Union Participation Through a Generational Cohort Lens:

Improving Participation Across Cohorts

by

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Abstract

This thesis consists of three mixed-method (interview, survey) research papers that share a common goal – to increase our understanding of the extent to which generational cohort impacts union participation and more broadly, renewal. Paper one sets the context for the thesis, exploring differences in attitudes towards and perceptions of unions between Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), and Millennials (1980-2000). Overall, we found that Boomers differ significantly from Gen Xers and Millennials, while the latter two groups were more alike than different. Specifically, Boomers’ attitudes and perceptions towards/of unions were typically more positive than those of Gen Xers and Millennials. Further, Boomers appeared to connect to unions on both ideological and instrumental levels, while Gen Xers and Millennials appeared to connect mostly based on the instrumental gain unions can provide their members.

Paper two seeks to learn more about how union members of different cohorts conceptualize different levels of participation activity (ie: Active, Passive, Inactive), comparing these emic conceptualizations to the etic understanding of active and passive participation found in the union literature. While we found a need for more nuance in the area, we generally found that union members’ emic conceptualization of active and passive participation overlap with the etic descriptions of these concepts held by researchers within the union literature – those who the literature would say participate more actively described their own participation as active, while those who participate more passively tended to describe their activity as such.

Paper three compares the state of current union communication practices with our participants’ preferences, identifying any gaps, while also exploring what each cohort believes the union is doing well and where it needs to improve with respect to informing members about

participation opportunities. We found that generally, union members would like to see the union employ more communication technology such as texts and emails in their communication with members, and more outreach in the form of face-to-face communication. Younger members (Gen X, Millennials) were more likely to want better use of communication technology than were Boomers, while Boomers were more likely to want more face-to-face communication.

Preface

At the time of this dissertation's submission, paper one had been accepted for publication in *The Journal of Social Psychology* (2019), paper two had been accepted for publication in *Industrial Relations Journal*, and paper three received a revise and resubmit from the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. Chris Smith is the first author and Dr. Linda Duxbury (thesis supervisor) the second author of all three papers.

Dr. Linda Duxbury provided support, guidance, and feedback over the course of this research project. Our research relationship with Natunion grew out of her network connections, her experience and knowledge helped inform key research decisions, and she provided invaluable analytical and editorial advice. Dr. Duxbury is the sole co-author on the three papers included in this dissertation.

I, Christopher Smith, am the sole author of this dissertation and was fully involved in each step of the research. I conducted all surveys and interviews, as well as data preparation, analysis, and discussion in the form of writing up the papers. When citing this dissertation, please include the following reference:

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Introduction

For more than fifty years, unions across the industrialized world have by and large experienced continual decline in the size of their memberships, the extent of their representation in the labour force, and of members' participation in union activities and roles (EFILWC, 2010; Gall and Fiorito, 2012a; Clawson, 2003). Globalization and other macro-level shifts such as the rise in contract work and the growing popularity of neoliberal ideology and policy have helped to speed up this decline (Gomez et al., 2002; EFILWC, 2010). Simultaneously, these shifts are seen to have erected structural barriers that keep young workers from joining unions (Gomez et al., 2002; EFILWC, 2010), while the actions of unions themselves have worked to prevent young workers from becoming more involved in their unions (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015). These trends appear to have led to the current situation in which unions are getting older as fewer younger members are coming in to replace departing older members (EFILWC, 2010). Together, this combination of demographically and sociologically driven factors threatens the sustainability of unions in developed economies.

In the wake of the union movement's decline (we use the terms labour or union movement, and "unions" interchangeably herein), two overarching bodies of union research have emerged relating to union renewal and union participation (Gall and Fiorito 2012a). Union renewal (also known as union revitalization) is the change process aimed at rebuilding the institutional and organizational strength of the labor movement (Kumar, 2012). The renewal literature is generally concerned with the study of macro-level factors such as the economy, demographics, and other institutions that impact the union movement's overall vitality. Union participation, on the other hand, is "the behavioral involvement of members in the operation and activities of the union" (Redman and Snape, 2005, pg. 847), and includes activities which range

from reading the union newsletter to running in local union elections. Whereas the union renewal literature focuses on the macro-level, the union participation literature is centred on the micro-level, studying antecedents to participation and the psychological processes through which these antecedents influence participation (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a).

Generational cohort theory is based upon the idea that people born within the same historical and cultural context will develop to view and experience the world through a similar lens (Mannheim, 1952). Generational cohort theory contends that because members of a cohort encounter significant events during a similar stage of their development, these shared experiences will go on to shape how they view and interact with the world around them (Mannheim, 1952). The three generations currently most prevalent within the workforce are the Baby Boomers (born 1945-65), Gen X (Born 1966-79), and Millennials (born 1980-2000). Despite an aging membership (Schmidt, 2009) and waning union participation amongst younger workers (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a) the generational cohort construct has yet to be adequately studied in relation to the behaviours of unions or union members (Cates, 2014). Through three separate papers, this study seeks to address this gap in the union literature.

This thesis was designed to explore the relationship between union participation/renewal and factors at the societal, individual, and organizational levels and union participation and related constructs. The omnibus objective of this thesis is to better understand what unions can do to increase active participation amongst union members of all generational cohorts. In order to achieve this objective, we have studied the relationship between generational cohort and three factors that are of importance to union participation: 1) how members view unions; 2) their conceptualization of passive and active union participation; and 3) the effectiveness of union communications. Our research is a case study that is focused on a large transportation industry

union (herein referred to as ‘Natunion’’) that is located in the United States (U.S.) Natunion is a union that represents about 40 000 workers in the transportation industry across the continental United States. Our research contributes to the union participation literature by studying the relationships that exist between generational cohort and factors from the union renewal and participation literatures. Relationships that we study include those between generational cohort and perceptions of unions, generational cohort and attitudes towards unions, generational cohort and union participation, and lastly, the relationship between generational cohort and union communication practices. In so doing, our research helps to bridge the gap between two literatures whose complementarities have yet to be fully realized (Barling et al., 1990; Gall and Fiorito, 2012a; Redman and Snape, 2004; Snape et al., 2000), and more specifically the gap that exists with respect to the relationship between generational cohort and the union participation construct. We do this through three papers, each of which is guided by its own specific objectives. Our research also provides empirical study of generational cohort in the union context, which would fulfill a current need within both literatures (Cates, 2014).

The main objective of Paper 1 is to investigate the relationship between generational cohort and union members’ perceptions of unions. The first study uses interviews to explore perceptions of unions from the union member’s point of view, with the goal of shedding light on each cohort’s perceptions about unions. Data analyzed in study 1 comes from interviews performed between autumn 2009 and spring 2010 (i.e. Interview 1). The sample consists of 100 participants (35 Baby Boomers, 35 Gen X, 30 Millennials), who live in 32 states and work in 42.

The second study included in Paper 1 uses established measures of union attitudes to assess participants’ attitudes towards unions. Study 2 builds on Study 1 by exploring themes identified in Study 1 across a broader sample. Study 2’s analysis features data from a survey of

Natunion members that was distributed in the fall of 2010 (i.e. Survey 1). In total, 4400 completed surveys were returned to the research team. The generational breakdown of the sample is: Boomers (3157), Gen X (1256), Millennials (304).

Paper 1 addresses a number of gaps in the union renewal and generational cohort literatures. First, by analyzing perceptions of unions through a generational lens, we highlight dimensions through which unions can segment their memberships and create targeted mobilization strategies and tactics for each segment, as suggested by Gall and Fiorito (2012a). Secondly, our use of a generational lens in the union context also addresses Cates' (2014) observation that more study of generational cohort in the union context is needed. Additionally, Paper 1 will help to address Lyons and Kuron's (2014) argument that generational cohort research should be performed in a wider variety of contexts.

Paper 2 aims to increase our understanding of the union participation construct by examining: 1) How do union members classify their own level of union participation? 2) What is the relationship between how union members classify their levels of union-participation (i.e. the emic view) and how researchers conceptualize this construct (i.e. the etic view)? 3) What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities (an objective measure of union participation) and their subjective perceptions of union participation? and 4) how does generational cohort affect each of these issues?

Paper 2 also includes two studies. The first study takes a participant-driven qualitative approach and involves asking the 100 individuals who participated in our time 1 interviews (i.e. Interview 1) to describe and classify their typical participation in union activities. The second study included in paper 2 uses a quantitative methodology to differentiate between perceptions of active and passive union participation. Data from study two comes from questions included in

Survey 1 which asked members to describe their participation in the union using a pre-determined list of items and then to classify their participation using a selection of labels.

Paper 2 provides researchers in the area with an emic (i.e. participant driven) view of the union participation construct. This is in contrast with much of the research in the area where the active/passive determination is typically made by the researcher based on either theoretical and/or factor analysis (i.e. developed using an etic approach). By asking participants to categorize how they see their participation in the union and then explain the criteria used in making the decision that they did, we can explore union members' personal perceptions and thought processes concerning union participation. This has been identified as a key to moving the participation literature forward (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a). By exploring the influence of generational cohort on the above, we help to address the shortage of research on generational cohort in the union participation context identified by Cates (2014).

Paper 3 examines how the union disseminates information to its members about opportunities to get involved with union activities. In this paper, we aim to elucidate: 1) How the union communicates information to its members; 2) Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications; 3) The types of changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members, and 4) How generational cohort impacts each of these issues.

Paper 3 includes two studies. The first study seeks to assess the extent to which current communication practices meet union members' preferences, using data from Survey 2. Survey 2 was distributed to members of the union's western division along with self-addressed and stamped envelopes between the fall of 2013 and the Spring of 2014. In total 710 completed surveys were returned to the research team. Of the sample's 710 participants, approximately half

the sample (n = 382) were Baby Boomers, about one in three (n =256) were from Generation X, while approximately one in ten (n = 63) were Millennials. Questions included in Study 2 include: “how does the union typically send you information about opportunities to get involved with the union?” and “how would you prefer to receive information about opportunities to get involved with the union?”

The second study aims to provide in-depth information about union members’ communication needs, using data from our time 2 interviews, which were conducted from Spring to Fall of 2013, with a sample of 75 union members (25 Millennials, 25 Gen X, and 25 Boomers). Our study 2 analysis examines responses to the following questions: when it comes to sending information about opportunities to get involved in the union: 1) “What do you think that the union is doing well?” 2) “What, do you think that the union could improve upon?” and 3) “Do you have any advice for the union with respect to improving the way it communicates information to its members?”

Paper 3 contributes to the union participation and renewal literatures in several ways. First, it provides more empirical evidence as to the relationship between union communication and union participation, which is to this point understudied (Rivers and Truitt, 2014). Second, findings should also provide a deeper understanding of some of the ways that unions themselves can impact participation, which is a current shortcoming in the renewal literature (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a). Third, this study also provides generational cohort researchers with empirical evidence on the relationship between generational cohort and the union context, which is a current shortcoming in both the union and generational cohort literatures (Cates, 2014).

The body of this thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 is the literature review, which aspires to provide the reader with an overview and critique of the literature featuring the

main concepts featured in this thesis. The literature review will begin with a brief history lesson covering the last fifty years of union decline. From there topics such as Union Renewal, Union Participation, and Generational Cohort will be discussed, and gaps in the literature will be identified with implications for our study noted. Chapter 2 is the methods section. Included within this chapter is a description of the dissertation's study design, common methodological assumptions and analysis techniques. Chapter 2 also features a description of the case organization Natunion, and a discussion of data collection techniques. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 consist of this thesis' three papers, respectively. Chapter 6 is the conclusion section, in which we integrate the findings of this thesis and discuss their implications for union participation and renewal.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with an overview of the main theoretical concepts and works that have informed the research questions pursued in this thesis. Section 1.1 focuses on the decline of the union movement over the past half-century, providing real-life context for the concepts explored throughout the literature review and beyond in the studies themselves. Section 1.2 features an overview of the union renewal literature, which highlights research pertaining to the revitalization of institutions, policies, and other macro-level factors that can impact the union movement's vitality. Section 1.3 familiarizes the reader with important research on the individual-level union participation construct. Section 1.4 will focus on the concept of generational cohort, a literature that will provide context for much of the analysis featured within the thesis study. We use the findings from our literature review to identify gaps in the current body of research that have motivated the papers included in this thesis study. Section 1.5 will feature an overview of these identified gaps, as well as an explanation of the objectives of this thesis.

1.1 A Brief History of Union Decline

Today, unions throughout the west are experiencing all-time lows in terms of union density (the percentage of the workforce that is represented by unions), an important indicator of the union movement's vitality (Clawson and Clawson, 2007). This section of the literature will describe the context in which today's unions operate and how, over time, the external environment has contributed to the union movement's decline. By understanding the context in which unions operate, researchers can make better-informed conclusions when studying

individual level factors such as union participation (Gall and Fiorio, 2012ab). As such, the union environment receives attention at the outset of this literature review.

This section begins with an overview of recent worldwide trends in union density. Once data illustrating the decline has been presented, a brief description of the factors that are generally considered to affect union density will follow. Since Natunion operates in the U.S., the review will then shift focus solely to a consideration of unionization in that country. More specifically, union density trends within the U.S. and the conditions in which those trends have developed will be analyzed. Finally, implications from the section for the rest of the thesis will be drawn.

1.1.1 Union density in decline across the west. Union density refers to “the proportion of paid workers who are union members” (Johnson, 2004; pg. 5). Union density can be measured at the level of country, sector, industry, city, state, etc. (Clawson and Clawson 1999). One of the foundational tenets of the labour movement is the adage that there is power in numbers. While that might be a cliché, the union movement truly does get its strength from the collective (Brett 1980). Because of this reliance on strength in numbers, maintaining, and even growing union density is important to the long-term sustainability of the labour movement (Behrens et al. 2004). High unionization rates provide more cash in-flow from union dues, which allows for more of a political presence and ultimately more of an enhanced ability to enact the union mission along with creating a greater sense of legitimacy and credibility (Behrens et al. 2004).

Over the past half-century or so, most industrialized economies have seen at least some decline in union density. Using data from the OECD (2014) and the EDAC (2013), Figure 1-1 illustrates the extent to which unionization rates (i.e. density) in a number of geographically

diverse economies have changed since 1960. We have not included the U.S. in this graph or discussion because their union decline will be explained in more detail in Section 1.1.2.

Figure 1-1: Union density across the OECD. Data from OECD (2014) and EDAC (2013)

Of the ten economies featured in Figure 1-1, only Finland and Denmark have seen net growth in their respective union densities since 1960. Over the same period, other countries across the western world have seen their union movements erode significantly. This decline has been identified and its causes studied by academics and practitioners alike (EFILW, 2010; Clawson and Clawson, 1999; Phelan 2007; Scruggs and Lange, 2002). While each country's labour environment is unique and borne largely out of idiosyncratic national economic, political, social, and union histories, there are a number of factors that researchers have identified as impactful to the union environment, and ultimately to union density, no matter the geographic context (Phelan, 2007). We briefly explain six of these factors below: *globalization*, *neo-liberalism*, *institutions*, *macro-economic shifts*, *business practices*, and *type of economy*.

Globalization. Although the cause of union decline is much more complex than simply “globalization”, the growing connectedness of the modern world has changed the face of economy and industry and has ultimately brought about a need for innovation within the union movement (Clawson and Clawson, 2007). As such, globalization, the “formal institutional potential for, and actual levels of, engagement with other countries” (Scruggs and Lange, 2002; pg. 129), is at the forefront of many discussions pertaining to the erosion of union density (Clawson and Clawson 2007, EFILWC 2010, Scruggs and Lange, 2002). The EFILWC (2010) asserts that globalization is at least partly at fault for the EU’s reduced union density because “the globalization of economic activities... seems to weaken traditional industrial relations systems and exposes trade unions to offshoring threats and social regime competition” (EFILWC, 2010; pg. 10). Researchers echo the contention that globalization, specifically access to relatively cheap and unregulated labour, reduces domestic union density as wages offered by unionized companies are squeezed down due to competition from abroad (Adamson and Partridge, 1997; Scruggs and Lange, 2002). Clawson and Clawson (1999) also contend that globalization has negatively impacted the union movement, pointing out that industry/capital is globalized to a much greater extent than is the union movement. They note that the fragmented nature of the union movement on a global scale compared to that of big business is of significance to the labour movement’s power and overall solidarity. Scruggs and Lange (2002) agree that globalization has put pressure on unions to avoid fragmentation in order to survive: “unions are most vulnerable to employer hostility and to subsequent membership loss where they are fragmented, weak, and combative towards employers” (pg. 131).

Neoliberalism. Over the course of the 20th century, neoliberalism has gained momentum as an ideology and as a political practice across an increasingly globalized world (Fairbrother

and Yates 2003). Neoliberalism is rooted in “the priority of the price mechanism, free enterprise, the system of competition, and a strong and impartial state” (Mirowski and Piewhe 2009, pg. 13-14). Fairbrother and Yates (2003) detail the role of neoliberal policy in the decline of the union movement. Companies, they argue, “have been helped...by governments choosing to restore economic competitiveness through the advancement of neo-liberal policies, in part aimed at restricting union political and economic influence” (pg. 1), adding that “many governments have abandoned Keynesian full-employment policies in favour of reducing inflation, deregulating labour markets, restricting union growth through changes to industrial relations institutions and eroding the welfare state” (pg. 1). The EFILWC report also cites neo-liberal policy as a main contributor to the EU’s diminished union density, identifying liberalization, privatization and the outsourcing of the public sector as significant factors in the continent’s loss of union density.

Institutions. Institutions are another factor that researchers link to union density, either facilitating or hindering its growth (Scruggs and Lange, 2002). Institutions “are the humanly devised schemas, norms, and regulations that enable and constrain the behaviour of social actors and make social life predictable and meaningful” (Hargrave and Van De Ven, 2006). As the Fairbrother and Yates (2003) quote above detailed, neoliberal policies have increasingly impacted institutions in a manner that is detrimental to the growth of the union movement, giving more power to employers. There are a variety of institutions that can impact union density and the demand for unions. For example, the Ghent system of unemployment is an institution that is present in Finland, Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, in which welfare and unemployment payments are distributed by labour unions (Rothstein 1992, Western 1997). Because union membership is required to collect benefits, there is more impetus for workers to become unionized under the Ghent system compared to that of North America.

Macro-economic shifts. Globalization and rapid technological advancements along with the growth of neoliberalism have greatly altered the structure of modern corporations and the traditional operation of international markets, resulting in wide-scale *macroeconomic shifts* that have negatively impacted the labour movement (EFILWC 2010). For example, many companies have relocated their manufacturing operations overseas in search of cheaper and less well-regulated labour markets. Second, developed economies have shifted away from sectors that are traditionally highly unionized and have turned to the knowledge and service industries which are less unionized (Clawson and Clawson, 1999; EFILWC, 2010). Finally, unionized full-time permanent positions are increasingly replaced by contract and part-time jobs that are less likely to be unionized (Fairbrother and Yates, 2003).

Business practices. Union density can also be affected by the practices and policies undertaken and implemented by companies. The lengths to which management will go to undermine a union presence have been well documented (Frege, 2003; Levitt, 1993; Logan, 2006). Bronfenbrenner and Juravich (1998) describe the situation as follows, “the overwhelming majority of employers use a broad range of aggressive legal and illegal antiunion tactics, including discharging workers for union activity... imposing unilateral changes in benefits... offering bribes, supporting antiunion committees... holding social events, and mailing letters and distributing leaflets” (pg. 28). These authors also report that the incidence and breadth of anti-union tactics had increased over time and that anti-union tactics work. Fairbrother and Yates (2003) echo this sentiment, arguing that employers have “been emboldened by changes in the political and ideological climate to increase their efforts either to contain or eliminate union influence in their workplaces” (pg. 15).

Type of economy. Phelan (2007) argues that the oil crisis of the 1970s produced two types of economies within affected OECD countries: Coordinated market economies (CME), and Liberal market economies (LME). CME countries such as Finland, Denmark, and Sweden generally feature centrally coordinated wage bargaining, stable labour relations, and an effective system that allows for union input at national, industrial, and firm levels (Phelan 2007). LMEs such as the USA, UK, and Australia are less hospitable to unions as they generally feature deregulated labour markets, no centralized wage bargaining, and close ties between firms and government legislation, which ultimately leads to weakened labor movements (Phelan, 2007).

According to Phelan (2007) there is a strong theoretical link between economy type and the labour environment the country would experience. He noted that unions have more power and growth potential within CMEs as institutions in these countries were developed in a way that reaffirms the importance of unions (Phelan, 2007).

