representativeness of their result.\(^7\)

Substantial differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards with respect to time spent on stewardship duties. Some 47.3 per cent of blue-collar stewards spent six or more hours during work-time on their duties compared to only 9.1 per cent of white-collar stewards. This difference proved to be statistically significant (t=4.82, df=187, p=.000). A similar pattern emerged in terms of stewardship activities during the stewards' own-time. For example, 72.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards spent two or more hours of their own-time on stewardship activities compared to 33.9 per cent of white-collar stewards. This result also was statistically significant (t=3.57, df=167, p=.000). No significant difference occurred when the time stewards spent on their activities was broken down by place of employment. Yallourn stewards were, however, more likely to spent a higher number of hours during work-time on stewardship activities. Loy Yang stewards, on the other hand, were likely to spend more of their own-time on activities related to their position.

Table 7.1 provides a break-down of mean hours spent on stewardship activities by steward type. It is clear from this table that leader stewards spend considerably more time in work-time and their own-time on their stewardship duties than do delegates. However, the difference in total time spent on steward activities proved significant only at the .10 level (t=1.43, df=84, p=.075). The work group leader spent the most time on stewardship duties, averaging 14.3 hours per week. This is

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considerably higher than for leader stewards (t=1.41, df=72, p=.082) and partially, at least, reflects the commitment this group of stewards have to their membership. Alternatively, it could illustrate the lack of support given to the work group leader by other stewards or full-time union officials. Table 7.2 provides a further explanation of this result. Some 42.4 per cent of work group leaders spent in excess of 10 hours per week on their stewardship duties. A slightly larger group of work group leaders spent less than 5 hours per week on these functions. Whilst a similar dichotomy is evident with all groups, it is the large number of work group leaders in the former category that calls for further comment. It appears that work group leaders can be broken into two types. The first type spends only a minimal amount of time on their duties, usually during work-time, and only undertakes activities that have some short term benefit to their constituents. This may include the taking up of an individual grievance, negotiations with management over localised issues and a range of minor administrative duties for the union. The second type spends considerably more time outside of work and in addition to the above activities, often undertakes activities that are of a more long term nature. Involvement
in working parties and attendance at local branch meetings are two examples.

Table 7.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 hours</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 hours</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 hours</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negotiations with Management

As pointed out earlier, stewards undertake a wide range of activities. In this section the focus is on what is arguably the most important of such activities, negotiations with management. Table 7.3 gives the collective response to the question 'have you even been involved in negotiations with management on any of the following issues?' From this table it can be readily observed that the Latrobe Valley shop stewards are involved in negotiations with management over a range of issues. The most frequent issues are pay problems and classifications (76.8 per cent of stewards having negotiated at least once with management on this issue), allowances (62.7 per cent), general working conditions (83.3 per cent), health and safety (77.5 per cent), shift work (50.7 per cent), overtime (64.2 per cent) staffing and manning (77.2 per cent) and rosters (51.2 per cent). Without exception, these issues are collective matters, relating to the membership in
general. These findings are contrary to the conventional wisdom that in a highly centralised system, shop stewards only handle individual grievances and minor administrative duties. These type of issues (discipline and victimization) rarely involved Latrobe Valley stewards in negotiations with management. This is in contrast to the research of Charleston who found stewards were more likely to negotiate over matters of discipline.  

Table 7.3

Issues Negotiated with Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Never %</th>
<th>Once or twice %</th>
<th>Often %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage rates (N=199)</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay problems/classifications (N=203)</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowances (N=201)</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Conditions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General working conditions (N=203)</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety (N=200)</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work (N=203)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours of Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard hours of work (N=199)</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime (N=204)</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (N=197)</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demarcation (N=202)</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (N=204)</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy (N=201)</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization (N=203)</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships (N=201)</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production queries (N=201)</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology (N=203)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing/manning (N=202)</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers’ compensation (N=201)</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosters (N=203)</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the present study indicate that Latrobe Valley shop stewards' involvement in industrial relations is very similar to the traditional role of the shop steward in the U.K. Table 7.4 compares the extent of Latrobe Valley stewards' involvement in collective negotiations with the findings of McCarthy and Parker. Although a degree of care has to be taken in making comparisons, the result does illustrate that Latrobe Valley stewards do engage in collective negotiations at a similar level to their U.K. counterparts. It should be pointed out that whilst table 7.4 highlights the similarities between U.K. and SECV stewards with respect to their range of bargaining, important qualitative differences may be concealed. For example, although a similar percentage of stewards claimed they had been involved in bargaining over wages (wage rates, pay problems and allowances) it is likely that SECV stewards' wage bargaining has been confined to some over-award and special payments and matters relating to pay problems.

Blue-collar stewards were significantly more involved in negotiations with management than were their white-collar counterparts. The most substantial variations occurred in negotiations over working conditions (89.3 per cent and 74.4 per cent respectively), health and safety (88.3 per cent and 61.2 per cent), shift work (58.7 per cent and 39.0 per cent), demarcations (63.3 per cent and 40.2 per


10. In particular given the difference in questions asked (McCarthy and Parker asked stewards whether they had personally discussed and settled with management a number of selected issues), different methods of compilation and the different time period under consideration. On this last point, it should be noted that it is not possible with later surveys of workplace industrial relations to make such comparisons. This is due to these surveys shifting the focus away from the individual shop steward and to workplaces as the key unit of analysis. See, for example, W.W. Daniel and N. Millward, Workplace Industrial Relations in Britain (London: Heinemann, 1983).
cent), discipline (72.1 per cent and 48.2 per cent), victimization (47.9 per cent and 22.0 per cent),\(^{11}\) workers' compensation (44.5 per cent and 23.2 per cent) and rosters (64.2 per cent and 22.5 per cent respectively). White-collar stewards were more likely, however, to have negotiated more frequently over apprenticeship levels (30.5 per cent and 24.4 per cent respectively). With the exception of working conditions, apprenticeship levels and shift work, which were significant at the .05 level, the differences were significant at the .01 level ($x^2$ test).

**Table 7.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Latrobe Valley Stewards</th>
<th>U.K. Stewards*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of work</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment issues</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* McCarthy and Parker, *Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations*, p.83.

Significant variations also occurred, with respect to the level of negotiations, when stewards were classified by place of work. The three issues where significant differences between workplaces were evident included negotiations over working conditions, health and safety, and employment of apprentices. The results are presented in table 7.5.

With the exception of apprenticeships, which was significant at the .05

---

11. Significant variation would be expected to occur between stewards on discipline and victimization matters as white-collar employees have access to an internal appeals and grievance committee. On these matters employees could take their complaints directly to the committee.
level, these variations were only significant at the .10 level ($x^2$ test). The issue of apprenticeships is more likely to be dealt with by Yallourn stewards as the apprenticeship training school is located at the Yallourn production centre. In general, Loy Lang stewards had not negotiated with management as frequently as their Morwell and Yallourn counterparts. This is to be expected as Loy Yang stewards have not served as long as Morwell and Yallourn stewards (see chapter 5). On matters relating to new technology, however, more Loy Yang stewards had negotiated with management (58.6 per cent compared to 47.1 per cent and 50.6 per cent of Morwell and Yallourn stewards respectively). This result is indicative of the technological advanced state of the Loy Lang complex.

Table 7.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Yallourn %</th>
<th>Morwell %</th>
<th>Loy Lang %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions (N=201)</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety (N=198)</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships (N=199)</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.6 provides the percentage of each steward type that has, at least on one occasion, negotiated with management over various issues. A significant variation (at .10 level) in the number of stewards, when broken down by the four role types, occurred in fifteen of the nineteen matters considered ($x^2$ test). Three of these differences were significant at the .01 level and included pay problems/classifications, apprenticeships and rosters. In twelve of these issues the leader category had the highest number of stewards who had negotiated with
management, the work group leader category two issues and the remaining issue was dominated by committed delegates.

Table 7.6
Issues Negotiated with Management by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage rates (N=192)</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay problems/classification (N=196)</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowances (N=194)</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Conditions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General working conditions (N=196)</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety (N=193)</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work (N=196)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours of Work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard hours of work (N=192)</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime (N=197)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays (N=190)</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demarcation (N=195)</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline (N=197)</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy (N=194)</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization (N=196)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships (N=194)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production queries (N=194)</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology (N=196)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing/manning (N=195)</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers' compensation (N=194)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosters (N=196)</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two issues that were dominated by work group leaders were general working conditions and health and safety. This is not unexpected as these issues are of immediate concern to the stewards' membership. And where the membership feels strongly about an issue the work group leader will be more likely to take up the issue with management. The high percentage of committed delegates that have
negotiated with management over staffing and manning issues is more
difficult to explain. One possible explanation is that this result
reflects the higher percentage of committed delegates that belong to the
three unions that, in 1984 and 1985, were in dispute with the SECV over
staffing and manning issues.\textsuperscript{12} The closure of the Yallourn C Power
Station and the dispute over manning at the Loy Yang Power Station
involved the MOA, FEDFA and AIMPE whilst the changes in the transport of
coal at the Yallourn open cut mine involved FEDFA. The negotiations
which subsequently followed these disputes involved, in the main, local
shop stewards.

\textit{Non-Industrial Issues}

One further group of activities undertaken by shop stewards,
although not formally within their range of responsibilities, is
involvement in non-industrial type issues such as member welfare and
political activities. The former relate to what Dufty has referred to
as the 'good shepherd' role where stewards are oriented towards the
pastoral care of their members;\textsuperscript{13} the latter reflects the
characteristics of Chinoys 'ideological' steward.\textsuperscript{14} Table 7.7 gives the
collective response to the question 'as a shop steward have you been
involved in the following non-industrial issues?' It is clear from this
table that shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley do not restrict their

\textsuperscript{12} Some 81.3 per cent of committed delegates belonged to these three
unions compared to membership figures of 70.5 per cent for work group
leaders, 58.2 per cent for delegates and 54.5 per cent for leaders.

\textsuperscript{13} N.F. Dufty, 'A Typology of Shop Stewards', \textit{Industrial Relations

\textsuperscript{14} E. Chinoys, 'Local Union Leadership', in \textit{Studies in Leadership},
activities to industrial matters. Issues relating to the welfare of members, including counselling and the settling of disputes between members, involved more than half of the stewards at some stage of their stewardship. As one senior AMWU steward commented:

Workers have a great many problems which require expert advice and counsel. They look to the shop steward to tell them how to obtain such information as they may require to solve the problem before them. Marriage guidance, legal aid, financial management and assistance, child welfare, drug and alcohol programmes, safety and health regulations, health and medical services and a whole host of other items, all find their way into the compendium of a shop steward's accumulated knowledge.\(^{15}\)

| Table 7.7 |
| Stewards' Involvement in Non-Industrial Issues |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Never %</th>
<th>Once or twice %</th>
<th>Often %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare of members (N=199)</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling of members (N=190)</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling disputes between members (N=195)</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activities (N=186)</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This tends to confirm the conclusion drawn by Goodman and Whittingham that "in many cases, stewards are supplementing, if not supplanting, supervisors and welfare departments in this function".\(^{16}\) Political activities, on the other hand, were undertaken by less than one-quarter of all stewards. Those stewards who do become involved in these activities argue that:


Trade unions are a vital part of community and political and social life and as such it is essential for the views of the membership to be reflected in any and all of the decisions taken by unions in all of the many matters which come before them.  

When broken down by type of union, blue-collar stewards were more likely to involve themselves in the settling of disputes between members (63.2 per cent compared to 43.6 per cent of white-collar stewards) and engage in political activities (29.4 per cent and 14.3 per cent respectively). In both cases these differences were statistically significant ($x^2=7.48$, $df=2$, $p=.024$ and $x^2=6.49$, $df=2$, $p=.039$ respectively). Further, Yallourn stewards were more likely to be involved in the settling of member disputes, although this difference was only significant at the .10 level ($x^2=9.21$, $df=4$, $p=.056$). Little difference was evidenced in terms of political activities although Morwell stewards were less likely to become involved in these activities.

Table 7.8 breaks down stewards involvement in non-industrial issues by steward type; on each of the four issues leader stewards are more likely to be involved. With the exception of settling disputes between members, these differences were significant at the .01 level ($x^2=17.32$, $df=6$, $p=.008$; $x^2=23.65$, $df=6$, $p=.001$; $x^2=19.36$, $df=6$, $p=.004$ respectively). In the case of member disputes the difference was significant at the .10 level.

17. Wragg, 'Role of the Union Shop Steward', p.2.
Table 7.8
Involvement in Non-Industrial Issues by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Delegate N</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader N</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate N</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader N</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare of members</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling of members</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling member disputes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initiation and Referral of Issues

This section examines how issues arise at the workplace and whether shop stewards are likely to refer these issues to their more 'senior' colleagues. The question of whom shop stewards feel responsible to for their actions will also be considered. Other aspects of the way stewards process issues will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Initiation of Issues

Stewards were asked to assess the source of issues that arise at the workplace. As expected, the membership was ranked the highest source with fellow stewards and management also being substantial sources. Results are presented in table 7.9. No significant variation occurred by place of work. However, nearly twice as many blue-collar stewards saw the steward as an important source of issues when compared to their white-collar counterparts (45.2 per cent and 26.4 per cent respectively). This result proved significant at the .10 level ($x^2=9.17$, df=4, p=.057). This illustrates the key role some blue-collar unions have given to their shop stewards. For example, the AMWU makes
it clear that their stewards should adopt a leadership role in terms of
raising issues, making decisions and negotiating with management.\textsuperscript{18}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members (N=175)</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards (N=142)</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewards (N=161)</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officials (N=151)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management (N=159)</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders and work group leaders saw stewards and senior stewards, union officials and management as more important sources of industrial issues than did delegates and committed delegates.\textsuperscript{19} Results from the survey are presented in table 7.10. As expected, delegates perceived the membership as the more frequent source of issues, although the difference was not significant. In this respect, the major difference occurred between delegates/leaders and work group leaders/committed delegates. The low figure for the work group leader with respect to membership initiated issues (55.2 per cent) would question whether this group of stewards are as responsive to the needs of their membership as was previously suggested.

\textsuperscript{18} Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union, Role of the Shop Steward: A Manual for Shop Stewards, June 1980.

\textsuperscript{19} It must be remembered that the leadership scale incorporated the initiation of issues, and hence, although the scale related to the stewards' assessment of their own role it would be expected that leaders and work group leaders would tend to see other stewards as a major source of issues.
### Table 7.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these results it is apparent that leader stewards process issues arising from a number of sources while delegates primarily process issues arising from the membership and do not see senior stewards or full-time union officials as an important sources of issues. This finding illustrates the limited involvement these stewards tend to have with their union or their colleagues. Their focus of attention is primarily on the demands of their constituents; it is clear that many important issues, which involve more than the stewards' immediate workgroup, could go unprocessed.

**Referral of Issues**

When issues arise at the workplace do stewards handle them or are they more likely to refer the issues to others, in particular senior stewards, local branch officials or full-time union officers? Many issues, such as pay inquiries, local grievances and matters pertaining to interpretation of awards or SECV regulations, are handled by the stewards. This was clearly illustrated in table 7.3. The majority of stewards had been involved in negotiations with management over a range
of issues, with the exception of basic award conditions. Stewards were, however, asked how they handled issues such as 'something out of the ordinary', 'important issues', 'something involving SEC-wide principles', 'something involving procedures' or 'issues you could not win'. Stewards frequency of referral of issues are presented in table 7.11. Only two of these matters 'important issues' and 'something involving SEC-wide principles' would be frequently referred to 'others' by the majority of stewards (71.3 per cent and 70.4 per cent respectively).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Frequently %</th>
<th>Sometimes %</th>
<th>Rarely %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Something out of the ordinary (N=197)</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important issues (N=202)</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something involving SEC-wide principles (N=196)</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something involving procedures (N=198)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something I could not win (N=195)</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of referral did not vary significantly between blue and white-collar stewards or, in the main, between the three workplaces. Loy Yang stewards were, however, more likely to refer issues to 'others', although they tended to handle 'extraordinary' issues themselves. This latter result was significant at the .10 level ($x^2=14.18$, df=8, $p=.077$). This finding reflects the situation to be found in a new works area incorporating the latest in technology. Most issues that arise, initially at least, are 'extraordinary' and in many cases other stewards or full-time union officials are not familiar with
that issue. Stewards in these circumstances learn to process the issue
themselves. This was particularly the case with the referral of issues
to full-time officials. Loy Yang stewards substantially differed from
other stewards in that they stated the major problem with working with
full-time officials was their unfamiliarity and the lack of
understanding of the issues relating to Loy Yang.

It would be expected that delegates would be more likely to refer
issues to more senior stewards, local branch officials or full-time
union officials than would leaders. This was not the case. On four of
the five issues, leader stewards were more likely to refer issues to
'others'. Results are presented in table 7.12. On one matter,
'something out of the ordinary', leaders were significantly more likely
to refer issues to 'others' (\(x^2 = 32.57, \text{df}=12, p=.001\)). This finding is
in direct contrast to Batstone et al. who found "in general terms,
populist stewards indicate a greater readiness to seek help in the
handling of issues than do leaders." Subsequent discussions with shop
stewards provided one explanation. AMWU stewards, 71.4 per cent of whom
were leaders, suggested their role was to win issues and that referral
of issues to 'others' was part of their strategy. Further, they
contended that as their orientation was towards the union, rather than
their particular membership, it was important to ensure uniformity in
approach and outcome. Thus, as issues arise that bring into conflict
stewards' leadership style and their orientation to unionism, it is
likely that the best interests of the union will ultimately prevail.

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20. E. Batstone, I. Boraston and S. Frenkel, Shop Steward in Action

21. Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union Stewards' Meeting, Morwell, 25
October 1985.
Table 7.12

Frequent Referral of Issues to Senior Stewards, Branch Officials and Full-Time Officials by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something out of the ordinary</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important issues</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something involving SEC-wide principles</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something involving procedures</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something I could not win</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsibility to Members

The initiation and subsequent processing of issues by stewards is presumably in the interests of the membership. To test this assumption stewards were asked ‘who they should be responsible to for their actions?’ The majority of stewards, 75.4 per cent, nominated the membership with 17.7 per cent their own conscience, 4.9 per cent their union, 1.5 per cent no-one and 0.5 per cent to management. Although both blue and white-collar stewards overwhelmingly felt a responsibility to the membership, there was a significant minority of white-collar stewards (26.8 per cent compared to 19.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards) who also felt a responsibility to their own conscience or to their union. Similarly, Yallourn and Loy Yang stewards (85.4 per cent and 80.0 per cent respectively) felt responsible to their members, whereas Morwell stewards, although also feeling responsible to their membership (63.4 per cent), were more likely to feel responsible to
their own conscience (26.8 per cent). These differences were significant at the .10 level ($x^2=15.42$, df=8, $p=.051$).\(^{21}\)

In carrying out their duties both delegates and leaders felt that they should be responsible to their members. Several differences, however, were discerned. First, work group leaders and committed delegates felt less responsibility to their constituents than did delegates or leaders. Second, substantially fewer delegates felt less responsibility to their union than the other stewards and, third, more committed delegates felt they should be responsible only to their own conscience. Details are provided in table 7.13.

Table 7.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible to</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow shop stewards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The union</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own conscience</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The one steward who felt responsible to Management was not able to be classified in terms of role type as he did not answer all the questions making up the orientation to unionism and leadership scales.

\(^{21}\) This result must be treated with caution as the number of cells with an expected frequency of less than five would tend to make the chi-squared test unreliable.
Conclusion

This chapter examined the duties of shop stewards and how they initiate and handle issues relevant to their membership. Stewards were found to spend a considerable number of hours on their stewardship duties and to engage in direct negotiations with management over a range of issues including matters contained in the relevant awards. These issues tended to be initiated by the members although stewards themselves and management also frequently raised issues. If the issues raised were extremely important or had wider ramifications than the immediate workgroup, stewards were likely to refer the matter to a more senior steward, local branch official or full-time union official. In the carrying out of their duties stewards felt responsible to their members, although a significant minority of stewards felt they were only responsible to their own consciences.

These findings challenge the conventional wisdom underpinning the role of the shop steward in Australian industrial relations. It is not possible, at least in the Latrobe Valley, to characterise shop stewards as the passive link between the union and the membership. Further, and again this finding is limited to the Latrobe Valley, the centralised nature of the institutions that set the terms and conditions of employment does not exclude shop stewards from the processes involved in the determination of wages and conditions of work. In the Latrobe Valley a number of the stewards surveyed had negotiated award conditions and had often conducted cases and appeared before the Arbitration Commission.

The confirmation of a number of differences between the various steward types has two important implications in terms of industrial relations behaviour. First, leader stewards are more likely to initiate
and negotiate issues with management and reach an acceptable solution. In this process they will involve senior stewards, local branch officials and full-time officials of their union if this seems to be the appropriate strategy. When they refer an issue to 'others' they maintain close contact with proceedings and usually provide input into the final settlement. Delegates, on the other hand, tend to respond to issues raised by members, are less likely to enter into negotiations with management and if the issue is referred to 'others', that will tend to mark the end of their involvement. Second, the significant involvement of leader stewards in pastoral type activities is an indication of the wider role they play at the workplace and the assistance they provide management in maintaining a productive workforce.
CHAPTER EIGHT
SHOP STEWARD ORGANISATION

There has been little research on formal shop steward organisation in Australia. Studies by Warbuton, and Rimmer and Sutcliffe outline in some detail the historical formation of shop committees in the railways and the naval dockyards. More contemporary studies, such as those of McBeath and Charleston, make reference to shop steward co-operation but do not explore this issue in any depth. The importance of shop steward co-operation and organisation has been noted in a number of British studies. For example, Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel argued that the effectiveness of shop stewards is, to a large degree, dependent upon the co-operation of other stewards. They concluded that "where they (shop stewards) are united, they invariably achieve their ends." Further support for the importance of steward organisation is provided in the AMWU's analysis of the 11 week, 1977 Latrobe Valley maintenance workers' strike.


strike. The union identified one of the major flaws of the dispute as "... the absence of regular shop steward meetings before and after the strike."\(^5\)

The focus of this chapter is on shop steward organisation in the Latrobe Valley. It explores the relationship between stewards at the workplace, both at the formal and informal level, paying particular attention to the interaction between stewards and the level of organised activity both within and between unions. The chapter is broken into three sections. The first section examines both intra and inter-union organisation and attempts to assess the value of such organisation. The second section explores the assistance stewards receive from other stewards and the influence the stewards' network has upon individual stewards. The final section considers other avenues for stewards to meet and interact. The emphasis throughout the chapter will be on the mechanisms, both formal and informal, that allow stewards to interact and co-operate.

**Formal Shop Steward Organisation**

In this section the meetings shop stewards have, on a regular basis, with stewards from their own and other unions will be considered. The impetus and value of such meetings will also be examined. It should be noted that the official attitude of the SECV unions to formal shop steward bodies varies considerably. The AMWU, for

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4. For details of this dispute see J.W. Benson and D.J. Goff, 'The 1977 Latrobe Valley SECV Maintenance Workers' Strike.' *Journal of Industrial Relations* 21 (June 1979), pp.217-228.

example, strongly supports the formation of AMWU shop steward committees and combined union shop committees, whereas the MOA prefers stewards to work through the local branch and to contact the relevant full-time industrial officer if a problem arises.

_Intra-Union Organisation_

Stewards were asked how often they attended regular meetings with stewards from their own union. Responses are presented in table 8.1. Some 74.5 per cent of stewards reported that they attended, at least sometimes, meeting with stewards from their own union. Although comparisons with the results of other studies must be made cautiously, this figure seems to be higher than that found by McCarthy and Parker in the U.K. and, in general, confirms the conclusions drawn by Charleston in his nation-wide survey. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to meet on a regular basis than were their white-collar counterparts (88.2 per cent and 55.0 per cent respectively). The difference proved significant at the .01 level (t=4.00, df=143, p=.000). This result


8. Fifty-nine stewards reported that there were no other stewards, from their own union, working in their workplace. These stewards (many from the smaller unions) plus five who did not respond to the question are excluded from this analysis.

9. McCarthy and Parker found workshop meetings of stewards from the same union occurred in 55 per cent of workplaces. Attendance at such meetings was calculated at 'a few percent' below this figure. See W.E.J. McCarthy and S.R. Parker, _Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations_ Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Research Paper No. 10 (London: HMSO, 1968), p.19.

reflects the official attitudes of the unions, namely that blue-collar unions tend to support local steward organisation whereas white-collar unions are more likely to want stewards to work through local branches and consult with their full-time officials. No substantial difference in frequency of attendance at steward meetings was evidenced between the three work locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, meetings of shop stewards were organised by the stewards themselves. Some 64.3 per cent of respondents reported stewards initiated these meetings and a further 29.5 per cent indicated that these meetings were initiated by senior stewards. Only 6.2 per cent of stewards reported that these meetings were normally initiated by full-time officials. A similar picture emerged for both blue and white-collar stewards, although 12.5 per cent of white-collar stewards reported that these meetings are organised by full-time officials compared to 2.5 per cent of blue-collar stewards. This result was significant at the .05 level ($X^2=6.00$, df=2, $p=.050$). Although no statistically significant difference occurred between stewards in the three work locations, no Loy Yang steward reported that these meetings
were organised by a full-time official. This supports the proposition, advanced in the previous chapter, that Loy Yang stewards are more likely to handle extra-ordinary issues themselves. Meetings were also more likely to be attended frequently if they were organised by the stewards themselves. Where meetings were organised by full-time officials it was likely that the majority of stewards would not attend.11

Intra-union steward meetings were rated as fairly to very important by 93.4 per cent of all stewards. Blue-collar stewards were significantly more likely to perceive these meetings as important; 97.6 per cent compared to 87.0 per cent for white-collar stewards (t=3.89, df=135, p=.000). No significant difference occurred by place of work, although all Loy Yang stewards reported that these meetings were of some importance. Interestingly, all stewards who reported meetings were organised by senior stewards or full-time officials also felt these meetings were important. It may well be that these groups would only call a meeting if the issue warranted such action whereas the stewards themselves may not be as discriminating. Attendance at such meetings, however, remains problematic.

Leader stewards were more likely to attend meetings of stewards from their own union than were delegates, work group leaders and committed delegates. Results are presented in table 8.2. The differences did not prove to be statistically significant. It should be noted that the majority of each steward type attended these meetings at least sometimes and, accordingly, the difference between leaders and other steward types is one of degree rather than substance.

11. The small number who reported such meetings (N=7) makes any conclusion tentative.
Table 8.2
Attendance at Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders were also more likely to value such meetings, although the difference was not statistically significant. Responses from stewards are presented in table 8.3. The perceived importance of these meetings tended to parallel attendance at such meetings and, once again, it is important to note that the vast majority of each steward type valued meetings with stewards from their own union. One difference between the four steward types was in their perception as to whom initiated such meetings. Whilst the majority of all stewards saw the impetus for such meetings as coming from the stewards themselves, leaders were more inclined to perceive senior stewards as the important initiators. Results, presented in table 8.4, proved not be statistically significant.

From the foregoing analysis of the responses to the survey, leader type stewards were found to be marginally more likely to attend and value meetings with stewards of their own union than are the other steward types. It should, at this stage, be pointed out that in many cases the local branch meeting will substitute for on-site steward meetings. This is particularly the case with the larger unions, such as
Table 8.3
Value of Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly important</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.4
Initiation of Intra-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiator</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior shop steward</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time officials</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the MOA, FEDFA, the AMWU and AIMPE, which hold regular branch meetings. As one steward responded in the questionnaire, the value of branch meetings is that they allow you to 'talk to other shop stewards about their problems on the job'. In many cases, therefore, on-site meetings of stewards from the same union occur only during periods of crisis and only when the issue involves the members of one union and perhaps the one workplace. If these conditions are not met, stewards are more likely to meet on-site but with stewards from a number of unions.
Inter-Union Organisation

Inter-union steward meetings are of considerable importance in understanding union organisation at the shop-floor. Further, as most work-sites would, in general, have stewards from other unions present, it may represent the only avenue open for stewards from the smaller unions to meet collectively. From the survey it was found that some 77.3 per cent of stewards (N=159) work in areas where stewards from other unions are present. Of the 22.7 per cent of stewards that work in areas where other union stewards are not present, 50.0 per cent were MOA stewards working in the SECV's regional administrative headquarters. These stewards would work alongside other MOA stewards and would tend to meet regularly with them.

Those stewards that worked alongside stewards from other unions were asked whether they attended meetings with shop stewards of these unions. Results are presented in table 8.5. Only 33.3 per cent of stewards reported that they attended, at least sometimes, meetings with stewards from other unions. This figure is considerably less than for intra-union steward meetings, but roughly in accord with the findings of McCarthy and Parker in the U.K. and Charleston in Australia. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to meet together than were their white-

12. Important in the sense that they represent the only formal avenue for the representatives of the various unions to meet. The increasing affiliations with the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council has, in recent years, provided an alternate or supplementary avenue for such meetings, although not all stewards will have official delegate status.

13. The other main unions represented in this group were FEDFA, the APEA and the ETU.

14. McCarthy and Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations; Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia'. Both these studies focused on the occurrence of workplace meetings and only estimated the frequency of attendance.
collar counterparts (42.3 per cent and 16.4 per cent respectively). The difference was statistically significant (t=2.75, df=157, p=.007). This result partially reflects the dilemma facing white-collar stewards who occupy supervisory positions. It is difficult for these stewards to meet with other stewards, who are under their authority, to discuss issues that may relate to their supervisory position.

Table 8.5

Frequency of Meetings with Stewards from Other Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Loy Yang stewards were significantly more likely to meet with stewards from other unions ($x^2=18.95$, df=6, p=.004) than were their Yallourn or Morwell counterparts. Some 67.2 per cent of Loy Yang stewards met at least sometimes with other stewards compared to figures of 38.8 per cent and 17.4 per cent for Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively. This result suggests that the potential for combined union activity may be stronger in a new work-site and is consistent with the previous finding that Loy Yang stewards are more likely to handle special problems themselves. The nature of the technology employed at Loy Yang coupled with the demands for special payments for all Loy Yang
workers has had the effect of uniting stewards and developing their organisation.15

Once again these meetings were initiated predominantly by the stewards themselves (56.5 per cent), although senior stewards (24.8 per cent) were also active in this regard. Only 6.9 per cent of the stewards surveyed nominated a full-time union official as the initiator of such meetings whilst 11.8 per cent of stewards nominated others such as members, management and local branch officials. Considerable differences existed between the perceptions of white and blue-collar stewards as to whom were the initiators of such meetings. Although both white and blue-collar stewards saw the stewards themselves as the major initiators (50.0 per cent and 63.0 per cent respectively), white-collar stewards also saw full-time officials (14.3 per cent) and 'others' (25.0 per cent) as important in this regard. Only 4.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards respectively saw these groups as initiators of meetings. This result was significant at the .05 level ($X^2=14.09$, df=5, $p=.015$).

A similar trend was also reflected in the responses of stewards when broken down by place of work. Morwell stewards, of whom 43.5 per cent belong to white-collar unions, also rated full-time officials and 'others' as significant, although still a minority in terms of initiating meetings. At Loy Yang it is more likely that the chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee will call regular meetings of stewards. These results, however, were not statistically significant.

15. The Loy Yang Power Station is the most complex and technologically advanced power station in the Latrobe Valley. In recognition of this the unions have demanded and won special payments for their members that are not applicable outside of the Loy Yang Production Centre.
Once again, stewards were more likely to attend these meetings frequently if they were initiated by the stewards themselves, and in particular senior stewards or the chairman of the joint shop stewards' committee.

Inter-union stewards meetings were rated as fairly to very important by 87.9 per cent of stewards where such meetings were held. Whilst a little lower than the perceived value of intra-union steward meetings, it does indicate that stewards themselves see value in collective action. Some 40.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards rated these meetings as very important compared to only 17.6 per cent of their white-collar colleagues. This result was significant at the .05 level (t=2.37, df=114, p=.020). Consistent with the previous findings on intra-union meetings was that 47.6 per cent of Loy Yang stewards felt these meetings were very important. This figure compares to 30.2 per cent and 31.7 per cent of Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively. This result was not, however, statistically significant. It would appear that shop steward organisation is a product not only of tradition, but also of the immediate needs and pressures that arise at the work-site. Loy Yang stewards have recognised that the development of a strong shop-floor organisation may well be the only way they will be able to achieve their members' demands. The perceived value of these meetings did not significantly differ when they were initiated by stewards, full-time officials or 'others'.

Leader stewards and to a lesser extent, committed delegates, were more likely to meet with stewards from other unions than were delegates and work group leaders. Details are provided in table 8.6 and the difference proved statistically significant at the .05 level.
(x²=19.58, df=9, p=.021). Orientation to unionism thus appears to be an important predictor in attendance at such meetings.

Table 8.6
Attendance at Inter-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 21.2 per cent of leaders indicated that they usually initiated inter-union steward meetings. This compared to figures of 5.3 per cent of delegates, 5.0 per cent of work group leaders and 8.0 per cent of committed delegates. Work group leaders tended to rely on full-time officials or 'others' more than other stewards types. These results were, however, not statistically significant. Whilst the overwhelming majority of each steward type valued, to some degree, inter-union shop steward meetings, leaders were more likely to rate these meetings as very important. Results are given in table 8.7.16

16. In this case the number of cells with an expected frequency less than five would make a chi-squared test unreliable.
Table 8.7

Value of Inter-Union Shop Steward Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly important</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assistance from and Influence of the Steward Network

In the preceding section it was clear that stewards who attended meetings with stewards from their own union and/or stewards from other unions saw value in these meetings. Blue-collar, Loy Yang and leader stewards, in general, saw more value in these meetings than did other shop stewards. Formal meetings are, however, only one source of assistance to the steward in the performance of his duties. In day-to-day activities other stewards, at an individual level, may provide considerable assistance. Assistance can take a variety of forms as suggested by Batstone et al. and can "... include the provisions of up-to-date information on events in the plant; interpretations of these events and theories of management and member behaviour; recipes of action and various forms of protection and support."17 Those stewards who do receive assistance from other stewards are more likely to be influenced by the steward network than those who do not interact with other stewards. This section will examine this proposition.

Assistance from Other Stewards

Stewards were asked 'what assistance do you receive from other shop stewards?' Of the 164 stewards who responded to this question, some 72.0 per cent indicated that they did receive assistance from other stewards in carrying out their duties. Just under one-half, 49.0 per cent, stated that they received considerable support. The two major forms of assistance were advice and guidance (24.6 per cent) and the provision of information (13.6 per cent). Other forms of assistance included moral support, aid in the development of strategies and organisational help.

Blue-collar stewards were more likely to receive assistance from other stewards than were their white-collar counterparts (76.0 per cent compared to 66.2 per cent), although this result did not prove to be statistically significant. Further, no significant differences occurred between blue and white-collar stewards on the type of assistance. The vast majority of Loy Yang stewards received assistance from their colleagues (85.2 per cent) whilst the number of Yallourn and Morwell stewards was substantially lower (74.0 per cent and 63.5 per cent respectively).

Some 80.9 per cent of leaders received assistance from other stewards, whilst only 68.2 per cent of delegate stewards received support. This latter figure compared to 68.4 per cent and 69.7 per cent of work group leaders and committed delegates respectively receiving assistance. These differences were not statistically significant. Thus, whilst all stewards are likely to receive assistance from other stewards in the carrying out of their duties, it is clear that leaders are more likely to receive such help. The type of assistance that
leaders seek tends to be almost exclusively in terms of information and/or advice, whereas the other steward types, whilst receiving similar assistance, will also seek moral, organisational and planning support.

It would seem reasonable to assume that stewards who regularly attend meetings of stewards from their own or other unions are more likely to develop relationships that encourage the seeking and receiving of assistance. This proved to be the case. Table 8.8 provides a breakdown of the frequency of attending meetings by the assistance received from other stewards. Clearly stewards are more likely to receive assistance from other stewards the more frequently they attend meetings with those stewards. This is particularly the case with those stewards who attend meetings with stewards of their own union (\( x^2 = 16.85, \) df=3, \( p = .001 \)) although it is also the case with those stewards who meet with stewards from other unions (\( x^2 = 11.00, \) df=3, \( p = .018 \)). This result is to be expected as stewards are more likely to seek help from stewards from their own union as they would be familiar with issues at hand. Stewards who meet sometimes or frequently with stewards from their own union cited advice and guidance as the major form of assistance (22.0 per cent)\(^18\), whereas stewards who meet with stewards from other unions cited the provision of information as the major form of assistance (19.0 per cent). This finding confirms the view that stewards from the same union would normally be aware of the issues involved and would accordingly be looking for advice and guidance on how to process these issues. Equally, the type of assistance that stewards from other unions could provide is more likely to involve the provision of information,

\(^{18}\) Excluding those stewards who merely stated they received considerable support from other stewards.
particularly their own unions' position on a particular issue. This
difference was not, however, statistically significant.

Table 8.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attend Meetings</th>
<th>Assistance Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Own Stewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Other Stewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Influence of the Collective Steward Body

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that the majority of
stewards receive some assistance from their colleagues. Does this
imply, however, that by meeting with and receiving assistance from other
stewards, stewards are then more likely to be influenced by the
collective steward body? To answer this question, steward were asked
'In general, when you make decisions, who has the most influence on
you?' The overwhelming majority of stewards (77.0 per cent) felt it was
the membership, whilst only 4.7 per cent of stewards replied that other
stewards had the most influence. Union officials (7.3 per cent),
management (1.6 per cent) and no-one (9.4 per cent) accounted for the
remainder.
No substantial difference, with respect to influence, existed between blue and white-collar stewards or between stewards from the three production centres. Loy Yang stewards were, however, more likely to be influenced by fellow shop stewards or not be influenced by anyone. Stewards who attended meetings frequently with other shop stewards from their own union were more likely to be influenced by their colleagues (11.1 per cent) and less by their membership (66.7 per cent). A similar trend was not evidenced with those shop stewards who met frequently with stewards from other unions. Only 5.9 per cent of these stewards reported they were primarily influenced by their colleagues.

Although all steward types were predominantly influenced by their membership (see table 8.9), several trends can be discerned. First, leader stewards were less likely to be influenced by their colleagues but more likely to be influenced by full-time officials. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 12 with respect to the acceptance of strategies proposed by full-time union officials. Second, delegates are less likely to be influenced by full-time officials and are more likely to take an independent position. Further, the two stewards who stated they were more likely to be influenced by management when making decisions were also delegates. Third, committed delegates will predominantly be influenced by the membership. It does appear, from these results, that the membership is a key influence on the behaviour of shop stewards. This does not imply that other groups are unimportant, but that as Farnham and Pimlott argued "... that where there are divided loyalties or a conflict of interest arises ... shop stewards generally side with their workgroups."19

Table 8.9

Major Influences on Stewards by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officials</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Forms of Organisation

The previous sections have examined the formal, steward initiated forms of organisation. Whilst these are of primary importance in understanding shop steward behaviour there are other avenues open to stewards to meet and discuss mutual problems and issues. Stewards may, at the local level, regularly attend and participate in the local branch meetings of their union, become a delegate to the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council or attend a variety of educational courses. These collective forms of steward organisation, outside of the immediate workplace, will be discussed in detail in chapter 12. At this stage, it is important to recognise that this involvement can impact significantly on stewards' organisation at the shop-floor.

20. Of special significance, in terms of shop steward organisation, are those courses conducted by the Trade Union Training Authority for SECV shop stewards. One example was the two day 'Power Industry Seminar' held in Morwell on the 7-8 November, 1985.
One further mechanism that allows shop stewards to meet regularly and discuss problems are management sponsored meetings. This avenue for shop steward organisation has taken on extra significance, for the Latrobe Valley SECV shop stewards, since the introduction of working parties in 1976. Working parties are essentially committees made up of a number of shop stewards and management personnel with a view of solving a specific problem.\textsuperscript{21} As stewards are given time off work to attend meetings, liaise with other stewards and discuss the issue with members, membership of a working party affords considerable opportunity for stewards to interact and discuss a range of issues. This section will concentrate on the concept of the working party as a defacto form of shop steward organisation. The effectiveness of such mechanisms will be considered in chapter 11.

Of the 209 stewards who responded to the questionnaire some 165 (78.9 per cent) had been involved in joint consultation with management, the primary form being the working party. This figure confirms the trend towards more consultation within the SECV and is indicative of the widespread nature of the working party concept. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to have participated in joint consultation than their white-collar counterparts (82.3 per cent and 75.9 per cent respectively), although this difference was not statistically significant. Little difference in participation rates was evidenced between stewards from the three production centres, although Morwell stewards were less likely to be involved in joint consultation. This reflects the higher percentage of white-collar stewards located at

\textsuperscript{21} For further details, see J. Benson, 'Worker Involvement: An Analysis of the SECV Working Parties' Journal of Industrial Relations 24 (March, 1982), pp.41-52.
Morwell. Work group leaders had the highest rate of participation in joint consultation, whilst the delegate had the lowest level of participation. Results are presented in table 8.10. These differences proved to be statistically significant ($x^2=10.64$, df=3, $p=.014$).

The members of a working party will be normally drawn from a number of unions, and hence there will usually be only one steward from each union. This was the case with the Asbestos Task Force and the Shift Work Working Party. In these cases, stewards were more likely to see the value of joint consultation, in terms of shop steward organisation, as providing information and the development of united strategies.

Whilst the organisational potential for shop stewards participating in any one working party is limited, due to the small number of stewards involved and the time limits imposed, the majority of shop stewards interviewed felt that their participation did allow for a closer contact to be made with other stewards.²²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²². Interviews were conducted with thirty shop stewards. For details see chapter 3.
Some working parties, however, involved stewards from only the one union. This is particularly the case with issues involving white-collar stewards, the majority belonging to the MOA, or a reclassification of job positions covered by only one union. Two examples of single union representation on a working party were the Supplies Working Party and the Electrical Operations Working Party. In both cases worker representation was restricted to MOA stewards, although it should be pointed out that in some single-union working parties, ordinary union members may also be included. The value of these types of working parties, in terms of shop steward organisation, is normally in terms of advice and guidance as the stewards would usually be familiar with the issue and the unions attitude to the issue.

The widespread use of joint consultation in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV affords the shop stewards a further opportunity to meet and discuss issues pertinent to their membership. The fact that the majority of stewards have, at some time, been involved in joint consultation with management leads to the conclusion that this form of organisation plays a part in determining the behaviour of the shop steward at the workplace.

Conclusion

This chapter examined shop steward organisation in the Latrobe Valley from a number of perspectives. First, stewards involvement in intra and inter-union steward organisation was explored. The survey revealed that most stewards attended and valued meetings with stewards from their own union, with blue-collar and leader stewards significantly more likely to attend such meetings. These meetings tended to be initiated by the stewards themselves. A smaller number of stewards were
likely to attend meetings with stewards of other unions and, in the main, these tended to be blue-collar, Loy Yang-based and leader stewards. These meetings were usually initiated by the stewards and were regarded as important by those who attended. The finding that leader stewards are more likely to attend intra and inter-union stewards’ meetings is important in understanding their power base and their ability to reject members’ demands when the need arises. The regular attendance at such meetings makes available a number of resources to the steward, back-up during times of crisis and, in general, a re-affirmation of values.

Second, the level of assistance stewards received from other stewards and the influence of the combined steward body was considered. Most stewards received some assistance from other stewards, with leader stewards significantly more likely to receive such assistance. This proved to be related to the attendance at stewards’ meetings. That is, stewards who attended meetings of stewards, from their own or other unions, were more likely to receive assistance from other stewards. This has a direct impact upon the effectiveness of stewards and their ability to carry out their functions. Most stewards felt that the membership was the major influence on their behaviour and although this was the case for all steward types, leaders were more likely to be influenced by their colleagues.

Third, other forms of steward organisation were discussed and in particular stewards’ participation in joint consultation with management. The majority of shop stewards reported that they had been involved in joint consultation with management with leaders being significantly more likely to undertake joint consultation than other steward types. The benefit of this form of organisation varied
depending upon whether the joint consultation involved shop stewards of one or several unions. In the main the benefits tended to parallel those of the intra and inter-union stewards' meetings.

The outcome, in terms of shop steward organisation, of stewards adopting a leadership role is clear. Leaders are more likely to meet formally with other stewards and from these meetings develop relationships with other stewards which will yield assistance if needed. Whilst leaders remain loyal to the membership, the steward body will be a significant source of influence. Collectivity and unity with colleagues assumes a special importance.
CHAPTER NINE

INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND SHOP STEWARDS

Chapter 7 analysed the functions and duties of shop stewards including the processing of industrial issues. It was found that the majority of Latrobe Valley stewards had engaged in negotiations with management over a range of issues. However, that chapter did not consider what would happen if those negotiations failed to achieve the stewards' desired objectives. Specifically, do stewards initiate and/or encourage some form of industrial action? This chapter will focus on the involvement of shop stewards in industrial action paying particular attention to the relationship between the stewards' role orientation and the part they play in strike action. Although a strike is only one of many forms of industrial action, it does involve an observable commitment to the objectives being fought for and brings into clear focus the leadership role of the steward. The role orientations of the steward and the level of shop-floor organisation will, thus, become important explanatory variables. This direction for research is clearly preferred by Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel:

Strikes do not just happen. As a form of collective activity they require the development of a degree of unity amongst those involved. Such organisation is not only important once a strike has begun; it is equally necessary in creating a stoppage of work. Particular individuals or groups are likely first to introduce the idea of a strike and then to persuade their fellows of the validity of this course of action. The

1. As Kerr suggested the "... means of expression (of industrial conflict) are as unlimited as the ingenuity of man." See C. Kerr, Labour and Management in Industrial Society (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p.171.
mobilization of strike action, then, is a social process involving systems of influence and power.  

The chapter is broken into three sections. The first section examines the perceived level of militancy of shop stewards and the forms of industrial action the stewards have participated in. The second section explores the use of procedures by shop stewards, whilst section three analyses the role of the shop steward in strike action.

Militancy and Forms of Industrial Conflict

The term militancy, as Allen suggested, "... has a strong emotive connotation in the trade union movement." Most trade unionists, and shop stewards in particular, would see themselves as militant, although their degree of militancy (depending on the definition adopted) would vary. This is particularly the case amongst the Latrobe Valley shop stewards. Stewards were asked whether they agreed that workers were justified in withdrawing their labour or using other forms of industrial action in specific circumstances. The overwhelming majority of stewards agreed that industrial action was justified to achieve improvements in wages and conditions (85.9 per cent), to keep management from breaking agreements (93.9 per cent), to speed up delays by management in negotiations (87.8 per cent), to prevent unfair dismissals by management (94.0 per cent) and to influence the Arbitration Commission (70.3 per cent). On the basis of the stewards' responses, and utilizing factor analysis, an index was developed to measure a steward's level of


militancy. Stewards were accordingly able to be classified as militant or non-militant. In this study a militant shop steward is one who feels workers are strongly justified in taking industrial action, whereas a non-militant shop steward, whilst supporting such action, is less committed to such a strategy.

On this basis the majority of blue-collar stewards (61.2 per cent) were classified as militant compared to 47.4 per cent of white-collar stewards. This result was significant at the .10 level ($x^2=3.38, df=1, p=.068$). No significant difference existed in the level of stewards' militancy when broken down by place of employment, although a majority of Loy Yang stewards were classified as non-militant (53.6 per cent compared to 43.0 per cent of Yallourn stewards and 44.8 per cent of Morwell stewards). The majority of all steward types were classified as militant, with marginally more leader stewards being considered militant. The differences did not prove to be statistically significant.

Whether stewards actually involved themselves in industrial action is, however, problematic. To explore this proposition stewards were asked to list the forms of industrial action that have been used in their section since they became a steward. Results are presented in table 9.1. It can be readily seen that work bans, stop work meetings and overtime bans are the most frequently cited form of industrial action. The threat to strike is also frequently mentioned (61.5 per cent), although actual strike action is considerably lower (41.9 per cent). Go slows, as an industrial tactic, are rarely used, only 13.9 per cent of stewards citing this as a form of industrial action used in

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4. Details of the development of this index are reported in chapter 3.
their section. This is similar to the situation found in the U.K. by McCarthy and Parker.5

Table 9.1
Forms of Industrial Action Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Action</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats to strike (N=169)</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime bans (N=174)</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to rule (N=164)</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bans (N=180)</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go slows (N=144)</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop work meetings (N=180)</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes (N=160)</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some important differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards and the forms of industrial action. Blue-collar stewards were substantially more likely to have used threats to strike, work bans, go slows, stop work meetings and strikes than were their white-collar counterparts. Results are presented in table 9.2. These differences were statistically significant at the .01 level with the exception of stop work meetings and threats to strike which were significant at the .05 level. The major difference was in the use of the strike. Only 25.4 per cent of white-collar stewards had been involved in strike action compared to 52.6 per cent of blue-collar stewards ($x^2=11.59$, df=1, p=.000). Several reasons may explain this variation. First, as Hyman suggested, white-collar employees "... have often regarded a stoppage

as 'unprofessional' and hence illegitimate whatever the provocation.\textsuperscript{6}
Second, as Turner noted, most professions have been able by their nature and position to have considerable control over their conditions of employment.\textsuperscript{7} Third, white-collar unions often do not possess a strong commitment to traditional trade union values. This may be due, according to Hyman, to the "... workers' identification with the values of higher managerial strata into which they aspire to achieve promotion."\textsuperscript{8} These factors are relevant to the SECV white-collar unions. The MOA, the largest of the 'staff unions', does not have a tradition of militant action and philosophy and its members, in many cases, do occupy influential positions in management. Given these factors, it was not unexpected that white-collar stewards' involvement in strike action would be less than that of their blue-collar counterparts.

Table 9.2
Forms of Industrial Action by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Action</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to strike (N=169)</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime bans (N=174)</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to rule (N=164)</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bans (N=180)</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go slow (N=144)</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop work meetings (N=180)</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes (N=160)</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{7} Referred to in Hyman, \textit{Strikes}, p.128.

\textsuperscript{8} Hyman, \textit{Strikes}, p.128.
No substantial difference existed in the number of stewards who have been involved in industrial action when broken down by place of employment. However, Loy Yang stewards have, in the main, been less involved in industrial action than their Morwell and Yallourn counterparts. In part, this can be explained by their limited time as shop stewards and, in part, by the effectiveness of the particular forms of industrial action utilized at Loy Yang. The use of bans (overtime, permit and black bans) was higher at Loy Yang whilst other forms of action substantially lower. This illustrates the strategic power stewards can develop in a new, high technology power station and open cut mine. The interdependency of activities and the setting of deadlines to achieve operational status means that the application of bans can prove equally effective, at this stage, as strike action.9

Stewards classified as militant were significantly more likely to have been involved in black bans ($X^2=6.32$, df=1, p=.012) and strike action ($X^2=4.31$, df=1, p=.038) than their less militant counterparts. These stewards were also more likely to have been involved in threats to strike and overtime bans, although the differences were only significant at the .10 level. On two of the remaining three forms of industrial action, work to rule and go slows, non-militant stewards were more likely to represent sections where these tactics have been employed. It may well be that as these actions are less overt than bans and strikes they are seen by non-militant stewards as more reasonable forms of protest.

The forms of industrial action considered above are collective in nature and, as such, may bear a strong relationship with the frequency

9. This is particularly the case with the commissioning of each 500 mega-watt unit in the Loy Yang Power Station.
of stewards attendance at various stewards' meetings. There was no statistically significant relationship between the use of these forms of industrial action and the frequency of the stewards' attendance at inter-union steward meetings. If, however, frequency of attendance at intra-union steward meetings is considered a significant relationship appeared with respect to the threat to strike ($x^2=11.95$, df=3, $p=.008$) and black bans ($x^2=11.49$, df=3, $p=.009$). Strike action and black bans were also statistically significant but only at the .10 level. This lends support to the view espoused in chapter 8 that the value of inter-union shop steward meetings is re-inforcement of trade union philosophy whilst the value of intra-union steward meetings relates more to the discussion of tactics and the development of strategies during periods of conflict.

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that leaders and delegates did not substantially differ in terms of their level of militancy. This was not the case with regard to involvement in industrial action. Results are presented in table 9.3. In all cases leader stewards were more likely to have been involved in industrial action than their delegate counterpart. Three of these differences proved to be statistically significant at the .05 level: threat to strike, go slows and stop work meetings. An examination of table 9.3 also reveals that work group leaders are more likely to have been involved in industrial action than their delegate (and committed delegate) counterparts. This suggests that the leadership provided by the steward may be important in the adoption of industrial action. It must be remembered, however, that stewards by modifying and/or squashing issues may well be avoiding a situation that ultimately may have led to industrial action.
Table 9.3
Involvement in Industrial Action by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat to strike (N=165)</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime bans (N=171)</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to rule (N=161)</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bans (N=177)</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go slow (N=142)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop work meetings (N=175)</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes (N=157)</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The foregoing discussion concentrated on stewards' use of a variety of industrial action. Blue-collar, Yallourn, Morwell and leader stewards were found to be more likely to be involved in such action. This raises the question of which form of industrial action is considered by shop stewards to be most effective? In particular, is the adoption of strike action, as a strategy, an indication of the effectiveness of the strike as a method to achieve certain objectives or is it more a reflection of the maintenance of traditional practices? To explore this proposition stewards were asked 'do you think strike action is more effective than other forms of industrial action?' Only 37.4 per cent of all stewards who responded to the questionnaire felt that strike action was the most effective industrial tactic. Some 41.1 per cent of stewards felt strikes, on the whole, were less effective whilst the remaining stewards were unsure. No statistically significant difference existed between stewards from blue and white-collar unions or from the three production centres, although blue-collar and Yallourn stewards were marginally more likely to perceive strike action as the most effective strategy.
Leader stewards were more likely to rate strike action as the least effective strategy whilst delegate stewards were more likely to perceive strike action as the most effective tactic. This, in part, explains why leader stewards are less likely to support strike action than their delegate counterparts (39.2 per cent compared to 44.7 per cent). Militant stewards, as expected, were more likely to perceive the strike as an effective strategy, although the result did not prove to be statistically significant.

Use of Procedures

A common perception held of shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley is that they are more willing to strike, or engage in other forms of industrial action, to resolve an issue, than to work through procedures. To adopt this view, however, means the acceptance of two underlying assumptions. First, this perception assumes that strikes/industrial action are direct substitutes for procedures. Yet, as Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel have pointed out "... surveys have suggested that strikes and resort to procedural means are not simple alternatives." Further, as Marsh suggested, the use of strikes may be designed to accelerate the procedural machinery. Second, this view assumes that there are formal procedures in existence, that shop stewards are aware of such procedures and that the steward has control over their membership to the extent that they will adopt such


procedures. This latter assumption necessarily precedes the strategy implications of the use of procedures and must be considered prior to the examination of strike action. This is the purpose of this section. In particular, the section will focus on the existence of procedures, whether they are followed and the problems of adhering to such procedures.

Stewards were asked whether there 'is a formally agreed procedure for settling disputes that arise at the local level'. Some 58.4 per cent of stewards responded there was such a procedure in existence.\(^\text{13}\) Thus, for nearly half of the Latrobe Valley stewards (41.6 per cent) procedures are not an alternative to some form of industrial action, nor could strike action be viewed as a mechanism to speed up the formal procedures. The existence of procedures was more likely to be in those workplaces involving blue-collar unions and were more prevalent at the Yallourn and Morwell production centres. These differences, however, were not statistically significant. Slightly more than half of these stewards (52.5 per cent) claimed that the procedures were a result of negotiations,\(^\text{14}\) whilst the remaining stewards suggested the procedures were a result of custom and practice (16.1 per cent), SECV regulations (11.0 per cent), union policy (11.0 per cent), arbitrated decisions (5.1 per cent) and other (4.2 per cent). The negotiated procedures were, in the main, the result of workplace interaction between the supervisor or

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\(^{13}\) This is generally in accord with the findings of Charleston. See D.F. Charleston, Shop Stewards in Australia: An Analytical Survey of Role Perceptions and Activities' (M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1977), p.356.

\(^{14}\) Charleston also found the majority of dispute procedures were determined through negotiations. See Charleston, 'Shop Stewards in Australia', p.356.
line manager and the stewards. Rarely do such procedures extend beyond the immediate workplace.  

Little differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards, with respect to their perceptions of how procedures were developed, although, as expected, Loy Yang stewards were significantly lower on procedures that arose out of custom and practice. Stewards who meet frequently with stewards from their own union reported that these procedures are more likely to be negotiated, whilst those stewards who did not meet regularly indicated that these procedures are more likely to arise out of custom and practice. This difference, however, did not prove to be statistically significant.

If a procedure exists and is known to the stewards, do they follow such procedure? Nearly three-quarters of such stewards (72.6 per cent) claimed they usually follow procedures and another 25.8 per cent indicated they sometimes follow such procedures. Only 1.6 per cent of these stewards indicated they would rarely follow procedures. Considerably more white-collar stewards were likely to follow procedure than their blue-collar counterpart (83.7 per cent compared to 66.7 per cent), although this difference was not statistically significant. Stewards from each of the production centres were equally committed to using such procedures.

Stewards were more likely to follow procedures that arose out of custom and practice (89.5 per cent) and negotiation (82.0 per cent) than those procedures that arose from SECV regulation (66.7 per cent), union policy (53.8 per cent) and arbitration (33.3 per cent). These

15. Only one such procedure, disputes arising out of the introduction of the 37 1/2 week/9 day fortnight, would be applicable to all SECV employees in the Latrobe Valley.
differences proved to be statistically significant ($x^2=13.13$, df=5, 
p=0.022). Accordingly, it is clear, procedures are more likely to be 
used if they are negotiated between stewards and management and 
recognise the norms of the workplace.

Leaders, work group leaders and committed delegates were all more 
likely to follow procedure (76.7 per cent, 77.8 per cent and 68.6 per 
cent respectively) than were delegates (63.6 per cent). These 
differences did not prove to be statistically significant. Part of the 
explanation of this result may be due to the small number of delegates 
who were aware of the existence of a procedure (37.7 per cent). With 
such a small group of delegates ($N=20$) it is possible that the results 
have become skewed. A more important explanation, in terms of the 
objectives of this study, is the close relationship many delegates, 
often white-collar stewards, have with management. Many disputes are 
solved at an informal level without resort to procedures or industrial 
action. One white-collar steward claimed in an interview that, 'if a 
problem arises I usually have enough contacts to rectify the issue.' A 
third explanation is that leaders are more likely to have negotiated the 
procedure than are their delegate counterparts (51.7 per cent compared 
to 30.0 per cent). In these cases, it can be argued, stewards feel some 
moral obligation to exhaust the procedure prior to embarking on 
industrial action. A fourth explanation is that if the membership is 
sceptical of such procedures delegates, in particular, would tend to 
defer to the membership and, as a consequence, would not adopt such a 
procedure.

A further reason why stewards by-pass procedure is that they have, 
in the past, experienced difficulty or problems with the procedure. 
Stewards were therefore asked 'do you have any complaints about the
procedure?' Only 15.9 per cent of stewards who were aware of a disputes procedure saw problems with the procedure, although more than five times the number of blue-collar stewards had complaints compared to their white-collar counterparts (22.5 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively). This result was statistically significant ($x^2=7.21$, df=1, $p=.007$). Little difference existed between stewards from the three production centres and leader stewards were only marginally more likely to have complaints about procedures than the other three steward types. The more frequent complaints involved procedures that arose out of SECV regulations (33.3 per cent), union policy (30.8 per cent) and arbitrated decisions (20.0 per cent). The smallest number of complaints involved procedures that arose out of negotiations (14.8 per cent) and custom and practice (5.3 per cent). This is consistent with the earlier finding that a strong relationship existed between how the procedure was developed and whether a steward would follow such a procedure.

The major complaint for all steward types was that the procedure was slow and cumbersome. Several stewards indicated, during interviews, that it was often necessary to institute some industrial action, usually in the form of bans, to speed up the process. This lends support to the comments of Marsh referred to earlier in this section. However, one problem both blue-collar and leader stewards alluded to was the opposition by supervisors to the procedure. Some supervisors, it was claimed, could make the procedure virtually unworkable. For example, one AMWU leader steward claimed in the questionnaire 'when dealing with bosses, whether they are right or wrong they all cover for each other to put you off!' Where problems with procedures were expressed in terms of supervisor opposition, these procedures did not arise from either custom and practice or union policy. The adherence to custom and practice is
not unexpected as the supervisor is usually appointed from the workgroup and accepts the customs and practices that have developed, over time, as the most appropriate way to proceed. The satisfaction with procedures arising out of union policy is partially explainable in terms of the supervisors own membership of a union (usually the MOA). The difficult position of the supervisor, neither part of management nor of the workgroup, and hence their perceived need of a union, means they are unlikely to deliberately alienate themselves from their union by opposing union developed procedures.

It is clear, from this research, that where a procedure exists, stewards are likely to exhaust the procedure before resorting to industrial action. Where, however, problems exist with the functioning of the procedure — slow, cumbersome, supervisor opposition — it is likely that some form of industrial action will be considered. Leader stewards are more likely to exhaust procedures before supporting industrial action. It should be emphasised that whilst the majority of stewards appear to accept and follow procedure, over 40 per cent of stewards operate outside of a procedural framework.

**Strikes and the Role of Shop Stewards**

Although major strike activity in the Latrobe Valley attracts considerable attention, primarily due to the possible state-wide implications, little is known about the role shop stewards play in this activity. Benson and Goff alluded to the stewards key role when they claimed that a major characteristic of strikes in the Latrobe Valley

16. In terms of arbitrary decision-making by management or grievances arising from the work group.
"... has been the strong leadership at the shop floor level."\textsuperscript{17} This section will specifically examine this assertion. Before commencing this task, it is necessary to provide a brief profile of the extent and type of strike activity in the SECV's Latrobe Valley operations.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{ Strikes in the Latrobe Valley }\textsuperscript{19}

Stewards were asked 'has there been a strike in your section since you have been a shop steward?' Some 33.3 per cent of stewards (N=68) responded affirmatively, with blue-collar (42.3 per cent) and Yallourn stewards (36.7 per cent) being more likely to be involved in strike action.\textsuperscript{20} Only 23.3 per cent of Loy Yang stewards had been involved in strike action. In part, this can be explained by their shorter term of office and, in part, as earlier argued, by the effectiveness of work bans. Leaders (42.6 per cent) were also more likely to have been involved in strikes than delegates (24.5 per cent). In the main, the strikes involved three issues: wages (including allowances), manning (including re-deployment) and shift penalties. Wages were the primary concern of white-collar stewards, accounting for some 35.7 per cent of strike action. Blue-collar stewards, on the other hand, were equally

\textsuperscript{17} J.W. Benson and D.J. Goff, 'The 1977 Latrobe Valley Maintenance Workers' Strike', \textit{Journal of Industrial Relations} 21 (June 1979), p.217.

\textsuperscript{18} This section should be considered in conjunction with the comments, provided in chapter 4, on the extent and level of industrial action in the Latrobe Valley.

\textsuperscript{19} No distinction is made, in this thesis, between official and unofficial strike action. As Allen claimed "... the distinction has no relevance for an understanding of strike action." See Allen, \textit{Militant Trade Unionism}, p.114.

\textsuperscript{20} It should be noted that these figures do not necessarily represent the number of strikes as the possibility of double counting exists and stewards were asked to refer not to all strikes, but to the most recent strike. Five stewards did not respond to this question.
concerned with wages and manning issues and together these issues accounted for 39.2 per cent of strikes. Other issues of importance to blue-collar stewards, although of negligible importance to white-collar stewards, were working conditions, health and safety and overtime. Leaders and committed delegates cited wages as the major issue (23.8 per cent and 46.2 per cent) whilst work group leaders and delegates cited manning as the most frequent issue leading to strike action (38.5 per cent and 18.2 per cent respectively).

The majority of strikes (61.4 per cent) involved only members of one union and 86.0 per cent of all strikes involved three or less unions. Little variation existed between blue and white-collar stewards or stewards from the three production centres in terms of the number of unions involved in the strike. Yallourn stewards were, however, more likely to conduct single-union strike action (70.0 per cent of all strikes). Single-union strike action was also favoured by leaders (73.7 per cent) and committed delegates (72.7 per cent) which tends to run counter to their wider trade union orientation. Delegates on the other hand were more likely to be involved in strike action that involved two or more unions (63.6 per cent).

The typical strike (61.7 per cent of all strikes) involved less than 250 workers and this tended to be uniform across unions and workplaces. It should be noted that no strike at Loy Yang involved more than 250 workers, although this is a product of the size of the operational workforce in 1985 rather than any underlying factors. A similar pattern emerged when broken down by the four steward role types, although 50.0 per cent of delegates reported that their strikes had involved less than 30 workers. This compared with figures of 10.0 per cent, 20.0 per cent and 11.8 per cent for work group leaders, committed delegates and leaders respectively.
In the main the strikes were of short duration. Over half (51.6 per cent) lasted for one day or less and in 83.9 per cent of all strikes a return to work occurred within two days. Duration of strikes were uniform across production centres, although 74.4 per cent of white-collar stewards reported strikes of one day duration compared to 45.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards. Both committed delegates and leaders (64.3 per cent and 61.9 per cent respectively) were more likely to be involved in short strikes (one day or less). This should be related to these stewards preference for single-union action and is part of a wider strategy used to achieve their objectives. On the other hand, delegates and work group leaders were more likely to be involved in strikes of two or more days duration (50.0 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively) which may be indicative of the lack of leadership provided by delegates or the work group leaders’ lack of commitment to the broader aims of unionism. Only 9.7 per cent of stewards reported a strike lasting ten or more days. These involved only blue-collar unions (12.5 per cent) and the Yallourn and Loy Yang production centres (16.1 per cent and 14.3 per cent respectively). Further, work group leaders were more likely to be involved in strikes exceeding ten days (20.0 per cent). These strikes tended to involve matters that directly affected their work group, in particular manning issues, and this determination to protect the membership, often regardless of wider union considerations, underlies Batstone et al.’s reference to this group as ‘cowboys’.21

In summary, the majority of stewards surveyed had not been directly involved in strike action. Where stewards had been involved, the strike was generally of short duration, one day or less, giving rise to the

claim that the strike was not so much a test of strength but rather to show management, and perhaps the Arbitration Commission, the degree of seriousness with which the workgroup viewed the matters in dispute. Generally the strike would involve less than 250 workers, usually members of the one union and, in the main, involved wages, manning and shift penalties. This profile of strikes in the 1980s differs in some important respects to strikes in earlier periods. In particular, the number of strikes have declined and, whilst the issue of wages is still important, issues such as manning and redeployment, particularly following the closure of Yallourn C and D power stations and the commissioning of Loy Yang A power station, have become important. It is likely that these issues will remain important in the foreseeable future as the SECV implements a new corporate strategy, a strategy based on efficiency and cost effectiveness.