1.1.2 Union decline in the U.S. This study features data collected from a union that operates in the United States. Accordingly, to provide context to our research, we will discuss the current state of the labour movement in the U.S. in some detail, providing relevant background information in order to explain how the union's external environment has changed over time. What is presented in this section should not, however, be considered a comprehensive history of the union movement in the United States. Rather we provide statistics on union density in the U.S. over time, paired with a discussion of some of the factors that have contributed to the overall decline of the labour movement's representation of the American workforce. Such an overview is important as it is this context that has helped to shape the experiences of respondents in our sample with respect to their views on unions.

1.1.2.1 Union density's downward spiral. Phelan (2007) classified the USA as a liberal market economy (LME), which means that it is driven by free-market ideals such as deregulation and privatization. Typical of an LME, the USA lacks the policies, institutions, and ideological/philosophical beliefs and values that most encourage the labour movement to flourish. As a result, American unions found it especially challenging to grow (Phelan 2007). This is evidenced by data that demonstrates declining rates of union density in the United States from 1950-2010 in Figure 1-2, below. A historical examination of the year to year decline in American union density provides a glimpse into the impacts that wide-scale institutional and societal shifts towards neo-liberalism can have on an economy's unionization rate (Phelan 2007).

Figure 1-2: Union Density in the USA 1955-2010 (BLS, 2014)

Examination of the data found in Figure 1-2 shows that American unions saw their highest representation rates in 1955, at which time 39% of American workers were affiliated with unions (Clawson and Clawson 2007). According to Unionstats.com (which uses data collected from the U.S.'s BLS), by 1973 density had dropped to 24%. The next two and a half decades saw a steady decline, and density hit a new low of 13.5% in 2000. At the turn of the millennium, density was

just slightly more than a third of what it was at its peak just under a half-century earlier. From 2005 to 2010, density stayed relatively stable, with a loss of 1.6 percentage points over that period (falling from 13.5% to 11.9%).

The public/private breakdown of American density can be found in Table 1-1, below.

Table 1-1: American union density: 1973-2010, Workforce, Private Sector, Public Sector. Data from Unionstats.org (2010)

	Workforce (%)	Private Sector (%)	Public Sector (%)
1973	24.0	24.2	23
1975	22.2	21.5	24.8
1980	23.0	20.1	35.9
1985	18.0	14.3	35.7
1990	16.1	11.9	36.5
1995	14.9	10.3	37.7
2000	13.5	9.0	37.5
2005	12.5	7.8	36.5
2010	11.9	6.9	36.2

As is the case in other LMEs such as Australia and Canada (Griffin 2007, Yates 2007), much of the USA's union density is bolstered by the public sector. For example, in 2010 36.2% of the America's public service employees were union members compared to only 6.9% of the private sector (unionstats.com, 2010). This however has not always been the case. Between 1973 (earliest available BLS data) and 1980, private sector representation kept pace with overall union density. Throughout the 1980s, however, private sector density fell at a slightly faster pace than overall density. This decline continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s, with only one small exception in the mid-2000s. On the other hand, public sector density has remained relatively static since 1983, ranging between its 1984 low of 35.9% and its 1994 peak of 38.7%. As such, the consistent union density statistics coming from the public sector (in which union protection

has been mandated) have to some degree hidden the extreme decline in private sector union densities over the four decades covered in Table 1-1 above.

Union decline in the U.S., while stemming from similar “big-picture changes” as in other economies, also appears to be quite unique. While labor laws in the U.S. secure the right of workers to self-organize, they also secure management’s right to impede the process (Clawson and Clawson, 1999). The capability to interfere with the organization process and to oppose unionization is not a right that is legally ensured in other developed countries and is unique to the American context (Comstock and Fox, 1994).

Clawson and Clawson (2007) provide a detailed description of U.S. labour’s post-war decline, as follows. They note that until about the early 1970s, labour and management were largely at peace with both sides prospering. By the 1970s, however, they argue that employers began using more evident anti-union tactics, such as refusing to expand unionized work-sites and moving new facilities to regions that were less unionized. They also contend that through the Reagan era of the 1980s, unions were increasingly forced to make concessions while also being forced to resist more aggressive anti-union campaigns from management than had been previously seen. In the 1990s, labour faced more challenges, as increases in the deregulation of labour markets, contracting out of jobs, privatization, part-time employment and globalization further impacted the reach of the labour movement in the U.S. Clawson and Clawson (2007) also make the case that these changes to the union environment not only impacted union density, but have also had negative effects on the power of the labour movement. They cite a variety of statistics supporting this claim, many of which we discuss below.

First, they note that evidence of this reduction in power can be seen with respect to the frequency of strikes. Between 1969 and 1979, for example, at least 950 000 workers went on

strike in each year. In contrast, between 1987 and 2007 no more than half a million workers went on strike in a given year with most years seeing fewer than a quarter million going on strike.

Clawson and Clawson (2007) argue that declines in strike numbers (despite growing workforces) come as a result of government policies reducing unions' ability to strike, a series of changes that have limited the effectiveness of labour's main tool (Clawson and Clawson, 2007).

Second, they claim that Ronald Reagan's decision to break the 1981 Air traffic controllers' strike using scabs (non-unionized replacement workers) can also be seen as a turning point in the country's labour history, as it was important in turning public opinion away from unions while also rendering the (previously undelivered) threat of using scab workers a new reality (Clawson and Clawson 2007).

A third factor that threatens to further reduce union density and power in the U.S. by reducing unions' ability to organize new members is the proliferation of "right to work" laws (Elwood and Fine, 1987). Currently 26 of the 50 American states have "right to work" laws (NRTW, 2016). In "right to work" states union membership is optional for all employees, requiring unions to be "open shop" (Elwood and Fine, 1987). In contrast, union membership is mandatory for all workers in workplaces in which "closed shop" unions exist. In an open shop environment, even if a union is present in the workplace, employees do not have to join the union or pay dues, but still benefit from the gains made by the union (Elwood and Fine, 1987). Right to work laws affect unions in both the private and public sector, but because all federal government workplaces are already represented by open-shop unions, it is more reasonable to theorize that further proliferation of right-to-work laws will weaken an already very low private-sector union density. Not only is union density on the decline, current demographic trends in unionism described in the next section indicate that further decline is likely to come in the future.

1.1.2.2 Demographic differences in American union density. The BLS (2010) report features a demographic breakdown of unionization in the U.S. The BLS data show that union density does not generally differ much by gender. In 2010, 12.6% of men belonged to a union while 11.1% of women were union members. This was not always the case as the gender-gap in terms of unionization has decreased significantly since 1983, when at that time there was a 10-percentage point difference, with men being more likely than women to belong to a union (BLS, 2010). Similarly, the 2010 data indicates that there were not any major differences in unionization rates between the various ethnic groups in the U.S. workforce. Black workers were the most highly unionized (at 13.5%), followed by white workers (11.7%), Hispanic workers (10.9%) and Asian workers (10.0%) (BLS, 2010).

The data do, however, indicate significant differences in unionization rates associated with the age of the worker. More specifically, data from the BLS (2010) report show that unions represented older workers at a much higher rate than younger workers. Only 4.3% of the youngest group (16 - 24 years) were union members – the smallest ratio in the data set. The next oldest group (25 - 34 years) density was more than double that, at 10.1%. The oldest group in the dataset (55-64 years) was the most highly unionized at 15.7% (BLS, 2010). This data reinforces Schmitt and Warner's (2009) argument that youth unionization has been on the decline since the 1980s (See Figure 1-3 Below).

Figure 1-3: Age makeup of US Unions (1983-2008). Data from Schmitt and Warner (2009)

1.1.2.3 Public approval of unions in the U.S. Gomez et al. (2002) identify socialization to the benefits of unionism as important to the strength of the union movement. This socialization (negative or positive) can occur through unions themselves (either through communication/advertising, or through gains/concessions in collective bargaining, etc.), through the media, through direct experiences in union workplaces, and through friends, family and society in general. They argue that as unions' ability to "advertise" the benefits of unionization have decreased over the years, so too has society's opinion towards unions. This argument is reflected in data from Gallup (2015) polls detailed below which have tracked the American public's approval/disapproval of unions (Figure 1-4) and confidence in unions (Figure 1-5) over time.

Figure 1-4: Union approval, USA, 1936-2014 (Gallup, 2015)

The Gallup (2015) data shown in Figure 1-4 above reveals the following trends in union approval in the United States. Union approval in the U.S. peaked in 1953 at about 75%. Although there have been ups and downs over the years, public approval of unions has generally been on the downswing since 1953, settling at 53% in 2014. Between the peak and the 2014 mark, union approval fell as low as 48% in 2009. Active disapproval of unions, on the other hand, shows the opposite trend, according to Gallup (2015) data.

Figure 1-5: Confidence in Unions, USA, 1973-2014 (Gallup, 2015)

Gallup’s (2015) dataset also includes information about American’s confidence in unions dating back to 1973 (Figure 1-5), when 30% of Americans polled had either a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in unions (the two positive options in the poll). Much like approval of unions in the U.S., the data shows that confidence in unions has also generally declined over the past forty years. Confidence in unions peaked in 1977, with 39% of those polled displaying a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in unions. Despite some gains in the mid-2000s (31% in 2004 for example), Gallup’s (2015) polling numbers show that confidence had fallen to just 22% in 2014.

The results from three public opinion polls conducted by Gallup (2015) and Pew (2009, 2011) will be described below to help us understand how perceptions with respect to the following issues have also changed over time: “In disputes between unions and management, which side do you typically support?” (Figure 1-6); “Unions have too much power, agree or

disagree?” (Figure 1-7); and “Would you vote to enact right to work laws in your state?” (Figure 1-8).

In disputes between unions and management, which side do you typically support?			
PEW (2011)		Gallup (2015)	
1985:	Unions: 36% Management: 43%	1995:	Unions: 45% Management: 37%
2011:	Unions: 40% Management: 43%	2005:	Unions: 52% Management: 34%

*Figure 1-6: Support of Unions vs. Management. (Note: * indicates PEW (2011), ** indicates Gallup (2015))*

Figure 1-6 features data from two polls that asked Americans to indicate who they would typically support in the event of a dispute between unions and management. The PEW (2011) study collected data in 1985 and 2011, demonstrating an increase of support for unions over that time (from 36% to 40%), while support for management was the same at both times (40%). The Gallup (2015) data similarly indicate an uptick in support for unions over management (45% in 1995 rising to 52% in 2005), while support for management declined over that time (from 37% to 34%). While these findings suggest an increasing percentage of the U.S. population supports unions, other data shows the opposite, suggesting that these two questions might have more to do with how people feel about management than their attitudes towards unions. For example, data in Figures 1-7 and 1-8 indicate diminishing support for unions over time.

Unions have too much power, agree or disagree?	
1999	Agree: 52% Disagree: 42%
2009	Agree: 62% Disagree: 33%

Figure 1-7: Unions have too much power (PEW, 2009)

Figure 1-7 includes data from a PEW (2009) survey that asked respondents to indicate their feelings about the question “unions have too much power, agree or disagree?” Results of the survey suggest that the proportion of the sample who believe that unions have too much power has increased over time. For example, in 1999 52% agreed that unions had too much power, while 42% disagreed. In 2009 however, the percentage of respondents who agreed had grown to 62%, while the proportion of those who disagreed fell to 33%.

Would you vote to enact right to work laws in your state?	
1957	Yes: 62% No: 27%
2014	Yes: 71% No: 22%

Figure 1-8: Right to work laws (Gallup, 2015)

Lastly, data from Figure 1-8 demonstrates a growing preference for right to work laws, which again, are laws that eliminate mandatory union membership in some workplaces and therefore threaten to further reduce union density. In 1957, for example, 62% of those polled indicated a preference for right to work laws, while 27% indicated that they would not vote for such a law. By 2014, the “yes” group had grown to 71% of respondents, while “no” fell to 22%, demonstrating a growth in preference for open-shop unions.

To summarize, the polling data support the following conclusions:

- Union density is on the decline, meaning they are representing fewer workers each year (particularly in the private sector),
- Union members are getting older, and
- Public approval for unions and their role in society is on the decline.

On a more positive note for the future of unionism, however, a 2013 PEW research poll found that respondents under 30 years of age were the most pro-union, as 61% from that age group had favourable views of unions (compared to 29% unfavourable). This finding reflects the assertions of Gomez et al. (2002) that young people are not necessarily anti-union, but that their relative lack of union representation stems from structural impediments to their joining.

1.1.3 Implications of union decline. The main goal of this section was to provide context for the research detailed in this document. Unions across the Western world (particularly the USA) are experiencing significant decline as the size of their memberships along with their power to negotiate good contracts and shape policy have been trending downward for roughly the past fifty years. Establishing the details of the union context is important to the remainder of this thesis because the environment in which unions operate is likely to impact the way that workers and the greater public view and interact with unions (Gomez et al., 2002; Bryson et al., 2005).

1.2 Union Renewal

The union renewal literature focuses on inquiries “into the causes, processes, and the effects of union revitalization” (Balasubramanian and Sarkar, 2015; pg. 22). The union renewal literature has grown largely out of the labour studies and industrial relations fields (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a).

The goal of this section is fourfold: 1) to introduce the concept of union renewal, 2) to provide an overview of main research streams within this literature, 3) to identify gaps in the literature, and 4) to explain how this thesis will address those gaps.

1.2.1 Union Renewal – Definitions and Foundations. We use the terms union renewal and union revitalization interchangeably throughout this document. This is consistent with how the terms are used in the body of literature under review. Some (Heery, 2003; Balasubramanian and Sarkar, 2015, for example) recommend using union revitalization to describe the efforts of the union movement to regain prominence, while using union renewal to describe the body of theory and study relating to those efforts. Others, such as Gall and Fiorito (2012a) do not differentiate between the two, preferring to use renewal to describe both the actual efforts made by the unions as well as the study of those efforts.

Most definitions of union renewal revolve around the union movement's attempt to remain sustainable in an increasingly hostile environment. For example, Kumar (2012) defines union renewal as “a process of change to rebuild the organizational and institutional strength of the labor movement (so that it will be) capable of defending and advancing the interests and (the) rights of workers” (pg. 2). Gall and Fiorito (2012a) state that union renewal is tasked with increasing union vitality to the point at which unions once again have influence in dealing with the government and employers. Fairbrother (1989), who has been credited as a pioneer in the union renewal literature (Gall 1998), offers a simpler definition, stating that union “renewal is about the way unions reorganize and recompose themselves to meet the problem of work and employment” (pg. 101). The union renewal literature includes the study and analysis of topics as varied as the general wellbeing of unions (Kessler and Heron, 2001), union density (Corby and

Blundell 1997), and the transformation of traditional union institutions, structures, and practices (Pocock, 2000).

For the purpose of this thesis we will use Behrens et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of union renewal as a multidimensional process. According to Behrens et al. (2004), union renewal refers to “the strategies that union movements have adopted to stem their decline in membership and influence”. This broad and inclusive conceptualization of the union renewal concept makes it appropriate for use in this thesis which seeks to better understand factors and processes that impact union participation specifically and union renewal more generally. It is also consistent with recommendations by Balasubramanian and Sarkar (2015) who contend that a broad definition of renewal allows for a more holistic perspective that considers the impact of unions on the economy and society.

1.2.2 Dimensions of union renewal. Behrens et al. (2004) argue that union renewal can be achieved along four dimensions (spheres of activity): the political dimension, the economic dimension, the institutional dimension and the membership dimension. This perspective is similar to that proposed by Balasubramanian and Sarkar (2015) who categorize the research using a similar typography. The objective of this section is to provide an overview of the range of research that is focused on the union movement's response to union decline. As such, this section should not be thought of as a complete review of the renewal literature, but rather as an overview of the main streams of study and their implications for this thesis.

1.2.2.1 Political renewal. Behrens (2004) describes the political dimension of union renewal as the interaction between unions and government bodies at the municipal, state, federal, and even international levels. He indicates that these interactions typically take place through elections, as well as through the development and implementation of legislation and policy. He

argues that unions can use the political dimension as a path to renewal by gaining political power and thereby influencing policy and legislation in a manner that would be beneficial to the union movement and its interests.

Behrens (2004) explains in more detail exactly how unions can use the political dimension to achieve renewal. He notes that the union movement's approach to the political dimension typically begins with the electoral process. At this stage, unions offer their support to candidates or parties that have union interests in mind either through fundraising, donations, campaigning, and endorsements (or a combination of thereof). The idea is that if pro-union candidates get elected into positions of power, then the union movement will benefit from their policy decisions.

Behrens (2004) points out that the election cycle is not the extent of the union movement's political involvement, however. By lobbying legislators, supporting social causes, and by pressuring governments to enforce already existing regulations, unions can impact the political sphere in order to keep union interests at the forefront of political conversations.

Behrens (2004) also argues that a strong union presence on the political scene provides workers with an opportunity to have more of a voice in the political process, which helps to broaden political discourse and provide a counterpoint to the more conventional economic ideas and political ideologies that may not be considered otherwise. Without the checks and balances provided by politically active unions, Behrens argues, the implications of union decline would "extend to political processes and policy-making dynamics with extensive ramifications for policy outcomes" (Behrens et al. 2004, pg. 16). In Behrens' argument, the union movement's political presence ensures that its interests are represented in legislative and policy making processes.

According to Phelps (2007) and Haman and Kelly (2004), however, the union movement has lost political power over time. They indicate that this is particularly true in the USA. Haman and Kelly (2004) studied the political activities of unions in five countries: the USA, the UK, Spain, Italy, and Germany. Their findings demonstrate how, compared to their counterparts in other countries, American unions are not as impactful on the national political sphere. Of the countries studied, unions in Italy and Spain possessed the most power. Because of centralized bargaining, extensive bargaining coverage, and the value put on industrial relations by the state, unions in the Mediterranean countries were most successful in government negotiations. Because American unions are less institutionalized into national politics than are unions in the other countries studied, congressional lobbying and electoral activity make up the majority of the American labor movement's political tactics (Haman and Kelly, 2004).

1.2.2.2: *Economic renewal.* The economic dimension of union renewal includes the union movement's attempt to increase the amount of influence it has on the macro-level of its environment (Behrens et al., 2004). This, they argue, relates to the relative bargaining power of unions compared to corporations and governments, the ability of unions to improve wages and benefits packages, and the ability of unions to impact the greater distribution of wealth within society. Concerning the last point, in some countries like Sweden, where unions are much more prevalent than in North America, unions are responsible for the distribution of unemployment insurance and therefore have a large impact on the distribution of the nation's wealth (Pestoff, 2004).

Revitalization in the economic dimension can be achieved by gaining enough influence over the economic sphere that the union movement can achieve its collective goal of leveling the distribution of wealth within society. Behrens et al. (2004) argue that because there are so many

factors that can influence the economic dimension, it is difficult for unions to impact the economic dimension on a wide scale before changes in the other dimensions first occur. Ironically, they point out, the amount of influence that unions have over the economic environment is the inverse of that of their corporate adversaries. Gomez et al. (2002) and Bryson et al. (2005) both argue that with economic influence comes social influence, which has the ability to impact society's views on unions for the better or worse, depending on the extent of the union movement's influence.

1.2.2.3 Membership dimension. Behrens' (2004) membership dimension of union renewal consists of union activities focused on its members. Typically, these activities relate to increasing union participation, increasing union density, and expanding the union membership away from the typical union industries and demographics. They contend that increases in participation and density will help revitalize unions through power in numbers. Moreover, additional cash-flow stemming from an increase in the number of members paying union dues can help revitalization efforts. It is their view, however, that true revitalization will not be possible without growing union membership beyond the typical industrial and demographic base.

Reflective of the importance that Behrens et al. (2004) put on the importance of growing the union membership base through the organizing of new members in previously un-unionized workplaces is the large body of research falling within the membership dimension that focuses on organizing election drives. Bronfenbrenner (2003, 2004), for example, studied the strategic and tactical approaches of unions in organizing drives with the intent of finding out which strategies and tactics are most likely to be successful in winning elections granting union certification (and therefore membership) to the employees.

The findings of both studies indicate that comprehensive organizing drives (i.e. those which employ a variety of tactics: advertising, face to face interaction, education sessions) are more likely to lead to certification than drives that are not comprehensive. In their (2004) study, the authors found that 68% of union drives that used six or more of the techniques listed in their survey were successful. This is higher than what they observed in drives that employed five or fewer tactics (44% won their certification bid) or no tactics whatsoever (succeeded only 32% of the time).