**Issue Raising**

Shop stewards are in a unique position to influence their membership by raising issues they think are important and proposing strategies to win improvements in wages and conditions of employment. The stewards’ position of influence has, in the Latrobe Valley, led SECV management to express the view that if strike action occurs then the stewards should be held responsible, either for inciting discontent or


or providing irresponsible leadership. This view, while it disregards the part the membership play during strike action, raises the question of whether shop stewards are the primary source of issues that ultimately lead to strike action? Of those stewards who had experienced a strike only 14.1 per cent of stewards claimed that in the last strike it was themselves who brought the issue to the attention of the union. Of considerably more importance were the membership (57.8 per cent) and full-time union officials (28.1 per cent). When the issue arose from the membership it tended to come from a group of members (94.6 per cent of cases) rather than an individual. Thus, before a steward is asked to process an issue, it is likely that the members have discussed the problem informally and have made a decision that the issue is of sufficient importance to take further. This is consistent with the findings of Turner, Clack and Roberts who suggested that stewards do not appear to stimulate and provoke disputes.

White-collar stewards perceived the initiators of issues to be a group of members (57.1 per cent) or Melbourne-based union officials (42.9 per cent). Blue-collar stewards also perceived the membership as an important source of issues (54.0 per cent), although Melbourne-based union officials were not seen as important (18.0 per cent). Other sources of issues, as perceived by blue-collar stewards, included shop stewards (18.0 per cent), local full-time officials (6.0 per cent) and

25. For example, on this latter point, with respect to the 1977 maintenance worker’s strike, SECV management claimed: "The S.E.C.V Maintenance Workers are on an indefinite strike over a list of claims which Latrobe Valley shop stewards have refused since March 29 this year, to submit for consideration through normal, established trade union channels". W. De Campo [Assistant General Manager (Operations) SECV], Circular to Striking Maintenance Workers, 9 September, 1977.

individual members (4.0 per cent). No significant differences existed
between stewards from the three production centres, although Loy Yang
stewards perceived only a group of members (71.4 per cent) and shop
stewards (28.6 per cent) as the initiators of issues. This lends
support to the argument advanced in chapter 7 that in new, advanced
technology work places, full-time union officials will play only a minor
role in initiating and processing issues.

Due to the small number of stewards who claimed they, as stewards,
had initiated the last dispute (N=4) it was not possible to ascertain
whether certain steward types are more likely to have raised issues that
ultimately led to strike action. It is, however, possible to reach some
tentative conclusions regarding the initiation of issues in general. As
we have seen (chapter 7), the vast majority of delegates (75.0 per cent)
perceived issues as arising from groups of members. Also, where shop
stewards were seen as a significant source of disputes, this tended to
be by work group leaders and leaders. Further, Melbourne-based union
officials were not seen by delegates as the source of any issues that
led to strike action. Thus, delegate stewards are more likely to
perceive that the issues they process arose from the membership, whereas
leader stewards are more likely to perceive that they raise issues
themselves and process issues raised by full-time union officials.

It is clear from the above, and also the discussion contained in
chapter 7, that shop stewards perceive the membership as the major
source of issues that arise at the workplace. This is equally the case
for issues that lead ultimately to strike action as well as issues that
may be solved by discussions between the steward and the supervisor.
Use of Procedures

It was noted earlier in this chapter that most stewards usually follow procedures for the settling of industrial disputes. Only 1.6 per cent of stewards stated they would rarely follow such procedures. However, that finding related to all forms of industrial action and may not be relevant to issues perceived as serious enough to warrant strike action. Stewards who had been involved in strike action were therefore asked had all procedures, within the SECV, been exhausted before the strike took place. Some 73.3 per cent of these stewards (N=68) claimed that procedures had been exhausted prior to the strike. White-collar stewards were more likely to have exhausted procedure than their blue-collar counterparts (90.9 per cent compared to 69.4 per cent). This provides some support for the finding of Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel that "proportionately more issues go through procedure on the staff side."27 This result, however, did not prove to be statistically significant. No major difference existed between stewards from the three work centres, although Morwell stewards were more likely to work through procedures. This tends to reflect the higher concentration of white-collar stewards located at that centre.

Some 93.3 per cent of committed delegates had worked through procedure compared to 71.4 per cent for work group leaders, 66.7 per cent for leaders and 63.6 per cent for delegates. It is clear from this result that stewards that adopt a leadership role are not more likely to disregard procedural arrangements. This would suggest that other factors, such as the unions' attitude to the strike, may be important in a steward's decision to work through procedures.

27. Batstone et al., Shop Stewards in Action, p.245.
This raises the question, was the strike sanctioned by the union? This is an important consideration for stewards as it may place them in a conflict situation between the wishes of their workgroup and their union representative role. Some 72.5 per cent of these stewards claimed the strike was sanctioned by the state union. Normally, however, union approval for strike action would only be given once all procedures had been exhausted. This was the case in 85.7 per cent of all strikes approved by the union. Stewards from white-collar unions and from the Morwell production centre were more likely to undertake strike action that did not have the official approval of their union. The differences were not, however, statistically significant. A slightly higher percentage of delegates (25.0 per cent) had undertaken strike activity not sanctioned by their union when compared to leaders (20.0 per cent). Once again, the difference was not statistically significant.

From the above, it is clear that Latrobe Valley stewards, in the main, do work through procedure and seek approval from their union before engaging in strike action. In those cases where procedures were not followed, the reasons discussed earlier in this chapter — slow and cumbersome procedures, supervisor opposition — are partial explanations. One other explanation, at least in some strikes, was that the union had approved of strike action even though the procedure had not been exhausted. Slightly less than half of the strikes that occurred prior to procedures being exhausted (45.5 per cent) had been officially approved by the union. This provides a justification for shop stewards to terminate procedures for more visible and speedier methods.
The Strike Decision

Steward leadership depends, to a considerable degree, on the support of the membership. This is particularly the case during periods of stress, such as industrial action, and hence it would be expected that the membership would play a key role in the decision to take strike action. This proved to be the case. Some 87.7 per cent of stewards who had been involved in a strike reported that the decision to take strike action was made at a meeting of members. This was more likely to be the case when more than one union was involved (90.9 per cent). Normally a vote would be taken at these meetings, usually by a show of hands, after an opportunity to participate in the discussion was given to all members. A slightly smaller number of stewards (75.5 per cent) felt the decision to take industrial action should be made at a meeting of members. This difference is indicative of the control the membership can exert over their representatives. Only in 6.2 per cent of strikes was the decision taken at a shop stewards' meeting. It is thus clear that the "... democratic decisions by members are major constraints upon the activities of both stewards and members." Nevertheless it is important to recognise that stewards have the ability and are in a position, particularly in concert with other stewards, to direct the way matters are presented and hence to influence the final outcomes.

Whilst most both blue and white-collar stewards reported that decisions to take strike action were made at membership meetings (88.2 per cent and 85.7 per cent respectively) the remaining blue-collar stewards nominated shop steward or local branch meetings whereas the remaining white-collar stewards nominated state and federal union

28. Ibid., p.92.
meetings. Little difference was evidenced between the perceptions of stewards from the three production centres, although Yallourn stewards (6.4 per cent) were the only stewards to state that some strike decisions were made outside of the Latrobe Valley. Certainly part of the explanation of this finding lies in the history of the continual struggle for control over the Yallourn membership by some state and federal unions.

Table 9.4 provides stewards’ perception of the level at which the strike decision was made and their preferred level for this type of decision. Delegates were more likely to perceive membership meetings as the appropriate forum to make decisions concerning industrial action. The differences between the four role types, however, did not prove to be statistically significant. A different picture emerged when stewards were asked to state how the actual strike decision was made. Although a comparison of this nature is limited in its appropriateness and value leader stewards are more likely to be involved in strikes that have been ratified by the membership than are delegates. Once again the difference did not prove to be statistically significant.

Strike Organisation

Once strike action has been agreed upon, what role do stewards play in the conduct of the strike? In particular, are senior stewards and/or full-time union officials involved from the outset and who are the key people in the day-to-day organisation of the strike?

29. This is due primarily to the smaller number of stewards who were actually involved in strike action.
Table 9.4
Stewards’ Perception and Preference of the Level of Strike Decision+ by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(90.0)</td>
<td>(65.9)</td>
<td>(69.6)</td>
<td>(77.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>(20.5)</td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
<td>(11.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local branch</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.0)</td>
<td>(9.1)</td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
<td>(8.9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State branch</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
<td>(4.3)</td>
<td>(2.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal branch</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td>(--)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100.0)</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(50)</td>
<td>(44)</td>
<td>(46)</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Figures in parentheses relate to stewards’ preference with respect to the level at which decision to undertake industrial action should be made. All other figures relate to stewards’ perceptions of the level at which the decisions to take strike action was made.

A number of shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley have assumed positions of seniority on the shop-floor. These have been referred to as senior stewards. They may occupy positions such as convenors of intra and/or inter-union shop committees, positions within the branch/union hierarchy or they may, due to their seniority, personality or ability be looked upon by fellow stewards as the next level in the shop-floor structure. Their advice, guidance and assistance are frequently sought on a range of matters. Is this the case when strike action is imminent? Stewards were asked ‘was a senior steward sent for before the strike took place?’ Of the stewards who had been involved in strike action, some 61.2 per cent reported that a senior steward had
been involved. A higher percentage of stewards, 74.5 per cent, reported that a full-time union official had been involved prior to strike action. In this latter case, the full-time official became involved, in the majority of cases (51.1 per cent), at the beginning of the dispute prior to a consideration of strike action. The high percentage of strike action involving full-time officials, coupled with the strike usually being sanctioned by the union, weakens the argument that the Latrobe Valley stewards act independently of their unions. 30

Blue-collar stewards were more likely to send for a senior steward prior to the strike than were their white-collar counterparts (62.5 per cent and 55.6 per cent respectively). White-collar stewards, on the other hand, were more likely to involve a full-time union official prior to strike action (91.0 per cent compared to 69.5 per cent of blue-collar stewards). Blue-collar stewards were, however, more likely to make the decision to involve full-time officials at the beginning of the dispute than were white-collar stewards (52.8 per cent and 45.5 per cent respectively), whereas white-collar stewards were more likely to involve a full-time official just prior to the actual strike action (45.5 per cent compared to 16.7 per cent for blue-collar stewards). These results, however, did not prove to be statistically significant. Nevertheless, these findings are important because they illustrate the strategy adopted by stewards with regard to the involvement of 'others'. Blue-collar stewards, if they are to involve full-time officials, will involve them from the outset. If they choose to go it alone and subsequently 'the going gets tough' they are unlikely to shift responsibility onto full-time officials. White-collar stewards, on the

other hand, would not seemingly wish to undertake strike action without the assistance of their paid officials.

Loy Yang stewards were more likely to send for a senior steward prior to undertaking strike action (83.3 per cent compared to 54.5 per cent and 61.9 per cent for Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively). They were, however, less likely to involve full-time officials, either at the beginning of a dispute or just prior to undertaking strike action. Only 50.0 per cent of Loy Yang stewards would involve a full-time official prior to strike action (including at the beginning of the dispute) compared to 66.6 per cent and 90.0 per cent for Yallourn and Morwell stewards respectively. The high percentage of Morwell stewards who involve a full-time official, in part, reflects the higher concentration of white-collar stewards at Morwell. This result, coupled with the findings relevant to the use of senior stewards suggests that to a limited degree the use of a senior steward or full-time official are seen by stewards as alternatives. Where inter-union steward organisation is strong the senior steward is most likely to be sent for, whilst in sections where organisation is weak the full-time official will play a key role. The reverse, however, applies to intra-union steward organisation. Where intra-union steward organisation is strong stewards tend to go directly to full-time officials; where intra-union organisation is weak stewards are more likely to call upon the assistance of a senior steward. Whilst these results are explainable, for example, if stewards meet regularly with stewards from their own union the next step would be the involvement of a full-time official, they do indicate the complex nature of the decision to involve 'others' in strike action.
Delegate stewards were more likely to involve senior stewards and full-time officials, the latter at the beginning of the dispute and just prior to strike action, than were their leader counterparts. The differences, however, did not prove to be statistically significant. Results are presented in table 9.5. Committed delegates, however, were the most likely to involve senior stewards and full-time officials before strike action took place. From these results it is clear that leader stewards will tend to handle the organisation of events leading to strike action rather than involve significant 'others'. The general role of full-time union officials and their involvement in industrial issues will be considered in detail in chapter 12.

Table 9.5
Involvement of Senior Stewards and Full-Time Union Officials in Strike Action by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior steward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- prior to strike action</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time union official</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- beginning of dispute</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- prior to strike action</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once a workgroup has decided upon strike action, either as a workgroup or as part of a larger group of union members, who are the key organisers of the strike? In particular, who arranges meetings, reports progress to members, decides on strategy and negotiates with management. The last two functions will be discussed under separate headings later in this chapter. One other factor, more pervasive and
more difficult to identify precisely, is the development of the social cohesion necessary to maintain strike action. This factor will not be discussed in this chapter, but will be referred to in the later case studies of industrial action in chapters 13 and 14.

Interviews with stewards and full-time officials indicated there were five groups of officials that could play important roles in the organisation of strike action. These were senior stewards/local branch officials, a shop stewards' committee, the local full-time union official, officials from the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council and state union officials. It should be noted, however, that in many short strikes (less than one day duration), the involvement of 'outsiders' will often occur subsequent to a return to work. This section, therefore, is primarily referring to the more extended strikes (in excess of one day). Over half the stewards stated that senior stewards/local branch officials (64.5 per cent, N=31), shop steward committees (65.7 per cent, N=35) and state union officials (61.1 per cent, N=36) played key roles in the organisation of the dispute. Local full-time officials were seen as less significant and were considered important by only 46.6 per cent of stewards (N=13). This result is surprising as most stewards involved full-time officials in disputes (64.4 per cent) and usually accepted the strategies proposed by them (78.3 per cent – see chapter 12). It may well be, however, that their

31. Many of the senior stewards were also officers of their union's local branch.

32. Outsiders in this context refers to officials who are not members of the primary work group.

33. This has the effect of reducing considerably the number of stewards responding to these particular questions. As such, only tentative conclusions can be drawn.
failure to prevent the issue going to strike action (either by failing in negotiations or recommending inappropriate strategies) may have resulted in stewards taking the issue into their own hands or referring it to more senior officials.

Gippsland Trades and Labour Council officials were not considered important with only 26.9 per cent (N=7) of stewards claiming these officials played a key role in the organisation of the strike. This was not unexpected for two reasons. First, the changing composition of the GTLC and the wider representation it provides for unions in the Latrobe Valley, as discussed in chapter 4, has meant that the key officials may no longer work for the SECV. The shop stewards in the SECV, as a consequence, may not perceive these officials as appropriate to involve in SECV industrial issues. Second, the GTLC officials would only be involved if the issue concerned matters of union principles or several unions where a co-ordination role may be requested.34

The frequency of involvement of each of these groups depended, in part, on the issues under consideration. GTLC and state union officials were more likely to be involved if the issue concerned wages and conditions. Given the sensitivity to wage relativities in the SECV's Latrobe Valley operations this finding was not unexpected. Senior shop stewards and local branch officials tended to be involved in demarcation disputes and health and safety issues whilst, predictably, steward committees would not become involved if the issue was one of demarcation.

34. One other explanation is that GTLC officials were involved but that shop stewards saw their involvement in terms of their position as stewards or local branch officials.
Two important differences exist between blue and white-collar stewards' perceptions of strike organisation. First, blue-collar stewards were substantially more likely to involve senior stewards/local branch officials (76.0 per cent) and GTLC officials (33.3 per cent) than their white-collar counterparts (16.7 per cent and 0 per cent respectively). The former result proved to be statistically significant ($x^2=7.44$, df=1, p=.006). Second, white-collar stewards were more likely to involve a shop steward committee (71.4 per cent compared to 64.3 per cent for blue-collar stewards), a local full-time official (62.5 per cent compared to 40.0 per cent) and state union officials (66.7 per cent compared to 59.3 per cent). These differences were not statistically significant. In the main, it is clear that the major difference between stewards from blue and white-collar unions can be characterised by a desire on the part of blue-collar stewards to keep the dispute local and preferably in the hands of those most closely involved. White-collar stewards, on the other hand, are more willing to pass on or refer issues to full-time union officials, both at the local and state level. This represents, in part, the degree to which external influences can play a role in strike activity.

Some differences were evidenced between the stewards' perceptions of the involvement of these five groups when broken down by production centres. Morwell stewards were more likely to involve the local full-time union official in their strike organisation (72.7 per cent compared to 28.6 per cent of Yallourn stewards and 33.3 per cent of Loy Yang stewards). These differences proved to be statistically significant at the .10 level ($x^2=5.06$, df=2, p=.080). These stewards were also more likely to involve state union officials. Loy Yang stewards had not involved GTLC officials, however, this is primarily due to the major
unions at Loy Yang (FEDPA, the MOA, AIMPE) not being affiliated with the GTLC or having affiliated very recently (see chapter 4).

Leaders were more likely to organise strike action through a steward committee than delegates who tended to rely on local and state union officials. Data are presented in table 9.6, although the small numbers involved makes unreliable any statistical verification. Leaders relied, almost exclusively, on senior stewards/local branch officials (72.7 per cent) and shop stewards' committees (41.7 per cent), whereas delegates, although relying heavily on steward committees (83.3 per cent), also relied on state union officials (57.1 per cent), local full-time officials (50.0 per cent) and senior stewards/local branch officials (50.0 per cent). Committed delegates and work group leaders relied substantially on all these groups, with the exception of GTLC officials, to play a significant role in the organisation of the strike. It is clear from these results that the leader steward can be characterised as organising strike action with the minimum involvement from outside the workgroup and when 'outside' assistance is required the leader tended to look to fellow stewards, either individually or collectively in the form of a committee. Full-time officials, for these stewards, have little relevance in strike organisation.

Strategy Development and Participation in Negotiations

To maintain a strike requires a certain level of organisation at the shop-floor level. The role of the steward in this organisation was discussed in the last section. However, whilst this organisation is a necessary condition to maintain strike action it is not sufficient. Of prime importance to achieving the objectives underlying the strike is the development of appropriate strategies and the following through of
these strategies in the negotiation process. This section will examine the role of the steward in proposing strategy and their participation in negotiations. It should be pointed out that management and/or state union officials may, however, deliberately attempt to exclude shop-floor representatives from the negotiations. Equally, these negotiations may take place under the auspices of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission via conciliation hearings and compulsory conferences.\textsuperscript{35}

Table 9.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officials</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior steward/</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branch official</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards committee</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local full-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>union official</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTLC officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State union officials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewards were asked 'in general who proposes strategy in industrial disputes'?\textsuperscript{36} Some 45.7 per cent of stewards nominated full-time union officials, 36.4 per cent nominated stewards (either individual stewards,

\textsuperscript{35} To allow for greater shop steward participation these hearings and conferences would normally be held on-site in the Latrobe Valley. (Interview with Commissioner Fred Brown, the member of the Arbitration Commission responsible for the Power Industry, Melbourne, 12 November 1986).

\textsuperscript{36} This question was designed to include all industrial disputes as strategies are often developed prior to strike action being agreed upon or taking place. This, however, will limit the conclusions that can be drawn with regard to the ongoing development of strategies during strike action.
senior stewards or steward committees) and 17.9 per cent nominated the membership. Over half the stewards (62.6 per cent) who nominated stewards as the key proposes of strategy felt individual stewards were more important than collective bodies. Considerable differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards with regard to their perceptions of the proposers of strategy. Results are presented in table 9.7. Clearly, for white-collar stewards, full-time officials are of key importance, whereas for blue-collar stewards, the steward themselves are important in this regard. This difference proved to be statistically significant ($x^2=13.92$, df=4, $p=.008$). These results reflect the findings of Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel. Batstone et al. also found that staff stewards were more likely to accept strategies proposed by full-time officials than were the shop-floor stewards. This was not the case in this study where both blue and white-collar stewards were equally likely to accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials. This aspect will be more fully examined in chapter 12.

Table 9.7

Proposers of Strategy During Industrial Disputes by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposer</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time officials</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward committee</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A major point of agreement between blue and white-collar stewards is that the members do not, in the substantial majority of cases, propose the strategies to be adopted in industrial disputes. Although strike action may require a greater commitment from the members, interviews with stewards did not suggest the membership would play a more active role in the development of strike strategies. Little difference in perceptions occurred between stewards from the three work centres. As was to be expected, perceptions of Morwell stewards tended to reflect the concentration of white-collar stewards at that centre, whilst Loy Yang stewards had a higher percentage of stewards proposing strategies during industrial disputes. These differences were not statistically significant.

Leaders were more likely to perceive shop stewards (individually and collectively) and full-time officials as the key proposers of strategy, during an industrial dispute, than were their delegate counterparts. These perceptions will, to a limited degree, reflect the part each steward plays in the actual development of strategy. Results are presented in table 9.8. In contrast, delegate stewards perceived full-time union officials and union members as the major proposers of strategy. Work group leaders and committed delegates tended, in their perceptions, to follow their leader counterparts.

The development of strategy during industrial disputes, in particular strike action, is an ongoing and dynamic process. Strategy can also be developed during the negotiation process, both during adjournments in negotiations and during the negotiations themselves. Coupled with the development of strategies during negotiations is the likelihood that compromises will have to be made if a settlement is to be reached. Accordingly, the importance of the role of the steward can
Table 9.8
Proposer of Strategy During Industrial Disputes by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposer</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time officials</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward committee</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

be gauged by their participation in the process of negotiations.

Stewards were asked 'who were the key negotiators during the strike?' Of importance were senior stewards (58.6 per cent, N=29), shop steward committees (65.7 per cent, N=35), local full-time union official (59.4 per cent, N=32) and state union officials (66.7 per cent, N=36). Of less importance were members of peak union councils, the GTLC (21.7 per cent, N=23) and the VTHC/ACTU (41.4 per cent, N=29). These last two results are to be expected as these bodies would only become involved in major issues such as overall wages and conditions, protracted strikes or strikes involving several unions. Similarly, state union officials tended to be involved in those strikes concerning wages and conditions, manning (particularly manning issues relating to the closure of Yallourn C and D power stations) and shift work. Shop

38. It should be noted that in many of the short strikes, lasting one day or less, the return to work may have occurred prior to any negotiations having taken place. Thus, for this question the numbers responding will be less than the number of stewards who have been involved in strike activity.
stewards, either individually or collectively, on the other hand, tend to negotiate more frequently on such matters as health and safety, and demarcation issues. Overtime issues were, in the main, left to the local full-time union official.

Several important differences existed between the perceptions of blue and white-collar stewards. Some 70.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards saw a major role in negotiations for senior stewards. No white-collar steward perceived such a role for senior stewards. Similar differences in the stewards' perception occurred with a role for GTLC officials (26.3 per cent of blue-collar stewards compared to no white-collar stewards) and VTHC/ACTU officials (45.8 per cent and 20.0 per cent respectively). White-collar stewards perceived shop steward committees (85.7 per cent compared to 60.7 per cent of blue-collar stewards), local full-time officials (77.8 per cent compared to 52.2 per cent) and state union officials (75.0 per cent and 64.3 per cent respectively) as the key negotiators during a strike. Only with regard to senior stewards were these results statistically significant ($x^2 = 8.56, df = 1, p = .003$). The lesson to be drawn from these figures is that blue-collar stewards will tend to keep the shop-floor involved in negotiations as long as it is possible. However, if the need arises they will involve a range of 'others' in the negotiations. White-collar stewards, on the other hand, will tend to negotiate through a stewards' committee whilst at the same time involve local and state union officials.

Loy Yang stewards, consistent with their desire to handle matters themselves, would normally negotiate through a senior steward and in the majority of cases rejected the involvement of all others. Morwell stewards tended to conform to the pattern observed for white-collar
stewards, whilst Yallourn stewards tended to use a range of negotiators depending upon the circumstances. This, in part, reflects the traditions that have built up over time. That is, Yallourn stewards were not adverse to calling upon a range of people to represent them in negotiations if the need arose. This strategy, they argued, is more likely to achieve the objectives being sought.

In general, for leader stewards the key negotiators were senior stewards and to a lesser extent state union officials and members of the shop committee. For delegate stewards local union officials, members of the shop committee and state union officials were the key negotiators. Work group leaders rated highly senior stewards and members of a stewards' committee, thus illustrating their desire to keep the issue particular to their workgroup. Committed delegates tended to rely heavily upon local and state union officials and officials from the peak councils for the conduct of negotiations. These differences were not, however, statistically significant. Results are presented in table 9.9. These results would be expected given the theoretical framework underpinning the four role types. It is clear from these results that stewards, either individually or collectively, play a key role in the negotiations with management over issues that led to strike action.

Return to Work

All strikes within the SECV ultimately end with a resumption of work. The decision to return to work may be made during the strike, although often the decision to strike is accompanied by a firm proposal to limit strike action. Strike action can be taken to illustrate to management the seriousness of the claim and the resolve of the membership. In these cases the initial strike may last only for a
Table 9.9
Key Negotiators During Strike Action by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negotiators</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward committee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local full-time union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>officials</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTLC officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State union officials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTHC/ACTU officials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

limited period; until the end of the shift or perhaps twenty-four hours. Rarely have strikes been undertaken without a definite period being specified. A motion for an indefinite strike would have trouble gaining membership support, particularly following the events of the 1977 maintenance workers' strike. Further, the success of other forms of action, in particular work bans (black, overtime and permit) would lead the membership to argue for the adoption of these measures rather than an indefinite stoppage.

It will be recalled that in the majority of strikes (87.7 per cent) the decision to take strike action was made by members. It would therefore be expected that the membership would be equally involved in the decision to return to work. This proved to be the case with 88.7 per cent of stewards, who had been involved in strike action, reporting that the decision to return to work was made at a meeting of members.

39. This strike, consisting of several stoppages, was indefinite in nature and many of the strikers subsequently felt that the costs far outweighed the benefits gained. For a wider discussion on the willingness to take strike action following a lengthy dispute see R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction (London: McMillan, 1975), p.191.
The remaining stewards reported the decision was made at shop stewards' meetings, local branch meetings or by their unions' state or federal committee of management. In these cases the strikes tended to be of short duration, often one day or less. Some 92.0 per cent of blue-collar stewards reported the decision was taken at a meeting of members compared to 75.0 per cent of white-collar stewards.\textsuperscript{40} Little difference was evidenced between the three production centres.

Almost equal percentages of delegates and leaders (90.0 per cent and 90.9 per cent respectively) reported the decision to return to work was made by the membership. All committed delegates reported this was also the case, although a smaller number of work group leaders (71.4 per cent) suggested this avenue. It would appear that regardless of the leadership style adopted by the steward, the workgroup will ultimately make the decision to return to work. This is consistent with Broad's suggestion that "... leadership styles adopted by shop stewards, while influenced by a range of factors, are critically dependent on the expression of opinion by the workgroup itself."\textsuperscript{41}

Of equal importance to the stewards' leadership style is the pressure placed on members to return to work. This pressure can take a variety of forms\textsuperscript{42} and can come from fellow shop stewards, full-time union officials, other unions and management. Management and union officials were seen as the major source of pressure (59.1 per cent and

\textsuperscript{40} Due to the small number of white-collar stewards who had been involved in strike action (N=12) it is not possible to argue these figures represent a broader trend.

\textsuperscript{41} G. Broad, 'Shop Steward Leadership and the Dynamics of Workplace Industrial Relations', Industrial Relations Journal 14 (September 1983), p.66.

\textsuperscript{42} Forms of pressure include suggestions, moral arguments, threats and in some cases violence.
30.4 per cent respectively). Little pressure to return to work came from fellow stewards and other unions. The only difference in the source of this pressure, when broken down by type of union, was that white-collar stewards were more likely to perceive this pressure coming from union officials (54.5 per cent of white-collar stewards compared to 22.9 per cent of blue-collar stewards). Loy Yang stewards perceived no pressure on members from union officials, although along with Yallourn stewards perceived more pressure from management than did Morwell stewards (60.0 per cent, 68.2 per cent and 47.1 per cent respectively). No substantial differences in perception were reported by stewards when broken down by role type.

Once having made the decision to take strike action, and, in fact, having gone on strike, do workers accept readily a decision to return to work? Stewards were asked, 'In general, how did members on strike accept the decision to return to work?' Just under half the stewards (49.2 per cent) reported that their members fully agreed, with another 36.5 per cent of stewards feeling their members, in general, agreed. However, 14.3 per cent of stewards were unsure of how their members felt, although no stewards reported any disagreement from their members. Little difference in stewards' perceptions was evidenced when broken down by type of union or place of work, although a higher percentage of blue-collar and Loy Yang stewards felt their members fully agreed with the decision. The source of the decision to end the strike cannot be used as a predictor of the memberships acceptance of the decision. For example, where the decision was made at a membership

43. This is often a decision workers have to grapple with individually, not only in terms of whether the claim is legitimate and whether a strike will be the most effective form of action but also the moral and financial implications of such action.
meeting only 46.3 per cent of stewards felt the members fully accepted that decision. Where the decision was made elsewhere – stewards' meeting, branch meeting, state and federal management committees – 70.1 per cent of stewards felt the members fully supported such a decision. A higher percentage of leaders and work group leaders perceived their membership to be fully behind the decision to return to work (59.1 per cent and 57.1 per cent) when compared to delegates and committed delegates (30.0 per cent and 40.0 per cent respectively). This suggests the influence of stewards' leadership is important in this regard. If the case for a return to work is well presented and stewards have used the strike to optimize the final outcomes then the membership will be more willing to accept such a decision.

In general, therefore, the decision to return to work was most often made by the membership. Leadership style and orientation to unionism did not alter the substance of this finding. Although not expected, this finding is nevertheless important. In the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV it is clearly the membership which determines the adoption and termination of strike action. It should, however, be pointed out that stewards can and do influence these decisions. As Batstone et al. argued:

the very idea of steward leadership involves an ability both to undertake certain courses of action without direct resort to the membership and to influence membership attitudes.44

There is, however, a limit to this independence. Strike action and a return to work is one such activity that clearly relies on the support of the membership.

Strike Efficacy and the Role of the Steward

For workers to undertake strike action they must "... perceive this as an effective solution to their predicament." This is no less the case for shop stewards. In particular, how did the perception of the value of strike action and the actual outcomes compare. Slightly more than three-quarters of the stewards who had been involved in strike action (77.4 per cent) felt that strike action had achieved a more favourable settlement. Some 14.5 per cent of stewards felt that no benefit was gained by strike action and a further 8.1 per cent of stewards were unsure. There was, however, little difference in the level of satisfaction with the outcome between those stewards who felt strikes to be the most effective form of industrial action and those stewards who felt strikes were less effective than other forms of industrial action. Some 80.6 per cent of the former group were satisfied with the final outcomes whilst 76.9 per cent of the latter group were also satisfied that the strike had achieved a more favourable settlement.

All white-collar stewards felt strike action helped to achieve a better outcome. In part, this may be explained by the strategic position occupied by white-collar workers within the SECV and, in part, by the general reluctance of white-collar unionists to take strike action. Thus, the decision to strike is accompanied by a thorough assessment of the likelihood of gaining an improved result. The equivalent percentage of blue-collar stewards was 72.5 per cent. A similar situation appeared when stewards were broken down by production

45. Hyman, Strikes, p.129.

46. This is similar to the findings of McCarthy and Parker. See McCarthy and Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations, p.46.
centres. No Loy Yang steward felt that strike action achieved a less favourable settlement, although some 14.3 per cent were unsure. A similar percentage of Morwell stewards also felt strike action to be effective (83.3 per cent), although this result reflects the higher concentration of white-collar stewards at this centre.

Four-fifths of leaders and committed delegates felt strikes were instrumental in achieving a better outcome. This compared to 72.7 per cent and 71.4 per cent for delegates and work group leaders respectively. On this basis it would appear that a relationship exists between orientation to unionism and the perceived value of strike action. It may well be that stewards who are committed to the principles of unionism are also committed to the traditional belief that strike action is the most potent of the industrial weapons. The differences were not, however, statistically significant.

In the conduct of the strike what was the role of each steward? Collectively, this question has been addressed in terms of the stewards’ role in the organisation of the strike and the ensuring negotiations. Stewards, however, were also asked to state, in their own words, what was their individual role throughout the strike. Table 9.10 provides details of the stewards’ responses. Some 23.2 per cent of stewards stated they played no role whatever in the dispute. This may not always, however, be the desired role of the steward. As one FEDFA steward, with ten years experience and a member of the local branch committee, commented in disgust 'I sat on my bum'. A considerable number of stewards (19.6 per cent) provided information to their members and a lesser number (12.6 per cent) helped in the organisational aspects of the dispute. The comments of an MOA steward with seven years experience was typical, 'I provided information to the organizer, kept
members informed, ensured their interests were protected, kept other
shop stewards in our union, but in other areas, informed of our progress
and provided support to the organizer at the negotiation table. Not
all stewards played a supportive role. One BLF steward with ten years
experience commented ‘I resigned for a short while because I couldn’t
accept a recommendation to return to work empty handed.’ I spoke
against tactics at mass meetings.’ The major role of nearly half the
stewards (44.6 per cent) was involvement in the actual negotiations of
the terms of settlement. The following comment of an MOA steward with
two years experience was representative: ‘in conjunction with the other
stewards I negotiated a satisfactory result and guidelines in the form
of agreement for the future.’ There was no evidence to suggest the more
experienced stewards played a more active role in the conduct of the
strike.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No role</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing members</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational role</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Although the BLF is normally associated with the construction
industry the SECV, in 1985, employed some 80 BLF members on maintenance
activities.
A slightly higher percentage of white-collar stewards played no role compared to their blue-collar counterparts (27.3 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively). Similarly, slightly more blue-collar stewards were involved in negotiations (46.7 per cent compared to 36.4 per cent of white-collar stewards). Neither result, however, proved to be statistically significant. Loy Yang stewards were more likely to have been involved in negotiations (71.4 per cent) compared to Morwell and Yallourn stewards (38.9 per cent and 42.0 per cent respectively). One-third of Morwell stewards reported no role compared to 19.4 per cent of Yallourn stewards and 14.3 per cent of Loy Yang stewards. These result confirm once more the active role of the Loy Yang steward. As suggested earlier, the establishment of an entirely new production centre may be an impetus to the development of a strong shop-floor industrial relations system.

Leaders were more likely to be actively involved in the conduct of a strike than were delegates. Results are presented in table 9.11. Rarely would a leader, or work group leader, not play some role during a strike. In the main this would involve being part of the negotiating team, but their involvement would not stop there. For example as one leader steward, an AMWU member with forty-one years experience as a shop steward, commented 'I was active in the negotiations, raising money for the strike relief fund and keeping the media informed.' Another leader, an ETU member with ten years experience as a shop steward, although not

48. Earlier in this thesis it was reported that Loy Yang stewards were more likely to meet with stewards from other unions, less likely to involve full-time union officials and more likely to negotiate issues with management. This last point is equally applicable to strike action.

49. Due to the small number of stewards involved it is not possible to subject this result to meaningful statistical testing.
involved in the negotiations ‘attended picket lines, union meetings, and helped with the distress fund and distribution of food parcels.’ On the other hand, about 2 out of every 5 delegate stewards (36.4 per cent and 41.7 per cent for delegate and committed delegates respectively) played no role at all. Nevertheless it is clear that a sizeable proportion of all steward types do play an active role during a strike. It is important to note that leader stewards, including work group leaders, are more likely to be involved in informing their members of the progress of negotiations. This is seen as an important role as they will, at some stage, require the support of their membership.

Table 9.11
Function of Steward During Strike Action by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No function</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing members</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational role</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explain the role of the shop steward in industrial action. Specifically the focus was on the forms of industrial conflict used, the adherence to dispute settling procedures and the part played by shop stewards in strike action. It was found that a variety of industrial action had been used; the most frequent, however, were work bans, stop-work meetings and overtime bans. In the
main, stewards followed procedures and only took strike action as a last resort. A detailed examination of strike activity was undertaken, and although less than half of the stewards had been involved in strikes, it was found that the membership was the major determinant of the issues that led to the strike and of the procedures adopted. Differences were found to exist between white and blue-collar stewards and stewards from the three production centres. Of particular importance was the finding that stewards at Loy Yang, a new production centre, tended to handle issues themselves rather than involve 'others'. The speed at which steward organisation has developed at Loy Yang can be related to the advanced technology employed, the strategic power of the unions and the uniqueness of the problems experienced.

The theoretical framework adopted in this study proved to be of value when analyzing industrial action. In general, leader stewards, those stewards who adopt a leadership role and who are strongly oriented to unionism, were found to behave differently than their delegate counterparts. In particular, leader stewards were more likely to have been involved in industrial action, but they also tended to exhaust procedures before resorting to such action. Whilst the membership was perceived to have raised the issues that ultimately led to strike action, leader stewards would also raise such issues. Leaders were also more likely to involve the membership in the decision to take strike action, be more actively involved in the organisational aspects of the strike, including developing strategies and negotiating with management, and were equally likely to involve their members in the decision to terminate strike action.

In industrial action, leaders were more likely to attempt to keep the shop-floor in control of the dispute. In most case this appeared to
be in accord with union policy although some unions do prefer to handle all issues centrally. The leaders, with their strong orientation to unionism, however, were less likely to undertake industrial action before getting approval from their union. Whilst advice and involvement of full-time officials are welcomed by leaders, they preferred to maintain a close involvement in the dispute. Delegates on the other hand, once having referred an issue to ‘others’, tended to consider that action marked the end of their responsibilities.

This last finding highlights two major problems with the way delegates handle disputes. First, it means that ‘outsiders’, usually from Melbourne, were negotiating in isolation from the environment, local feeling, and custom and practice. Second, any agreement arrived at ran the risk of not gaining the necessary commitment from the membership. This latter problem was evidenced with the outcome of negotiations concerning the introduction of 37 1/2 hour week/9 day fortnight in 1980. Many aspects of this agreement, reached by negotiations between the Victorian government, the SECV, the ACTU, the VTHC and the various SECV unions, were subsequently found to be difficult, if not impossible, to enforce on the membership. 50

It is clear from the above that stewards, by adopting a leadership role and maintaining a commitment to unionism, were more likely to reach agreements with management that will have the backing of the membership. These agreements were achieved, by leader stewards, by keeping negotiations close to the shop-floor, working through procedure and gaining union approval for industrial action.

50. For example, the agreement called for morning and afternoon tea to be taken on the job. This would save the time employees took to get to and from their work location and the ‘crib huts’. However, custom and practice prevailed and tea breaks are still held in the huts.
PART FOUR

RELATIONSHIPS AT THE WORKPLACE
CHAPTER TEN
SHOP STEWARDS AND MEMBERS

In Part Three of this thesis the focus was on the role of the shop steward at work. Part Four of this study will extend that analysis by considering the relationships between shop stewards and their members, management and their union. This chapter will specifically consider the relationship between shop stewards and their members. As Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel suggested, "the extent to which stewards can act as leaders is influenced by their members", whereas Fox claimed "for the most part, a steward’s power lasts only so long as he retains the confidence of those for whom he speaks...". Whilst both statements are undoubtedly valid, the relationship between stewards and their members is considerably more complex. Members can, and do, attempt to influence their stewards in order to achieve certain objectives. Failure on the part of the steward to achieve members’ expectations can lead the membership to agitate for the replacement of the steward. On the other hand, steward leadership, as defined in this thesis, is the ability to influence the membership, both in terms of specific issues and overall attitudes, and so be able to carry out duties and undertake action without necessarily gaining the approval of members. Accordingly, in examining the relationship between stewards and their constituents it is necessary to consider not only members’ expectations and their attempts


281.
to influence the steward but also the stewards’ attempts to influence the membership. An analysis of this latter issue not only involves a consideration of the more overt forms of persuasion, but also an understanding of the way stewards approach their duties. In particular, the frequency of interaction between shop stewards and their members, the stewards’ range of arguments to members and the level of membership involvement should be investigated.

In examining the relation between the steward and their members the chapter is broken into four sections. The first section considers the stewards’ interaction with members, both at the formal and informal level. In the second section members’ expectations and the way they attempt to influence their stewards will be considered. The third section analyses the major forms of arguments used by stewards when discussing issues with their members, whilst the fourth section examines the extent to which stewards involve their members in negotiations with management.

Stewards’ Interaction with Members

Steward leadership explicitly requires the support of the membership. Brown has argued that the level of group unity and equity between members are key determinants of this support: "...equity encourage(s) unity and hence increase(s) the workers' bargaining strength and the ease with which the shop steward can call upon it..."³ The main mechanism that enables shop stewards to develop a supportive membership is for them to meet regularly at both a formal and an informal level with members. Regular contact with the membership

is not of course, of itself, sufficient to maintain membership support. The stewards' personality, ability and past performance will also influence the stewards' relationship with their members. This section, however, will limit the discussion to the type of interaction the stewards have with their members.

The typical steward does not meet regularly with his members. Table 10.1 provides stewards' responses to the question 'on average how often do you meet formally with your members?' Only a minority of stewards meet formally with their members on a regular basis. A majority, 53.1 per cent of all stewards, met occasionally with their members with another 9.1 per cent of stewards reporting that they have 'never' held a membership meeting. 4 Formal meetings are not the only way stewards interact with their members, although in terms of promoting unity (collective consciousness) they are of considerable importance. Stewards would also meet with their members, on an individual basis, in the course of their normal work. Stewards were therefore asked 'on average how often do you have contact with the bulk of your members at work?' The responses were, as expected, somewhat different to the responses to formal meetings. Some 69.5 per cent of stewards reported this contact was daily whilst another 16.3 per cent reported having contact with the majority of their members on a weekly basis. Only 6.2 per cent of stewards reported that they would not have contact with the bulk of their members within any one month. Results are provided in table 10.2.

4. McCarthy and Parker in the U.K. found some 75.0 per cent of stewards held meetings of members at the workplace, although the frequency of such meetings was not given. See W.E.J. McCarthy and S.R. Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Research Paper No.10 (London: HMSO, 1968), p.18.
Table 10.1
Frequency of Formal Membership Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2
Frequency of Membership Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than monthly</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewards who had frequent contact with their members in the normal course of their work or in their duties as a shop steward also tended to meet more regularly, on a formal basis, with their members. For example, those stewards that held formal membership meetings on a weekly basis reported, without exception, that they had contact with the majority of their members on a daily basis. In contrast, only slightly more than half (56.9 per cent) of the stewards that met formally with their members on a monthly basis indicated they had daily contact with their members. This relationship, in part, may represent the practical
difficulties stewards have in organising meetings of members they only see infrequently. In part, however, it may be indicative of the level of unity of the workgroup. Workgroups that are united, with members having daily contact with each other, are more likely to want decisions affecting their work-life made at the collective level. The steward responds by organising formal meetings. Certainly stewards in this survey demonstrated a positive relationship between their perceptions of group unity and the frequency of formal workplace meetings \( (r=.12, p=.053) \).

The main place of contact for stewards and members was the workplace. Only 1.4 per cent of stewards \( (N=3) \) reported that they would meet their members mainly outside of the workplace. These stewards, due to the nature of their work, would not normally come into contact with their members during work-time. As expected, frequency of membership contact was higher where the major point of contact, with members, was the workplace. The vast majority of stewards \( (97.1 \text{ per cent}) \) also reported that they could move freely around the workplace to contact members. Those stewards that were restricted claimed this was due to the nature of the job. Management obstruction was not, therefore, an obstacle to steward-member interaction.

Blue-collar stewards were more likely to meet formally with their members than were their white-collar counterparts. Just under half of the blue-collar stewards \( (48.3 \text{ per cent}) \) conducted formal membership meetings at least monthly. The corresponding figure for white-collar stewards was 20.5 per cent. This difference proved to be statistically significant \( (t=3.26, df=205, p=.001) \). No difference was found between blue and white-collar stewards and the level of informal contact they have with their members.
Place of work was not a differentiating factor between frequency of either formal or informal membership meetings, although all Loy Yang stewards reported that they held formal meetings with members and had contact, at least, on a fortnightly basis. Leaders would be expected to have more frequent meetings with members than would delegates, and conversely, delegates would have more informal contact with members than would leaders. This latter view is based on the premise that leaders, with their longer hours spent on their stewardship duties and the more frequent involvement in negotiations with management, will have less time available to meet informally with members. This view was substantiated, although the differences did not prove to be statistically significant. The results are presented in tables 10.3 and 10.4. Nearly half of the leaders (47.2 per cent) met formally with their members, at least on a monthly basis, compared to 31.0 per cent of delegates. On the other hand more delegates had daily contact with their members than did leader stewards (78.2 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively). This is in direct contrast to the finding that a positive relationship exists between the frequency of formal meetings and membership contact. It therefore appears that the role definition adopted by the steward is acting as an intervening variable. Leader stewards overcome, in part, their inability to mix regularly with their members by instituting formal meetings. Delegate stewards, on the other hand, see less need for formal meetings as they tend to have daily contact with the majority of their members.
This finding, however, raises two issues. First, delegates, by definition, provide little leadership and tend to respond to the wishes of the membership. By holding fewer meetings they are subject to the criticism that they have not tested the collective feeling of their membership on key issues. Second, delegates, by not conducting more formal meetings of their members, are doing little to promote unity
between their constituents. This will tend to re-inforce their actions as the members will see little value in collective gatherings. Leaders, on the other hand, by meeting more formally with their members are likely to develop a higher level of unity and collective consciousness among their membership and thus provide further impetus to their leadership role.

What value do stewards see in the more formal gathering of members? In the main, stewards reported the value of these meetings in terms of providing a forum to discuss problems (48.5 per cent), providing information to members (28.8 per cent) and providing feedback on particular issues (11.7 per cent). Providing information to members usually involved keeping the members up to date on the progress of wage claims, other important issues and organisational matters. The other two areas, discussing problems and providing feedback, involved the members considering an issue and debating the appropriate response or strategy with the steward providing detailed information on the status of the issue. The feedback may subsequently lead to more discussions and/or a change in strategy.

Little difference existed between blue and white-collar stewards in terms of the value they placed on membership meetings. Loy Yang and Yallourn stewards, however, tended to see more value in terms of the ability to discuss a range of issues and providing an opportunity for feedback. Leaders were more likely to perceive the value of membership meetings in terms of the discussions that occur and the ability to provide feedback. Whilst delegate stewards also saw considerable value in the ability to discuss issues with members they were also more likely to see value in terms of being able to provide information. They do not, however, see the value of these meetings as providing specific
feedback on issues to members. These differences did not prove to be statistically significant. Responses are presented in table 10.5.

Table 10.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction to steward</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss problems</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members' Influence and Expectations

The ability of shop stewards to function effectively will depend primarily on the power granted to them by their membership. This power is not, however, absolute or static and the rank-and-file will consistently attempt to re-align the behaviour of stewards to meet their expectations. This section will examine the ways members attempt to influence the behaviour of the steward and the expectations members have of the role of the shop steward. It should be noted that it will be the stewards' perceptions of members' expectations and attempts to influence them that will ultimately determine how they behave.

Rank-and-file attempts to influence their stewards' behaviour occur continually, although in many instances these attempts go unnoticed. During times of disagreement, however, these attempts can form a major part of the interaction between members and stewards. Stewards were
asked to recall the ways by which members would put pressure on them when they disagreed with the membership. Not all stewards answered this question and of those that did (N=147) some 27.2 per cent felt that the members did not attempt to pressure them into accepting alternate points of view. This is partly related to the view particular stewards hold concerning their role, namely, that stewards are elected to represent the collective views of the membership. These stewards would not normally have a firm opinion but rather accept the views of the majority. The major forms of membership pressure mentioned were the proposing of alternative plans (23.1 per cent) and ostracisation or confrontation (17.7 per cent). Other forms of pressure included threats, disruption of formal meetings and the pointing out to the steward of their 'proper' role.

Little difference existed between blue and white-collar stewards, although several important differences occurred between stewards from the three production centres. In particular, Loy Yang stewards were more likely to be subjected to members pointing out to them their preferred role for the steward, having alternative plans proposed and having their members seeking the support of other shop stewards or union officials. Morwell stewards were more likely to be ostracised, whilst Yallourn stewards were less likely to be subjected to member pressure.

In general a higher percentage of leaders perceived the membership exerting pressure on them than did their delegate counterparts. This is not unexpected as the independent role adopted by leader stewards would, at times, bring them into conflict with their membership. Leaders were also more likely to be ostracised (18.2 per cent compared to 7.7 per
cent of delegates\(^5\), have members seek the support of other stewards and face disruptive meetings. Delegates, on the other hand, were more likely to report that their members would present alternative plans (38.5 per cent compared to 24.3 per cent, 17.1 per cent and 12.1 per cent for work group leaders, committed delegates and leaders respectively). These differences, however, did not prove to be statistically significant.

Whether stewards feel that members exert pressure on them will relate, in part, to the members' expectations of the steward compared to their own role orientation. To examine this relationship stewards were asked 'what do you think is the major expectation your members have of you as a shop steward?' Responses are presented in table 10.6. Although there exists some overlap in the categories adopted, it is clear that the majority of stewards perceived members' expectations in terms of a spokespersons' role (33.0 per cent) or solving problems (25.0 per cent). Protecting members and negotiating on their behalf could at times also fall within the general category of solving problems.

Although, in the main, stewards felt that the memberships' expectations were reasonable and achievable, there did exist a sizeable number of stewards who felt that members expected the impossible. One FIA steward with sixteen years experience claimed members expected their steward "to be able to solve all problems regardless of whether it is right or wrong and be able to pull a rabbit out of the hat." This view was backed up by the comments of an MOA steward, a member of the sub-branch executive with four years union experience, who suggested that

\(^5\) The 'ostracisation rates' for work group leaders and committed delegates were also substantially higher than delegates (20.0 per cent and 24.3 per cent respectively).
the members wanted stewards to "... perform major and minor miracles."
Another MOA steward with two years experience claimed members expected
you "to be able to read minds."

Table 10.6
Perceived Members' Expectations of Stewards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokesperson</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain matters</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise with union</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect members</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounding board</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results seem to reflect, in general, the expectations the
rank-and-file have of their union. Stewards' perceptions of these
expectations are presented in table 10.7. Whilst there is an emphasis
on the improvement of wages and conditions it is also clear that
stewards perceive members' expectations of the union in terms of
representing and protecting members and solving problems. These
expectations were clearly expressed by one BWIU steward: to "represent
them in negotiations with management and maintain and improve wage rates
and conditions."

With one exception, blue and white-collar stewards perceived
similar member expectations. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to
consider protection of members a major membership expectation than were
their white-collar counterparts (17.1 per cent and 3.9 per cent
respectively). This can be explained in terms of the positions that white-collar union members hold. In the main, these members occupy supervisory or managerial positions and, as such, do not perceive protection from indiscriminate managerial behaviour as necessary.

Table 10.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve wages and conditions</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent members</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect members</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly half of the Loy Yang stewards (46.4 per cent) perceived members' major expectations in terms of a spokespersons' role. Morwell and Yallourn stewards, on the other hand, were more likely to perceive members' expectations in terms of solving problems (26.8 per cent and 28.1 per cent of Morwell and Yallourn stewards respectively compared to 10.7 per cent of Loy Yang stewards). This finding reflects the long standing traditions within these two centres compared to Loy Yang. The rank-and-file at Loy Yang want their stewards to speak up on their behalf although, in general, they like to be involved in the final solution.

Primarily, delegate stewards perceived membership expectations in terms of a spokespersons' role, whereas leaders tended to perceive these expectations in terms of solving problems. The differences proved to be statistically significant ($x^2 = 19.53$, df=9, p=.012). Results are
presented in table 10.8. Work group leaders also perceived members' expectations primarily in terms of solving problems whereas committed delegates perceived these expectations in terms of a spokesperson's role. It therefore appears that the key variable, in terms of perceived role, is the leadership style of the steward. Delegates and work group leaders also perceived members' expectations in terms of protecting members against managerial extremes.

Table 10.8

Perceived Members' Expectations of Stewards by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokesperson</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect members</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewards' Influence and Range of Arguments to Members

How do stewards react to the pressures imposed on them by the members and what forms of arguments do they present to counter these pressures and perhaps change expectations? This section will address these questions by examining, first, the way stewards attempt to influence their members to get their support and, second, the range of arguments they use in support of their position.

Stewards reported a variety of methods they would adopt to gain the support of their members. The major forms included providing relevant information (47.1 per cent), presenting a sound and logical argument
(14.7 per cent) as well as pointing out the benefits of their proposed course of action (8.1 per cent) and the consequences of not accepting their view (7.4 per cent). It should be noted that the provision of information may be subjected to conscious or unconscious screening by the steward. As one APEA shop steward stated "I present them with all the facts as I know them. This may mean me interpreting management and/or union officials responses and/or advice." A small number of stewards would use the threat of resignation if the members do not back them. Some stewards indicated more indirect methods. For example, one FIA steward with only one years experience indicated his way was to "shout em beers at the pub." This same steward reported the main way members let him know their feelings was that they "don't shout me a beer." Whilst this may be a more overt form of influence it is clear that a range of social activities can be applied by both stewards and members in an attempt to mobilise support. Some 17.6 per cent of stewards, however, claimed that they did not make any attempt to directly influence their members.

Little difference existed between blue and white-collar stewards, although white-collar stewards were more likely to use information as their major form of influence. Similarly, no substantial differences existed between stewards from the three production centres. Delegates were less likely to attempt to influence their members, in order to get their support, than were their leader counterparts. A substantial percentage of committed delegates, delegates and work group leaders reported that they did not attempt to influence their members to gain their support. Of equal importance to this finding is the differences in the type of influence each of the steward types admitted to. Whilst the use of information is a key method of influence, leader stewards
were more likely to develop sound arguments and point out the consequences of non-agreement. Delegates, on the other hand were more likely to point out the benefits of adopting their particular view. These differences were not statistically significant. Results are provided in table 10.9.

Table 10.9
Stewards' Attempts to Influence Members by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Influence</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound argument</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No attempt</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In more general discussions concerning issues that arise at the workplace, what type of arguments do stewards present to their members? These issues can range from discussing working conditions to debate and argument concerning the most appropriate strategies during industrial disputes. Stewards were asked to rate a number of arguments in terms of their frequency of use. Results are presented in table 10.10. The major arguments included the likely outcome (44.5 per cent of stewards claimed they referred to this argument always), desired effect of the issue (40.6 per cent) and the award or agreement that covered the issue under discussion (32.1 per cent). Precedence, technical problems and union principles did not assume the same level of
importance. That is, the arguments tended to focus on what was possible (under the award or agreement), probable and the benefits to members.

Table 10.10
Stewards' Range of Arguments to Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Always %</th>
<th>Frequently %</th>
<th>Sometimes %</th>
<th>Seldom %</th>
<th>Never %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards/agreements (N=190)</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles (N=187)</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect (N=180)</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems (N=177)</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar issues (N=178)</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome (N=182)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue-collar stewards were less likely to make reference to awards/agreements (27.6 per cent of blue-collar stewards claimed they always made reference to awards compared to 39.2 per cent of white-collar stewards) but were more likely to refer to the desired effect of the issue (46.2 per cent compared to 32.4 per cent) and the likely outcome (50.5 per cent compared to 36.0 per cent). What is probable and desirable is of more importance to blue-collar stewards, in presenting their case to members, that the strict ‘legal’ situation. Several differences also existed between stewards from the three work centres. Yallourn stewards were more likely to refer to awards/agreements, union principles and the desired effect of the issue, whilst, predictably, Loy Yang stewards would not normally refer to precedence. These differences, however, were not statistically significant.

Leaders, when discussing issues with members, tended to use a variety of arguments, whereas delegate stewards used a restricted range
of arguments. Stewards' responses are presented in table 10.11.6

Clearly, leader stewards were more likely to use a range of arguments whereas delegates tend to restrict their arguments to references to awards/agreements, desired effect and the likely outcomes.

Table 10.11
Stewards' Range of Arguments to Members by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Delegate N</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader N</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate N</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader N</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards/agreements</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar issues</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Committed delegates used a similar range of arguments to delegates with one exception. Their broad commitment to the principles of unionism meant that they were more likely to use union principles as a key argument. Work group leaders, on the other hand, closely resembled leader stewards in their arguments, including the use of union principles. One explanation of this finding is that work group leaders are defining union principles in terms of the collective interests of their own particular workgroup.

Leader stewards, by presenting a range of arguments, are able to strengthen their leadership position as this is generally in accord with

6. In this table only those stewards who responded they 'always' or 'frequently' use the particular argument are included.
the expectations the members have of their stewards. It is also in accord with the stewards own perceptions of their role: 82.0 per cent of delegates claimed their major role was to follow the wishes of the membership whereas leaders perceived their role jointly in terms of following the wishes of the membership (50.0 per cent) and displaying leadership initiatives (46.0 per cent).

Involvement of Members

This section examines the stewards' involvement of members in negotiations with management. This not only represents a further avenue for stewards to influence members and to modify their expectations but is also an indication of the types of strategies stewards adopt in their bargaining with management. Involving members in negotiations with management may also be an insurance policy for, as Lane observed, "not a few stewards took the precaution of having a fellow worker with them when it was necessary to 'go upstairs'." However, by involving members in these type of activities the steward is also enhancing membership control.

Stewards were asked 'when you negotiate with management on issues which affect more than one of your members, do you go in on your own, or do you take any of your members with you?' Only 12.5 per cent of the stewards indicated they go into negotiations alone whilst 36.0 per cent reported that they normally take members with them. The majority (51.5

9. Note that this question refers to collective issues rather than individual matters.
per cent), however, reported that the decision to be accompanied by
members will vary with the issue. This tends to confirm the strategic
nature of membership involvement. Stewards will make an assessment as
to the value, in terms of outcomes, of being accompanied by a member and
will act accordingly. In some cases this may be a member with knowledge
of, or expertise in, the particular issue, or the member may be a deputy
shop steward\footnote{Deputy shop stewards are union members who substitute for the
steward in their absence.} (this is particularly the case with the MOA, FEDFA and
the APEA).

Blue and white-collar stewards differed significantly in their
involvement of members in negotiations with management. Blue-collar
stewards were more likely to be accompanied by members (42.6 per cent
compared to 25.6 per cent of white-collar stewards), whereas white-
collar stewards were more likely ‘to go in alone’ (15.4 per cent
compared to 10.7 per cent) or take members into negotiations depending
on the issue (59.0 per cent compared to 46.7 per cent). These
differences were statistically significant ($x^2=6.05, df=2, p=.049$).
This result is to be expected, particularly given the comments made
earlier regarding the relationship white-collar stewards have with
management. The social relationships that have built up over time, the
nature of the work and the fact that white-collar stewards and
management personnel would, in the case of the SECV, normally belong to
the same union (the MOA) provide the climate for a relaxation of the
need to be accompanied by a member. Little difference existed between
stewards from the three production centres, although only a small number
of Yallourn stewards (6.7 per cent) would go into negotiations alone.
This compared with 17.5 per cent of Morwell stewards and 13.8 per cent
of Loy Yang stewards. This reflects, at least in part, the traditional practices that have built up at Yallourn over the past sixty-five years.

Do stewards who take members into negotiations always use the same members or vary the members depending on the issue? A substantial majority of stewards (80.7 per cent) tended to vary the members they involved in negotiations. Whilst both blue and white-collar stewards followed this practice, blue-collar stewards were more likely to take the same members into negotiations than their white-collar counterparts (23.9 per cent compared to 11.9 per cent). This result was statistically significant at the .10 level ($x^2=3.78, \text{df}=1, p=.052$). Interview evidence indicated that a partial explanation of this finding is that white-collar stewards tend to take into negotiations the member who first raised the issue or has knowledge of the matter whereas blue-collar stewards tend to take in someone they can trust and know will not be intimidated by management. No difference was detected between the behaviour, in terms of member involvement, of shop stewards from the three production centres.

Whilst a similar percentage of all steward types reported they went into negotiations alone, over half of the leader stewards reported they tend to take members into the negotiations with management. Conversely the majority of delegates and work group leaders would vary membership involvement depending on the issue. These differences were statistically significant ($x^2=15.13, \text{df}=6, p=.019$). Results are presented in table 10.12. This result can be partially explained in terms of the stewards' orientation to unionism. Leaders and committed delegates, with their broader commitment to unionism, may see consistent membership involvement as an essential element in ensuring that the wider objectives of the union are met. Equally, membership involvement may be
a protection against criticism from sectional interests within their constituencies. The strategic value of varying membership involvement in negotiations accordingly appears limited. However, it may also be a recognition that "if the leadership becomes isolated from the masses, its autonomy degenerates into empty talk".\textsuperscript{11} Those stewards that did take members into negotiations tended to vary the personalities depending on the issue. This was uniform across all steward types.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Involvement of Members in Negotiations by Role Type}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Involvement & Delegate & & Work Group Leader & & Committed Delegate & & Leader \tabularnewline
 & % & & % & & % & & % \tabularnewline\hline
Go in alone & 14.3 & & 9.1 & & 12.5 & & 13.0 \tabularnewline
Go in with member(s) & 20.4 & & 27.3 & & 41.7 & & 51.9 \tabularnewline
Varies with issue & 65.3 & & 63.6 & & 45.8 & & 35.2 \tabularnewline\hline
Total & 100.0 & & 100.0 & & 100.0 & & 100.0 \tabularnewline
Number & 49 & & 44 & & 48 & & 54 \tabularnewline\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Conclusion

The relationship between a steward and his members is crucial to an understanding of why stewards adopt a particular role and to explaining their behaviour. This chapter sought to examine this relationship by focusing on the forms of interaction between stewards and members, the members' influence and expectations, the stewards' influence and range of arguments to members, and the members' involvement in negotiations.

Leader stewards were more likely than delegates to meet regularly with their members, to use a range of arguments when discussing issues with their members and to involve members in negotiations with management. In part, this is based on their belief that the members expect them to solve problems and that by interacting frequently with members, discussion and feedback will occur which will aid them in meeting members' expectations. In this process they perceive more pressure from their members and in turn exert more pressure on members when in disagreement.

This more active role for the membership, as promoted by leaders, is related to leader stewards' views concerning unity and the need to develop a collective consciousness. It may also relate to the leaders' belief that democratic decision making is an essential pre-requisite for strong shop-floor leadership. Further, most leaders recognise that membership support will be an important factor in achieving a favourable outcome.

12. This does not imply a subservient role for the steward.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

SHOP STEWARDS AND MANAGEMENT

The relationship between shop stewards and management can be critical in determining the role of the steward. Three major foundations of this steward-management relationship can be identified. First, management organises work and determines the general working conditions. By doing so it clearly controls a large part of the agenda for shop steward activity by determining the issues that will arise for debate and action. Second, management can influence the level of shop steward involvement once issues have arisen. As Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel observed, management "...may foster their (shop stewards) involvement in issues, they may make favourable agreements and in other ways support or challenge individual stewards."¹ This involvement can take place at both the organisational and individual manager level. At the organisational level, management may formally recognise and enhance the position of the shop steward. Within the SECV this is evidenced by stewards' involvement in joint consultation, in collective negotiations and in the development of policies. This policy of formal recognition has provided the shop steward with a level of authority and rights that is not provided by union rules or arbitrated awards. At the individual level, managers and shop stewards, regardless of the level of trust and respect, have to develop a working relationship with each other.

The third major aspect to the steward-management relationship is the part that management, consciously or unconsciously, plays in the

creation of custom and practice. As Brown pointed, out this involvement may be due to errors of commission (concession granted to stewards) and/or errors of omission (failure to enforce rules).\(^2\) One example is the supervisor who allows considerable freedom to stewards, involves them in decision-making and generally consults them on the day-to-day running of the section. The result, in terms of the stewards' role, is that stewards in other sections come to expect this level of involvement. From the above discussion it is clear that "...management may enhance the scope, power and authority of shop stewards."\(^3\) This, in turn, will influence the type of leadership role the steward ultimately adopts. It must, however, be stressed that management should not be conceived of as a single entity. Individual managers, like stewards, have various philosophies, objectives and levels of commitment to the SECV. This will need to be kept in mind when examining the relationship between stewards and management.

This chapter focuses on the steward-management relationship in the SECV. The first section examines the contact stewards have with management and the level of management they most frequently interact with. Section two explores the expectations which stewards' perceive management have of them and the ways in which management may attempt to influence them. The third section analyses the types of arguments stewards present to management when negotiating and discussing issues. Section four considers the extent and value of joint management-steward consultation.