Above all else, Bronfenbrenner (2003) found that the presence of a grassroots organizing campaign was the most vital criteria for achieving victories in union certification elections. Grassroots activism is at the heart of the organizing model of unions discussed in the “structure” section above. Grassroots activism can occur when attempting to unionize new workplaces through certification drives, or it can occur in established union environments in the form of participative union structures that give members more autonomy than do traditional union structures. The importance of grassroots activism to union renewal has been proffered throughout the literature (Fairbrother 1989; Gallagher and Strauss 1991;; Kumar and Schenk 2006;; Muehlenkamp 1991; Stinson and Ballantyne 2006; Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015). The perceived benefits of grassroots activism stem largely from the act of putting workers in key roles and placing responsibility in the hands of the workers themselves. This is done under the assumption that increased responsibility gives employees ownership over their certification campaign while also reducing the effectiveness of employers’ claims that the union is an untrustworthy organization of outsiders (Bronfenbrenner, 2003).

1.2.2.4 Institutional renewal. Behrens’ (2004) institutional dimension refers to the union movement’s attempts at improving the institutionalized aspects of unions themselves.

Researchers interested in the institutional dimension study a wide range of topics including union structures, hierarchies, processes, union governance, union leadership, and their impact on union renewal. Theoretically, union renewal can be achieved through the institutional dimension if unions adjust their structures, processes and practices in order to adapt to the modern economic and social realities in which they exist. Behrens et al. (2004) argue that revitalization through the institutional dimension may be hindered by the fact that unions are organizations and organizations are opposed to change. A lack of organizational change amongst unions also makes it difficult to study the impact of institutional change on renewal (Behrens et al., 2004).

There is no consensus in the literature on how to best structure unions in order to maximize engagement and loyalty amongst the union membership (Fairbrother and Yates, 2003). Two views are debated: the service model, and the organizing model. Traditionally, unions have taken on what is known as the service model of union governance. The service model aims to provide members with the most efficient and effective service possible. In the service model, union staff and officers perform union roles and duties on behalf of the members' best interests (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a). In this model, union members can almost be considered a client of the union (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a).

More recently however, successful unionization drives, such as the Justice for Janitors campaign (Savage, 2006), have increased the focus on the organizing model of union governance (Fairbrother and Yates, 2003). Whereas the service model relies upon paid employees to perform important union tasks, the organizing model takes on a more bottom-up, grassroots approach to union membership with a more participatory structure in which union members themselves perform roles and activities typically assigned to union officers (ie: pursuing grievances) (Gall 1998). Within the organizing model, members have more power and responsibility as they

receive training and are encouraged to solve problems creatively (Fairbrother and Yates, 2003). Union leadership's importance in the organizing model derives from the idea that leaders are responsible for training members in their increased roles in addition to developing and implementing strategy (Sharpe, 2004). The increased level of responsibility over the union's decision making is argued to lead members to take on more ownership of their union and therefore become more involved in and loyal to the union (Fairbrother and Yates, 2003). While many see grassroots activism as a path to union renewal, the actual impacts of the increasingly popular "organizing model" on union renewal are not yet clear. This is because the model's effectiveness and actual implementation have been shown to vary depending on a variety of contingencies (Gall 2005; Hickey et al., 2010). Markowitz (2000) suggested using a continuum to conceptualize the range of possible union models based on the organizing versus service dichotomy.

1.2.3 Union Renewal: Gaps in our understanding and implications for this thesis.

The union renewal literature plays an important role in this thesis. Renewal researchers have identified factors that could potentially help the sustainability of unions, but as Gall and Fiorito (2012a) argue, there is a lack of theoretical development within the literature concerning how these big-picture factors relate to individual-level constructs such as union participation. Despite its contributions, the renewal literature is limited by the fact that most studies in this area were done about a decade ago. This presents us with a number of gaps in our knowledge that our research can help to address. These gaps are listed and related to this thesis in the section below.

First, Gall and Fiorito (2012a) argue that until this point the union renewal research has been too practitioner oriented. In particular, they argue that union renewal research tends to be focused on providing normative instructions to union practitioners and policy makers, rather than

developing a theoretical and empirical discussion of renewal. Our research will address this shortcoming by focusing on concepts that are associated with union renewal (e.g. internal communication processes) and empirically testing their impact on outcomes that are important within the union renewal literature (e.g. perceptions of unions, member participation in union activities).

Second, although the union renewal literature considers union participation an important goal, many researchers argue that the processes through which participation occurs is understudied (Hurd 2007; Gall 1998; Gall and Fiorito 2012a; Phelan 2007). Gall (1998), for example, argued that the renewal literature too often only focuses on mobilization and participation as an end to be achieved, while the process that leads to that outcome is often ignored. Others (Phelan, 2007; Hurd, 2007) argue that the focus is on mobilization, not on how to maintain interest in the union and in participation over time.

Similarly, Balasubramanian and Sarkar (2015) argued that the renewal literature takes on too much of an agency theory perspective of union participation, reducing the role of the individual member in the process that drives union participation. This thesis was designed to help to address these gaps by exploring the extent to which factors within the union renewal literature such as social trends (via generational cohort), union communication, and individual perceptions relate to union participation, and attitudes towards participation. In other words, our research explores concepts found in the union renewal literature at the micro, individual-level, which should allow us to gain more understanding of the processes at play in driving union participation amongst union members.

Moving away from the membership dimension of the renewal literature, Behrens et al. (2004) identify a third gap. The authors believe that because unions are organizations they

should be expected to resist change, and much like typical organizations, unions are sometimes resistant to change (and perhaps even more so). To make their case they point to a number of studies exploring union inertia. These studies are based on a wide range of theories including Weber's bureaucracy (Voss and Sherman, 2000), resource based theory (Katz, Batt, and Keefe, 2003), and population ecology (Hannah and Freeman, 1989) and seek to demonstrate how inertia can reduce the union movement's propensity to change. This over-focus on inertia has meant there is little research exploring how best to implement change within the union renewal literature. Of particular relevance to this thesis is work by Rivers and Truitt (2014) who identified a lack of empirical study on the impact of union communication processes on union renewal and union participation. Filling this gap is important because their participants (who were themselves union representatives in their own union) indicated that poor communication practices were hindering their respective union's ability to send vital information to members. Without the effective dissemination of information, they reasoned, mobilization efforts are less fruitful (thus resulting in less participation and no renewal).

1.3 Union Participation

Union participation is "the behavioral involvement of members in the operation and activities of the union" (Redman and Snape (2004), p. 847). With such a broad definition, union participation could take on a seemingly infinite number of forms as unions evolve. Contextual differences from one country to the next also expand the numbers of ways in which participation manifests itself. For example, Sweden's unions play a much bigger role in society and are responsible for distributing unemployment insurance, whereas in the U.S. this is not the case. As such, studies of union participation in Sweden might differ from those in the U.S. Anderson's

(1979) study provides us with the following comprehensive list of union activities that can be used to ground our discussion of this construct: discussing union issues with coworkers; following the union newsletter; promoting the union to new members; attending union meetings; voting in union elections; attending union information sessions; working on union committees; taking on the role of union steward/representative; and running for elected leadership positions.

Due to the importance of union participation in the union renewal process (Behrens et al., 2004; Gall and Fiorito, 2012a), all three papers in this thesis focus on factors related to the union participation construct. This is consistent with Behrens et al.'s (2004) argument that union participation should be a focus of renewal efforts (and research) because it is a factor over which unions have some degree of control. This differentiates union participation from macro-level factors as economic trends and the national political climate that are relatively impervious to attempts from unions to impact them in a meaningful way. Union participation, on the other hand occurs in large part at an individual and organizational rather than societal level, which is easier to influence (Behrens, 2004).

This section will begin with a discussion of the antecedents to union participation, followed by a discussion of the union participation construct's multidimensionality, and more specifically of the active/passive conceptualization of union participation. Some criticisms of the participation literature will then be explained in order to identify gaps in the literature that this thesis will aim to help address.

1.3.1 Predictors of union participation. Our research aims to increase our understanding of the union participation construct, particularly how it might be influenced by factors such as generational cohort and union communication. As such, an overview of the current empirical research into predictors of union participation will be provided with the goal of

shedding light on some of the processes that drive union members to participate in union activities.

A survey of the union participation literature indicates that researchers have identified predictors of union participation at the individual, organizational (union), and societal levels. For example, Tripti and Ginni (2015) undertook a literature review in which they systematically categorized research on individual and organizational (union) level antecedents to union participation. Some important antecedents to participation they identified include union commitment, pro-union attitudes, union instrumentality, and union support. Other studies link union-level factors such as leadership and communication practices to participation (Rivers and Truitt, 2014; Cregan et al., 2009). Macroeconomic factors have also been found to influence participation (Bryson, 2005; Gomez, 2002; EFILWC, 2010). We discuss each of these factors in more detail over the course of this section, beginning with predictors arising at the individual level, then the union level, and finally the societal level.

1.3.1.1 Union commitment. Newton and Shore (1992) define union commitment (an individual level antecedent of participation) as “a desire to remain a member of the union, a willingness to put forth effort on behalf of the union, and a belief and acceptance in the role of unions” (pg. 278). Union commitment has been found to be a primary predictor of union participation (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a; Tripti and Ginni, 2015), with those who score high in union commitment being more likely to participate in union activities than those who do not. Gordon et al. (1980) observed that “since the ability of union locals to attain their goals is generally based on the members’ loyalty, belief in the objectives of organized labor, and willingness to perform services voluntarily, commitment is part of the very fabric of unions” (pg.

480). As such, an understanding of the union commitment construct lays the groundwork for understanding other factors that drive union participation.

Gordon et al.'s (1980) foundational work produced a measure that is employed in essentially every study using the union commitment construct (Tripti and Ginni, 2015). At the time of the Gordon (1980) study, researchers did not yet have a deep theoretical understanding of union commitment. In order to fill this gap, Gordon et al. (1980) developed a 48-item scale of union commitment with items covering subjects such as union attitudes, union affiliations and others. To test this measure Gordon et al. (1980) surveyed 1,377 union members from four white-collar union locals in the USA.

Gordon et al.'s (1980) factor analysis showed that union commitment loaded onto four factors: union loyalty, responsibility to the union, willingness to work for the union, and belief in unionism. The first factor, *union loyalty* consists of items that cover two aspects of union commitment: pride in being part of the union and an awareness of the benefits of unionism. The second factor, *responsibility to the union* measures members' "willingness to fulfill the day to day obligations of a member in order to protect the interests of the union" and the "acknowledgement and acceptance of the expectations regarding member support of, and reliance on, negotiated mechanisms for dealing with the union" (p. 485). The third factor, *willingness to work for the union* included items that tap into the member's willingness to go "above and beyond the call of duty" in order to help the union (Gordon et al., 1980). The fourth factor *belief in unionism* reflects the member's general ideological alignment with the concept of unionism over and above their feelings about their own specific organization. Their results indicated that the belief in unionism factor was the most predictive of union commitment among the four factors.

Fullagar et al. (2004) performed a longitudinal investigation over a ten-year period studying the impact of union commitment on union participation. Their study of 137 letter carriers in the USA found that union commitment was predictive of participation in union activities. Other studies have also demonstrated a predictive relationship between union commitment and union participation (Redman and Snape, 2004; Bamberger et al. 1999; Gallagher and Clark, 1989).

1.3.1.2 Union attitudes. Union attitudes is another foundational construct in the study of union participation (it predicts not only union participation, but also commitment (Gall and Fiorito, 2012b)) The union attitudes construct quantifies an individual's "overall perceptions about unions" and is one of the best predictors of union participation (Tripti and Ginni, 2015; 46). As such, those who score high in terms of pro-union attitudes are more likely to participate in union activities at a higher rate than those who do not. Throughout the literature (and this thesis) those whose attitudes favour unions are thought to possess "pro-union attitudes".

Brett (1980) performed early work on union attitudes. She interviewed over 1200 union members from fifteen different unions in a variety of industries in her attempt to find out why workers desire union representation. Brett (1980) developed and tested an 8-item scale measuring union attitudes that includes items such as "unions make sure that employees are treated fairly by supervisors", "unions help working men and women to get better wages and hours", "union dues are too high", and "when a strike is called, it is generally for a good reason". Using her union attitudes scale, Brett (1980) found that the presence of pro-union attitudes predicted a worker's intentions to vote in favour of union representation. Subsequently, other researchers (Gordon et al., 1980; Newton and Shore 1992; Redman and Snape 2004) have built upon the concept of union attitudes, developing and testing more complex constructs such as

union commitment. In all, Brett (1980) found that the combination of poor working conditions and pro-union attitudes was likely to lead to demand for union membership.

A variety of studies have found pro-union attitudes to predict union participation (Bamberger et al. 1999; Chan et al., 2006; Fullagar, 2004; Glick et al., 1977). For example, McShane (1986) studied 600 union members in a Canadian municipality finding that pro-union attitudes were predictive of union participation.

1.3.1.3 Union instrumentality. Union instrumentality “represents a calculative utilitarian relationship” (Newton and Shore, 1992; pg. 279) between a member and his or her union. If a union member believes that they can benefit from union membership through higher wages, increased job security, etc., then that member is thought to be high in union instrumentality. If a member believes that his or her wages will decrease, or job security will diminish because of union membership then they are assumed to be low in union instrumentality. A variety of empirical research links high levels of union instrumentality to participation in union activities (Tripti and Ginni, 2015).

Tetrick et al. (2007) developed and tested a model of union participation that included the union instrumentality variable. To measure union instrumentality, they employed Shore et al.’s (1994) 12-item scale, asking participants to rate the impact (high score denotes positive impact, low score denotes negative) they believe their union has on items such as pay, benefits, job security, promotions, health and safety, and job satisfaction, among others. Testing the model with a sample of 300 union members, they found that union instrumentality was predictive of member participation in union activities. Similarly, union instrumentality has been found to predict union participation in a number of other studies (Anderson, 1978; Chacko, 1985; Chan et al., 2006; Redman and Snape, 2004; Strauss, 1977; Shore et al., 1994).

1.3.1.4 Union support. Measures of union support quantify the extent to which union members perceive that the union values their input and involvement and cares about their needs (Shore et al., 1994). Shore et al. (1994) developed and tested a measure of union support that consisted of items such as “my local cares about my general satisfaction at work”, “my local would ignore any complaint from me”, “the local strongly considers my goals and values”, among others.

Empirical evidence indicates that members who believe they are supported by their union are more likely to participate than are those who do not feel supported by their union. Tetrick et al. (2007), for example, included the union support variable in the development of their model of union participation and reported that union support was predictive of union participation. Similarly, Anderson’s (1979) study of union participation included measures which are comparable in nature to those included in Tetrick et al. (2007) such as relationship with union and union support of participation, finding both measures to be predictive of union participation. Redman and Snape (2004) also found perceived support from the union to be predictive of participation.

1.3.1.5 Socialization. Socialization is “the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (Van Maanen and Schein, 1978; pg. 4). The socialization process helps individuals learn to understand and accept the organization’s values, beliefs, norms, and customs with continued exposure over time (Daft, 2013). Socialization can occur at many “levels” – family, organization, country, industry, etc. Of relevance to this thesis is research studying how the socialization process plays out within the union environment. The idea that individuals who have been positively socialized to the benefits of unionism perceive unions more favourably than those who have not, has been promoted and

tested by many researchers (Bryson et al., 2005; Gomez and Gunderson 2004; Gomez et al., 2002; EFILWC, 2010; Parks et al., 1995). This is important as pro-union attitudes positively predict union participation (Tripti and Ginni, 2015).

Gomez et. al (2002) applies the experienced good theory to explain this relationship. They argue that unions are an experienced good, meaning that because their benefits are abstract, individuals must either experience the benefits of unionism first hand, or be otherwise convinced of their benefits before the benefits can be truly appreciated (Gomez et al, 2004). They posit that individuals are essentially a black box in need of information, while the benefits of unionism are somewhat abstract. Putting these two ideas together they argue that the benefits of unionism are more likely to be understood if they are felt on a first-hand basis, or if people are socialized to them through other sources of information such as family members, the media, or social norms. This type of socialization on the societal level is important to our study because as established earlier, recent cultural, political, and macroeconomic shifts have led to an environment that is more inhospitable to unions now than in the past. Bryson et al. (2005) and Gomez et al. (2002) believe that this unfriendly environment may have prevented the socialization of younger individuals to the benefits of unionism by creating structural barriers that make it more difficult for the labour movement to create awareness about the benefits of union representation through either first-hand experience as a union member, or through other channels such as the mass media and public opinion. Socialization at the societal level is of importance to our study because it is the theoretical impetus for our study of the relationship between generational cohort and attitudes towards unions.

Parks et al. (1995) provided some evidence of the impact of socialization at the organizational level on participation through their study of 305 union members. Using surveys,

the authors studied the impact of socialization through official union communications and through informal interactions with co-workers. They found that the informal socialization that occurred through casual conversations with fellow members had a larger positive impact on participation than did socialization through formal union communications. Rivers and Truitt (2014), on the other hand, concluded that their union steward interviewees believed that poor formal union communication was hindering the union's renewal attempt. Their interviewees indicated that poor communication from the union reduced members' involvement in their union. They argued that the role of union communication in the renewal process needs more empirical study (Rivers and Truitt, 2014).

1.3.2 Union Participation as a Multidimensional construct. In early studies of union participation, researchers such as Schmidt and Kaplan (1971) and Cascio (1982) conceptualized the union participation construct as one-dimensional and used a single-item scale to operationalize the construct. They did this by simply aggregating yes/no responses to a wide array of union activities they believed to typify union participation to create an omnibus measure (McShane, 1986). In other words, they counted the number of discrete union activities, tasks, or roles in which their informants participated. The higher the number, the higher the assumed participation.

Over time, a number of methodological and theoretical shortcomings associated with the unidimensional conceptualization of the union participation construct were identified by researchers who demanded a more nuanced understanding of the construct. McShane (1986), for example, argued that participation scores from a unidimensional measure are too ambiguous to be reliable and that findings obtained using such a measure are likely to be inaccurate. A second problem with unidimensional scores identified by McShane (1986) is that they are harder to

compare across studies. Item lists and weightings often vary from one study's aggregate score to the next depending on which activities are included and how each is valued, which makes it difficult to compare studies. Similarly, there is little uniformity in terms of units of analysis in these types of measures, and as such activities such as discussing union issues often have the same impact on the aggregate participation score as does running for elected office. This also negatively impacts the quality of findings (McShane, 1986).

In a related vein, Strauss (1977) argues that the unidimensional conceptualization of union participation limits our understanding of the construct because drivers of participation are likely to vary from one union activity to the next. McShane (1986) later made a similar point when he observed that because union activities are so varied they likely involve "sufficiently distinct factorial and causal structures" (pg. 177). Studies by Portwood (1981) and Nicholson et al. (1981) provide evidence supporting the idea that participation in different union activities is influenced by different factors. For example, Portwood (1981) found that participants' voting behaviours were linked to the presence of instrumental needs (i.e. union serves their needs), whereas meeting attendance was linked to the need for expression. He concluded that because these drivers of participation were so different, they should be studied independently. Similarly, Nicholson et al. (1981) found that pro-union ideology was predictive of a union member's attendance of union rallies, but not predictive of voting in union elections.

By the mid-1980s researchers such as McShane (1986) and later Cohen (1993) and Parks et al. (1995) had begun to develop and test multidimensional measures of union participation. Parks et al. (1995) compartmentalized union participation into three factors including administrative (typical recurring office-based duties), intermittent (activities that occurred only occasionally), and ongoing (activities constantly required in order to serve members), based

largely on how often participation in each respective activity was expected. McShane (1986) developed a measure that produced three factors: administrative participation, meeting attendance, and voting participation that were related more directly to the function of the activity rather than on the demands on union members in terms of effort imposed on union members who participate in such activities.

Whether based on theory or through the factor analysis of empirical data, a growing body of researchers has suggested categorizing union activities and studying union participation based on the level of involvement required on the part of the member (McShane, 1986; Gall and Fiorito, 2012; Fiorito and Gall, 2010; Kelloway and Barling, 1993; Kuruvilla and Fiorito, 1994). According to Gall and Fiorito (2012b), active and passive participation can be differentiated based on quantitative factors such as how frequently the member participates in a given activity, as well as qualitative factors such as the amount of responsibility the member takes on, the amount of self-drive and self-direction required, along with the presence of other leadership behaviours.

Nicholson (1978) first proposed a continuum of union participation ranging from “passive participation” at the low end, to “involvement” at the high end. He did not, however, develop a measure to operationalize his conceptualization. Since then, others have suggested such a compartmentalization, though the terminology has varied from one study to the next. For example, Gall and Fiorito (2012a, 2012b) argue that researchers focus on the more highly involved end of the spectrum, which they refer to as “activism”. Regardless of the espoused terminology, there is a growing sentiment that participation should be categorized along some type of active/passive dichotomy. Despite these efforts, Tripti and Ginni (2015) argue that there is still yet to be developed a widely-accepted measure of union participation.