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Contact with Management

The results of the questionnaire make it clear that shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley have considerable contact with management personnel. As noted in chapter 7 the majority of shop stewards reported that they have negotiated with management over a range of issues. For example, 76.8 per cent of stewards had negotiated over pay problems and 83.3 per cent had negotiated over working conditions. Only 4.7 per cent of stewards reported that they had not been involved in negotiations with management. In addition, joint consultative arrangements provide stewards with considerable opportunity to discuss with management a range of problems that arise at the workplace (see chapter 8). This section aims to extend these findings by examining the reasons why stewards have contact with management, the level at which contact takes place and whether or not stewards will by-pass their immediate supervisor when a dispute arises.

In addressing the first objective, stewards were asked the reason for their last contact with their supervisor. Four major reasons emerged: informal chats (27.0 per cent), negotiations (24.9 per cent), receiving advice (18.9 per cent) and providing advice (17.8 per cent). Social and other reasons accounted for the remaining 11.4 per cent of stewards. Clearly, negotiations will only form a minor part of the steward-supervisor relationship. Exchange of information, 'off the record' talks and a variety of social encounters form the major contact stewards have with their supervisor. These meetings, however, provide an environment where strong bargaining relationships can develop. As Batstone et al. observed "a strong bargaining relationship involves the development of a relationship between steward and manager which goes beyond the minimum formal relationship which necessarily exists between
them."\(^4\) This will in turn work to "...reduce the uncertainty of the relationship."\(^5\)

A similar picture emerged with regard to shop stewards contact with SECV management,\(^6\) although, as expected, negotiations become more prominent at this level (49.5 per cent of all steward-management contacts).\(^7\) Other reasons included receiving information/advice (17.7 per cent), providing information/advice (14.1 per cent) and informal discussions (13.5 per cent). Social and other reasons accounted for the remaining 5.2 per cent of stewards. Clearly, stewards and management, at both the supervisor and more senior levels, do have extensive contact outside of the negotiating arena. These contacts not only reduce uncertainty but also provide a firm basis for the maintenance of strong shop-floor relationships.

Slightly more white-collar stewards engaged in negotiations with their supervisors (28.8 per cent compared to 22.7 per cent of blue-collar stewards) and mixed socially with their superiors (6.1 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively). Blue-collar stewards were, however, more likely to report that the reason for their last contact with their supervisor or line management was to provide/receive advice and information. These differences were not statistically significant. Similarly, when broken down by place of employment stewards revealed few


6. This refers to all management above the supervisor level.

7. Goodman and Whittingham postulated the reason for this was that "...many stewards regarded supervisors as staging points in bargaining procedure, important negotiations being carried out with department managers or above." Goodman and Whittingham, *Shop Stewards in British Industry*, p.97.
differences in their pattern of contact with management. Nevertheless, several trends can be discerned. Yallourn stewards were more likely to negotiate or have 'informal chats' with their supervisor and correspondingly less likely to negotiate with SECV management. Morwell stewards were more likely to provide advice to both supervisors and line management whilst Loy Yang stewards were less likely to negotiate with their supervisors and more likely to negotiate with SECV management. This last finding can be partly related to problems that exist in steward-supervisor relations and partly to the strategic power those stewards occupy. This strategic power is further enhanced by management's willingness to grant concessions in order to achieve commissioning targets. This action by line management has undermined the position of the supervisor.

Delegates contact with management was more likely to be to receive information and advice, whereas the leaders contact with management tended to involve negotiations. This proved to be the case for contact with both supervisors and higher management, although the differences were not substantial. Results are presented in tables 11.1 and 11.2. Leaders were also more likely to provide information/advice and considerably more likely to engage in 'informal chats' with supervisors and management. It is this last type of contact that differentiates delegate and leader stewards. Whereas delegates tend to keep matters on a formal basis, leaders will tend to process the problem by having 'a word in the right ear' before matters get out of hand. These findings,

8. Interview evidence indicates that Loy Yang stewards have not, as yet, developed strong and positive relationships with their supervisors.
in general, tend to confirm the results of Batstone et al., although the differences did not prove to be as large.9

Table 11.1
Nature of Stewards' Contacts with Supervisors by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing information/advice</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving information/advice</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Informal chat'</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.2
Nature of Stewards' Contacts with SECV Management by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing information/advice</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving information/advice</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Informal chat'</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding that a higher proportion of stewards' contact with management involved negotiations, when compared to contact with supervisors, was to be expected. Stewards, in carrying out their work duties as employees, will tend to have frequent contact with their supervisor, which provides the opportunity to discuss a range of issues of concern to the membership. This informal or work related contact will lead to formal negotiations forming only a small percentage of the contacts. However, it may also be a conscious strategy, on the part of the steward, to negotiate with those management personnel who have got the authority vested in them to make decisions. As Batstone et al. concluded "unless the other person has a degree of power, there is little attraction in giving him confidences and support, for little will be gained in return." 10

Stewards were also asked 'with whom do you most frequently negotiate?' Responses were nearly equally distributed between supervisors (39.9 per cent) and line management (43.5 per cent). SECV industrial officers (9.8 per cent) and a range of others (6.8 per cent) accounted for the remaining responses. A substantial number of shop stewards, therefore, do negotiate with their supervisors, at least in the first instance. The finding that a majority of stewards go beyond their supervisor does not necessarily represent a deliberate strategy to circumvent normal procedures; it could also represent the degree of encouragement given to stewards to go directly to more senior management. This aspect will be examined later in this section.

White-collar stewards were significantly more likely to negotiate with management above the supervisory level than were their blue-collar

10. Ibid., p.171.
counterparts ($x^2=27.93, df=3, p=.000$). Some 63.5 per cent of white-collar stewards negotiated most frequently with line management compared to only 31.1 per cent of blue-collar stewards. Blue-collar stewards, on the other hand, were more likely to negotiate with their immediate supervisor than were their white-collar counterparts (53.8 per cent compared to 17.6 per cent). White-collar stewards were also more likely to negotiate with industrial relations personnel (13.5 per cent) than were their blue-collar counterparts (7.6 per cent). Although no significant differences existed between stewards from the three work centres one trend was evident. Loy Yang stewards were less likely to negotiate with management (including supervisors) and more likely to negotiate with SECV industrial relations personnel than were their Yallourn and Morwell counterparts. This reflects, at least in part, the unique nature of many of the claims made at the Loy Yang complex and the recognition by the SECV of the need to ensure some consistency in terms and conditions of work across the three work centres.

Little difference was evidenced between the various steward types and the level of management at which negotiations took place. Results of the survey are provided in table 11.3. As expected work group leaders were more likely to negotiate with their immediate supervisor as they recognised they were not likely to gain special concessions for their particular workgroup from more senior management. A majority of committed delegates claimed they tended to negotiate with management personnel whilst leaders were slightly more likely to negotiate with industrial relations officers than were the other steward types. From these results, however, there is little to suggest that leader stewards behave differently, in terms of whom they negotiate with, than the other steward types.
Do stewards who negotiate more frequently with senior management make a conscious decision to by-pass their immediate supervisor? Only 9.0 per cent of stewards indicated they would by-pass their supervisor as a matter of course with another 15.1 per cent of stewards often engaging in this practice. A further 27.6 per cent would by-pass their supervisor sometimes whilst the remainder (48.2 per cent) would rarely, if ever, not consult their immediate supervisor in the first instance. Therefore, whilst many stewards negotiate with senior management personnel, it is not normally an alternative but rather in addition or subsequent to, negotiating with their supervisor. Blue-collar and Loy Yang stewards were more likely to by-pass their supervisor once a dispute had arisen, but these differences did not prove statistically significant.

### Table 11.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Manager</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Officer</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Goodman and Whittingham found a similar situation with respect to British shop stewards. See Goodman and Whittingham, Shop Stewards in British Industry, pp.97-98.
Leaders, once a dispute arose and in contrast to delegates, were more likely to by-pass immediate management in an attempt to negotiate a settlement. This difference proved to be statistically significant ($x^2=21.89, df=12, p=.039$). Results are presented in table 11.4. Some 71.7 per cent of leaders had, at least on some occasions, by-passed their supervisor compared to 42.3 per cent of delegates, 52.3 per cent of work group leaders and 42.2 per cent of committed delegates. That leaders do by-pass their immediate supervisor must be seen in the context of the nature of the interaction with management personnel, including the supervisor. As we have seen, a higher proportion of leader steward-management contacts are negotiations. Accordingly, as part of a conscious strategy, leaders will negotiate with those representatives of the SECV who can make decisions. In the majority of circumstances this would not include supervisors.

Table 11.4

Frequency of Stewards By-passing their Supervisors by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-pass Supervisor</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section has examined the contact shop stewards have with management. Stewards were found to be more likely to negotiate with
management personnel and restrict their involvement with supervisors to receiving and providing advice and 'informal chats'. Stewards do not often by-pass their immediate supervisor and tend to negotiate with management only after negotiations with their supervisor have broken down. This tends to support the finding in chapter 9 that stewards, in the main, tend to follow procedures when disputes arise. Leader stewards were found to be more likely to interact in terms of negotiations and were more likely to by-pass their immediate supervisors than were their delegate counterparts. The latter difference was, however, the only statistically significant result.

Management Influence and Expectations

The nature of the contact stewards have with the various levels of management within the SECV may be partially determined by the stewards' perceptions of the expectations of management and whether management attempts to influence them. Stewards were asked 'how often does management attempt to influence you on matters affecting your members?' Some 15.2 per cent of all stewards claimed management made no attempt to influence them, whilst 24.2 per cent of respondents claimed this occurred often. The majority of stewards, some 60.6 per cent, reported that management did attempt to influence them on occasions. On this basis, there is no clear evidence that shop stewards, in general, are subjected to intense pressure from management in terms of influence. However, some 25.4 per cent of stewards perceived themselves as having been victimized by management, at least once, in terms of lack of
promotion, transferral or dismissal, and another 20.4 per cent of stewards perceived cases of management obstruction. These actions by management are the more overt forms of influence and are primarily designed to limit the activities of stewards. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to report management attempts to influence them (28.6 per cent compared to 17.7 per cent of white-collar stewards) as were Yallourn and Loy Yang stewards (26.4 per cent and 26.7 per cent compared to 21.3 per cent of Morwell stewards). These results did not prove to be statistically significant.

Leaders were more likely to perceive management attempts to influence them than were delegates. These differences, however, proved significant at the .10 level only. Results are presented in table 11.5. This finding is to be expected as management, in the case of delegates, would be able to influence stewards' behaviour through the membership. The leader stewards' willingness to initiate, modify or squash issues would not be so readily influenced by the membership. The type of leadership provided by stewards will therefore, at least in part, account for variations in managements' attempts to influence stewards. Equally, however, it may relate to the frequency and type of contact leaders have with management. In particular, given the nature of the bargaining process, leaders higher frequency of involvement in negotiations would lead, almost inevitably, to leaders feeling more pressure from management.

12. This is significantly higher than the equivalent figure of 13.0 per cent reported by McCarthy and Parker in the U.K. See W.E.J. McCarthy and S.R. Parker, Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Research Paper No. 10 (London: HMSO, 1968), p.48.
A more subtle form of influence is the expectations management have of steward behaviour. Batstone et al. found that staff management expected stewards to be fair and reasonable whilst shop-floor management made considerable reference to "... leadership and the stewards' ability to control the membership."\textsuperscript{13} For stewards to react to these expectations they would need to recognise that these were the expectations management held. Stewards were accordingly asked 'What do you feel are managements expectations of you as a shop steward.' Table 11.6 presents the responses of the stewards. The major expectations, as perceived by stewards, were to represent members and to be fair and reasonable (23.1 per cent and 15.0 per cent respectively). Leadership and keeping members in line accounted for a further 16.2 per cent of stewards. These perceptions are similar to the expectations, as stated by management, in the Batstone et al. study.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Batstone et al., Shop Stewards in Action, p.165.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
Table 11.6
Perceived Management Expectations of Shop Stewards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible leader</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent members</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and reasonable</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept SECV decisions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep members in line</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise and consult</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour agreements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue and white-collar stewards were similar in their views except in two aspects. White-collar stewards were more likely to perceive representation of members as the major management expectation, whilst blue-collar stewards saw acceptance of SECV decisions as a major expectation of management. This latter perception caused some shop stewards to react negatively to management. For example, one FIA steward with 5 years experience who was also a delegate to the GTLC, responded that management expected stewards "to believe that management and its line supervision are always right and don't tell lies." This perceived expectation of management and the reaction of stewards makes more difficult the task of maintaining strong shop-floor relations. Several differences existed between stewards from the three work centres and although only significant at the .10 level ($x^2=23.98$, df=16, p=.090) are worthy of comment. Some 40.0 per cent of Loy Yang stewards perceived representation of members as the major expectation of management (23.4 per cent and 16.9 per cent respectively of Yallourn and Morwell stewards). This may be a reaction to the emerging shop-floor
organisation at Loy Yang where management continually questions the stews as to the extent of membership support on issues. This is particularly the case with a range of new claims which, if granted, would upset relativities between the three centres. A substantial number of Yallourn and Morwell stewards mentioned being fair and reasonable as the major management expectation (13.0 per cent and 22.5 per cent respectively) whereas no Loy Yang steward perceived this to be the case. Yallourn stewards also perceived management expectations in terms of liaison and consultation which reflect long standing custom and practice at that centre.

Leaders were more likely to perceive management expectations of them in terms of accepting SECV decisions and providing responsible leadership. In contrast, delegates perceived management expectations in terms of representation of members. Results are presented in table 11.7.15 This finding, with respect to leaders, was also confirmed in discussions with management personnel. In the main, managers suggested that stewards should provide strong leadership in terms of control over the membership and, ultimately, ensure the acceptance of managerial decisions. As Dufy suggested "there is little doubt that management prefers to deal with 'strong' shop stewards, leaders who can control their members to the extent of ensuring adherence to any agreements reached, official or otherwise."16 Some 44.7 per cent of leaders perceived management expectations in terms of leadership/keeping members in line and accepting SECV decisions whereas only 28.9 per cent of

15. The x^2 statistic was significant at the .10 level, however the number of cells where the expected frequency did not exceed 5 made this statistic unreliable.

delegates held similar views. On the other hand 44.5 per cent of
delegates perceived management expectations in terms of representing
members and being fair and reasonable. Only 25.5 per cent of leaders
concurred.

The committed delegate, whilst holding similar views to the
delegate, also perceived management placing emphasis on the steward
solving problems. The work group leader perceived management
expectations in terms of representation of members and liaison and
consultation with management. In both these cases the expectations are
membership oriented. One other important feature of these findings is
the range of expectations as perceived by leaders. It is clear from
Table 11.7 that leaders do not perceive management having one over-
riding expectation but rather a range of expectations.

Table 11.7
Perceived Management Expectations of Shop Stewards by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible leader</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Represent members</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and reasonable</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept SECV decisions</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep members in line</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaise and consult</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour agreements</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stewards' Range of Arguments to Management

As previously noted, shop stewards have considerable contact with management personnel and engage in collective negotiations on a wide range of matters. Leader stewards were, on the whole, found to be more likely to engage in negotiations on a wider range of issues than were their delegate counterparts. Do these differences between steward types extend to the range of arguments presented to management? This section will address this question.

Stewards were asked the frequency with which they used a variety of arguments in discussions with management. Results are presented in table 11.8. The most frequent arguments used by stewards included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Always %</th>
<th>Frequently %</th>
<th>Sometimes %</th>
<th>Seldom %</th>
<th>Never %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Award/agreements (N=185)</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles (N=188)</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members' demands (N=189)</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect (N=175)</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems (N=174)</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome (N=171)</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

referring to members' demands, the current award or agreement and the desired effect of the issue. The likely outcomes, technical problems and union principles were not major or frequently used arguments. Subsequent interview evidence confirmed this finding. Stewards, in discussing issues with management, would, in the first instance, refer management to the award or local agreements. If this was inappropriate, for example in negotiations for a new claim, the steward would point out
that this is what the members wanted and would stress the desirable
effects, both in terms of productivity and industrial relations, for
management.

Cutting across these arguments will be questions of equity,
precedence, and custom and practice.¹⁷ These are standard points raised
by stewards and will tend to underly all of the arguments given above.
In the main, these issues tend to provide the rationale for members and
stewards to raise the matter in the first instance. Stewards in the
Latrobe Valley, however, realise these questions must be linked to
arguments related to awards/agreements, members demands and the likely
effects/outcomes. On their own these general issues provide less than
sufficient arguments.

Little difference existed between blue and white-collar stewards,
although blue-collar stewards were more likely to refer to union
principles and technical issues than were their white-collar
counterparts. This is to be expected given the long standing traditions
of unionism at the shop-floor level and the nature of the technology
employed in the SECV. A similar picture emerged when stewards were
classified by place of employment. Yallourn stewards were more likely
to refer to union principles and, to a lesser degree, to the desired
effect and technical issues than were Morwell and Loy Yang stewards.
Loy Yang stewards were, however, more likely to use member demands as a
key argument than their colleagues elsewhere. Although these findings
did not prove to be statistically significant they do tend to support
results reported earlier in this thesis concerning the traditions of a

¹⁷. See Goodman and Whittingham, Shop Stewards in British Industry,
pp.164-167.
strong union orientation at Yallourn and the development of a newly emerging, self contained centre at Loy Yang.

Leaders in discussions with management tended to use a variety of arguments, unlike delegates who used a restricted range of arguments. Details of stewards responses are presented in table 11.9. Leaders were more likely to utilize five of the six arguments than were delegates. The most significant difference related to the use of union principles. Some 62.0 per cent of leaders would always or frequently make use of union principles compared to 35.4 per cent of delegates, 48.7 per cent of work group leaders and 37.5 per cent of committed delegates. Work group leaders were equally likely to use a range or arguments and were more likely to refer to the desired effect and likely outcomes than the other steward types.

Table 11.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award/agreements</td>
<td>31  62.0</td>
<td>30  78.9</td>
<td>24  54.5</td>
<td>34  68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles</td>
<td>17  35.4</td>
<td>19  48.7</td>
<td>18  37.5</td>
<td>31  62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members' demands</td>
<td>36  73.5</td>
<td>30  71.4</td>
<td>34  75.5</td>
<td>41  80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect</td>
<td>24  51.1</td>
<td>23  58.9</td>
<td>20  45.4</td>
<td>24  55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems</td>
<td>15  32.0</td>
<td>10  27.8</td>
<td>13  28.9</td>
<td>12  26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome</td>
<td>24  41.0</td>
<td>21  58.4</td>
<td>21  47.7</td>
<td>18  41.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these results it appears that a key factor in the adoption of a range of arguments is the type of leadership displayed by the

18. In this table, only those stewards who responded they 'always' or 'frequently' use the particular argument are included.
steward. Where stewards act as leaders (leaders and work group leaders) they will probably make reference to awards/agreements, union principles, members demands and the desired effect of the issue. Delegate type stewards, on the other hand, tend to restrict their arguments to awards/agreements and members demands. Given the similarities between committed delegates and delegates, it appears that orientation to unionism seems to have little influence on the arguments adopted, even surprisingly, on the use of union principles.

**Manager-Steward Consultation**

In chapter 8 it was reported that 78.9 per cent of shop stewards had been involved in joint consultation with management. This form of interaction was discussed in the context of providing stewards with a defacto form of shop steward organisation. It is, however, important to recognise that this formal type of consultation\(^{19}\) does not necessarily reflect the level of day-to-day consultation that takes place between stewards and line managers. This section will examine the level of informal consultations between managers and stewards and seeks to assess the effectiveness of both formal and informal manager-steward consultation.

Stewards were asked 'how often does management consult with you on problems that may affect your members?' Some 15.9 per cent of stewards claimed that management always consulted them, 60.7 per cent of stewards acknowledged that consultation occurred occasionally while 23.4 per cent of stewards reported that they were rarely, if ever, consulted on matters affecting their members. No significant differences emerged

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\(^{19}\) Consisting of a number of stewards and management personnel who discuss and make recommendations on a specific problem.
between blue and white-collar stewards, although 18.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards reported that they were always consulted on important issues compared with only 12.5 per cent of white-collar stewards. Similarly, little difference occurred between the responses of stewards from the three production centres, although Loy Yang stewards felt they were less likely to be consulted on issues affecting their members. Leaders were more likely to be consulted by management on the introduction of policies affecting members than were delegates. Some 50.0 per cent of leader stewards were often consulted by management whereas only 27.3 per cent of delegates reported a similar level of consultation. This finding provides some support to the claim by Batstone et al. that ‘managers’ attempts to achieve their primary goals lead them to close relations with those who can have an important impact upon their success.’ Interestingly, nearly a quarter of committed delegates (23.9 per cent) reported that they were always consulted by management on matters that affected their membership. The differences between the four role types, however, did not prove to be statistically significant. Results are presented in table 11.10.

In attempting to evaluate the effectiveness, from the stewards’ perspective, of both the formal and informal types of consultation, it is necessary to consider two aspects. First, whether the stewards perceive that by discussing issues with management they are actually helping the SECV to solve its problems and, second, where they are involved in joint consultation over particular problems whether satisfactory solutions were achieved. The remainder of this section will address these two points.

Table 11.10
Manager-Steward Consultation by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewards were asked did they think that they were 'helping the SECV solve its problems and improve efficiency?' Some 31.7 per cent of stewards felt they helped considerably to solve problems with another 34.7 per cent responding that this was sometimes the case. The remaining stewards felt that their involvement was not important in this regard. This view was shared equally by both blue and white-collar stewards and stewards from the three production centres, although Loy Yang stewards were more likely to value their contribution to solving SECV problems. Similar results were obtained when stewards were asked to rate the effectiveness of joint consultation with management.

Overall, slightly more than two-thirds of stewards (66.9 per cent) rated joint consultation as effective (including very effective). The remaining stewards were undecided or negative in their assessment. Stewards from blue and white-collar unions and the three production centres were similar in their responses.

In the main those stewards who saw joint consultation as effective felt that the issue was resolved to the satisfaction of all, that it
provided an alternative to disputation, that it allowed a variety of views to be considered and that, overall, management was receptive to the views of the steward. Those stewards who felt that joint consultation was ineffective tended to express views opposite to those above. For example, their reasons included management were uncommitted and used the process to stall for time and that the final results did not reflect the stewards' input. Interview evidence from stewards with respect to their day-to-day consultations tended to confirm these results. In particular, several stewards were critical of those managers who actually consulted them on issues but then 'went their own way.' These stewards were expressing the belief that consultation places responsibilities on management to incorporate alternative views into the final decision.

Leader stewards saw more value in consultations with management than did their delegate counterparts. Results are presented in tables 11.11 and 11.12. Although the differences between the four steward types did not prove to be statistically significant several trends can be discerned. First, substantially more leader stewards perceived that they were making an important contribution to solving the SECV's problems than did the other steward types. Second, leader stewards were more likely to rate joint consultation arrangements as effective in solving specific problems than delegates, work group leaders and committed delegates. Third, work group leaders and committed delegates were more likely to see their contributions as helping the SECV and joint consultation as effective than were their delegate counterparts. On the basis of these findings it would appear that both leadership style and orientation to unionism are weak, but positive, explanations of stewards' perceptions of the value of joint consultation. This
finding is, at least in part, to be expected. In chapter 10 (see table 10.7) it was found that leaders, including work group leaders and to a lesser extent committed delegates, perceived a major expectation of the membership was for stewards to solve problems. It would thus seem these stewards will use consultations with management to achieve these objectives.

### Table 11.11

Stewards’ Contribution to Solving Problems by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11.12

Effectiveness of Joint Consultation by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very ineffective</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

In this chapter the relationships shop stewards have with management were examined with particular emphasis on the various ways management may give credence to the position of the steward. The major areas considered included contact and negotiations between stewards and management, the ways management may attempt to influence stewards, the range of arguments stewards use in negotiations with management and the level and value of consultation at the shop-floor.

Leader stewards tended to concentrate on developing a solid negotiating relationship and on the negotiations themselves, whereas delegates tended to restrict their contacts to negotiations and receiving advice. Leader type stewards (leaders and work group leaders) were more likely to by-pass their immediate supervisors, when a dispute arose, than were the delegate type stewards. Equally, leaders tended to perceive more attempts by management to influence their behaviour and felt management had different perceptions of their role to that perceived by delegates. Finally, leaders were more likely to have formal and informal consultations with management and, in the main, felt these consultations were effective in solving problems.

Although the majority of these findings did not prove to be statistically significant it is nevertheless clear that leadership style and orientation to unionism are useful predictors of the way stewards will develop their relationship with management. Delegate stewards' leadership style and their workgroup orientation means that they will tend to allow management to initiate discussions, for example, by providing the steward with information, rather than raising issues themselves. Leader stewards, on the other hand, with their strong emphasis on representative leadership and their commitment to the wider
union movement, will concentrate on developing a good bargaining relationship. This is achieved, in part, by spending more time with management in informal discussions.
CHAPTER TWELVE
SHOP STEWARDS AND THEIR UNION

Effective shop-floor organisation requires the shop steward to deal with and become involved in the wider union organisation. This is due, in part, to the superior financial and human resources held by the central union and also, in part, to the need for a co-ordinated approach when negotiating certain issues with management. This involvement, typically with full-time officials, represents the degree of external influence and control the union can achieve at the workplace. Equally, however, full-time officials are dependent upon their shop stewards. This is particularly the case with a number of administrative duties,\(^1\) mobilising member support and providing detailed local knowledge. Thus, as Hyman argued, "... a relationship of interdependence is the norm."\(^2\) The level of dependence upon full-time officials will vary considerably between stewards\(^3\) and will be influenced by a number of factors. Hyman and Fryer, for example, argue "... the structure and traditions of the union itself; the composition and work situation of the membership;

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1. For example, recruitment of members, monitoring management practices and acting as a communication link between the union and members.


and the policies and actions of the employer and the structure of collective bargaining are all influences on the relative power of the steward and the full-time official. These factors in turn influence the role definition adopted by the steward and the effectiveness of the full-time official.

The first section of this chapter will examine to what extent full-time officials, outside of the local steward organisation, influence the conduct and style of shop-floor industrial relations. As Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel concluded "... it is possible that domestic organizations are strongly influenced, if not controlled, by external groups, notably full-time officials." The organisational structure of trade unions in Australia is based on the assumption that shop stewards and members will become involved in the union more generally and will seek office at the local, state or federal levels. It is important, however, to recognise that stewards' wider involvement in the union will influence how they perceive their role and how they perform their duties. It would, for example, be reasonable to expect that a shop steward who holds additional union positions would take a wider perspective than that of the immediate workplace and would adopt more of a leadership role than would stewards who seek only to represent their members to management. The second section of this chapter will accordingly examine what involvement shop stewards have in their union beyond the shop-floor and how this involvement may affect their functions as a shop steward.

4. Ibid.

Involvement of Full-time Union Officials

From earlier chapters, particularly chapter 7, it is obvious that shop stewards play an active and integral role in industrial relations within the SECV. This role has been encouraged by local full-time union officials who indicated, during interviews, that they expected shop stewards to handle shop-floor issues wherever possible. As a consequence, these officials saw their role as providing co-ordination, human and technical resources and a link between the central union and the steward. It should be noted that, at the time of the survey, all local, full-time officials had been active shop stewards within the SECV prior to taking on full-time union duties. This is an important distinction as, in the main, the advice and assistance of such officials will be perceived in a different light from the Melbourne-based officials. In this latter case these officials are seen as remote, lacking in detailed knowledge of the SECV's operations and serving a different 'master'.

Not all stewards will, however, want to process issues themselves, preferring to request the assistance of full-time officials as soon as an issue arises. Other stewards, during the course of events, will find it necessary to 'call in' the full-time official. In the twelve months preceding the completion of the questionnaire, some 64.4 per cent of stewards reported that they had involved a full-time official in a local issue. The main issues that prompted this action were manning and redeployment (30.7 per cent), wages and conditions (10.9 per cent), demarcation disputes (6.9 per cent) and health and safety (5.9 per

6. Including local full-time officials from the AMWU, the ETU, the FIA, the MOA and FEDFA.
cent). In nearly half of these cases (46.5 per cent) the steward had acted on their own initiative; only 3.5 per cent of stewards claimed it was the full-time official who had suggested their involvement. This confirms the point made earlier in this chapter concerning full-time officials desire for stewards to handle issues themselves. Table 12.1 provides further details of the source of the initiative to involve full-time officials. In three-quarters of the cases (75.4 per cent) the suggestion to involve full-time officials came from the steward body. The only other substantial source was the members who suggested the involvement of full-time officials in 13.4 per cent of the cases. This tended to be the case particularly where the union had a local full-time official.

Table 12.1
Source of Initiative to Involve Full-time Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other shop stewards</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior shop steward</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local branch meeting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time union official</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne-based union officials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Some 37.6 per cent of stewards reported the issue was a one-off, local problem.
Blue-collar stewards were less likely to involve full-time officials in shop-floor issues (60.0 per cent compared to 70.4 per cent of white-collar stewards), although the difference did not prove to be statistically significant. Little difference was observed in the nature of the issues blue and white-collar stewards would hand over to full-time officials although, in general, white-collar stewards were more likely to involve full-time officials in one-off, local problems (45.8 per cent compared to 30.2 per cent of blue-collar stewards). White-collar stewards were more likely to call in full-time officials themselves (56.5 per cent compared to 38.8 per cent of blue-collar stewards), whereas blue-collar stewards tended to take into account the wishes of senior stewards and local branch meetings (30.0 per cent compared to 9.7 per cent of white-collar stewards). Results are presented in table 12.2. The source of the initiative to involve full-time officials tended, therefore, to be more varied for blue-collar stewards than that for white-collar stewards. This finding lends support to the conclusions of Batstone et al.\(^8\)

Stewards from the three work centres were similar in their use of full-time officials, although considerable differences existed in the issues full-time officials were asked to deal with. The major issue for Loy Yang stewards was manning whereas wages and conditions, demarcations and individual issues as well as manning were the major concerns that prompted Morwell and Yallourn stewards to bring in full-time officials.

---

Table 12.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Blue-Collar</th>
<th>White-collar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other shop stewards</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Shop Stewards</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Branch Meeting</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time union official</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne-based union officials</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was expected that delegates would be more likely to take an independent role from the union than were leaders. This was based on the premise that leaders, with their strong orientation to unionism, would tend to meet more frequently with full-time officials and, as a consequence, involve them in shop-floor issues. This did not prove to be the case. A similar percentage of all steward types tended to involve full-time officials in workplace issues. However, differences emerged between steward types with regard to the type of issues they would involve full-time officials in. Delegates and committed delegates would not involve full-time officials in manning issues, preferring instead to leave the issue to the membership. Leaders, on the other hand, would tend to handle questions of wages, conditions and demarcations themselves. Further, leaders and workgroup leaders tended to specifically exclude full-time officials from local health and safety issues. Perceptions of who suggested the involvement of full-time officials did not substantially vary between the four role types. One
interesting difference, although not statistically significant, was that only committed delegates and leaders involved full-time officials on these officials’ advice. This is consistent with their wider orientation to unionism.

Once having involved a full-time official in an issue, the majority of stewards (70.1 per cent) indicated that they would accept the strategies proposed by the official. Only 2.7 per cent of stewards claimed they would rarely adopt full-time officials’ proposed strategies. On the basis of these figures it is clear that full-time officials have considerable influence on industrial relations in the SECV. White-collar stewards were slightly more likely to accept strategies proposed by full-time officials (74.0 per cent compared to 67.3 per cent of blue-collar stewards) as were Yallourn and Loy Yang stewards (73.8 per cent and 73.3 per cent compared to 64.6 per cent of Morwell stewards). The former results tend to confirm the findings of Batstone et al., although the difference between staff and shop-floor stewards was significantly greater in their study.

Some 80.5 per cent of leaders (77.3 per cent of work group leaders) stated they normally would accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials. This compared to 60.0 per cent of delegates (63.3 per cent of committed delegates). Results are presented in table 12.3 and the differences proved to be statistically significant ($\chi^2=12.93$, df=6, p=.044). This finding was not unexpected as delegates would tend to

9. Strategy in this context is defined as the methods aimed at achieving certain goals. As such, it may also involve the definition and re-definition of the actual goals.

refer the proposed strategy back to the membership for their ratification.

Table 12.3

Acceptance by Stewards of Strategy Proposed by Full-Time Officials by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Delegate %</th>
<th>Work Group Leader %</th>
<th>Committed Delegate %</th>
<th>Leader %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One important aspect of the involvement of full-time officials is the stewards' subsequent perception of their usefulness in achieving a satisfactory resolution of the issue. These perceptions are of considerable importance as they will affect any future involvement these officials may have in SECV industrial issues, both in terms of actual involvement and the timing of that involvement. Stewards were therefore asked 'how useful is it to involve a full-time official in an issue?' Results are presented in table 12.4. Some 90.3 per cent of stewards claimed it was useful to involve full-time officials in shop-floor issues and only 4.3 per cent of stewards found the involvement of full-time officials not very useful. White-collar stewards were more likely to report the involvement of full-time officials as useful (93.6 per cent compared to 88.1 per cent of blue-collar stewards) as were Morwell and Loy Yang stewards (93.3 per cent in both cases compared to 86.4 per
cent of Yallourn stewards). Although these differences did not prove to be statistically significant, the higher percentage of Loy Yang stewards who found the involvement of full-time officials useful, coupled with the earlier finding that Loy Yang stewards were more likely to have involved full-time officials in shop-floor issues, deserves further comment. Whilst Loy Yang stewards prefer to handle 'extraordinary' issues themselves, they have tended to employ full-time officials in negotiating manning levels both in the power station and the open cut mine. The success of these officials in the negotiations would contribute significantly to the stewards' perceptions of the usefulness of full-time officials.

Table 12.4
Usefulness of Involving Full-Time Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usefulness</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very useful</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very useful</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 187 100.0

Where delegates and leaders have involved full-time officials, their perceptions of their usefulness did not significantly differ. As expected, work group leaders saw the least value in involving full-time officials, but even amongst this group of stewards some 86.4 per cent felt the involvement of full-time officials was useful. This finding suggests that shop stewards in the Latrobe Valley tend to be more
complimentary about the involvement of full-time officials than those stewards in the Batstone et al. study. This can primarily be explained by the distinction between unions with local full-time officials and those whose officials are based in Melbourne. Stewards who belonged to unions with local officials were more likely to involve full-time officials (69.9 per cent compared to 46.7 per cent), accept their strategies (73.2 per cent compared to 59.5 per cent) and, overall, rate their officials involvement as very useful (53.5 per cent compared to 30.2 per cent). In the first and last cases these differences proved to be statistically significant at the .01 and .05 levels respectively. These results are to be expected as the locally-based officials tend to be more familiar with the issues and meet regularly with shop stewards on the job, at local branch meeting and at various social activities.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of stewards saw value in involving full-time union officials and were prepared to accept their strategies it did not follow that stewards did not experience difficulties when working with these officials. These problems are set out in table 12.5. It should be noted, however, that only 57.9 per cent of stewards (N =121) were able or prepared to articulate such problems. These problems could be classified into two broad groupings. The first group related to the difficulties stewards experienced in attempting to involve full-time officials in issues and included being hard to contact (29.8 per cent) and their lack of time to deal with the issue (14.0 per cent). The second group of problems related to the official's handling

11. Ibid., p.192.
of the dispute and included being out of date (17.4 per cent), not familiar with the issue (14.9 per cent), having a conflict of interest (7.4 per cent) and their overt political motives (3.3 per cent). A further 13.2 per cent of stewards reported a range of other problems.

Two differences existed between white and blue-collar stewards’ perceptions of the difficulties in working with full-time officials. Three times as many white-collar stewards claimed the officials’ lack of time was a major problem (18.8 per cent compared to 6.1 per cent of blue-collar stewards). In the main, however, this difference represents the shortage of staff within the MOA. Just prior to the survey the MOA’s second local full-time official had resigned. As one MOA steward with 6 years experience claimed ‘our local industrial officer is so over-worked he is almost impossible to find’. Blue-collar stewards, on the other hand, more frequently claimed that the full-time officials were not familiar with the issues (14.6 per cent compared to 9.4 per cent of white-collar stewards). One FEDFA steward of 10 years standing clearly summarized the situation. ‘It takes so long to brief them in areas of which they have limited or no knowledge.’ Overall, the differences did not prove to be statistically significant. Few comments related to the reasons cited by Batstone et al.: too ready to compromise, lengthy and restrictive procedures and the officials own personal skill and competence.12

12. Ibid.
Table 12.5
Difficulties Experienced with Full-Time Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard to contact</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of date</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with issue</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political motives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several differences existed between stewards from the three work centres although they did not prove to be statistically significant. Results are provided in table 12.6. Yallourn, and to a lesser extent Loy Yang, stewards were more likely to complain that full-time officials were hard to contact. This is, in part, explained by the fact that all local full-time officials are located in Morwell. Loy Yang, and to a lesser extent Yallourn, stewards were more likely to complain that full-time officials were not familiar with the issues. Both these centres, in particular Loy Yang, are the sites of the latest power stations (Loy Yang A and Yallourn W). It would, therefore, appear that the state of technology and the full-time officials’ proximity to the work force are key factors in explaining variations in the types of problems shop stewards experience in dealing with full-time officials. Ironically, however, the less technologically advanced Morwell production centre had the highest number of stewards complaining that the full-time officials were out of date.
Table 12.6

Difficulties Experienced with Full-Time Officials by Place of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Yallourn %</th>
<th>Morwell %</th>
<th>Loy Yang %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard to contact</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of date</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with issue</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political motives</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The perceived problems of involving full-time officials did not differ significantly between delegates and leaders. Some differences did, however, exist. In particular, delegates complained of full-time officials not having sufficient time (15.8 per cent compared to 10.8 per cent of leaders), whereas leaders felt a major problem was that full-time officials lacked familiarity with the issue (18.9 per cent compared to 13.2 per cent of delegates). A substantial number of work group leaders cited conflict of interest as a major problem (12.5 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent of delegates, 5.6 per cent of committed delegates and 2.7 per cent of leaders).

Accordingly, given that the use, perceptions of effectiveness and difficulties of working with full-time officials are substantially similar across the four role types it is not possible to conclude that the role definition of the steward is a key determinant in explaining the influence of the full-time union official in SECV industrial relations. Leadership style, however, was significantly related to
whether a steward would accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials and represents an important factor concerning the degree of external influence at the workplace.

Shop Stewards' Wider Union Involvement

This section will examine the shop stewards' involvement in union activities that are not directly related to their immediate workplace. Two particular activities are examined: attendance at local branch meetings and accepting union office. These activities represent two levels of involvement. The first measures the stewards' wider interest in union activities whilst the second suggests a higher commitment to the principles of unionism.¹³

Stewards were asked 'how often do you attend local branch meetings of your union?' Results are presented in table 12.7. Some 41.7 per cent of stewards who responded to the questionnaire claimed they would attend most of the meetings held. Similarly, 36.4 per cent of stewards reported that they would rarely, if ever, attend such meetings. These results are consistent with those reported by Batstone et al.,¹⁴ although they are considerably lower than the 88.0 per cent of stewards Goodman and Whittingham found attended branch meetings regularly.¹⁵ It should be pointed out that only the larger unions have local branches in the Latrobe Valley (although they cover some 90.9 per cent of stewards in

¹³. These principles will be self defined by the steward and do not rule out 'other motives' for seeking and accepting union office.


this study) and as a consequence some stewards would need to travel to Melbourne to attend a meeting of their branch. Further, as discussed in chapter 3, the nature of shift work can inhibit the attendance at such meetings.

Blue-collar stewards were significantly more likely to attend branch meetings of their union than were their white-collar counterparts ($x^2=16.24$, df=4, p=.003). This difference is understated as considerably more white-collar stewards belong to unions that have local branches (98.8 per cent compared to 85.7 per cent of blue-collar stewards). Loy Yang stewards were also more likely to frequently attend branch meetings than their Morwell and Yallourn colleagues (50.6 per cent, 36.2 per cent and 43.3 per cent respectively) although these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 12.7
Attendance at Branch Union Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nearly always</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most times</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some times</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewards cited a number of reasons why these meetings were of value. These are provided in table 12.8. The major value of branch meetings included the provisions of information (47.0 per cent), to be able to discuss general issues of unionism (11.9 per cent) and provide
the opportunity to discuss and debate strategies relating to major problems and concerns (9.7 per cent). From these results it is clear that stewards do not see branch meetings as the key forum to discuss and plan strategies for particular issues or disputes. Blue and white-collar stewards did not differ markedly in their perceptions of the value of these meetings. Stewards from the three production centres were also in general agreement with one exception. Loy Yang stewards did not see any value in these meetings in terms of unity and providing support. This compares with 9.8 per cent and 6.8 per cent of Morwell and Yallourn stewards respectively. Similarly, the various steward types did not differ substantially in the value they attached to branch meetings.

Table 12.8
Value of Branch Union Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with other stewards</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity-support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning strategies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss general issues</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss major issues</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules-advice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A substantial majority of stewards (71.8 per cent) did not, at the time of the survey, hold any official position in their union apart from their stewardship. Blue-collar stewards were more likely to occupy
union office (33.3 per cent compared to 20.5 per cent of white-collar stewards). This difference proved to be statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.08$, df=1, $p = .043$). This finding, however, must be qualified. Most of the white-collar stewards belong to the MOA, and although this union has a local branch only a limited number of positions are available. As a consequence, the ability for wider union involvement is severely limited. Loy Yang stewards were also substantially more likely to accept official union positions (45.2 per cent) compared to their Morwell and Yallourn colleagues (24.7 per cent and 26.4 per cent respectively). These differences proved significant only at the .10 level ($\chi^2 = 5.03$, df=2, $p = .081$). This, in part, complements the finding that Loy Yang stewards were more likely to seek and accept leadership positions in local community organisations (see chapter 5), however, it also represents the desire by Loy Yang stewards to gain superior conditions for their members. Accepting positions within their union is part of this strategy.

A range of official positions were reported by those stewards who did hold office ($N = 59$). The majority of these stewards were members of the local branch committee (53.7 per cent) with a further 35.2 per cent of stewards holding executive positions within that branch. The remaining positions included membership of state and federal management committees (3.7 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively) and one steward (1.9 per cent) was an honorary state union official. Significant differences existed between blue and white-collar stewards. These

16. Branch president, deputy president, secretary or member of the executive.
differences are presented in table 12.9. White-collar stewards tended to restrict their involvement to membership of the local branch committee. Only five white-collar stewards occupied more significant positions: two had taken local leadership positions and three were members of their unions federal management committee. Blue-collar stewards, on the other hand, were substantially more likely to seek and accept leadership positions, the majority at the local level.

Table 12.9

Official Positions within the Union by Type of Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Blue-collar Stewards %</th>
<th>White-collar Stewards %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member-local committee</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local official</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-state committee</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State official</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-federal committee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leaders were not more likely to be involved in union activities beyond the shop-floor than were delegates. In terms of the two criteria adopted, attendance at branch union meetings and holding official positions, there were no statistically significant differences between

17. These positions represent the highest union position for each steward. It is possible for one steward to occupy several of these positions simultaneously.

18. As already noted the limited opportunity for white-collar stewards, in terms of positions available at the local level, would explain some of these differences.
leaders and delegates. Frequency of attendance at branch union meetings are provided in table 12.10. A higher percentage of leaders 'nearly always' attended branch union meetings than any other steward type, however, with the exception of committed delegates, a higher percentage of leaders, than any other steward type, rarely or never attended such meetings. This latter result can be partly explained by the fact that many of the unions who have only a small number of members in the SECV and hence have not established a local branch have stewards that act as leaders. This was the case, for example, with the FMWU, VOBS, the OPQUB and the BLF. It should be noted that the various steward types may be distinguishable in terms of the role they play at branch meetings. Leaders, for example, may tend to propose more strategy and be more forceful in debate, whereas delegates may concentrate on informing the meeting of their members' attitude. This, however, remains an area for future research.

Table 12.10
Attendance at Branch Union Meetings by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly always</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most times</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some times</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentage of each steward type holding official positions and the type of position did not vary significantly between the four steward types. Results are presented in tables 12.11 and 12.12. Leaders and work group leaders were more likely to hold official positions within their union than were delegates and committed delegates. Committed delegates, in fact, were the least likely to hold such positions. Leaders and delegates tended to hold similar positions within their union and committed delegates tended to restrict their involvement to membership of the local branch committee of management. Taken collectively, however, these results (tables 12.10, 12.11 and 12.12) do not illustrate any substantial difference between the four steward types.

Tables 12.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hold Position</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12.12
Type of Position within the Union by Role Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
<th>Work Group Leader</th>
<th>Committed Delegate</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member-local committee</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local official</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-state committee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State official</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-federal committee</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter it was argued that the stewards’ level of dependence upon and use of full-time officials would be influenced by a number of factors and, in particular, the role definition adopted by the steward. However, the differences between the steward types were statistically significant in only one instance: leader stewards were more likely to accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials. It was also expected that the stewards’ involvement in the wider union would be related to their role definition. This did not prove to be the case.

One trend, however, did emerge. Involvement in the activities of the wider union positively correlated with the stewards' leadership style. Leader type stewards (leaders and work group leaders) were more likely to attend meetings and accept union office than those stewards who act as delegates. This relationship can be partially explained by leader stewards’ desire to adopt a variety of strategies to achieve
their objectives. It may well be, however, that these activities further enhance the stewards' leadership position. By attending branch meetings these stewards will be in possession of the necessary information to formulate arguments for or against a particular strategy. Equally, acceptance of an official position within their union will raise the status of these stewards and lessen the risk of a challenge to their position or to their arguments. They can then carry out their duties with few impediments.
PART FIVE

SHOP STEWARDS IN ACTION
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE 1977 MAINTENANCE WORKERS' STRIKE

Parts Three and Four of this thesis have considered the functions of shop stewards and their relationships with members, management and their union. A number of differences in steward behaviour were ascertained when the stewards were broken down by the type of union they belonged to, their place of work and their role definition. Part Five of this thesis will consolidate this analysis through a consideration of shop steward behaviour in two protracted industrial disputes. The aim of both chapters 13 and 14 is to integrate the theoretical framework of shop stewards' role definition and the findings of chapters 7 to 12 through an examination of shop steward activity during industrial action. The first of these case studies is the eleven week strike of 2,300 maintenance workers in 1977. Although much has been written on this particular strike,\(^1\) no attempt has been made to examine the dispute in terms of local union leadership.

The analysis in this chapter proceeds along the following lines. Section one provides a detailed overview of the strike, noting the context of the dispute, the key issues and the processes that led to the final settlement. Section two focuses on the strike leaders, their role definition and the tactics and strategies employed. The remaining three sections follow closely the structure of chapters 7 to 12, namely the

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functions of the stewards, their strike organisation and their relationships with members, union officials and management.

The Strike

On the 29 March 1977 the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council served a log of claims on local SECV industrial relations officers on behalf of all maintenance workers employed by the SECV in the Latrobe Valley. The claims had been developed by the shop stewards from the various unions at a number of meetings held earlier in that year and were endorsed by the joint memberships at a mass meeting held on 25 March 1977.2 The objectives of the claim were to provide:

1. A power industry award;
2. comparable wage relativities with contract labour;
3. an evening-out of award conditions; and
4. similar conditions for blue and white-collar employees.3

In effect, the claim, if granted, would provide consistent terms of employment to all SECV employees and would provide recognition of the special industrial character of the SECV.

The SECV refused to discuss the claim on the grounds that the claim should have been submitted via the usual channels, namely from the state unions and the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) to the Head Office

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2. The claims included demands for wage increases, improved leave provisions, an increase in penalty rates, an increase in meal allowances, a thirty-five hour week and an improved retirement scheme.

of the SECV. That this did not happen clearly highlighted the degree to which Latrobe Valley shop stewards had lost confidence in the leadership of their state union branches and the VTHC. For example, the stewards argued that lodging claims through normal channels had, in the past, resulted in delays of up to two years. Further, these claims would be modified to fall in line with the state and federal union policies that, in effect, resulted in little resemblance to what the rank-and-file in the Latrobe Valley wanted.

The Latrobe Valley stewards complied, at least in part, with the SECV demand by presenting their log of claims to a meeting convened by the VTHC on 3 May 1977. This meeting essentially left the claim intact but transferred the authority to conduct the negotiations to the VTHC. A meeting of shop stewards held in the Latrobe Valley the following day approved of the VTHC acting on their behalf but decided that they would meet in two weeks time and "... review progress and consider action to speed up the claims." With little progress being made by the VTHC and after a series of workplace and shop stewards meetings to discuss the claim, a mass meeting of workplace workers held on 15 June 1977 demanded the GTLC re-serve the claim upon the SECV and that an overtime and availability ban be immediately implemented. Thus, although the shop stewards were prepared initially to allow the VTHC to handle the dispute they now had recognised that if gains were to be made, and uncoordinated action from the rank-and-file prevented, they would need to take charge of the claim.

4. The SECV also argued that as the claims were relevant to all SECV employees they could not be considered in isolation.

These bans were implemented on the 15 June and by early August had "...began to seriously affect the operational value of coal winning and power generation equipment." The SECV, in its determination to break these bans, removed two vehicles for repair by contract labour and altered rosters to enable a damaged boiler to be repaired. Each of these actions breached existing arrangements of consultation with the unions and resulted in some 200 metal trades employees spontaneously walking off the job on 8 August 1977. The stewards saw this action by the SECV as an opportunity for them to seize the initiative and called a mass meeting of all maintenance workers for the following day. Some 2,300 workers, representing eleven unions, attended this meeting and voted to go on strike for one week.

Three days later, on 12 August 1977, the ETU applied to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to vary the Metal Trades Award in line with the Latrobe Valley stewards claim. As Benson and Goff observed "to all outward appearances an important procedural difficulty had been overcome." The SECV had rejected the log of claims served on them by the stewards arguing that the correct procedure was for the state branches of the unions to take it through the arbitration system. Whilst this was a pre-condition to settlement, the stewards and the rank-and-file were not prepared to discontinue their strike action and on the 16 August voted to continue the strike indefinitely.


7. The application was dated 8 August 1977.

Over the next six weeks events followed a more or less cyclical pattern:

... the SECV would firstly request a return to work by the maintenance workers before commencing negotiations on the log of claims; if the unions agreed, Commissioner Vosti would then convene a hearing where the SECV would submit a timetable for discussing the log of claims. After the conference the shop stewards would call a mass meeting of maintenance workers who, in what was seen as an unnecessary delay, voted to stay out; the SECV responded by cancelling the proposed timetable and the whole cycle would start again.  

The shop stewards had, during this time, been involved in discussions with SECV management in an endeavour to reach a solution. By the 23 September 1977 a tentative agreement for a return to work had been reached. On 26 September 1977 this agreement was presented to a mass meeting of maintenance workers and was overwhelmingly rejected. All efforts to get the men back to work and to achieve progress on the log of claims had failed.

By this stage, the lack of adequate maintenance was seriously threatening the viability of power supplies. Accordingly, the following day, the SECV imposed state-wide power restrictions and in early October the State Government invoked the Essential Services Act and declared a state of emergency. This action by the Victorian Government had the effect of uniting unionists in the Valley. For example, FEDFA, whilst not involved in the dispute, declared they would not operate machinery repaired by 'other than those in dispute' and if punitive action was taken against the strikers a mass meeting of all FEDFA members would be called.  

This action by non-involved unions coupled with the resolve of the maintenance workers led the Government and the SECV to return to

9. Ibid., p.224.
the arbitration system. An Arbitration Commission hearing on 6/7 October made little progress. The Commission's recommendation that existing offers by the SECV should be accepted accompanied by an immediate resumption of work, was overwhelmingly rejected by the maintenance workers.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) which, up to this stage, had not been involved then entered the arena and chaired a conference of unions on 11 October 1977. At this conference, it suggested a *prima facie* case existed for the Arbitration Commission to agree to an anomalies hearing. This was accepted by the Latrobe Valley shop stewards and they recommended to a mass meeting of strikers, held on 13 October, that they should return to work to enable a Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission to hear the claim. This recommendation was accepted, the maintenance workers returned to work and the Full Bench immediately heard the claim. On 18 October the Full Bench handed down its decision that no increases in wages were justified. A mass meeting of maintenance workers held later that day decided to resume the strike.

The SECV retaliated by immediately writing to each maintenance worker on strike inviting them to return to work by the 21 October; if they chose not to return they would be regarded as having abandoned their employment. The following day, 19 October 1977, the ACTU recommended a return to arbitration, this time on the basis of a work value case. Also on this day the SECV, in an attempt to put pressure on the striking maintenance workers to return to work, advertised locally and nationally for replacement labour. The two largest unions in the SECV, the MOA and FEDPA, responded by categorically stating that their members would not work with 'scab' labour and 'scab' strikers returning to work.
The work value hearing began before Commissioner Mansini on 20 October and immediately a request was made to the maintenance workers to return to work so as to allow the claim to be heard. The stewards, recognising that this hearing could be their last opportunity to secure some gains for the maintenance workers, recommended, although not without dissent, to a mass meeting held on 25 October that all strikers return to work. The stewards believed by doing so a final decision would be handed down by the end of the year with an interim decision being made within four weeks.

The maintenance workers accepted their stewards recommendation and returned to work later that day with all bans and limitations lifted. The work value decision was not, however, handed down until 21 March 1978 and although some classifications gained moderate increases others did not. It was resolved by the unions that at an early date direct action would be taken to rectify these alleged injustices.

The strike had lasted for eleven weeks. It had been initiated and conducted by the Latrobe Valley shop stewards and involved the Arbitration Commission hearing four different claims. Divisions between the VTHC and the local branches had reached straining point and deep resentment of the maintenance workers had been expressed by unionists in Melbourne.\footnote{Approximately 500,000 workers in Melbourne had been laid off at some stage during the strike due to power restrictions being implemented.} This strike not only had a profound affect on the style of
industrial relations within the SECV\textsuperscript{12} but it also provided the impetus for the recognition that a more united union movement in the Valley would be necessary to achieve future demands.

**Strike Leaders**

The 2300 maintenance workers from the eleven unions had some sixty shop-floor representatives, most of whom played an active part in the conduct of the strike and the organisation of the membership. Four of the stewards stood out: Sam Armstrong and George Wragg from the AMWU, Ted Turnbull from the ETU and Ross Miles from the BWIU.\textsuperscript{13} Some full-time union officials also played important roles in this dispute including Franz Onger, Secretary of the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council\textsuperscript{14} and John Halfpenny, State Secretary of the AMWU. This section will concentrate on the four shop stewards, placing their role definition within the framework adopted by this study and examining the tactics and strategies employed throughout the dispute.

Each of the four stewards was asked to answer the six questions making up the leadership and orientation to unionism scales.\textsuperscript{15} Although the strike had occurred over nine years earlier each steward was asked to relate their responses to how they operated and felt at that particular time. Based on their responses all four stewards were

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\textsuperscript{13} Ted Turnbull subsequently became the Latrobe Valley regional organiser for the ETU whilst the other three retired from the SECV in the period 1985-1987.

\textsuperscript{14} Also full-time organiser with the Liquor and Allied Trades Union.

\textsuperscript{15} See questions contained in table 3.3. These questions formed question 23 of the survey questionnaire (Appendix A).
leaders; they were prepared to raise issues or modify and squash issues raised by the membership if they deemed this necessary and all had a strong commitment to the wider union movement. Armstrong and Turnbull were extremely high on both the leadership and orientation to unionism scales. They placed great emphasis on combined steward organisation and felt they belonged to the wider trade union movement.

The finding that the major actors in this dispute were leaders, in terms of their role definition, is not unexpected. This dispute involved eleven unions with the major aim being an industry agreement that would provide similar terms and conditions of employment to all SECV workers. The four stewards were orientated towards the welfare of the wider trade union membership within the SECV and all occupied a number of significant honorary positions within the union movement. Armstrong was President of the GTLC, Secretary of the SECV combined shop stewards' committee and Secretary of the local branch of the AMWU. Turnbull was President of the SECV combined shop stewards' committee, Vice-President of the GTLC and Secretary of the local ETU branch. Wragg was a former president of the GTLC and President of the local branch of the AMWU whilst Miles was the immediate past-president of the combined shop stewards' committee and Area Secretary of the BWIU. At the time of the dispute, their average trade union experience was in excess of 25 years. Two of these stewards, Armstrong and Wragg, had been active in the trade union movement in the U.K. before emigrating to Australia in the early 1950s. Thus, whilst chapter 12 found that leaders were not necessarily more likely to occupy official positions within their union than were delegates, the high levels of leadership and orientation to unionism displayed by these four stewards would suggest that wider union involvement would occur.
The strategy adopted by these stewards in this dispute was based on the maximum participation of all stewards. Whilst these four stewards exercised considerable influence during the dispute their major aim was to involve all stewards in the organisation of the dispute. Accordingly, whilst the executive of the combined shop stewards committee met frequently, the steward body met daily and made all decisions relating to the conduct of the strike. It was, for example, policy for as many stewards as possible to attend negotiations and arbitration hearings, to liaise with other unions, both in Melbourne and interstate, to be involved in raising money for the strike fund and to attend all job meetings.

The leadership constantly stressed to all stewards the importance of their involvement in the conduct of the strike and the need to maintain a close relationship with the rank-and-file if gains were to be made.16 The decision to submit the claim locally was made in early 1977 by the shop stewards themselves who had experienced difficulty in explaining to their members why claims in the past had not been achieved. It was clearly a decision by the SECV stewards to go it alone. It should, however, be noted that at that time the GTLC was primarily an SECV maintenance unions forum and unions like the AMWU tended to encourage their stewards to become actively involved in disputes of this nature.

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Shop Stewards' Duties during the Strike

Chapter 7 outlined in some detail the functions of shop stewards in their day-to-day activities in the workplace. These duties included recruitment, handling grievances and negotiations with management. Chapter 9 specifically related these activities to industrial disputation and noted the role of the steward in terms of the initiation of issues, use of procedure, strike organisation, the development of strategy and participation in negotiations. This section will build on these findings by examining the duties that stewards carried out in the course of this particular strike. This section adds weight to the finding of chapter 9 that leader type stewards are more likely to be actively involved in the organisational aspects of the strike and more likely to involve the membership in the decision to begin and terminate industrial action.

As noted earlier, the strategy adopted by the leadership was to involve as many stewards as possible in all facets of the strike. Interviews with the key stewards indicated a number of activities were considered central to the achievement of the strike objectives. Each of these activities and the level of steward involvement are now considered.

Decision Making

All major decisions regarding the strike and the strategies to be pursued were made by the membership. This usually occurred at mass meetings of members of the eleven unions and included decisions concerning the original claim, the procedure regarding the serving of the claim, the implementation of work bans, the decisions to strike, to continue strike action and to terminate strike action. Stewards would,
however, meet prior to the mass meetings to develop recommendations that
would be put to the membership. Unity between the stewards was also
considered important by the leadership and was demonstrated to members
by all stewards being asked to ‘stand behind the mike’ at mass
meetings. Interview evidence clearly suggested a positive relationship
between this unity and the memberships’ willingness to continue strike
action.

Developing Strategy

All stewards were encouraged to participate in deciding the
particular course of action to be followed. These decisions included
the recommendations to be put to mass meetings, organisational matters,
the strategies to be adopted in negotiations with the SECV and the form
and content of presentations to the Arbitration Commission. To
accommodate the number of stewards involved, regular meetings (often
daily) of all shop stewards were held. These meetings were well
attended and proved to be a major factor in maintaining unity between
the eleven unions and presenting a united front to the membership.

Delegations and Negotiations

Although not all stewards could attend every negotiation session or
be part of every delegation, the leadership rotated participation so as
to allow those stewards who wanted to be involved in this aspect of the
strike to be involved, at least to a limited degree. Armstrong saw this
involvement as an educative process as well as strengthening the resolve
of stewards.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, whilst key stewards like Armstrong, Wragg, Turnbull and Miles were intimately involved in these activities, different stewards would also participate in these activities. For example, most stewards during the course of the dispute had the opportunity to attend, at least in part, one of the four different arbitration hearings. John Halfpenny, State Secretary of the AMWU, saw this participation by stewards as particularly significant as it forced the Arbitration Commission to modify its processes to accommodate the involvement of a large number of shop stewards as well as giving the stewards an insight into how the Arbitration Commission worked.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{Strike Fund Activities}

The strike fund was seen as paramount to achieving the objectives of the strike. The shop stewards perceived early on in the dispute that the maintenance workers would need financial support if they were to engage in lengthy strike action. Fund raising activities also had the effect of involving many stewards who had not any prior involvement. This involvement ranged from collecting donations from local residents in the shopping centres, collecting and distributing food and produce and travelling both intra and inter-state to seek financial and moral support from fellow unionists. There was, in this activity, no limit to the level of involvement of stewards and most stewards made a considerable effort in this regard. It should also be noted that many members played an energetic role in this activity.

\textsuperscript{17} Armstrong, Interview, 15 February 1987.

\textsuperscript{18} Interview with J. Halfpenny, 10 August 1978. This interview was conducted for an earlier paper on the strike, see Benson and Goff 'The 1977 Latrobe Valley SECV Maintenance Workers' Strike'.

Maintaining Links with Members

The strike leaders recognised that ultimately the membership would determine the outcome of the dispute. It was therefore decided that each steward, apart from playing a role in the collective decision making, would act as the reference point for their particular workgroup. Accordingly, shop stewards, held on-the-job meetings during periods of work and during the strike attempted to maintain contact with their members via informal meetings, newsletters, word of mouth and mass meetings. The coverage of the dispute in the local press aided this process as did the distribution of food parcels and monies from the strike fund.

Administration

In any strike, but particularly a lengthy dispute, a number of administrative type activities must be performed. This strike was no exception. Booking of venues for mass meetings, the acquiring and setting up of loudspeaker equipment, transport to meetings, the writing and printing of newsletters, distribution of copies of proposed recommendations and talking to the press were activities that were frequently undertaken by the stewards and members. These activities, whilst time-consuming, allowed stewards to become fully involved in the day-to-day running of the dispute and to develop closer relationships with other shop stewards. This in turn provided for a more united stewards' movement.

Table 13.1 summarises the roles of the leadership and stewards in each of these areas. It is clear that whilst certain functions were the preserve of the leadership, for example, negotiations, this particular strike was characterised by the level of co-operation displayed between
the leadership and the stewards from the eleven unions, and these
stewards' involvement in all aspects of the dispute. These duties were
diverse and the general stewards' involvement was the outcome of the
leaderships' desire to pursue the general principles of unionism via
equity and collective action.

Table 13.1
Shop Steward Functions During 1977 Strike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Major Participants</th>
<th>Role of Leadership</th>
<th>Role of Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Active support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Development</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Develop proposals</td>
<td>Debate proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegations/negotiations</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Negotiate</td>
<td>Observers/backup witnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike Fund</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Oversee fund</td>
<td>Actively raising funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with members</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>General information</td>
<td>Keeping own members informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to all members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Directing and allocating duties</td>
<td>Carrying out a variety of functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strike Organisation

The Gippsland Trades and Labour Council provided the initial
vehicle through which the log of claims was developed and served on the
SECV. As the dispute proceeded and strike action became a realistic
option the leadership recognised that whilst the GTLC represented most
of the maintenance unions a representative body which involved all shop stewards would be more appropriate. The outcome was the formation of the SECV Combined Shop Stewards’ Committee (CSSC). This body consisted of all shop stewards from the eleven unions regardless of their relationship with the GTLC. Ted Turnbull of the ETU was elected president and Sam Armstrong of the AMWU was elected secretary. Daily meetings were held during the strike, usually commencing at 9.00 a.m. The major functions of the CSSC were to provide leadership, co-ordinate action and develop strategy. Shop steward attendance at these meeting were high with few stewards not attending the daily meetings.

The initial role of the GTLC in co-ordinating the log of claims and its subsequent role in negotiations prior to the actual strike meant that the organisation of the strike would be shared between this body and the CSSC. The Secretary of the GTLC, Franz Onger, continued his involvement in the day-to-day organisation of the strike including providing a focal point for communications, a collection centre for the strike fund and a distribution centre for food vouchers.

The leadership of the CSSC also felt it would be appropriate to form a steering group, consisting of the local branch secretaries of the eleven unions, to allow for a more co-ordinated approach to be taken between the individual unions and the shop stewards. This body met several times, but did not function effectively and was eventually disbanded. Whereas the GTLC was able to provide a local focus for the unions, this latter body excluded the majority of stewards and accordingly lacked credibility with the stewards and also with the membership.

19. One notable exception was the FIA.
The major weakness identified with the strike organisation was the lack of a more permanent steward body before and after the strike. Although the GTLC partially fulfilled this role, the CSSC came into existence for the express purpose of ‘managing’ the strike and disbanded when the maintenance workers finally returned to work. As the AMWU concluded with respect to organisation:

Once the strike began, the shop stewards worked ceaselessly to relay information and organise meetings, but one flaw was the absence of regular shop steward meetings before and after the strike. The demands of the Shop Stewards Charter for recognition and rights for shop stewards and provision for weekly job meetings must be achieved, and this will improve both the research of claims and the pooling and communication of information. It will also enable shop stewards to spend more time with the members, since the organisation backbone will have been established.\(^\text{20}\)

A number of more localised shop committees did exist before and after the strike, for example the Central Workshop Shop Committee. These committees, however, tend to be organised geographically and little attempt is made to co-ordinate activities between the various committees. At this level, as reported in chapter 8, stewards do meet regularly with stewards from their own unions and also, although less often, with stewards from other unions. During the actual dispute the various unions continued with their local branch meetings and activities. Whilst it is difficult to ascertain the level of influence of these meetings on strike decisions and strategies it is important to recognise that these meetings allowed stewards to meet with local branch officials and full-time officers of their union to discuss the strike from a more parochial perspective.