For the purposes of this research, we use the following nomenclature for our conceptualization of the participation construct. Passive participation is the label we use to refer to activities at the least-involved end of the continuum (based on Gall and Fiorito's quantitative and qualitative criteria described above). Some union activities that would be classified as passive participation include attending meetings and information sessions, reading the union newsletter, and discussing union issues with other union members (Gall and Fiorito, 2012b). Active participation is the term we will use to refer to activities at the most-involved end of the spectrum. Active participation includes activities such as running for elected union office positions, serving on union committees, acting as a union steward/representative, or actively pursuing grievances against the employer (Gall and Fiorito, 2012).

Our decision to use an active/passive conceptualization of participation in this thesis has both academic and practical ramifications. Academically speaking, this decision aligns with researchers who recommend compartmentalizing the construct. This argument is based on the premise that because some activities require more effort than others, there are probably different factors that motivate the various forms of participation, and that these need to be studied separately in order to fully understand what drives participation (Kelloway and Barling, 1993; Gall and Fiorito, 2012b; Portwood, 1981). Practically speaking, the decision to differentiate between active and passive participation allows us to determine if they have different predictors (Gall and Fiorito 2012; Shore and Newton, 1995).

Researchers argue that active participation is of more importance to the union renewal process than is passive participation. For example, Gall and Fiorito (2012b) contend that active participation of involved and engaged workers is required for the successful operation of unions from their inception through to their daily operations. Additionally, workers are needed to

volunteer and champion the cause of unionization as hopeful union locals hold certification elections in order to gain entry to new workplaces (Bronfenbrenner, 2003, 2004). Certification drives in which workers take a big role have been found to be more successful than those that depend purely on union representatives (Bronfenbrenner, 2003, 2004; Hickey, Kuruvilla and Lakhani, 2010). Active participation is also very important to established unions, as members are often required to form committees, pursue grievances against management, to mobilize members, and to take on local leadership roles (Fiorito and Gall, 2010). Lastly, Kuruvilla and Fiorito (1994) point out that active participation is more directly linked to goal-attainment within the union than is passive participation.

While active participation is considered to have more direct implications on union renewal, some argue that positive outcomes related to more passive forms of participation should not be overlooked (Shore and Newton, 1995). For example, Fairbrother (2000) draws a link between the successful dissemination of information throughout the union and increased chances of union renewal. This plays into the important role of informal conversations between union members and socialization that was made evident by the findings of Parks et al. (1995).

1.3.3 Gaps in our understanding of the union participation construct and implications for this thesis. Over the past 20 years, union researchers have shifted from a focus on the union commitment construct to a focus on union participation. Gall and Fiorito (2012a, 2012b) believe that this is a vital paradigm shift in the union research, with particularly important practical and academic implications for union renewal. They give two reasons for this belief. First, the fact that union participation is a more tangible outcome than is commitment makes it an easier construct to measure. Second, participation has a more direct impact on union renewal itself than does commitment.

To this point, much of the union participation research has focused on the various antecedents that lead to participation, which is evident in both Gall and Fiorito's (2012a, 2012b) and Tripti and Ginni's (2015) reviews of the participation literature. Studies have, for example, shown that the union commitment construct, the union instrumentality construct, perceptions of union support, and transformational leadership all have some impact on union participation. Because individual, organizational, and societal factors have all been found to impact participation in union activities, Gall and Fiorito's (2012b) recommend that researchers seek a holistic understanding of the construct and consider the possibility of effects at all three levels. Others (Murray, 2017; Fairbrother, 2015) have more recently indicated a need for a holistic analysis of union revitalization. We follow this advice in this thesis.

Despite advances in our understanding of the union participation phenomenon, several significant gaps remain (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a, 2012b; Rivers and Truitt, 2014; Redman and Snape 2001). The first gap relates to what Gall and Fiorito (2012a) refer to as "the problematic conceptualization of union participation". Here the authors argue for more detail in the description and study of union participation, advocating that passive activities such as chatting with coworkers about union issues, attending union meetings, and reading union newsletters be analyzed separately from more "active" activities such as volunteering for committees, pursuing grievances, and running for leadership positions (Gall and Fiorito, 2012b). Similarly, Fiorito, Padavic, Deorentiis (2015) have pointed out inconsistencies in the reporting of union activism. For example, they demonstrate that some studies, such as Davis and Smith (1993) and Hart Research Associates (2003) report activism at upwards of 50%, while others such as Nissen (1998), are much lower, at about 2%. These discrepancies, they argue, stem from different understandings of the term "activism", indicating a need to re-assess what we understand as

being active in the union. By comparing emic and etic conceptualizations of union participation, Paper 2 helps us fill this gap.

Another shortcoming identified by Gall and Fiorito (2012a, 2012b), arises at the organizational (aka union) level and relates to the way researchers conceptualize unions. The authors argue that because unions are generally treated as “abstracted and unspecified entities” (pg. 722) there is a lack of focus within the literature on factors specific to individual union processes that might impact participation (and therefore renewal). In a related vein, Rivers and Truitt (2014) note the lack of research on union communication processes on union renewal. By studying union communication in Study 3, we can find out more about how unions themselves can impact participation among their own members.

Gaps also remain with respect to the influence of factors at the societal level on union participation. While Tripti and Ginni (2015) include demographic factors in their recap of predictors of union participation they note that thus far results in this area have been uncertain, and that more investigation is needed. Recent work by Cates (2014) specifically identified a lack of current empirical research into the impact of generational cohort on unions as problematic, as did others such as Hodder (2014) and Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015). Getting a better understanding of how generational cohort impacts union participation is a key objective of this thesis. To this end, we provide an overview of generational cohort literature and its implications for this thesis in the next section of this chapter.

1.4 Generational Cohort

The term generation (also referred to as cohort, or generational cohort) describes “a group of individuals born within the same historical and socio-cultural context, who experience the

same formative experiences and develop unifying commonalities as a result” (Lyons and Kuron, 2014, pg. 140). Researchers have compared generational cohorts looking for potential differences in a variety of variables including personality traits (Twenge, 2006), work-values and preferences (Parry and Urwin, 2011), and career paths (Dries et al., 2008). This body of research has determined that some constructs demonstrate more evidence of generational differences than others (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Through this thesis research, we aim to explore the extent to which generational cohort impacts attitudes towards unions, perceptions of union participation, union participation, and communication preferences of union members.

The goal of this section is to answer the following four questions: 1) What perspective do we take in our understanding of generation? 2) Why might generational cohort impact the issues we are exploring in this thesis? 3) Which gaps does the inclusion of generational cohort theory in our research into union participation address? 4) What implications does the inclusion of generational cohort in this thesis have for academic research in the area and for unions themselves? To answer these questions, we present the relevant conceptual and empirical evidence found within the generational cohort literature. In order to explain our perspective on the generational cohort concept, this section will begin with a theoretical explanation of how generational cohorts (and differences) are formed, which will be followed by a description of the three most prominent generational cohorts involved in today’s workforce (Boomers, Gen X, Millennials). From here, we present a selection of empirical work related to differences between the three current cohorts to explain how generational cohort may impact union participation and related constructs. This is followed by a theoretical explanation of the importance of generational cohort to the union renewal and participation literatures. We then provide a discussion of the generational cohort literature’s shortcomings and how this thesis can help to bridge theoretical

and empirical gaps. Finally, we provide an explanation of the academic and practical outcomes of this research.

1.4.1 The conceptualization of generational cohort in this thesis. Over time, the generations concept has taken on a multitude of conceptualizations (Burnett, 2010). This section will explain the understanding of generational cohort that we employ throughout this thesis research. To do this, we will first discuss our philosophical approach to understanding and measuring generational cohort. We will then describe the demographic and sociological boundaries that we believe differentiate the three cohorts which are currently most prominent within the labour force.

1.4.1.1 Generational cohort: Theoretical background. Mannheim's (1952) theorizing on societal change produced the foundation for our understanding of the concept of generational cohort and generational difference. Mannheim (1952) proposed that people born in the same time period and with proximate cultural and geographical contexts are similarly influenced by shared events and experiences. These shared foundational experiences lead cohorts of individuals to develop similar world-views, which then ultimately influence the way they interpret and interact with the world around them. Lyons and Kuron (2014) explain this phenomenon, stating that "each generation's location in history limits its members to a specific range of opportunities and experiences, provides them with "collective memories" that serve as a basis for future attitudes and behaviors, predisposes them to a certain "habitus", a mode of thought and action, and restricts their range of self-expression to certain pre-defined possibilities throughout their lives" (pg. 140).

Over time, two schools of thought have emerged with respect to the study of generational cohorts. Lyons and Kuron's (2014) review of the generational cohort literature features a

succinct discussion of the two perspectives whose polarities have long been present throughout the field's history. The social perspective, which has evolved out of Mannheim's (1952) work, is interpretivist/qualitative in nature, and conceptualizes generations as malleable social groups that emerge from within the "flow of history" (Lyons and Kuron, 2014, pg. 140). The cohort perspective, popularized by Ryder (1965) is positivist/quantitative in nature, and "views generations simply as a collective of people born in a given time period" (Lyons and Kuron, 2014, pg. 140).

From the social perspective, the emergence of each new generation is triggered by wide-scale societal shifts that change the way people work, live and think, ultimately altering our values and beliefs, and the way society is organized (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). From the social perspective, generational identity is not necessarily shared by everyone within its boundaries and is even possibly felt by those outside the given boundaries. The social understanding of generations is not concerned so much with the micro-level behaviours and attitudes that come about as a result of generational difference, but rather with the macro-level cultural shifts that each new generation brings forth (Lyons and Kuron, 2014; Ryder, 1965).

The cohort perspective, on the other hand, is employed largely by demographers to study changes in society over time (Pilcher, 1994). Ryder (1965) argued that societal change is influenced largely by the society's demographic reality. For example, cohorts with higher birth rates would grow up with more crowded schools and job markets than would cohorts with lower birth rates, which would create a different experience for each cohort (Pilcher, 1994). From the cohort perspective, generational identity is considered to be a homogeneously recognized psychic construct that is shared among those born within the given boundary years (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Because of this, those studying cohorts are often very concerned with

differentiating the effects of birth cohort, age (life cycle) and historical context (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Generational cohort research in the organizational context has almost exclusively taken on the cohort perspective (Foster, 2013; Lyons and Kuron, 2014).

Our philosophical understanding of and approach to studying generational cohort is mindful of the various existing conceptualizations of this phenomenon and as Glenn (2005) suggests, attempts to bring together various approaches. More specifically, Mannheim's (1952) social, qualitative, generational theory provides our philosophical underpinning of the construct, while we take a more demographic, positivist approach to categorizing cohorts. This approach allows us to incorporate the idea of social change and context while also providing us with discrete cohort groups through which we can analyze results.

1.4.1.2 Conceptualization of current cohorts: Boomers, Generation X, Millennials. In this thesis, we compare the attitudes of individuals representing the three generational cohorts that are prominent in the workforce and the contemporary generational cohort literature: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. The Baby Boomer (aka Boomer) cohort includes anyone born between the end of the Second World War (1946) and 1964 (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, 2000; Smith and Clurman, 1997; Lyons, 2003). The spike in birth rates across North America that followed WW2 was the demographic shift that defined the boundaries of the Boomer cohort. Generation X (aka Gen-X) came about in the wake of the baby boom. People born between 1965 and 1979 are generally considered to be Gen X-ers (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Zemke et al., 2000; Smith and Clurman, 1997; Lyons, 2003). Demographically, Generation X represents the lull in birthrates that followed the baby boom and continued until the Baby Boomers started to have children of their own (Lyons, 2003). Millennials are those born between 1980 and 2000 (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Zemke,

Raines, et al., 2000; Smith and Clurman, 1997, Lyons, 2003). Demographically, the Millennial cohort is defined by the elevated birthrates stemming from the Boomer generation's transition to parenthood (Lyons, 2003). Despite a general agreement on the basic traits and causes of each cohort, there is some variation within the literature when it comes to exactly in which year each cohort begins and ends. To maintain consistency with contemporary generational research, we will use the same boundaries as Lyons and Kuron (2014), leaders in the field of generational study.

Lyons and Kuron (2014) reviewed the body of empirical evidence within the generational difference literature, focusing on areas of research such as personality traits, work-values, work attitudes, career paths, work/life balance expectations, among others. Based on the evidence they reviewed, they concluded that some significant differences do appear when comparing Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials.

For example, the study of differences in personality traits across generations has been an area of focus within the literature, and an area in which differences have been identified (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Generally, younger generations have been found to be more individualistic in nature than their predecessors. The shifts in personality traits from one generation to the next that have been empirically identified reflect the pattern of individualization identified by theorists such as Giddens (1984) and Blok (1998). Twenge (2006) proposed the “generation me” archetype that portrays those born after 1980 as more neurotic and narcissistic than earlier generations, but also more extroverted, confident and possessed of higher expectations.

Studies of work attitudes and work values found that compared to their older colleagues, younger generations are driven to a greater extent by external rewards and place less importance on work relative to other aspects of their life (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Desire for leisure is on

the rise, while work ethic has decreased; competitiveness has increased and teamwork has decreased, which has led to an increase in individualism (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). The apparent shift towards individualism and away from a more collectively minded society could have implications for the union movement and union renewal as they are both based on the idea of the collective.

1.4.2 Generational cohort and unions. The extent to which the generational differences and union renewal and/or participation literatures have intersected is minimal, and as such there is great opportunity to expand our understanding of the relationship between generational cohort and constructs related to unions (Cates, 2014). Over the course of this section, we explain theoretical and contextual (i.e., demographic) reasons for exploring generational cohort within the union context.

Although the union renewal and participation literatures are currently lacking in work that looks specifically at generational cohort, some researchers (Schmitt and Warner, 2009; Gomez et al., 2002; Bryson et al., 2005) have studied trends in union membership and activity that are related to demographics and social change, two concepts at the heart of generational theory.

For example, Schmitt and Warner (2009) produced a policy paper on the changing face of the US labour force that featured demographic data from 1980-2008. The authors indicated that on average, unions are getting older. In 1983, the average union worker was 41 years old, while in 2008, the average union member was 48 years of age. Proportionally, older workers made up a greater part of the union movement in 2008 than in 1983, as the percentage of union members over the age of 45 grew from about 35% to about 50% over that period, while the percentage of union members under 35 years of age shrunk from about 40% to about 25% over the same time span (Schmitt and Warner, 2009). With an average age of 48 years old, the US

union movement is moving towards retirement age, which means that younger members will have to replace those who are soon to retire if the union movement is to remain viable.

At the same time, the work of Bryson et al. (2005) and Gomez et al. (2002) suggests that attracting younger people to the union movement may be difficult. More specifically, the authors identify a number of macro-level changes in the union environment that may be preventing younger workers from becoming union members and reducing the likelihood that young workers are socialized to the benefits of unionism. They argue that younger workers (i.e., the Millennial generation) are harder to unionize because they often work in newer industries that have not yet been unionized or they are in temporary or contract positions, the nature of which typically prevents unionization. At the same time, they point out that neoliberal ideology and politics that have become popular in western economies inhibit the spread of union ideology and the socialization of young workers to the union cause. This phenomenon has also been identified within the union renewal literature as problematic for the labour movement (EFILWC, 2010; Clawson and Clawson, 1999).

Socialization is important because as Gomez, Gunderson and Meltz (2002) argue, young workers “start off essentially as ‘black boxes’ with no well-defined self-concept concerning unionization” (pg. 525). The environment in which people are introduced to the concept of unionism, they argue, will therefore impact the individual’s perception of unions and the union ideology. Political and social norms regarding unionism, the opinions of family members and friends, as well as early experiences with employers and unions are all factors (among a plurality of others) that could influence a young worker’s socialization, and resultant attitudes toward unions.

While some research focuses on the impact of macro-level social issues on generational differences in the union environment, other research explores how unions have had a negative impact on younger workers' integration to the union movement. For example, Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) found that young workers felt ignored by current union structures and processes. Their participants highlighted several factors that they felt impacted young workers' union participation including a lack of input into union operations, the creation of in/out groups that exclude young workers, and a lack of social network contacts that could bring them in to the union's inner-circle of active members.

Cates' (2014) preliminary exploration of generational cohort and unionization reflects the trends identified within the work of Schmidt (2009) and Gomez et al. (2002), presented above. Prompted by their finding that Millennials make up only 4% of the American union membership, Cates (2014) studies over 11 thousand union members represented by six open-shop unions. To reiterate: those represented by open shop unions have the choice to become due-paying members or to opt out of union membership. Those members who opt out of paying union dues nevertheless receive the same benefits and protections as those who choose to pay dues. The goal of Cates' (2014) investigation was to find out whether there was a difference between the rates at which Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials "opt out" of the union. His analysis demonstrated that "opt-out" rates were negatively related to age of cohort, as Boomers opted out of union membership at the lowest rate of the three groups (36%), followed by members of the Gen X cohort (41%), then the Millennial Cohort (55%). Cates (2014) argues that it is possible that social changes that have resulted in a less union-friendly environment have led to this reluctance in embracing unionization amongst younger members, but that more study of generational

cohort's relationship to unions and unionism is needed to enhance the body of empirical evidence.

1.4.3 Gaps in cohort literature and implications for this thesis. In addition to expanding on what has been identified as a limited body of empirical study of generational cohort in the union context (Cates, 2014), this thesis research has the opportunity to address a number of gaps identified within the generational cohort literature overall. Lyons and Kuron (2014), (the former of whom is among the generational cohort field's most prolific contemporary researchers) address several shortcomings within the generational cohort literature that our research can help to address.

First, the authors argue that the social perspective should play a larger role in generational study. Because it frames "age, period and cohort effects as complementary, rather than opposing influences, and generations as multi-dimensional rather than monolithic, the social forces perspective offers a more nuanced conceptualization of the phenomenon. It also places the focus on the dynamic interaction of new and old ideas that facilitate change in organizations" (pg. 141). They argue that a more qualitative understanding of the generational difference phenomenon is needed, and that generations are not homogeneous entities, but feature some variation between the traits, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals within each cohort. They also conclude that more emphasis should be placed on the context in which the studies take place, as each country has a specific history and therefore generational profile and therefore findings within the literature should be compared with context in mind. They note that such comparisons are not always the case in the literature (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Ignoring context, they argue, is ignoring a fundamental tenet of Mannheim's (1952) theory. Our study was designed with the above criticisms in mind, as we limit our study to one clearly defined social

context: the union movement in the U.S. Using semi-structured interviews that are designed to allow our participants to express their perceptions and describe the experiences out of which their perceptions have grown also allows us to keep our analysis grounded within the context of our participants' own experiences. While we do employ more positivist-oriented methods to explore themes with a larger survey sample, these themes were originally identified in our participant-driven qualitative studies.

1.5 Implications of Literature Review for Thesis

The above literature review was designed to showcase the predominant theories and phenomena that provide context and impetus for this thesis while also identifying gaps within the relevant literatures that our research could help to address. In total, we have identified four such gaps within the union renewal, union participation, and generational cohort literatures that have motivated the design of this thesis.

The first gap stems from the seemingly independent development of two streams of union research – union renewal and union participation – that each aspire to spur on the revitalization of the union movement. Though not the first to make the argument, Gall and Fiorito (2012a) propose that the union renewal and union participation literatures and research agendas be synthesized in order to take advantage of their complementary research perspectives and established bodies of knowledge. This has been suggested in the past (Barling et al., 1990) and some attempts have been made (Snape et al., 2000), but nevertheless there is still room for a fuller synthesis (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a; Murray, 2017; Fairbrother, 2015).

Gall and Fiorito (2012a) indicate that the reason the two literatures are so complementary is that the union renewal body is largely focused on macro-level trends that impact the labour

movement as a whole, whereas the union participation theory is largely focused on individual-level behaviours and attitudes related to unions, providing a micro-level of analysis that they argue is lacking within the union renewal literature. They argue that the union participation literature and its focus on attitudes and behaviours can fill in some of the union renewal literature's shortcomings. In particular, they perceive that the union renewal literature assumes that union participation is a direct byproduct of the union's mobilization efforts, thus placing research focus on the organizational (union) level while ignoring the role of the individual in union involvement. In other words, the union renewal research places too much focus on what the union does to generate participation amongst members while under-emphasizing the union member's cognitive processes that lead them to be active in their union. As such, they believe that our understanding of union participation and renewal will benefit from bringing together the renewal and participation literatures and their complementary areas of focus. Our research will address this gap by studying the impact of societal (i.e., generational cohort) and organizational (i.e., union communication) factors on areas of study related to union participation. This synthesis could provide a more holistic view of the participation and renewal problem for both researchers and unions.