Stewards’ Relationships with Members, Union Officials and Management

During periods of industrial action a number of relationship are crucial to the pursuit of the claim. In particular, the members will need to be kept informed and closely involved, the expertise of full-time union officials will often be required and negotiations must continue with management personnel. This section will examine the relationships the Latrobe Valley stewards had with these groups.

Relationship with Members

Strike action is only possible with the support of the membership. Membership support, however, cannot be taken for granted. For example, whilst the membership may support the aims and content of a log of claims, disagreement can arise in the choice of strategies to be employed. This is particularly the case with strike action. The reasons why workers withdraw their labour are complex and as Hyman suggested will ".... vary according to the cultural content and their previous experience of strike action." 21

One important factor in the strike decision was the perception held by the membership that a short strike, of perhaps one-week duration, would be sufficient to bring about meaningful negotiations. This proved not to be the case and a major function of the stewards was to keep the membership united and involved in all aspects of the dispute. Primarily this was achieved by the use of mass meetings. This not only allowed the membership to make the necessary decisions concerning the strike, but also brought about a collective consciousness and unity amongst the members of the eleven unions.

Members were also involved in other activities such as raising money for the strike fund and attending arbitration hearings as observers. The stewards also kept in close liaison with the membership via newsletters and personal contact. Although the strike was drawn out over some four months the membership support for strike action did not waiver even when faced with extreme hardships.

*Relationship with Full-time Union Officials*

This dispute did not have the complete backing of the Melbourne-based full-time officials. The dispute was initiated and controlled by the shop stewards with all decisions being made by the rank-and-file. Some full-time officials perceived their power and authority being usurped. This then brought the shop stewards, who were making decisions with regard to strategies and tactics, into direct conflict with Melbourne-based officials and the VTHC.22 The strike leaders, Armstrong and Wragg of the AMWU, Turnbull of the ETU and Miles of the BWU, indicated, in interviews, that their relationship during the strike with their respective state secretaries were positive and their assistance helpful.

Overall, however, Melbourne-based officials were in a difficult position as they had to consider the ramifications of this strike on their membership as a whole. The stewards, on the other hand, saw the attitudes of full-time officials as being contrary to the well-being of their own members. This dilemma was not satisfactorily resolved and the relationship between Melbourne-based officials and shop stewards has, on occasions subsequent to this dispute, reflected this conflict.

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22. At the time of the strike there were only two local full-time officials (AMWU and FIA) and neither became involved in the dispute.
Relationship with Management

It is important to distinguish between the two levels of management involved in this dispute. At the lower level was local management which dealt with the stewards daily and, at least in part, could understand the rationale underpinning the claims. At this level, management were receptive to the claims, particularly if they could deal with it locally. Armstrong argued that the relationship with local management, during the strike, was one of comradeship; management and stewards would exchange information and discuss prospects for settlement. The source of authority, however, resided in Melbourne-based management. All key decisions emanated from Melbourne with Melbourne-based management taking the right to discuss any of the key issues with the shop stewards out of the hands of local management. The important relationship, in terms of outcomes, was therefore the relationship between the shop stewards and Melbourne-based management.

This relationship was always under stress. The stewards argued that this level of management was not interested in the well-being of the Latrobe Valley workforce. Management countered with the need for all disputes to follow the accepted procedures and, therefore, would only discuss the claim with state union officials and only in the context of the Arbitration Commission. This stance, by Melbourne-based management, reflected the attitude of the then Victorian Government that all disputes must go to arbitration. Nevertheless, in this respect, the division between local and Melbourne management reflected the division between the local stewards and their state union counterparts.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the 1977 Maintenance Workers' strike from a shop steward perspective. After providing a brief overview of the strike the chapter focused on the strike leaders, their strategies and tactics, the role of the steward, the strike organisation and the stewards' relationships with members, union officials and management. In terms of the theoretical framework employed in this study the strike leaders where classified as 'leaders', that is, they displayed leadership in terms of independent decision making and were highly oriented to the broad aims of unionism.

On the basis of one case study it is not possible to generalise and argue that the behaviour of the leader-type stewards in this dispute is typical of leaders' behaviour in all disputes. When coupled with the findings of chapter 9, however, a more detailed understanding of the behaviour of leader-type stewards, in industrial disputes, can be achieved. That chapter concluded that leader stewards are:

1. More likely to exhaust procedures before supporting industrial action;
2. significantly more likely to have been involved in strikes that had been sanctioned by members;
3. less likely to involve full-time officials;
4. more likely to organise the strike through a stewards' committee;
5. more likely to perceive stewards as the developers of strategies; and
6. more likely to perceive stewards as the key negotiations of the claim.

This case study supports these findings: it was more than two months after the serving of the log of claims before bans were placed on overtime; it was four months before strike action occurred; once the strike had commenced the stewards continued to negotiate the claim and
the maintenance workers, on more than one occasion, were prepared to return to work to allow the claim to be heard by the Arbitration Commission. The strike leaders clearly followed the usual procedures of negotiations and appearances before the Arbitration Commission. The only variation from past practices was the way the claim was submitted to the SECV. On this point the leadership was adamant: to use the usual channels would 'kill the claim'. Once the claim was submitted, conventional practices were adhered to.

The primary characteristic of this dispute was that all decisions relating to the strike were made by the membership. Full-time union officials, whilst maintaining some involvement via advice and surveillance, were kept in the background. On both aspects this was a deliberate policy of the strike leaders and provides further support for the findings of chapter 9. This case study also adds weight to the findings of chapter 9 on the use of steward committees, on leaders' perceptions of the major participants in the development of strategy and on the conduct of negotiations. The leadership organised the strike through the CSSC and actively promoted the involvement of all stewards in the development of strategy and negotiations even if, at times, it reduced their effective control over events. This policy did, however, have the effect of maintaining solidarity between stewards and the membership as a whole.

This case study has provided support for the findings of chapter 9 in terms of an individual dispute. It is not possible to relate this dispute to delegate-type stewards as the strike leaders were all clearly stewards who had adopted a leader-type role definition. The following chapter will, however, examine the delegate role in industrial action in some detail. The case study has also provided a more individualistic
and detailed account of leaders' role in strikes than chapter 9 which relied on aggregated data. In conclusion, leader stewards demonstrated, in this strike, that they had a clear objective of involving all stewards in the development of strategy and the ensuing negotiations whilst simultaneously guarding the memberships' ultimate authority to make all key decisions.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE 1984 LOY YANG UNIT ATTENDANTS' DISPUTE

This chapter examines a protracted dispute that occurred at the Loy Yang Power Station (Loy Yang A) in 1984 over staffing levels in the central control room. Only one union, the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association, was directly involved and the major form of industrial action involved the placing of bans on selective tasks. The dispute is of particular relevance to this study for two reasons. First, it occurred in a newly constructed power station where shop stewards had just recently been appointed and shop-floor organisation had yet to develop. Second, the dispute was largely conducted by the stewards themselves, although considerable assistance came in the form of advice from officials of the 'staff' branch of FEDFA and the presentation of the unit attendants' case before the Arbitration Commission by full-time FEDFA officials.

The chapter is structured along similar lines to the case study analysed in chapter 13. The first section provides an overview of the dispute, noting in particular the background to the issue of staff levels. Section two focuses on steward leadership, whilst the remaining three sections examine and analyse the duties of the stewards throughout the dispute, their shop-floor organisation and their relationships with members, union officials and management.
The Dispute

With the introduction of unitized power stations\textsuperscript{1} in 1966 a regrading and reclassification of positions within the power stations occurred. One important change was the regrading and renaming of the Auxiliary Plant Attendants to the position of Unit Attendant (UA). This change was accompanied by a substantial increase in wages, a change in job status to 'staff' and the prospects of promotion to Unit Controller. It was accepted by the SECV that these positions would be exclusively covered by FEDFA.

As power stations became more technologically advanced and made up of larger generating units\textsuperscript{2}, FEDFA requested an increase in the number of unit attendants for the new stations. The SECV rejected this request. In 1978, just after the commencement of Loy Yang A, the SECV proposed a control room structure that allowed for one unit attendant on each of the four units. This was identical to the manning structure of the Yallourn W Power Station. In November 1982, after a series of discussions, the SECV and FEDFA agreed to an increase of one unit attendant (five in total for Loy Yang A) per shift.\textsuperscript{3} In March 1983 FEDFA demanded an increase in the proposed manning to two unit attendants per unit plus two others. Further discussions occurred.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item These are power stations consisting of a number of discrete units (one boiler supplying steam to one turbine) in contrast to the earlier 'range stations' where a number of boilers fed a common steam range which in turn supplied steam to a number of turbines. Hazelwood Power Station was the first of such stations.
\item For example, Hazelwood Power Station consists of eight 200 megawatt units whilst Loy Yang A consists of four 500 megawatt units.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
between the SECV and FEDFA resulting in an agreement being reached that
specified one unit attendant per unit plus one other for units one and
two only. This agreement was, however, reached before any of the units
became operational.

In late 1983 unit two of Loy Yang A began trial operations. SECV
power station staff, many of whom had been recently appointed to Loy
Yang, were now operating the first of the four 500 megawatt units.
Dissatisfaction with the heavy work load being experienced led to the
unit attendants meeting on 24 January 1984 and resurrecting the March
1983 claim.\(^4\) At this meeting the following motion was passed:

1. That a black ban be placed on unit 1 until such time as the
   U.A. manning is increased to 2 U.A.'s per unit and 2 U.A.'s on
   wages (fuel).

2. The auxiliary boiler be black banned until the problem of
   increments and increment starting dates is resolved. Also
   that upon appointment to Loy Yang A new appointees are to be
   paid from that date, not when they start at Loy Yang A.\(^5\)

These bans became effective on the 25 January 1984.

The ban on the auxiliary boiler was lifted on 27 January after a
positive reply to that aspect of the claim had been provided by the Loy
Yang Power Station operations engineer. The ban on unit one was
subsequently confirmed by the local 'staff' branch of FEDFA in early
February 1984. The SECV responded to the ban on unit one by agreeing to
meet with FEDFA on 6 February 1984. Not unexpectedly, the SECV was not
prepared to concede to the claim. In essence the claim represented a
doubling of the number of unit attendants, although at this meeting

\(^4\) Nine unit attendants were present.

\(^5\) Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen’s Association Shop Stewards,
FEDFA indicated they were prepared to limit their claim to the staffing requirements of units one and two with the proviso that extra staff would be provided for units three and four unless the SECV could prove to FEDFA that an increase in staff was unnecessary. At this stage the ban on unit one was having minimal effect as the SECV and contract personnel were, by and large, able to circumvent the ban. The fact that the ban proved ineffectual was not unexpected as the stewards argued the action represented the first stage of the campaign. The major aim, at that point, was the speeding up of the negotiation process and the alerting of more senior SECV management to the existence of a dispute.

Pressure was, however, building up at the shop-floor level and, following a further rejection of the claim by the SECV at a meeting held on 8 March 1984, the Loy Yang unit attendants decided that from midnight of that day bans would be placed on "... all work on the auxiliary boiler and on any operator standby." This was in addition to the ban on unit one. The SECV responded immediately by notifying the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of the existence of a dispute that was causing a delay in reaching construction deadlines and the final commissioning of units one and two. Later the same day, the unit attendants again met and, in response to what they saw as unnecessary action by the SECV in bringing the Arbitration Commission into the dispute, passed the following motion:

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That, in order to bring this dispute to a faster resolution, the U.A.'s implement further bans on plant at Loy Yang being the auxiliary fuel area and briquette handling plant to the station briquette hoppers.\textsuperscript{8}

These bans were in addition to the previous bans and were implemented immediately.

At this stage unit two was still functioning, a fact which caused some FEDFA members to accuse the MOA and AIMPE of breaching the ban. The local branch of AIMPE responded by issuing a memo warning its members of the consequences of breaching bans imposed by FEDFA.\textsuperscript{9} It was clear that the bans were not fully effective and to become so would require a complete shutting down of unit two. This action, however, had little support from the local branch executive of FEDFA as an escalation of the dispute would force the government to intervene via its Industrial Relations Task Force. Essentially this would take the dispute out of the hands of the shop stewards and local officials and would ensue a modification of the claim, a similar situation to the dilemma the shop stewards found themselves in during the 1977 Maintenance Workers' strike.

The Arbitration Commission responded quickly to the notification of the dispute and on 14 March 1984 held the first hearing on the FEDFA claim.\textsuperscript{10} At this hearing the SECV outlined the background to the dispute and the design philosophy of the power station. In brief, the SECV claimed that the power station had been designed to be staffed by

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\textsuperscript{8} Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association Shop Stewards, Notice to Members, 9 March, 1984.

\textsuperscript{9} Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Cutting Across Work Bans, March 1984.

\textsuperscript{10} The hearing was held at the Loy Yang Power Station.
one unit attendant per unit and that once commissioning had taken place work loads would settle down. The union rejected that proposition adding that they felt they had 'got their fingers burnt' in agreeing to the staffing levels for the Yallourn W Power Station.\textsuperscript{11} The result of this conference was the setting up of a working party to discuss the matter and to subsequently make recommendations to the Arbitration Commission. The working party consisted of four SECV management personnel, two FEDFA shop stewards and the secretary of FEDFA's local 'staff' branch. At this stage FEDFA agreed to lift all bans.

The working party met for a total of three days from 19 March to 21 March 1984. The SECV representatives expressed their concern in terms of staffing structures and numbers whereas the union representatives were concerned with the heavy work loads being experienced by their members. The working party made a number of inspections which, according to one management member, were to 'enlighten' Jim McCamley.\textsuperscript{12} Given McCamley's position within FEDFA and that he also represented power station operators at the Hazelwood Power Station, the SECV perceived an agreement, adopting the middle ground, as possible. The outcome of the working party was an agreed position on the need to increase the number of unit attendants on day shift by one and to provide some rostering assistance. The union representatives were prepared to sign the agreement, however, the SECV personnel were directed, by senior management, to support but not sign the agreement.


\textsuperscript{12} Secretary of FEDFA's local 'staff' branch and the only member of the working party not employed at Loy Yang.
On 22 March the two shop stewards on the working party took the 'agreement' to a meeting of unit attendants employed at Loy Yang. The following motion was passed unanimously:

This meeting of Loy Yang unit attendants feels that the working party has gone as far as it can in resolving the dispute, and that although the SECV representatives have implied a movement towards more manning, this group of U.A.'s does not accept the viability of the 1 x 7 post in fulfilling the need which brought about this dispute. Further, we would like the Commission to intervene as the SECV has made it clear that they have no intention of considering our merits of other posts, and further talks by the working party would not move closer to this.\[13]\n
Thus, although the union representatives had been prepared to sign the agreement, the membership were not prepared to accept such an agreement. At this stage the unit attendants decided to reconstitute all work bans.

The following day the Commission reconvened in Melbourne. Clarke of FEDFA suggested a work survey to illustrate the problems facing the unit attendants. This was subsequently rejected by the unit attendants who called on the Commission to conduct inspections. Commissioner Brown agreed to this latter request and on 29 March he conducted inspections of the Loy Yang Power Station complex. The outcome of these inspections was a recommendation to lift all bans and an agreement to set dates for final submissions by the parties. All parties agreed to abide by the arbitrated decision.

During the inspection the shop stewards were unable to convincingly demonstrate to the Commission the claimed excessive work load of unit attendants. Commissioner Brown highlighted this problem when he

suggested that the union would do well to conduct a work survey, as suggested earlier by the full-time FEDFA official, prior to him reaching his final decision. The survey was agreed to and three unit attendants were asked to document all their work activities for the period 29 March to 6 April 1984. During this period, on 30 March, the unit attendants also agreed to lift all work bans as a demonstration of good faith.

On 13 April 1984 the SECV presented further evidence on the design philosophy of Loy Yang A and on 8 May 1984 FEDFA stewards presented the results of the survey. It was hoped by all parties that the final submissions could be made within the following two weeks. However, a major dispute occurred in the Yallourn open cut mine involving FEDFA members which delayed the final submissions until 18 July 1984. The final submissions were presented by Jacobs of the SECV and Clarke of FEDFA. The decision was handed down on 13 September 1984 and provided for an increase of one position per shift during the commissioning period. This position would be subject to review by the working party at the completion of the commissioning process. The new staff levels were not, however, implemented immediately by the SECV and were only achieved after the unit attendants passed a resolution in December 1984 threatening industrial action.

This dispute had lasted for just under one year. Although strike action did not eventuate and power supplies were not threatened it did


15. Involving staffing levels on coal dredges and redundancies caused by the discontinuing of coal transportation by rail between Yallourn and Morwell.
demonstrate the processes by which the local shop stewards were able to improve the conditions of work for their members.

**Shop-floor Leaders**

This dispute was initiated by the Loy Yang unit attendants in response to what they perceived as excessive workloads. Although discussions on staffing levels had been going on for a number of years prior to 1984, the dispute came to a head on 24 January 1984 when unit attendants voted to place bans on certain activities until their claims were met. At this stage thirteen unit attendants were employed at Loy Yang and together with ten FEDFA unit controllers and assistant unit controllers had elected two stewards to represent them. The stewards, Kelvin Kelly and David Helyar, were relatively inexperienced both as Loy Yang employees and stewards having been employed at Loy Yang only two months prior to their election as stewards in November 1983. They were, however, experienced unit attendants having worked in that capacity from 1971 and 1978 respectively.\(^{16}\) Further, it is important to note that most of the unit attendants had prior experience in other unitized power stations in the Latrobe Valley.

Jim McCamley, a steward from the Hazelwood Power Station and Secretary of FEDFA's local 'staff' branch, also played a significant role, although he was not involved in all facets of the dispute. The local full-time FEDFA organiser, Mick Clarke, also played a key role in the resolution of the issues, although that role was primarily limited.

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\(^{16}\) Interview with D. Helyar (5 September 1987).
to the presentation of the unit attendants' case to the Arbitration Commission and advising stewards on possible strategies.

As with the 1977 strike leaders, these two stewards were asked to answer the six questions constituting the leadership and orientation to unionism scales. David Helyar, who effectively conducted the dispute, was a work group leader, whilst Kelvin Kelly was clearly of the delegate type. The finding that the key shop steward in this dispute, was a work group leader was not unexpected. Loy Yang Power Station operators, in general, have seen themselves as the elite group among power station operators and have, since the commencement of Loy Yang, sought terms and conditions of employment commensurate with their self image. Accordingly it would be difficult, in this environment, for leader shop stewards to function effectively due to the sanctions the membership would implement if special conditions for Loy Yang operators were not fought for. The very issue in dispute was clearly of this nature. It is important to note that Helyar was also on the management committee of the local FEDFA 'staff' branch. It was this formal connection with McCamley, coupled with his inexperience as a steward, that led Helyar to utilize the local branch officials.

The strategy adopted by Helyar and Kelly during the course of the dispute was one of reacting to the demands of the membership and providing the organisational backup to achieve the claims. Throughout the dispute the membership demonstrated their dissatisfaction with

17. This is related to the size, complexity and the advanced technology employed at the Loy Yang power station. Brief details were provided in chapter 4.

staffing levels and the progress of the claim by threatening industrial action, primarily by passing resolutions at workplace meetings. The form of industrial action adopted was to place bans on certain activities connected with the commissioning of individual units. These meetings were well attended, although it should be noted that the nature of shift work would preclude some stewards from attending. Between these meetings Helyar demonstrated his leadership role by carrying out the necessary organisational tasks, liaising with the union via the local branch officials and providing a focus for the membership and management alike. A work group leader adopting this role is consistent with earlier findings of this thesis. For example, chapter 9 argued that delegates and work group leaders were more likely to perceive full-time union officials as the proposers of strategy whilst chapter 12 found that work group leaders were more likely to hold official positions with their union than were their delegate counterparts. They were, however, no more likely to take a role independent from their union than others steward types. There was little evidence to suggest that Kelly or Helyar spent time on maintaining solidarity between members and themselves or on developing strategies that were unique to the position they found themselves in. In contrast, chapter 13 argued that the leader stewards in the 1977 strike devoted considerable time and effort with respect to these functions.

Shop Stewards' Duties During the Dispute

As with the 1977 Maintenance Workers' strike it was possible to ascertain that the stewards, in this dispute, carried out a number of functions necessary to achieve the desired outcomes. This section will
add further weight to some of the findings of chapter 9, namely that work group leaders were more likely to perceive the members making the decision to undertake industrial action, to involve full-time union officials and to perceive the members as making the decision to cease industrial action. This case study obviously does not prove these findings. However, when coupled with the previous chapter it illustrates, in a more substantial manner, the processes at work at the shop-floor level. These functions are now considered.

Decision Making

Decisions to undertake certain action were normally initiated and ratified by the membership. This was particularly the case with the implementation and cessation of work bans but also included the memberships' rejection of the recommendations of the working party. Membership involvement in decision making was a reflection of the frustration the unit attendants were feeling with the delays to rectify what they perceived as excessive work loads rather than a strategy of the leadership. There was, for example, no attempt by the stewards to caucus prior to meetings or to come to those meetings with a recommendation for a particular course of action. They were, however, acutely aware of the problems in mounting this claim and the level of support they would receive from both the local branch and the state union. In between membership meetings the stewards conducted the dispute and clearly made a number of decisions that affected the final outcome. These decisions included the agreement to participate in the working party and the organisation and conduct of a work load
survey. Membership support for these stewards was clearly visible when, in both instances, they agreed to lift work bans as acts of 'good faith'.

Developing Strategy

Unlike the 1977 strike, stewards in this dispute did not consciously develop a strategy to process the claim. This, the two stewards claimed, was primarily due to their inexperience rather than to any absolute beliefs concerning the memberships right to determine the appropriate course of action. In general, the strategy turned out to be one of reacting to events and allowing the local full-time official, Mick Clarke, to dominate the direction of the dispute. The inexperience of the stewards does not, however, fully account for the course of events. Both stewards believed that the membership wanted this claim fought to the fullest and that the membership would therefore want local branch officials and full-time officials involved in prosecuting the claim. In a sense, if this did not happen, the membership would perceive the stewards as not treating the claim seriously.

Delegations and Negotiations

Helyar and Kelly were intimately involved in all discussions, negotiations and arbitration hearings. The membership expected this of their stewards and were keen to have formal and informal report back

20. Interviews with D. Helyar (12 April 1987) and K. Kelly (27 April 1987).
sessions. Negotiations occurred in three stages. The first stage was where the stewards engaged in a series of discussions with SECV management at Loy Yang. These meetings were of particular value to the Loy Yang stewards in providing them with background information, the SECV arguments concerning staffing levels and an understanding of the design philosophy of the Loy Yang Power Station. As inexperienced stewards their involvement in these initial discussions and negotiations was necessary to allow them to subsequently participate meaningfully in the working party and to explain to members the current status of the claim.

The second stage involved the two local stewards and Jim McCamley representing the unit attendants on the working party. The working party met for three consecutive days and although considerable pressure was brought to bear on the stewards it was Jim McCamley who was prepared to compromise. This was to be expected as McCamley, a leader steward, had to consider a much wider constituency than the unit attendants at Loy Yang. The working party could clearly be considered as the collective negotiations stage. Although the concept of integrative bargaining underlies the concept of working parties, it was clear that, in this case, the two local stewards took this opportunity to articulate the demands of the membership and were not, initially,

21. Often the stewards would talk to individual unit attendants as it was not possible, due to the nature of shiftwork, to bring all members together at once.

22. Comments made by one SECV management representative on the working party to author.

willing to compromise the claim of ten unit attendants per shift. They
did, however, finally agree, due to the intransigence of the SECV
officials and the perceived drift in McCamley’s position, to a lesser
claim in the hope that the unit attendants would accept such an
agreement. The process broke down when the SECV representatives were
not prepared or able to commit the SECV to negotiated staffing
arrangements that did not have the approval of Melbourne-based
management.

The third and final stage involved Helyar and Kelly attending all
arbitration hearings where they gave evidence, assisted with the
inspection and reported the results of the survey. Mick Clarke, FEDFA’s
local full-time official, assumed responsibility for the dispute at this
stage and directed all dealings with the Arbitration Commission.
Approximately half of the hearings were conducted in the Latrobe Valley,
at the Loy Yang Power Station, which allowed for other unit attendants
to attend the hearings either to provide evidence or just observe the
proceedings.

*Maintaining Links with Members*

This dispute was initiated by the unit attendants and they kept a
close involvement in the progress of the claim. Membership meetings
were held regularly and the stewards, both at these meetings and at the
individual level, kept the membership informed of the offers made by the
SECV and the progress of the arbitration hearings. This was not a
particularly difficult task as only thirteen unit attendants were
involved in the dispute and they tended to mix outside of the workplace
at a range of social activities.
Administration

Most of the administrative type activities were carried out by David Helyar. This steward arranged membership meetings, printed and distributed motions passed at meetings and generally kept members informed of the current state of the claim. Helyar also organised the work-load study survey, compiled the results and presented the findings to the Arbitration Commission.

Table 14.1 summarises the roles performed by the stewards, union officials and members. In essence most activities were not the sole preserve of the stewards. Full-time and branch officials played a more active and influential role in this dispute than did their counterparts in the 1977 Maintenance Workers' Strike (see table 13.1). These differences can be partially attributable to the differences in the role definition adopted by the stewards leading the dispute. However, the vastly different nature of the issue, the different environmental context and the differences in the strategic nature of the groups involved makes any conclusion extremely tentative. Nevertheless, this case study, when coupled with the earlier findings of this thesis, illustrates clear differences in the way various stewards handle industrial disputes. The major differences relate to decision making and strategy development. Leader stewards perceive these functions as crucial to their role as a steward. This was clearly illustrated in chapter 13. Work group leaders and delegates, in this dispute, did not consider these functions were important to their role and only concerned themselves with making administrative type decisions that would facilitate the claim. Little effort was directed towards developing overall strategy.
Table 14.1

Shop Steward Functions During 1984 Dispute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Major Participants</th>
<th>Role of Stewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Day-to-day decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy development</td>
<td>Full-time union officials</td>
<td>Provide feedback to union officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegations/negotiations</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Negotiations/witnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local and full-time officials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison with members</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Keeping members informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>Carry out a variety of functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shop-floor Organisation**

At no stage throughout this lengthy dispute was any attempt made to set up alternative structures to pursue the matter. This was primarily due to the small number of unit attendants and stewards directly involved in the issue. Nevertheless, it is important to clearly articulate the type of organisation that sustained the issue and allowed for shop steward involvement throughout the dispute.

The thirteen unit attendants had elected two shop stewards as their workplace representatives. Both stewards had regular contact with their members, often daily, and organised formal meetings when the need arose.24 This close contact allowed these stewards to be aware of the

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24. These meetings would usually be held at the end of one shift which would allow unit attendants from that shift and from the next shift to attend.
problems their members were experiencing\textsuperscript{25} and to communicate to them the progress, or otherwise, of discussions on the issues under dispute.

Contact with the union was maintained at two levels. At the local level, Helyar was a member of the local branch committee and had direct access to senior branch officials such as McCamley. This relationship was further enhanced with McCamley’s involvement in the working party and arbitration hearings. At the state union level the key role of Clarke, the local full-time FEDFA official, in all arbitration hearings meant that a direct link with state union officials was maintained throughout the dispute.

The involvement of these officials split the leadership in this dispute between three distinct groups. Day-to-day matters, negotiations with local SECV management and liaison with members and the union were the major duties of the two local stewards. At the local branch level McCamley articulated the branches’ desire to settle the dispute before the membership became frustrated and took matters into their own hands. He was also aware of the problems that would be created if relativities between unit attendants at Loy Yang and elsewhere were upset. Once, however, the dispute got to arbitration it was clearly the desire of the union to control the dispute. This may have been a reflection of the lack of experience of the local stewards, although a more plausible and pragmatic explanation was that the union hierarchy did not want to concede this function to stewards who were clearly pursuing sectional interests.

\textsuperscript{25} It should be remembered that both stewards were unit attendants and accordingly personally experienced these problems.
This division of responsibility could partially account for the length of time it took to resolve the issue and the relatively minor gains achieved. The uneasy relationships that existed between these three groups probably dictated the strategies employed by SECV management. The SECV responded in a similar fashion and involved local management in initial negotiations, local management and industrial relations staff in the working party and a Melbourne-based industrial relations officer in the arbitration proceedings. Further, it proved convenient for management to notify the Arbitration Commission of the existence of a dispute, not because of the effects of the ban, but due to the growing militancy of the unit attendants. This dispute had the potential to escalate and SECV management were well aware that bringing in the Arbitration Commission would relegate the local stewards to a more subservient role.

Stewards’ Relationships with Members, Union Officials and Management

The previous section alluded to a number of relationships that proved critical to the partial achievement of the unit attendants’ claim. This section will examine the relationships the two FEDFA stewards had with members, union officials and management throughout the course of this dispute.

Relationship with Members

This dispute arose out of the perceived excessive work loads being undertaken by relatively young and inexperienced unit attendants. The two stewards were part of this group and could easily identify with the claim. Both Helyar and Kelly believed that their relationships with the
members throughout the dispute were good, although the membership exerted, at times, considerable pressure on the stewards to achieve a favourable settlement. One unit attendant, however, was not satisfied with the progress being made and attempted to disrupt meetings by 'sounding off' at all possible opportunities.26

Unlike the 1977 strike there existed little opportunity for the members to participate in activities apart from the membership meetings and attendance at the arbitration hearings held at Loy Yang. A countervailing factor, however, was that this dispute only involved a small group of workers, all in the one location, all doing the same job and all belonging to the same union. Accordingly, it was possible for the stewards to have personal contact with all members and, given both stewards' orientation to the workgroup, little difference existed between stewards and members on the appropriate strategies to be adopted. The only clear illustration of any substantial difference occurred when the membership rejected the recommendations of the working party. Notwithstanding this, a degree of unity existed which allowed the stewards to maintain control over the progress of the dispute.27

Relationship with Union Officials

In this dispute it is important to distinguish between local branch officials, such as McCamley, and the local full-time official, Mick Clarke. The stewards felt their relationship with local branch officials was positive, although they felt McCamley in particular did


27. This control was substantially reduced once the claim went to arbitration.
not fully understand the issues. This is not unexpected as McCamley, a leader steward, felt he had to take a wider perspective than the Loy Yang stewards.\textsuperscript{28}

Mick Clarke, the local full-time FEDFA official,\textsuperscript{29} only became fully involved in this dispute once the SECV had notified the Arbitration Commission of the existence of a dispute. Both stewards expressed the view that Clarke was perceived by their members as a 'wages man' and did not have a critical concern over the working conditions of unit attendants. Although this perception affected the relationship between the stewards and Clarke, the stewards conceded that Clarke provided support and assistance to them and was able to achieve an acceptable outcome. Clarke's strategy throughout the dispute was subject to questioning by the members and stewards, particularly the suggestion of a work survey. For example, Kelly could see little value in the survey and only agreed to a survey on the recommendation of Commissioner Brown. Even then, Helyar was the steward who organised the survey, compiled the results and presented the findings to the Commission. This is consistent with the finding reported in chapter 12 that work group leaders were more likely to accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials.

\textsuperscript{28} Interview with J. McCamley (20 March 1987).

\textsuperscript{29} Clarke's function was to spend his time equally between Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley.
Relationship with Management

As with the stewards' relationships with union officials it is necessary to distinguish between local and Melbourne-based management. The stewards' relationships with local management were positive and allowed for a free exchange of information. In particular, the stewards found the local industrial relations personnel willing to discuss their demands and were 'realistic' in their assessment of the issues. Power station management was more difficult to discuss the issue with, although throughout the dispute both stewards reported they were able to maintain a working relationship with the Loy Yang Power Station operations engineer.\textsuperscript{30}

The relationship between stewards and Melbourne-based SECV management was more difficult to assess. The only contact the stewards had with Melbourne management was during the arbitration hearings and, in that context, they played a subservient role to Clarke. In effect, this mirrored the 1977 dispute and meant that stewards had a perception that local SECV management's input into the dispute resolution process must accommodate the wishes of Melbourne-based management. This perception was confirmed early in the dispute when SECV representatives on the working party were instructed to agree to the final recommendations but not to sign the document.

Conclusion

This chapter examined a protracted dispute that occurred in 1984 at the then newly commissioned Loy Yang Power Station. The significant

\textsuperscript{30} Interviews with D. Helyar (12 April 1987) and K. Kelly (21 April 1987).
outcome, in terms of workplace industrial relations, was the speed with which two inexperienced shop stewards were able to develop a shop-floor organisation by which to prosecute the claim. In contrast to chapter 13, however, the leaders of this dispute had a low orientation to unionism and only one displayed leadership in terms of a willingness to lead rather than accept direction from membership.