The second gap comes out of the union participation literature. Gall and Fiorito (2012b) argue that although more researchers are studying union participation than in the past, there are still problems with respect to how the construct is defined and measured. More specifically, they argue that more specificity with respect to types of participation is needed. Their belief is that participation should be designated as active or passive, and that more research be done in order to more fully understand the antecedents and processes that lead to each type of participation. They also recommend that research pay particular attention to active participation, as they deem

it to be more important to union renewal than passive participation. The treatment of union participation as a multidimensional construct consisting of active and passive factors (or some variant of this concept) is found throughout the union participation literature (Redman and Snape, 2004; Cohen, 1993; Tripti and Singh, 2015). This thesis uses both emic and etic lenses to explore participation and related ideas. In doing so, we hope to learn more about what drives active and passive participation respectively. Such information could provide unions with information that would allow them to target their mobilizing tactics for each type of participation, which could lead to increased participation and ultimately renewal.

The third gap we seek to address comes from the generational cohort literature. While empirical studies of demographic/sociological trends and the union context exist (Gomez et al., 2002; Bryson et al., 2005), there is currently a lack of empirical research studying generational differences in unions (Cates, 2014). Each of the three papers featured in this thesis examines the similarities and differences between each generation with respect to a number of factors including union attitudes, perceptions of unions, and perceptions of union participation, thus helping to address the gap identified by Cates (2014). Relatedly, in their critique of the literature, Lyons and Kuron (2014) argue that generational difference research should be examined across a wider variety of contexts. The studies contained within this thesis will help to fill this gap, broadening the scope of the generational literature as well as the union literature, the two of which have had little overlap to this point. Our study of how the generational cohort manifests itself within the union context could also have practical implications for unions, as it may point out another way to segment union members into specific groups. As suggested by Gall and Fiorito (2012b) this could help unions address the specific needs of each group in the most

appropriate manner. If generational cohorts do each have different perceptions and expectations of unions, there could be some value for unions in approaching each in a different manner.

The fourth gap also comes from the generational cohort literature. In their review of the current body of generational cohort research, Lyons and Kuron (2014) argue that the body of literature is in need of a shift of perspectives - that a more social interactive view of generations is needed in order to complement the more quantitative, positivist research that has made up a bulk of the research in the area. A renewed focus, they believe, would ultimately bring the research back to the social roots of Mannheim's (1952) theory. Our participant-driven qualitative studies use semi-structured interviews to ground our research in the experiences and perceptions of our participants. By building each of our follow-up quantitative instruments from the themes identified in our initial qualitative, participant-driven studies, even our more positivist, quantitative studies can maintain a link to the context of our participants, as Lyons and Kuron (2014) suggest.

Chapter 2: Methods

The aim of this chapter is to explain our philosophical and methodological approach to performing this research. Such an explanation is important given Singleton's and Straits's (2005) assertion that the researcher's methodological approach has an impact on just about all stages of the research process. Table 2-1 provides an overview of the material covered in this chapter including the research problem, research goals (objectives of each of our three papers), our philosophical and methodological approaches, and the data and analysis techniques used in each paper.

This chapter contains five sections and will unfold as follows. Section 2.1 is a discussion of this thesis's research philosophy, featuring a discussion of the two prominent research paradigms, as well as a description of the pragmatic approach, a third paradigm which we adopt in this thesis. From there, Section 2.2 explains the overarching methodological approach to this thesis research, beginning with the mixed methods approach, then moving on to the case study design. Section 2.3 introduces Natunion, the case organization, while providing an explanation of why this organization is appropriate for our purposes. Section 2.4 includes a description of the data collection procedures and instruments, while Section 2.5 will explain the qualitative and quantitative analysis methods that we use throughout this research.

Table 2-1: Methods Section Roadmap

Research Goals	The overarching goal of this research is to better understand what unions can do to increase the active participation of their members in union activities, regardless of which generation they belong to.
Research Papers	<p>Paper 1 investigates the relationship between generational cohort and individual perceptions of unions</p> <p>Paper 2 aims to increase our understanding of the union participation construct by examining: (1) How do union members classify their own level of union participation? (2) What is the relationship between how union members classify their levels of union participation (i.e. the emic view) and how researchers conceptualize this construct (i.e. the etic view)? (3) What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities (an objective measure of union participation) and members' subjective perceptions of union participation? and (4) How does generational cohort affect each of these issues?</p> <p>Paper 3 studies union communication processes, examining: (1) How the union communicates information to its members; (2) Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications; (3) The types of changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members, and (4) How generational cohort impacts each of these issues.</p>
Research Paradigm	Pragmatism
Methodological Approach	<p>Mixed-methods employing both an emic and etic approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews, Surveys, Organizational documents
Data	<p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview 1 (n = 100) Interview 2 (n = 75) <p>Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey 1 (n = 4400) Survey 2 (n = 715)
Type of Analysis	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charmaz (2006) <p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T-Test ANOVA MANOVA Ordered Logistic Regression Pearson's Chi-Square Gap analysis

2.1 Guiding Research Paradigm

This section has three goals: 1) to discuss the research paradigm that guides this thesis, 2) to articulate how this paradigm differs from other prominent research paradigms, and 3) to explain why we have chosen to use this philosophical approach in our research. Before we do this however, we first need to explain what a research paradigm is, and the components on which paradigms are built.

A research paradigm is defined as “the set of common beliefs and agreements... about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1962, pg. 23). More specifically, paradigms provide direction to researchers when it comes to “what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted” (Bryman and Bell, 2007, pg. 730). Each paradigm is made up of an epistemology, an ontology, and a methodology.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain the three elements of paradigm. First, ontology relates to how “being” is understood, how things are and how things work. Secondly, epistemology relates to the foundations of knowledge and understanding, and to the relationship between the knower and the known. Lastly, methodology relates to the tools used to develop knowledge of reality.

The positivist and interpretivist paradigms are the most widely used within the realm of social science (Morgan, 2007). Traditionally, the positivist paradigm, with roots in the hard sciences, and a focus on the objective nature of knowledge, prevailed. As time passed, the interpretivist paradigm, with its focus on the social nature of knowledge, began to grow in popularity (Morgan, 2007). These two approaches can be thought of as two ends of a philosophical continuum. Somewhere in between the two poles of the continuum, balancing the

objective and socially constructed views of reality, exists the pragmatic paradigm (Johnson, 2004).

Before explaining the pragmatic paradigm that will guide our research, positivism and interpretivism will first be compared. A discussion of the pragmatic paradigm and its usefulness for our purposes relative to the two traditional paradigms will follow.

2.1.1 The positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Lincoln and Guba (2011) discuss and compare key elements of the most prominent research paradigms. Table 2-2 (below) is an adaptation of the table featured within the Lincoln and Guba (2011) discussion, which includes information describing foundational elements of the positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Key features that differentiate the positivist and interpretivist paradigms will be discussed in further detail following Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Important features of the positivist and constructivist epistemologies (adapted from Lincoln et al., 2011)

Item	Positivism	Interpretivism
Ontology	Naïve realism	Relativism
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist	Transactional/subjectivist
Methodology	Verification of hypotheses, typically employs quantitative methods	Hermeneutical/dialectical, typically employs qualitative methods
Inquiry aim	Explanation: prediction and control	Understanding; reconstruction
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypothesis established as facts or laws	Individual reconstruction coalescing around consensus
Goodness or quality criteria	Rigor, external validity, reliability, objectivity	Trustworthiness, authenticity
Values	Excluded – influence denied	Included – formative
Voice	“disinterested scientist” as informer of decision makers	“passionate participant” as facilitator of multi-voice reconstruction
Research Product	Nomothetic theory and testable propositions	Process models and novel concepts

The positivist and interpretivist paradigms differ on philosophical and practical levels. To start, each has a different understanding of what constitutes “knowledge” or “reality”. Whereas

positivists view knowledge as a received good produced outside of the individual, interpretivists view knowledge as a socially created good (Lincoln and Guba, 2011). The positivist paradigm “assumes that reality is objectively given” (Myers, 2009, pg. 260), while the interpretivist paradigm assumes that multiple realities exist, and that each understanding of reality is dependent upon individual experiences and interpretations (Guba, 1990).

Lincoln and Guba (2011) explain that the metaphysical aspects of a chosen paradigm, as described above, can have practical implications for the researcher and the research process, impacting such areas as the aim of inquiry, the way knowledge is acquired, and the role of the researcher within the process. For example, they articulate that the aim of positivist research is generally explanatory in nature, focused on the prediction and control of a given phenomenon. Interpretivist research, on the other hand typically aspires to understand and interpret a phenomenon through the co-creation of knowledge between researchers and participants.

The choice of paradigm also has implications for a study’s methodological approach. For example, positivist research is typically hypothesis-driven, using experiments or surveys to collect data (Lincoln and Guba, 2011). Interpretivist studies on the other hand, are hermeneutic in nature (Lincoln and Guba, 2011) and are reliant on semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as observation and textual analysis (Ansel, 2000).

Another differentiating factor between paradigms highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (2011) is that of researcher voice. Within the positivist paradigm, they argue, researchers are supposed to take on the voice of the disinterested scientist whose role it is simply to provide explanation to decision makers who might be interested in the study’s findings. Conversely, they write, within the interpretivist paradigm the researcher acts as a “passionate participant” who facilitates the construction of knowledge. As can be seen throughout the table, the positivist and

interpretivist paradigms present a number of dualities. However, over time a variety of researchers have indicated that such concrete dualities are not always realistic, that there is a need for a more flexible paradigm (Johnson, 2004; Farjoun, 2015). The pragmatic paradigm, to many, fills such a need (Johnson, 2004; Farjoun, 2015).

2.1.2 The Pragmatist paradigm. The pragmatic paradigm emerged as a middle ground between philosophical dogmatisms, rejecting the traditional dualisms (such as objectivism vs. subjectivism) typically found in research (Johnson, 2004). Pragmatism, on the other hand accepts that there exist both single (as in positivism) and multiple (as in interpretivism) realities (Felizer, 2009). Farjoun (2015) argues that pragmatism has recently regained focus across a variety of fields such as organizational studies, cognitive science, strategic management, and economics, among others (Ansell, 2011; Cohen, 2007; Evans, 2010; Winter, 2013).

Morgan (2007) presents a number of new research opportunities he believes that are made possible by the pragmatic approach. Table 2-3, originally featured in Morgan (2007, pg. 71), contains a comparison of the three paradigms across three “choices”: connection of theory and data, relationship to research process, and inference from data.

Table 2-3: A Pragmatic Alternative to the Key Issues in Social Science Research Methodology (From Morgan, 2007; p. 71)

	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach	Pragmatic Approach
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Relationship to research process	Subjectivity	Objective	Intersubjectivity
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

The first row of Morgan’s (2007) table contrasts induction and deduction, typically associated with qualitative and quantitative research, respectively, with the pragmatic approach’s abduction. Abductive reasoning, he explains, consists of moving back and forth between

induction and deduction – beginning by building theories out of observations, followed by the testing of those observations on a wider sample. He argues that it is naïve to believe that movement between theory and data is as unidirectional as the traditional polarized thinking with respect to induction/deduction might suggest, and notes that abduction is more realistic and useful to researchers studying complex phenomena. Abduction seeks to answer the question of what would happen if qualitative researchers paid more attention to the opportunities for qualitative research produced through the work of quantitative researchers, and vice versa (Morgan, 2007).

The second row of Morgan's (2007) table shows how the subjective/objective dichotomy is not necessarily representative of the true nature of the relationship between researcher and process, introducing the notion of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity, he explains, means that the notion of an objective "real world" and that of the existence of unique subjective interpretations of that world are not mutually exclusive (Morgan, 2007). Once again, the argument is that both extremes of the dichotomy are unrealistic, with the pragmatic approach offering a middle-ground that is more representative of reality than is either of the polar views.

The third dualism featured in the table is between qualitative research's specific and context dependent knowledge, and quantitative research's general knowledge (Morgan, 2007). The pragmatic approach again posits that neither absolute is realistic. As such, the third row focuses on the question of to what degree can the findings of one method in a certain setting be applied to another, and what's the most appropriate way in which to do so (Morgan, 2007)? Morgan labels this as "transferability". Morgan (2007) again recommends working back and forth between the two poles of the research continuum, providing the practical example of

assessing results from one program evaluation to determine whether they may apply to similar programs in other contexts (pg. 72).

In summary, the pragmatic epistemology's notions of abduction, intersubjectivity, and transferability provide researchers with an alternative other than that imposed at either end of the epistemological continuum: one that combines the strengths offered by qualitative and quantitative approaches while minimizing the weaknesses. This third research paradigm brings together the two traditional approaches in a complementary way in order to broaden the impact of mixed-methods research.

The pragmatic paradigm is an appropriate choice to achieve the objectives of this thesis for a number of reasons. First, this paradigm is considered a valuable tool for studying practical problems in “real world” situations (Feilzer, 2010; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Rorty, 1999). Farjoun (2015) argues that the pragmatic paradigm “facilitates a timely discussion between theory and practice” (pg. 1799) employing a problem-solving philosophy that is both analytical and prescriptive, lending it to use in action research such as our study. In addition to the theoretical outcomes of our research, our findings will have practical implications for Natunion, an outcome that again is supported by our use of the pragmatic paradigm. Secondly, Farjoun (2015) argues that “pragmatist principles are particularly relevant for dealing with contemporary challenges of change and complexity across multiple levels of analysis” (pg. 1798). Our study takes place in a changing union environment that has seen significant changes in the economic and social contexts over time (macro-level) and seeks to investigate the extent to which these changes relate to individual behaviours (union participation). Within the pragmatic paradigm individual behaviour cannot be separated from the social context in which it

occurs. This philosophy is consistent with our desire to study factors at various levels and their respective impact on individual behaviours.

2.2 Methodological Approach

Our research takes the form of a case study undertaken from the pragmatic perspective that employs qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. The purpose of this section is to describe and justify this thesis' use of the mixed method approach and case study design.

2.2.1 The Mixed-methods approach. The research described in this document uses a mixed-methods approach to learn more about the impact of generational cohort on union participation. Johnson (2007) performed content analysis on 15 definitions of mixed methods research in order to develop a more complete and all-encompassing definition. Out of this exercise, they concluded that mixed-methods research “combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (pg. 113).

A key to the mixed-methods approach to knowledge is its incorporation of multiple perspectives (Johnson, 2007, pg. 113). Typically, positivist research is performed from the etic point of view, while interpretivist research is performed from an emic point of view. Etic research attempts to provide an objective (outsider's) understanding of a phenomenon by applying theory to a situation (Kottak, 2006; Morris et al., 1999). Emic research attempts to explain phenomena from the perspective of the insider, as researchers use their participants' experiences to develop understanding of a phenomenon (Denison, 1996; Morris et al., 1999). A

mixed-methods approach supports analysis from either perspective, therefore providing us with a more complete view of the union participation phenomenon.

Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) outlined five general goals or rationales for using a mixed-methods approach. First is triangulation, in which two or more methods are used to study the same problem. The goal of triangulation is to corroborate the findings of one method using another. In our research, Paper 1 uses triangulation to corroborate the extent to which each cohort possesses distinctive perceptions of and attitudes towards unions. More specifically, broad themes identified through the interview process are tested across a wider sample through the subsequent survey. Second is complementarity, in which one method is used to elaborate upon the findings of another. Complementarity is evident in all three papers of this thesis as quantitative, etic studies are used to elaborate upon the findings of qualitative, emic studies. Third is development, in which the findings of one method are used in the design of the other subsequent method(s). Development is evident in Paper 3, as findings from interview 2 identified themes pertaining to the effectiveness of union communication – information that was used to design questions for survey 2. Fourth is initiation, in which findings from the first method reveal information that leads to a reframing of the research question. Initiation was displayed through the findings of Interview 1 and Survey 1, as those instruments identified communication as an obstacle to participation. As a result of those findings, Interview 2 and Survey 2 were designed to better understand the union's communication practices and union members' preferences with respect to the communication of important information by the union. Fifth is expansion, in which multiple methods are used to broaden the range of study. Again, this can be seen in all three papers included in this thesis.

2.2.2 Case study design. This thesis research uses the case study research design. Yin (1994) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (pg. 13). According to Langley and Abdallah (2011), case studies are appropriate when looking to produce a deep, thorough, and meaningful analysis of one organization in which the focus is on developing contextual knowledge rather than generalizability across contexts. Yin (1994) cautions readers of a common source of confusion about case study research, that it often gets confused with the actual data collection instrument (i.e., interviews) or with a type of research altogether (i.e., ethnography), or a philosophy (i.e., qualitative vs. quantitative) when in fact, case studies often include multiple data-collection instruments and techniques and can incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data types.

Yin (1994) indicates three main conditions under which the case study method is most appropriate, each of which is met by our research. First, case studies are appropriate when research is guided by “how” or “why” questions. Over our three studies we ask a number of how or why questions. For example, Study 1 investigates how the social change process (as manifested in our generational cohort construct) affects perceptions of unions; Study 2 explores how union members’ experiences inform their understanding of “active and passive participation”; while Study 3 asks how union communication perceptions and preferences differ across generations. The second ideal condition for the case study method is when the researcher does not require control over behavioural events. Because we are using interviews and surveys as data sources, as opposed to experiments, we do not require any control over the behaviour of our participants. Thirdly, Yin (1994) indicates that case studies are appropriate when the research focuses on contemporary events or phenomena (as opposed to historical events). While historical

context is important to our research, we will be studying the contemporary issue of union renewal.

Despite its growth in use over time, Yin (1994) argues that there remain several prejudices against the case study method within the research world. The first main concern is that case studies are often associated with a lack of rigor such that equivocal evidence or biased views can skew findings (Yin, 1994). To counter this point, Yin (1994) states that other strategies too can be infiltrated by bias, such as the design of questionnaires or the conducting of experiments, and as such it is not fair to dismiss case studies outright for a lack of rigor. To defend against any claims of un-rigorous research, he recommends future case study researchers report all evidence fairly and ensure transparency in the research and reporting processes. Such practices are followed in this research.

A second frequent concern about case studies is that they are not generalizable to a broader population due to their small sample size. Again, Yin (1994) points to experiments as an accepted form of research that faces the same problem. He adds that like experiments, case studies do not represent a sample because the researcher's aim is not statistical generalization, but rather analytic generalization of theories (pg. 10). Similarly, Stake (1994) argued that case studies should maximize the understanding of a case, as opposed to generalizing to other contexts (pg. 236). We do this by studying the impact of generational cohort on different aspects of union participation through three separate studies of one case study organization.

The third common prejudice associated with the case study method is that they take too long and produce documents that are unreadable due to their length (Yin, 1994). Yin does admit that historically there have been instances when case study research (and the associated reporting) has been seemingly endless, but counters that this phenomenon is often associated

with studies that consist of longitudinal ethnographies or participant observations. He notes, however, that researchers performing case studies can employ a wide variety of data gathering techniques, not all of which are typically as time consuming as are ethnographies and participant observation. By collecting data through interviews and surveys we were able to avoid this problem. The time spent on data collection was limited by introducing targets for number of interviews performed and by setting and sticking to strict timelines for the collection of survey data. To maintain readability and limit the length of our final product, we have limited analysis to a discrete number of interview and survey questions. This is as opposed to other potentially problematic data collection techniques identified by Yin (2004) such as longitudinal participant observation or ethnography in which analysis could consist of the interpretation of months' or years' worth of notes, for example.

2.3 Natunion

The goal of this part of the methodology chapter is to introduce the organization that is featured in this case study: Natunion. The description is included in order to provide the reader with some understanding of the organization's internal context, and the motivation behind its selection for this study.

2.3.1 Natunion – Overview. The sample organization at the heart of our research is a large transportation industry union that operates throughout the continental U.S.: Natunion. First incorporated in 1887 in the state of Alabama, Natunion represented about 350 000 employees across Canada and the United States at its peak, but now represents just under forty thousand members in the continental U.S. alone. Natunion is a closed-shop union, meaning members do not have the option to opt out of union membership (they must be a member to have the job). The union represents blue collar workers who for the most part perform physical labour, often

away from home, travelling great distances in order to maintain the transportation infrastructure on which their industry relies. The membership's demographic profile is skewed in a number of ways. First and most obviously, the membership is highly male (about 95%). Second, the union skews older in terms of member age, as 56% of the members are Baby Boomers, 30% Gen X, and only 14% are Millennials.

An organization chart illustrating the union's structure and hierarchy can be found in Figure 2-1, below.

Figure 2-1: Natunion Organizational Hierarchy

The union's hierarchy has four main tiers: National Division, System Divisions, Local Offices, and rank and file membership. At the top of the organizational chart is the National Division. National Division is responsible for the union's governance including such vital tasks as

administration, research and strategic coordination, member education and mobilization, communications, legal, data processing, personnel training, and finance/reporting. The National Division employs five regional Vice Presidents, each of whom is responsible for their own geographic region (Northwest, Northeast, Western, Southwest, and Southeast). These Vice Presidents act as liaisons between the National division, the thirteen Systems Divisions and the many Local Offices.

Below the National Division on the organizational chart are the Systems Divisions. There is one Systems Division for each employer whose workforce Natunion represents, and as such the organization currently has thirteen Systems Divisions. Systems Divisions (in conjunction with their respective VPs) are responsible with handling day to day operations of the union. For example, one of the main responsibilities of Systems Division officers is the pursuit of grievances against management.

Local Offices are the main point of contact between members and the union. Local Offices are responsible for the dissemination of a wide amount of information from the union to members through meetings and other avenues. They also provide the members with a venue in which to send their opinions up through to union leadership.

In section 1.2.2 we introduced Fairbrother and Yates' (2003) continuum of union structures. This continuum classifies unions based on their hierarchical structure and the nature of the union's relationship with its members. At the "servicing" end of the continuum are unions as they are traditionally conceptualized, with paid union employees in leadership and administrative roles who attempt to provide union members with efficient and effective service. On the "organizing" end of the continuum are grassroots style unions that rely upon members to take on much of the administrative work, with leadership providing members with strategic

guidance, and expertise and training to operate a more “grassroots” style, bottom-up type of union. In terms of Fairbrother and Yates (2003) continuum, Natunion would be closer to the servicing end of the spectrum as union staff and officers perform union roles and duties as representatives of union members. Natunion’s Local Offices, however, are heavily reliant upon grassroots-style unionism that is typically associated with organizing unions. For example, rank and file members are needed to run in elections to become delegates that get voting power in National Division decisions such as the adoption of new by-laws and policy changes. Local lodges also depend on volunteers to take on a number of roles such as elected officer positions, and union steward positions. As such, Natunion would not be at either extreme along the continuum, but somewhere closer to the “servicing” than “organizing” end.

2.3.2 Natunion – pressures for change. This research project became a reality after Natunion identified a variety of pressures for change that they believed were in need of addressing. This section discusses two of those pressures for change (waning union participation within the membership and an aging membership), and how they have informed this case study.

In 2009, Natunion began to be concerned that union involvement amongst its rank and file membership was in decline. Meetings were sparsely attended, and filling key volunteer roles was a challenge. The union’s leadership felt that the large amount of travel required of their members could be one obstacle to participation because it is difficult for them to be active in their local office back home when on the road for work. Another potential cause of decline in participation observed by the union’s leadership was a lack of satisfaction with the union itself. Union satisfaction has been shown to predict participation (Brett, 1980). In order to diagnose and find a remedy to this problem, Natunion wanted to find out more about its members’

expectations of and satisfaction with the union, and what they could do to get members more involved.

A second pressure for change within the union was its aging membership. Overall, the American population is aging at a rapid pace (Ortman et al., 2014). This demographic trend is even more exaggerated within Natunion's membership, as the average age of its membership is 52 years old. At the time the study started younger workers from the Generation X and Millennial cohorts were greatly outnumbered by those from the Boomer cohort. The union wanted to know specifically how it could better appeal to younger members in order to get them more involved with the union because they felt that getting more young people actively involved with Natunion was a key to the union's future sustainability.

In addition to the forces for change outlined above, several other significant events that occurred in the years leading up to when our research was done as well as the time period when we were doing research provides important contextual information on Natunion's internal environment which may be helpful when we are interpreting our findings. First, one issue that members (and the steering committee) frequently cited was the influx of the transportation companies hiring non-union, contract workers to perform the work that rightfully should go to Natunion members. This is a contravention of the collective agreement, and as such, when identified, Natunion members are to file time-claims in which members are remunerated for the work that they should have been allowed to perform.

Another factor that could impact our findings was that Natunion had just ratified a new collective agreement within a year of our research beginning. Our study showed that only 42% thought they got a fair contract, meaning that most members were dissatisfied with the agreement.

Lastly, there was some turnover among high-ranking union leaders throughout the course of this research project. First, within the first year of the project beginning, the National President was voted out of his position. Second, between our first and second studies, the Western Division (our sample division for interview 2 and survey 2) voted in a new Vice President. These changes appear to demonstrate a desire for change among the union membership.

We worked with Natunion over the course of five years to help them better understand union members' expectations of their union and how best to increase the participation of members of all ages. A steering committee consisting of representatives from National, several Regional Vice Presidents, Local elected officers, and rank and file members was formed in order to liaise with our research team and help guide the project. The data collection process for the project will be explained in the next section.

2.3.3 Data collection timeline. The data collection process for this thesis study took place between the fall of 2010 and the end of 2014. This process included the development and administration of two interviews and two surveys, as well as four presentations of findings and meetings with the steering committee. Our data collection timeline is visualized in Figure 2-2 and described in more detail over the course of this section.

Figure 2-2: The data collection process (Fall 2010-Winter 2014)

We began our initiative in the fall of 2010 with an interview (Interview 1) which was motivated by Natunion's desire to find out more about its membership. The interview's overall aim was to identify themes that would help them to increase members' engagement and involvement in the union and union activities. Interview questions were developed after meeting and consulting with the steering committee. Before data collection began, interviews were first pre-tested on steering committee members as well as several rank and file union members. In all, Interview 1 covered a wide variety of topics including: members' expectations of the union, the extent to which those expectations have been met, members' relationship with their employer, their relationship with the union, members' current union participation, plans on pursuing union leadership positions in the future, and member perceptions of unions and the union movement.

The Interview 1 participant solicitation process began with a letter from the union's president that was sent to all members, seeking participation in the survey. The letter included information about the project's goals, the interview process, and the benefits of the study to the union. The letter also indicated that the researchers might be in touch over the phone in search of interview participants, and that participation was not only sanctioned by union leadership but encouraged.

Union leaders on the steering committee provided the research team with a list of union member phone numbers. The contact list was stratified by region and generational cohort. The research team then began the research process by randomly selecting individuals on the lists in search of participants. Selection was done in such a manner as to ensure that we had an equal number of respondents in each generational cohort but that within each cohort subsample there was diversity of region, age, and job. Calls were placed using Skype internet communication software. Interviews were also performed using Skype and recorded using SkypeRecorder

software. A copy of the script used when soliciting members can be found in Appendix A. Interviews would be administered on the spot if convenient for the participant or at an agreed upon time in the near future. Concurrently, steering committee members encouraged participation in the interview process to fellow union members through daily interactions, at meetings, and other union events. The efforts of steering committee members produced a number of volunteers who contacted the research team via email. In these cases, interview times were set up over email and performed via Skype.

Data collection for Interview 1 was conducted from autumn 2010 to early spring of 2011. In total, 100 participants were interviewed in the first round of qualitative data collection. Our goal was to interview thirty members from each generational cohort, which would satisfy the generally accepted requirements for saturation in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998). In total, our sample consisted of 35 Boomers, 35 Gen X, and 30 Millennials. Participants lived in 32 states and worked in 42. About 58% of respondents worked typical 40 hour/5-day work weeks, while 22% worked compressed weeks that consisted of 4 ten-hour work days. About 11% had schedules that varied. On average, participants worked about 44.5 hours per week in the month prior to the interview. The average participant's tenure within the union was about 16.4 years. Data from Interview 1 are analyzed in Paper 1 and Paper 2.

Survey 1 was designed to explore key issues identified in the first interview but with a larger sample. It follows Interview 1 in time and covers many of the same topics. Some topics covered in the survey include union participation (both type and quantity), attitudes towards unions, attitudes towards their job and their specific union (and expectations of the union), and intentions to pursue union leadership positions.

Again, Natunion's leadership notified members in advanced by mail, and through union meetings and informal interactions between union representatives and members that surveys would be administered as the next stage of our ongoing research. In the summer of 2011 Survey 1 questionnaires were mailed to all members of the union along with self-addressed and stamped envelopes. In total, 4400 completed surveys were returned to the research team out of a total of 40,000 distributed surveys (11% response rate). The generational breakdown of the sample is: Boomers (2857, 65%), Gen X (1256, 28%), Millennials (304, 7%). The time 1 survey sample is as follows: 100% male (which is representative of the overall union membership that includes very few women). With respect to race, 86.5% of the sample are White, while 12.5% are Black/Latino/Indigenous. Of the sample, 80% are married, and 80% have at least one child at home. With respect to education, 50% have a high school diploma, 9% have completed college, and 36% had some college education. In terms of experience with Natunion, 48% of the total sample had been with the union for 25 or more years, while only about 15% had been with the union for fewer than five years at the time of the survey. About 59% of our sample works a typical work schedule (9-5, Monday-Friday), while about 32% works a compressed week (4 shifts of 10 hours, for example). According to our steering committee, these findings are consistent with the union's membership. Data from Survey 1 are used in Paper 1 and Paper 2 of the thesis.

We presented findings from Interview and Survey 1 to the steering committee, union representatives from National and Divisional levels, and some ranks and file members at the union's National meetings in Jackson, Wyoming, in the summer of 2012. A plan for the next stage of data collection was developed in meetings with the steering committee following the presentation of data to the wider group.

Data from Interview 1 and Survey 1 indicated that union members believed union communication to be a roadblock to their increased participation in union activities. As such, Interview 2 was designed to find out what the union was doing right in terms of communication, what it was doing wrong, and where improvements were needed. The interview also aimed to find out how the union communicated with members, and how members would prefer to be communicated with. This second set of questions was motivated by data from Interview 1 showing a lack of current communication technology as a weakness of the communication processes used by the union when sending members vital information. Interview 2 also covered topics such as members' feelings about unions and what unionism meant to them.

Whereas the first round of data collection featured a sample that spanned the whole union, the second round of data collection focused on only Natunion's Western Division. A smaller sample population was chosen for Interview 2 and Survey 2 because findings from the second round of data collection would later be used to inform the development of communication pilot projects. The steering committee felt it was best to begin with one region (the Western Division was selected because of its engaged leadership) before expanding the project more widely throughout the union.

Interview 2 was conducted from Spring to Winter of 2013. Preliminary findings were presented to the steering committee in the Summer of 2013 at divisional meetings in Denver, CO. In order to increase participation in our interviews, the project was featured in the union's online newsletter and blog, while local officers increased their promotional efforts to attract participants at the local level. In total, the author of this text performed interviews with 25 Boomers, 25 Gen X, and 25 Millennials. These sample sizes were selected as they meet the

generally accepted sample size guidelines for qualitative research such as this (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998). Again, we used Skype software to perform the interviews.

Participants lived in 17 states. About 63% of the sample typically worked in their home state, while the remaining 37% had to travel to another state for work. About 47% of the sample spent 100% of their time working away from home, about 20% spent between half and all of their time away from home, while 26% spent no time working away from home. About 31% of the sample worked more than 200 hours in the month prior to the interview, while 40% worked between 160 and 200 hours. Almost one in four participants had more than thirty years of experience with the union, while just under one in five participants had fewer than five years of experience within Natunion. Only 26% of participants had experience working for a union prior to joining Natunion. Data from Interview 2 are analyzed in Paper 3 of this thesis.

Survey 2 was designed as a follow-up to Interview 2. The goal of the survey was to determine the use of the various modes of communication employed by the union at the time the survey data was collected, participants' preferences with respect to mode of communication, and their satisfaction with the communication of important information from the union. The survey also included questions about members' participation in union activities.

Survey 2 questionnaires were sent to all members of the union's Western Division along with self-addressed and stamped envelopes between the Spring and Fall of 2014. In total 710 completed surveys were returned to the research team. Of the sample's 710 participants, approximately half the sample ($n = 382$) were Baby Boomers, about one in three ($n = 256$) were from Generation X, while approximately one in ten ($n = 63$) were Millennials. Survey 2 only had 7 Female respondents (about 1% of sample). About 48% of the participants worked locally, while 52% worked on mobile crews covered wide geographic regions requiring travel for work.

About 38% of the sample worked typical 40 hour/5 day a week shifts, while 21% worked 4 ten-hour days a week. The remaining 41% worked what are called compressed halves, in which they work 14 consecutive twelve hour days, then get two weeks off. Data from Survey 2 are analyzed in Paper 3 of the thesis.

2.4 Data

Table 2-4 identifies specifically which data we collected and describes how it is analyzed over the course of our research. All four research instruments can be found in the Appendix Section. Details relevant to all three papers included in this thesis will be provided below. Aspects of the methodology that uniquely relate to only one of the three papers will be included in the section discussing the respective paper in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

The goal of this section is to familiarize the reader with the data collection strategy employed in this study. Section 2.4.1 will discuss the types of data we have collected and will make the case for our use of such data collection techniques and instruments.

2.4.1 Types of data collected. Our research will focus on a subset of the data we collected over the course of our time working with Natunion between 2010 and 2014. While other data sources such as Natunion documents and websites were used to provide the research team with context for our study, the analysis featured in the three papers included in this thesis involves two types of data, qualitative data collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, and quantitative data collected using surveys. This section provides justification for the use of interviews and surveys in this thesis.

Table 2-4: Description of Instruments used in thesis

	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
Objective	Paper 1 aims to elucidate the relationship between generational cohort and individual perceptions of unions.	Paper 2 aims to increase our understanding of the union participation construct by examining: (1) How do union members classify their own level of union participation? (2) What is the relationship between how union members classify their levels of union-participation (i.e. the emic view) and how researchers conceptualize this construct (i.e. the etic view)? (3) What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities (an objective measure of union participation) and their subjective perceptions of union participation? and (4) how does generational cohort affect each of these issues?	Paper 3 examines the link between union communication processes and ember participation. It does this by seeks answers to the following questions: (1) How the union communicates information to its members; (2) Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications; (3) The types of changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members, and (4) How generational cohort impacts each of these issues.
Methodological Approach	Two Studies done to address these objectives Study 1: Emic perspective Study 2: Etic perspective	Two Studies done to address these objectives Study 1: Emic perspective Study 2: Etic perspective	Two Studies done to address these objectives Study 1: Etic perspective Study 2: Emic perspective
Qualitative Study: Objective	To provide us with an in-depth understanding into: (1) how union members perceive unions, and (2) how this is influenced by generational cohort	To provide us with an in-depth understanding into how union members themselves categorize union participation and the relationship between generational cohort and these perceptions.	To identify areas in which the union's communication practices are effective, areas in which they need to improve

Qualitative Study: Data	<p>Interview 1 questions:</p> <p><i>“How does your generation view unions?”</i></p>	<p>Interview 1 questions:</p> <p><i>“We would like to know how active you are in your union. Which of the following labels best describes you?”</i></p> <p><i>“What union activities in particular do you engage in? Why these?”</i></p> <p><i>“How many hours per month do you spend in union related activities?”</i></p>	<p>Interview 2 questions:</p> <p><i>When it comes to communicating information about opportunities to get involved in the union: 1) “What do you think that the union is doing well?,” (2) “What, do you think that the union could improve upon?” and (3) “Do you have any advice for the union with respect to improving the way it communicates information to its members?”</i></p>
Qualitative Study: Analysis	Qualitative analysis using Charmaz (2006) method	Qualitative analysis using Charmaz (2006) method	Qualitative analysis using Charmaz (2006) method
Quantitative Study: Objective	To further investigate themes related to perceptions of unions and explore generational cohort differences identified in Study 1 using a larger, more representative sample.	To determine the extent to which union members’ categorization of active and passive participation corresponds to a theoretically-derived conceptualization of active and passive participation.	To identify and contrast the channels through which the union currently uses to send information to members, and the channels through which union members would prefer the union use to send this information.
Quantitative Study: Data	<p>From Survey 1:</p> <p><i>Brett (1980) Union Attitudes</i></p>	<p>From Survey 1:</p> <p><i>Smith et al. (2019) Union Participation</i></p> <p><i>Participation Hours</i></p>	<p>From Survey 2:</p> <p>Mode of communication</p>
Quantitative Study: Analysis	MANOVA	<p>T-Tests</p> <p>Pearson’s Chi-Square</p> <p>ANOVA</p> <p>Ordered Logistic Regression</p>	<p>Gap Analysis</p> <p>Pearson’s Chi-Square</p> <p>ANOVA</p>

2.4.1.1 Semi-structured interviews. Interviews are widely known as one of the most commonly used tools in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2009; Singleton and Straits, 2005). Interviews are advantageous to researchers because they allow for a depth of explanation that is not possible in the survey format (Bryman and Bell, 2009). Similarly, the interactive nature of the interview process provides a level of flexibility that is not achievable using other instruments such as a survey (Bryman and Bell, 2009). For example, if confusion arises pertaining to a question, the interviewer has the chance to pose the question in another way or elaborate in order to clarify – an option not available with a survey.

Some of the data used in this thesis was collected by completing semi-structured interviews (Gioia et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews are centred upon a set of predetermined open-ended questions but are designed to allow the researcher to probe further into the informant's experiences with follow-up questions and prompts for more information (Gioia et al., 2012). Open-ended questions are useful when probing for new ideas and when looking to explore a phenomenon from the informant's point of view (Singleton and Straits, 2005; Denizen and Lincoln, 2011), and as such were used in this thesis to explore union members' perceptions of topics such as the union movement and their union's communication processes.

All interview data gathered for this research was collected over the telephone. Telephone interviews provide both benefits and drawbacks when compared to face-to-face interviews both in general and in the specific context of this thesis research. For example, Singleton and Straits (2005) point out that telephone interviews can be advantageous because they are often more practical in terms of cost, time and other resources than are face-to-face interviews. This thesis' sample is spread across the continental United States, which made conducting face-to-face

interviews impractical due to the large amount of time and monetary expense associated with the amount of travel needed to perform the interviews. Means taken to overcome shortcomings of the telephone interview such as difficulty establishing trust and rapport, sampling biases, and making contact with respondents (Singleton and Straits, 2005) will be explained in more detail over the course of the next several sections.

Fontana and Frey (2005) identify several areas of importance that researchers should consider before embarking on the interview (particularly open-ended interviewing) process, including understanding the language and culture of respondents, deciding on how to present oneself to and establishing rapport with participants. These elements are important to consider when undertaking the interview process due to the interviewer's implicit role in the collection of data. Fontana and Frey's (2005) recommendations, along with the steps taken by the research team to comply with those recommendations will be described below.

In order to perform accurate qualitative data analysis, the researcher must understand the language and culture of respondents, as context-specific jargon can sometimes be hard for outsiders to understand (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Because Natunion is a transnational transportation industry union, we wanted to become familiar not only with the work context of its members/our participants, but also to understand the structure, processes, and terminology used by the union and its members. The union's website was a key resource in accomplishing both of these tasks. Also important were union leaders who were part of the research project's steering committee. Steering committee members were able to answer specific questions we had, and also helped by providing us with supplemental documents that broadened our understanding of the organization's culture and design.

Fontana and Frey (2005) argue that the manner in which the researcher presents him/herself has great influence on the success of the study because the informants' perceptions of the interviewer could affect their responses. In the section below I will describe how I addressed this issue, as I personally conducted all of the Time 1 and 2 interviews. In order to gain the trust of interview participants, I made sure to present myself as an independent, unpaid researcher. I made it clear I was not affiliated with either the union or their employer. At the outset of each interview I made sure to clarify how information gathered through the interview would be used. More specifically, I explained: that neither the union nor the employer would have access to the raw interview data; how interview data would be used; and how data would be stored and secured. In an attempt to connect with and gain further trust of the participant, I would initiate an informal conversation before the recorded interview began. This was particularly useful in establishing rapport, and important to the study, as I was able to assuage any fears about my Canadian-ness, or my potential role as a snitch for the union or the employer. At times I would also discuss my own experiences as an active union member, which I found helped to establish rapport, and demonstrated that I was not merely a researcher, but also that I could see the situation from their perspective as a union member. The above procedures are consistent with those suggested by Fontana and Frey (2005) as essential to a successful interview.