On the basis of this one case study, as with the 1977 dispute, it is not, of course, possible to generalise the findings. The results do, however, lend a measure of support to the findings of chapter 9, although it should be noted that chapter 9 primarily focused on strike action. In particular, the key factors were the stewards' orientation to the workgroup and the small united group of unit attendants that comprised the membership. With the exception of the memberships' rejection of the recommendations of the working party there existed almost total agreement between the stewards and their members. These factors combined to provide a strong shop-floor organisation and only allowed full-time union officials to become actively involved when the matter proceeded to arbitration. This referral of the issue to arbitration, however, occurred early in the dispute and allowed the local full-time official not only to present the case to the Commission but to dictate the strategies to be pursued. That these stewards were prepared to accept this direction is partially a product of their inexperience and partially an outcome of delegate type stewards (and to a lesser extent, work group leaders) not perceiving strategy development as essential to their role. Their willingness to involve officials of the local FEDFA 'staff' branch is also partially related to this last factor and partially to a lack of confidence that full-time officials would prosecute 'staff' claims to the maximum.
PART SIX

CONCLUSION
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis has been to analyse the role of the shop steward in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV. The intention of the study was to contribute to an understanding of the activities of shop stewards in a centralised industrial relations system and to analyse the contribution to this level of activity of factors primarily internal to the organisation. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section summarises the major findings of the study and argues that high levels of shop-floor activity can occur in a centralised industrial relations system. The second section assesses the validity and usefulness of the typology used to classify shop stewards whilst the last section examines possible directions for future research.

Summary of Findings

The point of departure of this thesis was to ask if there was a role for shop stewards in a centralised industrial relations system. Based on the results of a questionnaire survey, interviews with shop stewards, union officials and management personnel and two case studies it is clear that, in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV, shop stewards play a significant role in industrial relations at the workplace. This role includes a substantial level of bargaining over wage and non-wage issues, the development of internal shop-floor organisations, the active participation in a range of activities related to industrial action, interaction with union members and management as
well as liaison with external groups such as full-time union officials and central trade union bodies.

At least for the Latrobe Valley stewards, the conventional wisdom concerning the role of the shop steward must therefore be re-evaluated. In the main, this belief concerning limited union activity at the workplace is based on the restrictions placed upon stewards by union rules, the reluctance of full-time officials to widen the scope of steward activities and the preoccupation in academic research with the formal industrial relations institutions. Nevertheless, chapter 1 argued that the sources of stewards' authority and power are more widely generated than the official position of the union. It is these sources of power coupled with a range of historical, social and institutional factors, including the strategic nature of the industry, which have created an environment in the Latrobe Valley where a high level of shop-floor activity has become the norm. The view that this level of workplace industrial relations could not occur simultaneously with a reliance on and a commitment to a system of compulsory arbitration is, therefore, not correct.

Once having demonstrated the level of shop steward activity the second problematic was to establish whether shop stewards defined their role differently. A model based on the stewards' orientation to unionism and leadership style was used to assess a stewards' role definition. Stewards in the Latrobe Valley were found to be reasonably evenly spread over the resultant four role types. Three factors were found to be significant determinants of the stewards' role perception.

1. See chapter 2.
These were: length of stewardship, presence of a full-time union official and the possibility of facing regular re-election.

The final problematic considered was whether the diversity in role definition affected shop steward behaviour. The variations in role definition did significantly relate to shop steward behaviour over a range of issues. In particular, leader stewards were found to be significantly more likely to have:

1. Spent more time on stewardship activities;
2. engaged in higher levels of bargaining with management personnel;
3. become involved in non-industrial issues;
4. regularly met with stewards from other unions;
5. become involved in joint consultative exercises;
6. been involved in threats to strike, go slows and stop-work meetings;
7. played an active role during strike action;
8. tended to organise strikes through committees;
9. used a range of arguments when discussing issues with members;
10. developed a set pattern with respect to the involvement of members in industrial issues;
11. by-passed immediate management once a dispute had commenced;
12. experienced attempts by management to influence them; and
13. been willing to refer special issues to full-time union officials and to accept the strategies of these officials, than were their delegate counterparts.

These findings have important implications for trade unions and SECV management. The implications for trade unions relate clearly to their strategies with respect to delegation and devolution of responsibilities to shop-floor representatives, training programmes for
shop stewards and the role of the full-time union official in workplace industrial relations. For SECV management the results are of equal importance. Management cannot rely on formal rules and procedures to set the parameters of shop-floor activity and must ensure that their industrial relations policies take into account the level of influence and power possessed by shop stewards. The way the various stewards approach their job also has implications for the first-line supervisor and what management can reasonably expect of them.

Two other variables, type of union and place of work, also proved to be related to the various types of behaviour stewards engage in. Both these findings have important implications concerning union policies and strategies with respect to industrial relations at the workplace. Shop stewards, at least with respect to blue-collar unions in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SECV, must be seen as the foci for trade union activity. With respect to place of work it is clear from this study that historical factors, type of management, local workplace rules and the nature of the technology employed are important correlates of stewards' behaviour. It is thus argued that in workplaces where a strong culture of shop-floor organisation exists, individual union policies towards shop stewards are diminished in terms of affecting behaviour at that level. The parochial nature of the Valley and the divisions between workplaces tend to re-inforce this trend.

Validity of Typology

The validity and usefulness of any theoretical framework depends, at least in part, on the objectives of the research. Chapter 2 argued that, on this basis, the most appropriate model to adopt was that
originally conceived by Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel. Recognition was, however, given to the refinements proposed by Marchington and Armstrong.\(^3\)

Prior to applying the typology to the Latrobe Valley stewards, considerable statistical testing was carried out. This included reliability and factor analysis which resulted in some items used by Batstone et al. and Marchington and Armstrong being rejected. On this basis, it is argued that the two scales so constructed, orientation to unionism and leadership style, were both reliable and valid for use in Australia.

Once having developed a statistically reliable and valid typology it remains problematic as to the value of that typology in predicting variations in stewards' behaviour. The previous section of this chapter outlined areas of shop steward behaviour which were significantly related to variations in role definition. These areas included levels of bargaining with management, steward organisation, joint consultative arrangements, industrial action and relationships with members, union officials and management. Given the typology's ability to differentiate between stewards in terms of their behaviour, it can be argued the typology has some utility. However, on a number of issues, intra-union organisation, strike activity and the development of strategies with respect to members and management the typology was not able to predict statistically significant differences. Thus, overall the typology


proved to be of restricted value in explaining the full range of shop steward behaviour.

When the model was used in conjunction with type of union and place of employment a more complete understanding of the dynamics of shop steward behaviour at the workplace was achieved. Where the behaviour of shop stewards was not related to the role definition of stewards it was, in many cases, related to the type of union the steward belonged to and, in a lesser number of cases, to the stewards’ place of work. Accordingly, it is argued, taken collectively, variations in role definition, type of union and place of work provide a more complete explanation as to the internal dynamics of steward behaviour.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this thesis attempted to control for external factors and only examined factors internal to the workplace. The argument above must be read in this context. In a more general sense the warning sounded in chapters 1 and 2 cannot be ignored. Structural and institutional factors may interact with these three variables (role type, type of union and place of work) in such a way as to confound the results. This remains a problem for all researchers who attempt to reduce the number of variables under examination. The alternative, however, does not provide advances on this and may retard the process of research into shop-floor behaviour. By taking into account a wide range of factors it becomes problematic as to whether meaningful allocations of the effects of any one variable can be attempted.

Future Research

This study focused on and analysed the internal dynamics of shop steward behaviour in a well organised workplace, namely the Latrobe
Valley operations of the SECV. In general, the study aimed to locate the analysis of shop stewards in terms of their role and behaviour in contemporary industrial relations in the SECV. The central question considered by this thesis, the explanation of differences in the behaviour of stewards, meant that the research methodology would focus on factors internal to the workplace.

Notwithstanding the above, future research should attempt to incorporate, at least in part, structural and institutional factors. If the contribution of these factors, however, are to be measured with some degree of accuracy it would be unlikely to be achieved in any one study. Not only would studies need to be conducted over relatively long periods of time but research would also need to focus on a range of industries and enterprises. In particular there would be a need to break down the analysis by ownership (public/private), organisation (local/national/multinational) and other factors such as size, sector and markets.

Therefore, it is suggested that research should proceed along the more modest approach of in-depth and detailed case studies that can clearly isolate a number of the above factors for consideration. On the basis of these case studies a more comprehensive study, incorporating the findings of this and other studies, could be conducted. This would ultimately produce a more complete picture of shop steward activity at the workplace.
APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE
INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Labour Studies Programme,
Faculty of Economics &
Commerce,
University of Melbourne,
Parkville, Vic., 3052.

Dear Shop Steward,

As part of my research into industrial relations in the Latrobe Valley I am surveying all shop stewards employed in the Latrobe Valley operations of the SEC. I am writing to you to ask if you could assist me in this project by filling out the attached questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed reply-paid envelope.

The research project has the full support of your union, both at the local and state level and the results of the survey may be useful to your union in understanding your role as a shop steward and the problems you experience.

Information received will be treated with the STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. At no stage are you asked to place your name on the questionnaire. This ensures that, under no circumstances whatsoever, will it be possible for any person to link a particular set of answers with a particular respondent.

The success of this survey is dependent upon a high percentage of completed questionnaires being returned to me at the University as soon as possible. If you have any queries or would like to discuss this project further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the University (03 344-7099) or on weekends at Churchill (22-2685).

Looking forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

John Benson,
(Lecturer in Industrial Relations)
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Labour Studies Programme,
Faculty of Economics &
Commerce,
University of Melbourne,
Parkville, Vic., 3052.

Dear Shop Steward,

Recently I sent you a questionnaire in connection with my research into industrial relations in the Latrobe Valley. The aim of the research is to examine the role and influence of shop stewards in industrial relations matters. In Australia little research has been directed at the shopfloor level — this project will at least partially rectify this situation.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire I would like to thank you for your co-operation and assistance. If you have not yet completed the questionnaire could I ask you to do so within the next few days. Remember the survey is completely confidential and under no circumstances will it be possible to link a particular set of answers with a particular person. If you have lost or misplaced your questionnaire, you can obtain an extra copy by contacting me at the University (03 344-7099) or on weekends at Churchill (22-2685).

The success of the research is dependent upon a high percentage of questionnaires being completed and returned. Your contribution will be most valuable.

Regards,

John Benson
(Lecturer in Industrial Relations).
QUESTIONNAIRE

TO

SHOP STEWARDS

DIRECTIONS

* Please indicate your responses to the following questions by placing a circle around the appropriate number. Answer according to your most recent experience.

* Please attempt to answer each question. If, however, you have difficulty in answering any of the questions simply go onto the next one.

* Please post back the questionnaire in the enclosed reply paid envelope as soon as possible after its completion.
SECTION I

In this section I would like to ask you some questions about your work, becoming a shop steward and the duties you perform. (Please circle the most appropriate number).

1. Approximately how long have you worked for the SBC? ________ years

2. What union are you a member of? ________________________________

3. How long have you been a member of this union? ________ years

4. What is your work location?
   Yallourn ......................................................... 1
   Morwell/Hazelwood ......................................... 2
   Loy Yang ...................................................... 3

5. In general, how satisfied are you with your present job?
   Very satisfied .................................................. 1
   Satisfied ........................................................ 2
   Undecided ...................................................... 3
   Dissatisfied ................................................... 4
   Very dissatisfied .............................................. 5

6. Are you interested in gaining promotion within the SBC?
   Yes ........................................................................ 1
   No ....................................................................... 2
   Unsure .................................................................. 3

7. How many years have you been a shop steward? ________ years

8. How many members do you personally represent? ____________

9. Do you hold any other positions in your union?
   Yes ................................................................. 1
   No ................................................................. 2
   If YES: What positions? ____________________________

10. On average how often do you meet formally with your members?
    Weekly ......................................................... 1
    Fortnightly .................................................... 2
    Monthly ......................................................... 3
    Occasionally .................................................. 4
    Never ........................................................... 5

11. What is the major value of these meetings?

   ________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________
12. On average how often do you have contact with the bulk of your members at work?
   Daily ............................................. 1
   Weekly ........................................... 2
   Fortnightly ..................................... 3
   Monthly ......................................... 5
   Less than monthly ............................. 6

13. How many hours per week, on average, do you spend on your job as shop steward?
   In work hours _______________ hours
   In your own time _______________ hours

14. (a) Was there someone who previously had your job as a shop steward?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................... 2

   (b) If YES, why did the previous steward give up his position?
   Left the SEC ..................................... 1
   Changed sections ............................... 2
   Got promoted .................................... 3
   Dissatisfied/No co-operation ................ 4
   Defeated in an election ....................... 5
   Ill health ....................................... 6
   Wanted a break .................................. 7
   Don't know ....................................... 8
   Other (please specify) ---------------------- 9

15. What was the single main reason that made you stand as a shop steward?
   Pressure from union officials/other shop stewards .......... 1
   Belief in union principles ................................ 2
   Pressure from workers in your section .................... 3
   Dissatisfaction with the way matters were handled ....... 4
   General interest in matters affecting the union and workers 5
   Self development/satisfaction............................ 6
   No-one else willing to accept position ................... 7
   Other (please specify) .................................. 8

16. (a) When you took on your present job as shop steward was this?
   After defeating the previous shop steward .................. 1
   In a contested election after the previous steward resigned .... 2
   Without opposition when the previous steward resigned .... 3
   In a contested election as the first shop steward in the section .. 4
   Without opposition as the first shop steward in the section .... 5
   Through appointment by the union .......................... 6
   Other (please specify) .................................... 7
(b) If elected, where did this take place?
   In the shop/section .................................................. 1
   Local branch meeting ................................................. 2
   Other (please specify) ............................................... 3

(c) If elected, was this by?
   Show of hands ........................................................... 1
   Secret ballot ........................................................... 2

17. (a) Are you subject to regular re-election?
   Yes ................................................................. 1
   No ................................................................. 2

(b) If YES, how often do elections take place?
   Annually .................................................................... 1
   Every two years ......................................................... 2
   Every three years ....................................................... 3
   Irregularly ............................................................... 4
   Other (please specify) ............................................... 5

18. (a) Have you ever been opposed when standing for re-election?
   Yes ................................................................. 1
   No ................................................................. 2
   Never had to stand for re-election ............................... 3

(b) If YES, have you been regularly opposed?
   Yes ................................................................. 1
   No ................................................................. 2

19. Have you ever been involved in negotiations with management on any of the following issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage Issues</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage rates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay problems/classifications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowances (meal, dirt, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Conditions</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General working conditions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Work</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard hours of work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Issues</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demarcation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production queries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing/Manning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers compensation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. As a shop steward have you been involved in the following non-industrial issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or Twice</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare of members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling of members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settling disputes between members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. (a) How satisfying is the job of being a shop steward?

- Very satisfying: 1
- Satisfying: 2
- Undecided: 3
- Dissatisfying: 4
- Very dissatisfying: 5

21. (b) When your present term expires, how will you feel about serving another term?

- Will seek another term: 1
- Will seek another term if pressed: 2
- Will be reluctant to seek another term: 3
- Will not seek another term: 4

22. (a) Have you been involved in joint consultation with management over industrial matters (e.g. working party)?

- Yes: 1
- No: 2

(b) If you have been involved in joint consultation with management, how effective do you feel it was?

- Very effective: 1
- Effective: 2
- Undecided: 3
- Ineffective: 4
- Very ineffective: 5

Why do you feel this way?
SECTION II

In this section I would like to ask some questions about how you see your role as a shop steward, how you approach your job and your views on trade unionism and industrial action. (Please circle the most appropriate answer).

23. Listed below are a number of statements on your role as a shop steward. Please indicate the extent of your agreement with each of these statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A steward is a representative, but he is also a leader; sometimes he has to tell his members they're not on, sometimes stir them into action.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A steward should support joint shop steward committee/local branch resolutions even if they are against the best interests of his own members.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generally you can't act according to union principles - they don't feed the family.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint shop steward committees are of considerable importance to the union movement.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think of myself as primarily belonging to the trade union movement than to my own union.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When issues arise at the workplace I refer them to other stewards or the union organiser.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a steward I have to raise issues myself.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a steward I often amend, change or squash issues raised by members.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. What do you think are the main trade union principles?

25. Which of the following issues would you take to a senior steward, local branch official or full-time union official?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something out of the ordinary</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important issues</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something involving SBC wide principles</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something involving procedures</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Something you could not win</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26. In general, who proposes strategy in industrial disputes?

- Full-time union officials
- Shop stewards
- Members
- Senior steward
- Steward committees

27. When industrial issues arise in the workplace, who tends to initiate such issues?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior stewards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. What is your major role when issues arise at the workplace?

- To show leadership initiatives
- To follow the senior steward/shop steward committee
- To follow members' wishes
- To follow union executive's wishes

29. In general, when you make decisions, who has the most influence on you?

- Other shop stewards
- Members
- Union officials
- Management
- No-one

30. As a shop steward, who do you think you should be responsible to for your actions? (Please circle only one response)

- Members
- Fellow shop stewards
- The union
- Own conscience
- Management
- No-one

31. When discussing issues with management do you use reference to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards/agreements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members demands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect of issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32. When discussing issues with groups of members do you use reference to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequent</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awards/agreements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union principles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired effect of issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely outcome</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. If negotiations with SEC management on a wages claim broke down, how strongly would you support the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Against</th>
<th>Strongly Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop-work meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work bans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer matter to Arbitration Commission</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike action</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take no action/Remain at work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. Do you agree that workers are justified in withdrawing their labour or using other forms of industrial action...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To achieve improvements in wages and conditions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If management broke an agreement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If management appears to be resorting to unreasonable delays in negotiations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prevent management from discharging one of your workmates unfairly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To demonstrate to the Arbitration Commission the seriousness of an issue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. What are the three most important issues you have dealt with as a steward in the past year? (List in order of importance)

1. 
2. 
3. 

29

30

31
SECTION III

This section seeks to examine your relationship with your members, your union, other shop stewards and SEC management. (Don't forget to circle the appropriate response).

36. (a) Where is the main place of contact with your members?
   Entirely at workplace.............................................1
   Mainly at workplace.............................................2
   Mainly outside workplace.......................................3
   Entirely outside workplace.....................................4

   (b) Can you move around the workplace to contact your members?
   Yes..............................................................................1
   No............................................................................2

37. What do you believe is your members main expectation of the union?

38. Do your members appreciate the work you do as a shop steward?
   Most times.................................................................1
   Some times...............................................................2
   Occasionally............................................................3

39. What do you think is the major expectation your members have of you as a shop steward?

40. Are your members predominantly?
   Australian born.......................................................1
   Overseas born.........................................................2

41. (a) When you negotiate with management on issues which affect more than one of your members, do you go in on your own, or do you take any of your members with you?
   Go in alone...............................................................1
   Go in with some members.........................................2
   Varies with the issue................................................3

   (b) If you go in with members, are these usually the same people each time?
   Same members each time..........................................1
   Varies with the issue.................................................2

42. In what ways do you try to influence your members in order to get their support?

43

44
43. In what ways do your members try to put pressure on you when you disagree with them?

44. How united is your work group?
   Very united.............................................1
   United.................................................2
   Unsure..................................................3
   Divided..................................................4
   Very divided..........................................5

45. What would be the approximate average age of your work group?
   Twenties................................................1
   Thirties...............................................2
   Forties................................................3
   Fifties................................................4

46. At what level within your union do you think the initial decision to take industrial action should be taken?
   Meeting of members......................................1
   Combined shop stewards meetings....................2
   Local branch meetings..................................3
   State level.............................................4
   Federal level...........................................5

47. Why did you join your particular union?
   Belief in union principles.............................1
   Unions performance and policies.....................2
   Chance..................................................3
   Closed shop............................................4
   Appropriate for my trade/profession................5
   Other (please specify) ................................6

48. (a) How often do you attend local branch meetings of your union?
   Nearly always..........................................1
   Most times..............................................2
   Some times..............................................3
   Rarely...................................................4
   Not at all...............................................5

(b) In what ways (if any) are local branch meetings useful to you as a shop steward? (List in order of importance)
1. ............................................................
2. ............................................................
3. ............................................................
49. (a) In the last year have you involved a full-time official in any issues?
   Yes.................................................................1
   No.................................................................2

   If Yes, what were these issues? ________________________________

(b) If a full-time official has been involved, who initially suggested their involvement?
   Fellow shop stewards..............................................1
   Senior shop steward/local branch official.....................2
   Members...........................................................3
   Full-time official.................................................4
   Local branch meeting.............................................5
   State union officials.............................................6
   Yourself..........................................................7

(c) To what degree do you accept the strategies proposed by full-time officials?
   Always..........................................................1
   Usually..........................................................2
   Sometimes.......................................................3
   Rarely...........................................................4
   Never............................................................5

(d) How useful is it to involve a full-time official in an issue?
   Very useful.....................................................1
   Useful...........................................................2
   Not sure........................................................3
   Not very useful................................................4
   No use..........................................................5

(e) What are some of the difficulties in working with full-time union officials?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

50. (a) Are there other shop stewards representing members of your union at your place of work?
   Yes.................................................................1
   No.................................................................2

   (If NO go to question 51.)

(b) If YES, do you attend regular meetings with these shop stewards?
   Frequently......................................................1
   Sometimes......................................................2
   Rarely............................................................3
   Never............................................................4

(c) Who initiates such meetings?
   Senior shop steward/local branch official.....................1
   Shop stewards..................................................2
   Full-time official.............................................3
51. (a) Are there shop stewards representing members of other unions at your place of work?
   Yes .............................................. 1
   No .............................................. 2
   (If NO go to Question 52.)

   (b) If YES, do you attend regular meetings with these shop stewards?
       Frequently .................................. 1
       Sometimes ................................... 2
       Rarely ........................................ 3
       Never ......................................... 4

   (c) Who initiates such meetings?
       Senior shop steward/local branch official .............. 1
       Fellow shop stewards ................................ 2
       Full-time official .................................. 3
       Chairman - combined shop steward committee .......... 4
       Myself ........................................... 5
       Other (please specify) ................................ 6

   (d) Do you think these meetings are:
       Very important .................................. 1
       Important ....................................... 2
       Not important ................................... 3

52. What assistance do you receive from other shop stewards?
    ________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________

53. With whom do you most frequently negotiate?
    Foreman/Supervisor ..................................... 1
    Section or shop supervisor .......................... 2
    Shop/Section manager ................................ 3
    Personnel or industrial officer ................. 4
    Other (please specify) .............................. 5

54. (a) What was the reason for your last contact with the foreman/ supervisor?
       Providing information/advice ...................... 1
       Receiving information/advice ................... 2
       Negotiation ...................................... 3
       'Informal chat' ................................... 4
       Social ............................................ 5
       Other (please specify) ............................ 6
(b) What was the reason for your last contact with SEC management?
   Providing information/advice........................................1
   Receiving information/advice......................................2
   Negotiation..............................................................3
   'Informal chat'.........................................................4
   Social.......................................................................5
   Other (please specify) .................................................6

55. What do you feel are management's expectations of you as a shop steward?


56. To what extent do you think that you as a shop steward are helping the SEC solve its problems and improve efficiency?
   Considerably..............................................................1
   Sometimes..................................................................2
   In a minor way...........................................................3
   Not at all....................................................................4

57. What do you think is SEC management's attitude to you as a shop steward?
   Very positive...............................................................1
   Positive.......................................................................2
   Not sure.......................................................................3
   Negative......................................................................4
   Very negative.............................................................5

58. How often does management consult with you on policies that may affect your members?
   Always......................................................................1
   Often.........................................................................2
   Sometimes..................................................................3
   Rarely........................................................................4
   Not at all....................................................................5

59. How often does management attempt to influence you on matters affecting your members?
   Often........................................................................1
   Sometimes..................................................................2
   Not at all....................................................................3

60. Does management attempt to obstruct you performing your job as a shop steward? If Yes, in what ways do they obstruct you?


61. When a dispute arises, do you bypass your foreman/supervisor and approach the next level of management?
- Always ..............................................1
- Often ..................................................2
- Sometimes ............................................3
- Rarely ...................................................4
- Not at all ..............................................5

62. (a) Have you ever been victimized by management for being a shop steward?
- No ........................................................1
- Once ......................................................2
- Twice ....................................................3
- Three times or more .................................4

(b) If you have been victimized, in what way did this take place? (If more than once refer to last occasion)
- Lack of promotion ..................................1
- Dismissed ..............................................2
- Transferred ...........................................3
- Other (please specify) ..............................4

63. What changes would you like to see made within the SBC in order to improve industrial relations? (List in order of importance)
1. ................................................................
2. ................................................................
3. ................................................................

64. (a) What type of management style does your immediate supervisor/foreman engage in?
- High degree of direction ................................1
- High degree of employee participation ..........2
- Management by rules and procedures ..........3
- Free rein ..................................................4

(b) What is the approximate age of your immediate supervisor? ____ years.

(c) How ambitious would you say your immediate supervisor is?
- Very ambitious .......................................1
- Ambitious ...............................................2
- Somewhat ambitious ..................................3
- Not very ambitious ...................................4
- Not ambitious at all....................................5
SECTION IV

This section explores industrial disputes that you may have been involved in and how such disputes are resolved. (Please circle the appropriate responses)

65. What forms of industrial action have been used in your section since you have been a shop steward?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats to strike</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime bans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to rule</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black bans/Permit bans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go slow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop work meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66. Do you think strike action is more or less effective than other forms of industrial action?

More effective.................................1
Less effective.................................2
Unsure..........................................3

67. (a) Is there a formally agreed procedure for settling disputes that arise at your local level?

Yes..................................................1
No..................................................2

(b) If YES, how was this procedure determined?

Custom and practice..............................1
SEC policy (regulation)..........................2
Union policy......................................3
Negotiation......................................4
Arbitrated decision.............................5
Other (please specify)..........................6

(c) Do you always follow the procedure?

Usually ...........................................1
Sometimes ........................................2
Rarely ............................................3

(d) Do you have any complaints about the procedure?

Yes................................................1
No..................................................2

68. Has there been a strike in your section since you have been a shop steward?

Yes................................................1
No..................................................2

If YES (refer to last strike): If NO go to question 75

(a) What was the strike about?

........................................................
(b) Approximately how many unions were involved? ________________

(c) How many workers withdrew their labour? ________________

(d) How many days did it last? ________________ days

9. (a) Who first brought the issue to the attention of the union?
   Individual member ........................................... 1
   Group of members ........................................... 2
   Yourself ....................................................... 3
   Other shop stewards ........................................ 4
   Local union organiser ....................................... 5
   State union officials ....................................... 6

(b) Who initiated the issue?
   An individual member ........................................... 1
   Union official .................................................. 2
   Foreman/supervisor ......................................... 3
   SBC management ............................................... 4
   State Government ........................................... 5
   Other union ................................................... 6

(c) How was the decision made to take strike action?
   Meeting of members (mass meeting) ......................... 1
   Shop stewards meeting ..................................... 2
   Local branch meeting ....................................... 3
   State level .................................................... 4
   Federal level .................................................. 5
   Other (please specify) ..................................... 6

(d) Had all procedures within the SBC been exhausted before the strike?
   Yes ............................................................ 1
   No ............................................................ 2

70. (a) Was a senior shop steward sent for before the strike took place?
   Yes ............................................................. 1
   No ............................................................. 2

(b) Did the state union initially approve of strike action?
   Yes ............................................................. 1
   No ............................................................. 2

(c) Was a full-time union official sent for:
   At the beginning of the dispute .............................. 1
   Before strike action ....................................... 2
   As a result of strike action ................................. 3

(d) Who were the key people in the organisation of the strike?
   Yes No
   A senior shop steward/Local branch official ........... 1 2
   A shop stewards committee ................................ 1 2
   Local union organiser ..................................... 1 2
   Gippsland Trades and Labour Council officials ...... 1 2
   State union officials ..................................... 1 2
426.

(e) Who were the key negotiators during the strike?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A senior shop steward</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the shop stewards committee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local union organiser</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gippsland Trades and Labour Council officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State union officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTHC/ACTU officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71. Was pressure put on members to return to work by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union officials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

72. (a) How was the decision made to return to work?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting of members/mass meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop stewards meeting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local branch meeting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State level</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal level</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) In general how did the members on strike accept the decision to return to work?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully agreed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totally disagreed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73. Do you feel the strike helped those who took part to achieve a more favourable settlement?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

74. What was your involvement/role throughout the dispute?


SECTION V

In this section I would like to ask some questions about yourself so that I can see how different people feel about important issues. Please remember that this questionnaire is completely anonymous - neither your name or address is required. (Please circle the appropriate responses)

75. What is your age? ___________ years

76. What region or country were you born in?
   Australia.................................................................1
   New Zealand...........................................................2
   United Kingdom and Ireland.......................................3
   Germany.......................................................................4
   Netherlands...................................................................5
   Southern European (Italy, Greece, Malta).........................6
   Other European................................................................7
   Other (please specify) ____________________________________8

77. What is your current marital status?
   Married........................................................................1
   Single...........................................................................2
   Separated/Divorced..........................................................3
   Widowed.........................................................................4
   Other............................................................................5

78. What is the highest education level you have completed?
   Fourth form or lower....................................................1
   Fifth form......................................................................2
   Sixth form......................................................................3
   Apprenticeship...............................................................4
   Technical certificate......................................................5
   Tertiary education...........................................................6

79. (a) How would you describe yourself in political terms?
   Generally a Liberal Party supporter..............................1
   Generally a Labor Party supporter..................................2
   Generally an Australian Democratic Party supporter.........3
   Generally a National Country Party supporter...............4
   Generally a supporter of some other political party.........5
   A Swinging voter (support different parties at different elections depending on issues and circumstances)........6

   (b) Are you a member of a Political Party?
   No...............................................................................1
   Liberal Party.................................................................2
   Australian Labor Party....................................................3
   Australian Democratic Party..........................................4
   National/Country Party....................................................5
   Other (please specify) ____________________________________6
80. What **Occupational Grouping** did (does) your father belong to?

- Manual (craftsman/labourer) .................................. 1
- Clerical, administrative and managerial ......................... 2
- Professional .................................................................. 3
- Self-employed ................................................................ 4
- Other (please specify) .................................................. 5

81. (a) Was your father a union member?

- Yes ........................................................................... 1
- No .............................................................................. 2
- Don't know .................................................................. 3

(b) If YES, was he active in the union?

- Yes ........................................................................... 1
- No .............................................................................. 2
- Unsure ........................................................................ 3

82. How many **dependent children** do you have?

- None .......................................................................... 1
- One ............................................................................ 2
- Two ............................................................................. 3
- Three .......................................................................... 4
- Four or more ................................................................ 5

83. What is your present **gross annual income** (before tax and other deductions)?

- Below $12,000 (below $230 per week) ............................. 1
- Between $12,001 - 15,000 (approx. $231-288 per week) ....... 2
- Between $15,001 - 18,000 (approx. $289-346 per week) ....... 3
- Between $18,001 - 21,000 (approx. $347-404 per week) ....... 4
- Between $21,001 - 24,000 (approx. $405-461 per week) ....... 5
- Between $24,001 - 27,000 (approx. $462-519 per week) ..... 6
- Between $27,001 - 30,000 (approx. $520-577 per week) ....... 7
- Between $30,001 - 33,000 (approx. $578-635 per week) ....... 8
- Over $33,000 (above $636 per week) ............................... 9

84. How long have you lived in the Latrobe Valley? ___________ years

85. Are you a sole, main or secondary **income earner** in your family?

- Sole ............................................................................ 1
- Main ............................................................................ 2
- Secondary .................................................................... 3
- Not applicable (do not have a spouse) ............................. 4

86. (a) How many **organisations** (e.g. churches, sporting and social clubs, scouts, service organisations) do you belong to?

- None ......................................................................... 1
- One ............................................................................ 2
- Two ............................................................................ 3
- Three .......................................................................... 4
- Four or more ................................................................ 5
(b) How many meetings of these organisations would you attend in a month?
    Not a member..................................................1
    Less than one a month......................................2
    One a month..................................................3
    Two a month..................................................4
    Three a month...............................................5
    Four or more a month......................................6

(c) Do you hold any official positions in these organisations?
    Not a member..................................................1
    No official positions.......................................2
    One .............................................................3
    Two .............................................................4
    Three..........................................................5
    Four or more..................................................6

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE REPLY-PAID ENVELOPE AT YOUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION
APPENDIX B

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
SHOP STEWARDS IN THE LATROBE VALLEY

Interview Schedule for Shop Stewards, Union Officials and Industrial Relations Personnel

1. Structure of SECV Industrial Relations.
   (a) Structure.
   (b) Major issues.
   (c) Methods of resolution.
   (d) Role of Steward.

2. Shop Stewards at the Workplace.
   (a) Duties of Shop Stewards.
   (b) Shop Steward Organisation: intra and inter-union.
   (c) Relationship Shop Stewards have with members, management and full-time officials.
   (d) Shop Stewards: their local branches and the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council.

3. The Role of Shop Stewards in Industrial Disputes.
   (a) General.
   (b) Specific.
      - 1977 Maintenance Worker’s strike
      - 1984 Loy Yang Manning Dispute
      - Other Disputes

4. Other Issues
   (a) Melbourne vs. the Latrobe Valley
      - SECV management
      - Unions/Shop Stewards
   (b) The role of the Victorian Government.
   (c) The role of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.
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9 March 1983
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