2.4.1.2 Surveys. Singleton and Straits (2005) argue that one purpose of surveys is to “describe the frequency of certain characteristics among groups or populations” (pg. 8). The authors go on to say that because surveys use information collected from part of a group to make generalizations about the whole group, surveys can be effective complementary tools when employed alongside interviews, a point made by others as well (Langley and Abdallah, 2011; Van de Ven and Poole, 2005). The idea is that surveys can be of great use when they are used to

take themes identified by researchers within the responses (and own words) of interview participants (i.e., results from emic research studies), and then examine them using a larger sample made possible by the survey format (a more etic approach). This is largely the role that the survey data will play in this thesis, as each survey was designed and administered as a follow-up to an earlier unstructured interview. As such, throughout this thesis, interviews will be used to identify themes related to issues such as perceptions of unions and union participation, while surveys will be used to test these themes on a wider audience, as is typical within the pragmatic paradigm (Morgan, 2007).

Some practical benefits of the survey instrument include relative ease and cost-efficiency of administration when compared to other instruments such as interviews and experiments (Bryman and Bell, 2009). Surveys are also relatively more convenient for participants, as they can fill them out at their leisure, as opposed to interviews that must be scheduled and may require travel (Bryman and Bell, 2009).

2.5 Data Analysis

The goal of this section is to familiarize the reader with the data analytical techniques used in the various stages of our research. The first part of this section will feature a discussion of the Charmaz (2006) method of qualitative analysis. The second part of this section discusses the quantitative analysis techniques employed in this study.

2.5.1 Qualitative analysis – In all three of the papers included in this thesis we used a variation of the grounded theory technique outlined by Charmaz (2000, 2006) to analyze our semi-structured interview data. Grounded theory is an iterative analysis methodology that is based on “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pg. 1). Glaser and

Strauss (1967) developed the grounded theory method to demonstrate the legitimacy of qualitative analysis by introducing a more rigorous analysis technique (Charmaz, 2006).

Our qualitative analysis is modeled upon Charmaz' (2000, 2006) "constructivist grounded theory" framework, which she developed to address criticism of earlier iterations of the method. Charmaz (2000, pg. 521) pointed out that the traditional grounded theory methods had become too objective, "separating the experience from the experiencing subject, the meaning from the story, and the viewer from the viewed." To address these issues, she developed an approach to grounded theory (what she refers to as guidelines rather than a blueprint) that "recognizes that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed. Data do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts" (Charmaz, 2000, pg. 523-524).

Charmaz (2017) provides several reasons why constructivist grounded theory is a useful technique to employ in research such as this thesis which employs a pragmatist perspective. First, she notes that grounded theory is a descendent of the pragmatist tradition as both approaches: (1) view reality as social, (2) draw links between experience and social context, (3) are emergent and iterative, (4) are process-driven, (5) seek multiple perspectives and (6) rely on abduction – the moving back and forth from data to theory, changing as new experiences and information reveal themselves (Charmaz, 2017). Broadly speaking, pragmatist philosophy and constructivist grounded theory complement one another because both "foster openness to the world, curiosity about it, and a belief in gaining knowledge through experience in it" (Charmaz 2017, pg. 38).

Our application of constructivist grounded theory in this thesis is based on four core elements: coding, constant comparison, sensitizing concepts, and theoretical sensitivity. We will briefly explain each of these elements and how they apply to our analysis.

Coding is the process of defining and labeling data, which is important because the coding structure provides a framework for analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory coding is an emergent process, as researchers develop codes based on their data as opposed to imposing theoretical concepts onto their findings (Charmaz, 2006).

In constructivist grounded theory, coding consists of two stages: initial coding and focused coding. In the first stage, initial coding, the researcher labels each piece of data, developing specific first-order concepts emerging from informants' responses. According to Charmaz (2006), initial coding sets out to answer questions such as "what is this data a study of? What does this data suggest? From whose point of view? What theoretical category does this specific datum dictate?" (pg. 46). In this thesis, initial coding takes place on an "incident by incident" basis (as opposed to line by line or word by word, for example) (Charmaz, 2006). For the purposes of this research, each incident will represent an informant's response to an individual interview question, though elsewhere an incident could consist of a group of questions or an entire interview, for example (Charmaz, 2006). More detail about how data is used in the respective papers can be found in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

The second stage of coding, focused coding, is the process through which the researcher sorts and categorizes data from initial coding into broader second-order concepts, "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2006, pg. 47). Charmaz (2006) describes multiple coding techniques that can be employed to guide the focused coding process, including "theoretical coding", which we use in our analysis.

In theoretical coding, the researcher draws links between related initial codes, grouping them into theoretically-driven categories, typically with the help of outside theory (Charmaz, 2006). This process not only helps to identify relationships within the data, it also provides theoretical direction to the analytical narrative (Charmaz, 2006).

According to Parry (2004), constant comparison is “the data-analytic process whereby each interpretation and finding is compared with existing findings as it emerges from the data analysis” (pg. 182). This implies that the coding process, and grounded theory analysis in general, are iterative in nature, that they are not a linear process. We employed the notion of constant comparison in each stage of coding, re-assessing previous initial and focused codes when needed as we move from incident to incident.

In grounded theory, sensitizing concepts are ideas that “give (the researcher) initial ideas to pursue and sensitize (the researcher) to ask particular kinds of questions about (their) topic” (Charmaz, 2006; pg. 17). Charmaz (2006) goes on to caution, however, that sensitizing concepts should be a “starting point” that helps steer the research, opening doors for inquiry, as opposed to limiting the scope of investigation. The main sensitizing concepts present throughout this thesis are union decline, union renewal, and generational differences, as they inform the context for all three studies.

As described by Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical sensitivity is a characteristic of the researcher that allows them to understand and give meaning to their data, and to determine which information is relevant and which is not. Coming into this research project, I had a base of theoretical sensitivity developed through past experience studying generational cohorts and through my first-hand experience as a union member. To improve this sensitivity, I immersed

myself in the union renewal and participation literatures, while early meetings with the union steering committee helped provide me with contextual information about Natunion.

2.5.1.1 Organizing qualitative data. We sorted and coded this thesis's interview data using QSR-Nvivo, Version 10 qualitative data analysis software. We began by transcribing 175 interviews (Interview 1, n=100; Interview 2; n=75). Second, we imported these transcripts into Nvivo. Before beginning the coding and analysis process, our data was first organized in a way that increases the ease and thoroughness of analysis. This was accomplished in two steps.

The first step involved creating "case nodes" for each generational cohort group (Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial) using demographic information collected at the beginning of the interviews. These nodes allow the researcher to easily sort through Interview 1 and 2 transcripts by cohort group, which facilitates the between-group comparison of responses for differences that can be linked to generational cohort (a common theme throughout the three papers in this thesis). After the nodes were created, we then went through each interview transcript and assigned it to the appropriate cohort group.

The second step includes creating "incident nodes". We created incident nodes for each interview question included in the three papers that make up this thesis. For each question there are as many incidents of text as there are people who have answered the question. In order to assign nodes to each incident, the researcher must read through each interview transcript and label informant responses to each incident with the corresponding node. This second step allows the researcher to easily sort the informant responses by question, as a search for "question 1" will pull up all responses assigned to the node corresponding to "question 1".

2.5.1.2 Ensuring the quality of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (2005) list four criteria that can be used to assess the quality of qualitative research. This list includes credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were developed to mirror those typically used to assess the quality of quantitative or more positivist research (internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity) (Lincoln and Guba, 2005). Table 2-5 has been adapted from Shah and Corley (2006, pg. 1830) and features Lincoln and Guba's (2005) criteria for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research, as well as methods for meeting them. We strive to meet these criteria throughout this research to ensure the results of this thesis's analyses are as trustworthy as possible.

Table 2-5: Trustworthiness Criteria (adapted from Shah and Corley, 2006, pg. 1830)

Traditional Criteria	Trustworthiness Criteria	Methods for Meeting Trustworthiness Criteria
Internal Validity	Credibility	Extended engagement in the field Triangulation of data types Peer debriefing Member checks
External Validity	Transferability	Detailed (thick) description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concepts and categories - Structures and processes related to processes revealed in the data
Reliability	Dependability	Purposive and theoretical sampling Informants' confidentiality protected Inquiry audit of data collection, management, and analysis processes
Objectivity	Confirmability	Explicit separation of 1 st order and 2 nd order findings Meticulous data management and recording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Careful notes of observations - Clear notes on theoretical and methodological decisions - Accurate records of contacts and interviews

Over the course of this section, each of the quality criteria will be explained in more detail. Also included in this section are details on how we ensure that these criteria were met within this research.

Credibility: Lincoln and Guba (2005) compare credibility in qualitative research to the concept of internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility, they argue, is concerned with ensuring that the study and its results are realistic from a participant's point of view. They suggest that to achieve credibility, researchers should: 1) spend a lot of time in the field in order

to get a sense of participants' reality; (2) incorporate a variety of data sources in order to see the situation from multiple perspectives; and (3) consult with members of the sample population to ensure that research instruments are valid for the purposes they are intended to fulfill (Lincoln and Guba, 2005).

In this study credibility was attained by using a number of methods described by Shah and Corley (2006). While the nature of the work performed by Natunion's members made field observation impractical and unsafe, the research team spent significant time engaging with members and leaders of the union at a variety of Natunion's annual and quarterly national and divisional meetings. Throughout this time, the research team was able to observe some internal dynamics of the union and learn about issues related to those covered in the thesis research. This helped the researchers gain perspective, while also allowing for the filling of any gaps in their understanding.

Triangulation of findings was achieved through the collection of multiple data types including interview data, survey data, and the aforementioned observation at Natunion's conferences and meetings. Peer debriefing was also used, as the researcher often bounced ideas and findings off of colleagues at conference workshops, conference presentations, the author's supervisor, and more generally with fellow PhD students. Member checks are used to confirm that findings pertain to the real-life context being studied. We conducted member checks by discussing our findings with the union steering committee as well as through presentations of findings to the steering committee (and general union membership) as the project progressed.

Transferability: Lincoln and Guba (2005) propose that transferability in qualitative research is analogous to external validity in quantitative research, (i.e., a study's findings should be generalizable beyond the study's sample). In order to attain transferability, it is recommended

that the researcher include thick, detailed descriptions of key concepts and findings. Similarly, Lee (2014) recommends that researchers contextualize their research by providing important information about participants and the research setting, situating the phenomena under study in the social context, and pointing out any influences that might be specific to that context.

To ensure our results are transferable we follow the steps proposed by Lincoln and Guba (2005), Lee (2014) and Shah and Corley (2006) provided above. Rich descriptions will be provided throughout the analysis and results sections in the final dissertation. Tables, figures, and other visual aids will be included throughout to succinctly summarize key concepts and information, with the ultimate goal of providing more clarity for the reader.

Dependability: According to Lincoln and Guba (2005) dependability in qualitative research is analogous to the concept of reliability in quantitative research. Dependability is concerned with replicability of the study and keeping track of factors that might impact the extent to which similar results could be obtained by other researchers using the same methods (Lincoln and Guba, 2005). Shah and Corley (2006) recommend including a detailed explanation of the case selection process. Lee (2014) adds that explaining the context and case selection is important as it helps explain the study's motivation and can help to justify selection of chosen methods. Shah and Corley (2006) also recommend assuring that participants' confidentiality is honored, while also documenting all the steps taken throughout the research process to ensure replicability. Similarly, Pratt (2009) highlights the importance of clearly demonstrating the path the researcher followed getting from data to findings. This, he argues can be achieved through the thorough documentation of analysis processes, indication of which data is included in the analysis, and the inclusion of instruments such as interview scripts in the document itself.

To produce reliability in this thesis research, we use the process outlined above. First, this research used purposive and theoretical sampling in the selection of Natunion. Second, we informed our participants of the steps we would be taking to ensure that their confidentiality would be protected. Lastly, detailed explanations of the data collection and analysis processes are included in the methods section of this thesis in order to provide transparency and facilitate replication of our methods in potential future research.

Confirmability: Lincoln and Guba (2005) equate confirmability in qualitative research to the concept of objectivity in quantitative research. Such an approach ensures that a study's findings can be confirmed by other researchers.

Spiggle (1994) discusses how record keeping (including memos, journals, charts, for example) can bring more rigor to qualitative study. She begins by arguing that records can either facilitate analysis or preserve the interpretation process. Facilitation-type records can include tabulations, theoretical summaries, diagrams that are used to condense, summarize and integrate data (Spiggle, 1994). Preservation-type records can include memos about the development of insights and ideas, notes about possible future steps, and notes about actions and attempts made by the researcher (Spiggle, 1994). Facilitation-type memos can be useful to the researcher in keeping track of what has been done and what is to be done in the future, while also providing a record of the researcher's thought process which will help other researchers assess the appropriateness and quality of inferences made by the researcher (Spiggle, 1994). Lee (2014) argues that detailed record keeping is important because it provides the researcher with the ability to clearly highlight any potential biases or influences over the analysis process.

Data analysis and findings sections are clearly distinguished between first and second order coding as explained in the description of the Charmaz (2006) methodology above, and all

decisions with respect to theory and methods are explicitly detailed throughout the dissertation's analysis and presentation of findings. In order to effectively manage our data, Excel spreadsheets were used to keep track of participant contact information, their status (i.e., have they been contacted, have they agreed or declined to be interviewed, date and time of interview, etc.)

2.5.2 Quantitative Analysis. Each of our three papers has a qualitative and a quantitative component. In all three papers, we undertake some form of cross-group comparison to explore the impact of generational cohort on our findings. Statistical methodologies used to do this comparison include an independent sample t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA), and Chi-squared test. In this section we will briefly outline each type of tests and justify their use in this thesis.

2.5.2.1 Paired-sample T-test. T-tests are useful when comparing two means for significant differences (Field, 2005). We use Paired-sample t-tests to analyze survey data in this thesis to: (1) compare active and passive activity scores for the total sample, (2) to compare active and passive activity scores for each cohort (i.e., just Boomers, just Gen Xers, just Millennials). For our purposes, paired-sample T-tests are most appropriate, as they compare the means of different outcome variables from the same sample (such as at two different times, or in our case, for two types of activity – active or passive) (Field, 2005).

Paired-sample t-tests operate under two assumptions: 1) data is normally distributed; and 2) data are measured at the continuous (at least interval) level (Field, 2005). These assumptions can be tested while running the t-test using Levene's test (Field, 2005).

After running the test, SPSS's output produces several key points of information for analysis. Most important are the test statistic or t-score, which is the result of the test, and the probability (*Sig.*), which tells us how likely it is that the test results were statistically meaningful

(Field, 2005). As is typical in social sciences, the results of t-tests are considered statistically significant if the probability that the results are based on randomness is less than 5% (i.e., $\text{Sig} < 0.05$) (Field, 2005). In this thesis, we follow convention and report the t-statistic, the degrees of freedom, significance value, means and their standard errors (Field, 2005).

2.5.2.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). We use one-way ANOVA to analyze cross-group differences in quantitative interview and survey data throughout this thesis. More specifically, we use ANOVA to explore the possibility of differences between activity level groups with respect to hours spent in union activities, as well as potential differences across cohort groups with respect to: level of active and passive participation; time spent in union activities; and preference for different forms of union communication.

Like t-tests, ANOVA is used to compare the difference in means of an outcome variable in search of significant differences. ANOVA is more appropriate for some of our analysis than are t-tests, because it allows us to compare means across more than two groups, which is necessary for our cross-cohort (Boomers, Gen X, Millennials) and our cross-activity level (Active/Moderate, Limited, Inactive) analyses (Field, 2005). Additionally, performing one ANOVA rather than multiple t-tests helps reduce the possibility of making a Type 1 error (the rejection of a true null hypothesis) (Field, 2005). ANOVA operates under three assumptions: 1) samples are normally distributed; 2) cases are independent; 3) homogeneity of variance (Field, 2005).

Post-hoc testing of our ANOVA results consists of Fisher's Least Significant Differences (LSD) test, and Tukey's Honestly Significant Differences (HSD) test. The LSD test is designed to investigate possible pairwise comparisons of means in the same spirit as performing multiple t-tests (University of Oregon, ND). The LSD test's output tells us the minimum necessary

difference between two means to produce statistical significance (University of Oregon, ND). The HSD test also compares all possible mean ranges, with the goal of reducing experiment-wide error (Simon Fraser University, ND).

Key components to reporting of ANOVA results include the F-ratio, and degrees of freedom, as well as the criterion significance level (i.e., 0.05), but not the actual exact significance level of the F-ratio (Field, 2005).

2.5.2.3 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). We use MANOVA in our analysis of survey data to identify any cross-cohort differences in pro and anti-union attitudes. MANOVA follows in the tradition of ANOVA and is useful when determining the extent to which mean differences among groups occur due to chance as opposed to the independent variable's influence (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2011). While ANOVA is useful when examining a single dependent variable, MANOVA is more appropriate when examining two or more dependent variables (Warne, 2014), as is the case in this thesis. Simply put, MANOVA is an ANOVA that has been theoretically adapted to work in analyses featuring multiple dependent variables (Warne, 2014). When analyzing multiple dependent variables, MANOVA has two distinct advantages over ANOVA (Warne, 2014). The first advantage of using a MANOVA is that the risk of incurring Type 1 error is lower in the case of MANOVA (in much the same way that ANOVA is an improvement over multiple t-tests for two or more independent variables) (Fish, 1988; Haase and Ellis, 1987; Huberty and Morris, 1989; Warne, 2014). The second main advantage of MANOVA compared to ANOVA when there are multiple dependent variables is that "multiple ANOVAs cannot determine whether independent variable(s) are related to combinations of dependent variables, which is often more useful information for behavioral scientists" (Warne, 2014, pg. 3). The fact that generational cohort is a categorical variable makes

MANOVA a more appropriate methodology than is multiple regression (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2011).

After running a MANOVA in SPSS, the researcher must then interpret the test. Horn (2008) recommends first checking correlation between variables to determine whether MANCOVA is a more appropriate analysis. In order to make this determination, the Pearson Correlation row of the correlations table should be consulted. If the Pearson Correlation is less than 0.6 then correlation is low enough to proceed with the MANOVA (Horn, 2008). It is also recommended that the researcher check to ensure that cell sizes are approximately the same size. To do this, the Descriptive Statistics table should be consulted. Here, the researcher should look at the “N” column and ensure that the largest cell size is no more than about one and a half times larger than the smallest cell size (Horn, 2008). Horn (2008) then recommends checking the assumption of homogeneity of covariance across groups using the Box Test with a significance of $p < 0.01$. If the test is not significant, then the assumption is not violated and Wilk’s Lambda test is the most appropriate test to use to check the MANOVA’s significance (Horn, 2008). If the box test is significant, then the assumption is violated and Pillai’s Trace is a better indicator of the MANOVA’s significance. To check for the MANOVA’s significance, the researcher looks to the table containing the MANOVA’s multivariate tests. A score of < 0.05 in the Sig. column of the table demonstrates the MANOVA’s significance (Horn, 2008). The Partial Eta Squared column of the Multivariate Tests table indicates as a percentage how much of the variation between group means comes as a result of group differences.

2.5.2.4 Pearson’s Chi-Square test. Pearsons’s chi-square test is useful when examining whether a relationship between two categorical variables is significant or not (Field, 2005). This test compares observed frequencies in certain categories to frequencies you might expect based

on chance (Field, 2005). We employ the Pearson's Chi-Square test on survey data throughout the thesis to examine the relationship between generational cohort and: how members self-classified their level of union participation; the amount of time members spent in union activities per month; and union communication preferences.

Pearson's Chi-Square operates under two assumptions: 1) each person, item or entity contributes to only one cell of the contingency table, and 2) expected frequencies should be greater than 5 (Field, 2005). Tests are considered significant if $p < 0.05$ (Field, 2005). When discussing the results of a Pearson's Chi-square, the following should be reported: the Chi-square statistic (X^2), the degrees of freedom, the significance (p) value, and the resulting contingency table (Field, 2005).

2.5.2.5 Ordered Logistic Regression. Ordered logistic regression (ordinal regression) is a statistical technique that is appropriate when determining the relationship between independent variables and an ordinal level dependent variable (Winship and Mare, 1984). We use ordered logistic regression to study the extent to which our respondents' classification of their level of union activity was influenced by the extent of their Active and Passive Participation, hours spent in union activities per month, and generational cohort.

Ordered logistic regressions operate under four assumptions (Fields, 2015). The first assumption is that the dependent variable is an ordinal variable such as the result of a Likert scale or an ordered ranking of preference (Not at all, Some, Very Much). The second assumption is that there are more than two independent variables, which must be either continuous or categorical. The third assumption is that of no multicollinearity (correlation between two or more independent variables). The fourth assumption is that of proportional odds – that all independent variables have the same effect at each cumulative split of the dependent variable.

To complete post-hoc testing for our ordered logistic regression, we ran a test of parallel lines (also known as proportional odds test). In this test, an insignificant chi-square statistic confirms the proportional odds assumption and the model's validity (UCLA Institute for Digital Research and Education, 2019).

Chapter 3: Paper 1

The three papers representing the output of this research program will be presented over the course of the next three chapters (Ch. 3, 4, 5) of this dissertation. Each chapter will conform to a similar format, beginning with a short introduction linking the paper to the thesis' goals, followed by an abstract, and then the paper itself. We made several formatting decisions to improve the readability of the document. First, the references for each paper have been integrated into the reference section at the end of this thesis document. Second, headings within the papers themselves are not numbered, and are presented as they were for journal publication (e.g. Introduction, Literature review, other main sections are at level 1).

The omnibus objective of this thesis is to study the relationship between generational cohort and union participation. Paper 1's objective is to elucidate the relationship between generational cohort and individual perceptions of unions. As such, it contributes to the thesis as a whole by examining each generational cohort's perceptions of unions, and the extent to which these perceptions differ. As noted earlier, members' perceptions of unions (which are studied in quantitative research using the attitudes towards unions measure) have been shown to predict union participation (Burnett, 2010). By elucidating the relationship between generational cohort and perceptions of unions, Paper 1 provides insight into a known predictor of union participation.

3.1 Abstract

Studying a large American union, we report on findings from two studies investigating perceptions of and attitudes towards unions through a generational cohort lens. Study one explores the link between generational cohort and members' perceptions of unions, employing qualitative analysis of 100 interviews: 30 Millennials, 35 Gen X, and 35 Baby Boomers.

Analysis determined that union members focus on either ideological or instrumental explanations to support perceptions that their generation was either pro-union or anti-union. Themes identified in study one were further explored in a quantitative study which involved statistical analysis of survey data (n=4717) to identify possible differences in pro and anti-union attitudes across three generational cohorts: Baby Boomer (n = 2857), Gen X (n = 1256), and Millennials (n = 304). Data from both studies support the idea that pro-union perceptions and attitudes are more prevalent among those in the Baby Boomer cohort than Gen Xers, and Millennials.

3.2 Attitudes Towards Unions Through a Generational Cohort Lens

Since the middle of the 20th century, unions in the United States and other industrialized nations have experienced a well-documented decline (Clawson and Clawson, 2007). Over this period, union density (the proportion of the workforce that is unionized) has shrunk by 75% (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2018), unions' political and economic power has diminished (Clawson and Clawson, 2007), the average age of unionized workers has increased from 41 years of age to 48 (Schmitt and Werner, 2009), and unions have seen a decline in member participation in union activities (Gall and Fiorito, 2012), especially among younger members (Cates, 2014). While recent data show that three-quarters of new union members in 2017 were thirty-five years of age or younger (Schmitt, 2018), this influx this will have little impact if younger workers remain disinterested in unions and the union movement as reflected in recent research (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015; Hodder 2014; Cates, 2014).

To cope with these challenges, unions and researchers have focused their attention on union renewal (Behrens, Hamann, and Hurd, 2004), the name given to the change process aimed at rebuilding the labour movement to a point where it can protect and advance the rights and interests of workers (Kumar, 2012). The attention on renewal has brought into focus the critical

importance of understanding generations and generational differences with respect to attitudes towards unions and unionization. Unfortunately, a search of the extant literature determined that very little generational research has been done within unions (Cates, 2014). As such, fundamental questions such as “how is generational cohort related to perceptions of and attitudes towards unions?” and “what are the implications of generational differences in perceptions of and attitudes towards unions on the union renewal movement” remain unanswered.

To answer these important questions, we began a program of research to help us better understand the relationship between generational cohort and union members’ attitudes towards unions. Ultimately, our goal was to learn more about how unions could increase union member participation, a key element to union renewal (Gall and Fiorito, 2012). This paper reports on two studies, one exploratory, the other descriptive, designed to elucidate the relationship between generational cohort and individual perceptions of unions. Findings from these studies contribute to both the union renewal and generational cohort literatures and have implications for researchers and unions who are engaged in the union renewal process.

Literature Review

As Joshi, Dencker, Franz and Martocchio (2010) point out, the "generations" construct is elusive and researchers in different disciplines have taken a variety of approaches to try to understand this phenomenon. In the section that follows we begin with an introduction to the generational cohort literature. We then provide contextual information to support our argument that attitudes towards unions may vary with generational cohort.

Generational Cohort

The term generation (also “cohort”, or “generational cohort”) describes “a group of individuals born within the same historical and socio-cultural context, who experience the same

formative experiences and develop unifying commonalities as a result” (Lyons and Kuron, 2014, pg. 140). Mannheim (1952) proposed that people born in a similar period of time, and within proximate cultural and geographical contexts are similarly influenced by shared foundational events and experiences and tend to develop similar world-views, which influence the way they interpret and interact with the world around them. As summarized by Lyons and Kuron (2014, pg. 140): “each generation’s location in history limits its members to a specific range of opportunities and experiences, provides them with “collective memories” that serve as a basis for future attitudes and behaviors, predisposes them to a certain “habitus”, a mode of thought and action, and restricts their range of self-expression to certain pre-defined possibilities throughout their lives.” Generations are also thought to have an identity, defined by Joshi et al., (2010) as “an individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to a generational group/ role, together with some emotional and value significance to him or her of this group/role membership.”

This study will compare the attitudes towards unions and unionization of individuals representing the three most prominent cohorts in the workforce today. Baby Boomers (Boomers) were born between 1946-1964, coinciding with a rise in birth rates following WW2, and were shaped by post-war economic prosperity, the Civil Rights Movement, and the advent of the birth control pill. Generation X (Gen X) (1965-1979) emerged from the drop in the birthrate following the baby boom, and was shaped by the Cold War, and stagnant economic environment that saw an increase in layoffs. The Millennial cohort (1980-2000) followed a rise in birth rates that occurred as Baby Boomers started to have families of their own (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Millennials were shaped by the ubiquity of computer technology, the 9/11 attacks, and an age of austerity brought on initially by the dotcom bubble of the early 2000s.

Despite widespread acceptance of the cohort concept in popular culture and a growing body of empirical research supporting the idea of generations, researchers such as Rudolph and Zacher (2018) argue that the current conceptualization of generational cohort should be discontinued. They note that generational theory is too deterministic and that generational stereotypes are not likely to accurately represent all cohort members. They also claim that there is a lack of empirical support for the construct, pointing to several empirical studies that demonstrate mixed or no evidence of generational differences (e.g., Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, and Gade, 2012; Stassen, Anseel, and Levesque, 2016; Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, and Shepard, 2017) to bolster their argument.

Rudolph and Zacher (2018) highlight several methodological challenges to the study of generational cohort. They use research done by Costanza and Finklestein (2015), for example, to support their claim that the results of many studies into generational differences are at least partly attributable to the analytical techniques chosen by researchers. They also identify methodological issues related to differentiating between period, cohort, and age effects in generational research arguing that cross sectional studies (i.e. comparing multiple generations at the same point in time) confuse aging and cohort effects, while cross-temporal analysis (i.e. comparing people of same age at different points in history) confuses period and cohort effects.

When making their case for the continued study of generational differences, Lyons, Urick, Kuron, and Schweitzer (2015) address many of the shortcomings of the theory identified by Rudolph and Zacher (2018) and other critics of the generation concept such as Costanza and Finklestein (2015). In response to the claim that it is dangerous to stereotype large swaths of people based on their year of birth, Lyons et al. (2015) invoke Mannheim's (1952) fundamental work on the subject. Generations, in Mannheim's (1952) view, are not monolithic, but are likely to include

sub-units that may diverge from the norm. Lyons and Kuron (2014) claim that we can learn more about each cohort by studying their respective subgroups in the context of the cohort as a whole.

Lyons et al. (2015) also address the criticism that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the validity of the generational cohort construct, pointing to recent meta-analyses (Lyons and Kuron, 2014; Parry and Urwin, 2010; Twenge, 2010) that find otherwise. Lyons and Kuron (2014), for example, provide evidence of generational differences in personality traits (Twenge et al.; 2008, Steward and Bernhardt, 2010), work-values (Hansen and Leuty, 2012), and attitudes (Lub et al. 2012; Benson and Brown, 2011). Generational differences reported in this literature are summarized in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Generational differences in personality traits, work values, and work attitudes

Personality Traits	Work Values and Attitudes
Neuroticism: Millennials > Gen X > Boomers (Twenge, 2010)	Leisure: Millennials > Gen X > Boomers (Twenge et al., 2010; Wray-Lake et al., 2012)
Narcissism: Millennials > Gen X > Boomers (Twenge, 2000)	Work Centrality: Boomers > Gen X > Millennials (Twenge et al., 2010; Wray-Lake et al., 2012)
Extroversion: Millennials > Gen X > Boomers (Twenge, 2001)	Job security: Boomers > Gen X > Millennials (Wray-Lake et al., 2012)
Self-Esteem: Millennials > Gen X > Boomers (Gentile et al., 2010)	Social: Boomers = Gen X = Millennials (Wray-Lake et al., 2012)
Empathy: Boomers > Gen X > Millennials (Konrath, 2012)	Altruistic: Boomers = Gen X = Millennials (Hansen and Leuty, 2012)
	Organizational Commitment: Boomers > Gen X > Millennials (Costanza et al., 2012)

Lyons et al. (2015) also use Mannheim's (1952) foundational theory to address issues around the age/cohort/period confound. They argue that Mannheim saw generations as "a fundamental confluence of biology and history" (pg. 349), meaning that as researchers we should examine "the joint influence of age *within* cohort *within* period" (pg. 349). They also identify several methodological approaches that researchers can use to disentangle the impacts of life-cycle from cohort and historical effects.

Lyons et al. (2015) conclude their paper by arguing that we need not give up researching the generation construct because we have yet to adequately measure it, but rather that we need more research to better understand the factors that shape the way that we see and interact with the world around us. They highlight the need for more qualitative research in the area, claiming that the richness these types of data provide should help us better understand how generations develop and evolve, and how the societal conditions into which we are born impact our perceptions and the way we interact with the world around us (Lyons et al., 2015). This recommendation is followed in this paper.

Unpacking Generational Identities in Unions

Mannheim's (1952) theory argues that people are a product of their time, that they are shaped by the events that occur in their formative years. Similarly, Lyons and Kuron (2014) conclude their meta-analysis of generational differences in the organizational setting by underlining the importance of context in generational research. This implies that to understand a generation we need first to study what environmental influences they were exposed to in their formative years. Accordingly, to help us with our analysis we generated an overview of the sociopolitical conditions impacting the union movement in the United States during the time-

period when the three generations included in this study entered the workforce (i.e. 1960s through to the present time). This is shown in Figure 3-1 and discussed below.

Baby Boomers (Born 1946 to 1964). The Boomers in our sample entered the workforce between 1964 and 1982. The “Early” Boomers (i.e. those who entered the labor market between 1966 and 1970) started working at a time when the economy was riding out the end of a post-WW2 economic surge. The union movement was relatively powerful during this period. Union density in 1965 was 28%, a number that has not been surpassed since, and work stoppages of 1000+ workers in the U.S.A. were common (222 in 1960, 268 in 1965) (BLS, 2018). With a 71% approval rating in 1965, up from 69% in 1960 (Gallup, 2015) public support for unions was high and growing over this period as well.

Boomers who entered the labor market between 1970 and 1980 experienced a slightly less favorable union environment than did their older counterparts (but it should be noted a more positive labour environment than those who entered the labour market a bit later). Key indicators declined throughout the 1970s: union density fell from 27% in 1970 to 22% in 1980, and the number of strikes of 1000+ workers fell from its peak of 381 work stoppages, to 187 over that same period (BLS, 2018). Phelan (2007) identifies the 1970s-oil crisis as one of the factors that helped to speed up the union movement’s decline and argues that during this period the U.S.A. introduced institutional frameworks and neoliberal policies that were market-driven and anti-union in nature. Public disapproval of unions increased slightly from 25% to 27% over this time. Throughout the 1980s, union strike action and density both hit new lows as the number of work stoppages of 1000+ workers fell from 54 in 1985 to 22 by 1990 (BLS, 2018). Similarly, union

Figure 3-1: Socio-political conditions—1955–2015. Note: Union density and strike data from Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), Union approval/Disapproval from Gallup (2015): When creating this figure, we assumed that the unionized employees in our sample would be approximately 18 years of age when they started working (most have high school education)

density continued its decline to 16% in 1990 from 18% in 1985 (BLS, 2018). These indicators imply that early Gen Xers were exposed to unions at a time where their power, rights, and size were being significantly eroded.

Late Gen Xers (i.e. entering workforce in the 1990s) were exposed to a similar union environment as the early Gen Xers with one small difference in that public support of unions had made some incremental gains – rising from 55% in 1985 to 60% in 1990 (Gallup, 2015). While public opinion towards unions had grown more positive, Gen Xers during this period were exposed to unions who were constantly under siege from increases in the deregulation of labor markets, contracting out of work, privatization, part-time employment and globalization (Clawson and Clawson, 2007).

Millennials (Born 1980 to 2000). Entry of the first of the Millennials into the workforce started at the dawn of the millennium (1998) and continues to this day. In many ways, the union environment experienced by those in the Millennial cohort was like that experienced by Gen X (i.e., hostile to unions), but to a greater degree. Union density continued its decline, from 13.5% in 2000 to its lowest point in recent history at 11.9% in 2010 (Gallup, 2015). Unions were exercising their power less frequently and strikes of 1000+ workers fell from 22 in 2000 to 12 by 2015 (BLS, 2018). During this same period, the US economy was again entering a downturn as the dotcom bubble burst. Over their time in office spanning much of the decade, president George W. Bush and his administration further hindered the union movement's position by weakening workers' health and safety legislation (OHSA, 2010), restricting workers' right to strike (AFL-CIO, 2018), and filling the National Labor Relations Board with anti-union appointees (Freeman, 2007). The new millennium also saw a proliferation of right to work laws, which give workers the ability to opt out of their union (and paying dues) while still receiving

the benefits of unionization (NRTW.ORG, 2018). Despite these trends (or perhaps as a reaction to them), public opinions of unions shifted upward from 2010-2015 and research done by PEW (2018) found that 75% of respondents under the age of 25 had favorable views of unions (the largest percentage of any age group in their study), suggesting that despite systemic obstacles faced by unions, grassroots support could be growing.

Implications for Union Renewal. Mannheim (1952) posits that generational differences in attitudes and values can be linked to the fact that individuals within different generations live in historically different times and are shaped by different social life experiences. Above, we have shown how members of each cohort grew up in environments that differed in their support of the union movement. As such, if Mannheim's (1952) theory is correct, then members of each cohort could be expected to have differing views of unions. A rare study of generational cohort's influence on union members done by Cates (2014) which found that union "opt-out" rates were negatively related to cohort age also provides some support for the idea of generational differences in attitudes towards unions.

While there is a shortage of empirical research which "unpacks" generational identity within unions (Cates, 2014), a body of research has emerged which seeks to explain the mechanisms that have led to the union movement's decline and the potential for renewal through younger workers. Such studies (e.g., Bryson et al., 2005; EFILWC, 2010; Gomez et al., 2002) typically identify multiple macro-level factors that are either preventing younger workers from becoming union members and/or reducing the likelihood that young workers are socialized to the benefits of unionism. This body of research makes the case that younger workers are harder to unionize than older workers because: (1) they work in newer industries that have not yet been unionized, (2) they are in temporary or contract positions, the nature of which typically prevents

unionization, and (3) neoliberal ideology and policies that have become popular in western economies inhibit the spread of union ideology and the socialization of young workers to the union cause. This last proposition is important given the significant amount of empirical research demonstrating that positive socialization to the benefits of unionism predicts positive attitudes towards unions (Bryson et al., 2005; Gomez et al., 2002; Dufour-Poirer and Laroche, 2015) and that pro-union attitudes positively predict union participation (Tripti and Ginni, 2015). Kuriga (2006) makes the case that the lack of union participation of younger workers cannot, however, be blamed totally on the labor movement's inhospitable external environment and argues that unions have not paid enough attention to organizing younger workers.

Other than the above studies we could find little empirical research either supporting or refuting the idea of generational differences in attitudes towards unions. This is unfortunate given research linking successful union renewal to unions' ability to better-integrate and increase activism among their younger members (Hodder, 2014; Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015). It is our hope that this study, which explores the relationship between generational cohort and attitudes towards unions, will provide information that can help unions engage different cohorts of employees and enhance their ability to implement effective strategies aimed at union renewal.

Methods

In this paper, we report on a multi-method case study undertaken to explore the relationship between generational cohort and attitudes towards unions. Most studies of new ideas start with an exploratory research study where the research seeks to understand more about the phenomena and lay the groundwork for future studies. Once the groundwork is established, the next step is descriptive research, defined as attempts to explore and explain while providing additional

information about a topic (Shields and Rangarajan, 2013). Descriptive research extends what was discovered in the exploratory phase and increases awareness of the phenomenon to the level where the researcher can develop hypotheses. In the exploratory study reported on in this paper, we used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data which provided us with a deep understanding of how each generational cohort of union members perceives unions. Then, in the descriptive study, we explored themes identified in our qualitative analysis using quantitative methods and a larger sample size. In this methodology section, we provide the reader with a description of the case organization. This is followed by sections devoted to first the exploratory study and then the descriptive study. We then discuss key findings and draw relevant conclusions from both studies.

Case organization

Our sample consists entirely of members of a large American union operating in the transportation sector. This union (referred to in this paper using the pseudonym “Natunion”) represents approximately 40,000 members across the continental U.S.A.

Fairbrother and Yates’ (2004) present a typology (ranging from ‘servicing’ to ‘organizing’) that classifies unions based on their hierarchical structure and the nature of the union’s relationship with its members. Natunion does not lay at either extreme of Fairbrother and Yates’ (2004) continuum. Natunion has some aspects of a servicing association as union staff and officers perform union roles and duties as representatives of union members. Natunion’s local offices, however, are also heavily reliant upon grassroots-style unionism that is typically associated with organizing unions. For example, the union relies upon its members to run in elections to become delegates that get voting power in National Division decisions such as the adoption of new by-laws and policy changes. Local lodges also depend on volunteers to take on a variety of roles such as elected officer positions, and union steward positions.

This research initiative started when Natunion's leadership saw a need for renewal within its own organization. Leadership had become concerned that union involvement among its membership was in decline. Meetings were sparsely attended, and filling key volunteer roles was a challenge. The union's leadership felt that the large amount of travel required of their members could be one obstacle to participation as it is difficult for workers to be active in their local office when on the road for work. Another potential cause of decline in participation observed by the union's leadership was a lack of satisfaction with the union itself. To diagnose and find a remedy to this problem, Natunion wanted to find out more about its members' expectations of and satisfaction with the union, and what they could do to get members more involved.

A second pressure for change within the union was its aging membership. While the American population is aging at a rapid pace (Ortman, J.M., Vekloff, V.A., and Hogan, H. (2014), this demographic trend is even more exaggerated within Natunion's membership, as the average age of its membership is 52 years old. At the time the study started, younger workers from the Gen X and Millennial cohorts were greatly outnumbered by those from the Boomer cohort. The union wanted to know specifically how it could better appeal to younger members to get them more involved with the union. The union executive believed quite passionately that getting more young people actively involved with Natunion was a key to the union's future sustainability and renewal. The studies reported on in this paper are part of a research program undertaken with the union to address these issues.

With the above pressures for change in mind, we engaged in an action research program with Natunion for four years. The relationship was academic in nature and the researchers were not paid for their work. The researchers were granted access to the union leadership and its members, and all research costs were paid for by the union. A generationally diverse research

advisory board made up of union executives and union stewards guided the research. In return, the researchers presented their findings to the union and engaged in discussions with them on how they could use the results moving forward. Our findings led to the implementation of several high priority pilot projects. In the first pilot project, regional union representatives re-organized their duties to allow for more on-site visits to increase the amount of facetime members have with their representatives. Another pilot project saw the implementation of a “text tree” for the dissemination of information. Rather than relying on postcards, scarcely attended meetings, or word of mouth to spread information, vital news flowed from regional representatives to local officers, who would then cascade the information to members through text messages.

Study One: Exploratory Research

We began our work with Natunion by undertaking an exploratory study featuring qualitative data. This approach ensured that we got the rich information and stories needed to help us understand how workers from each generational cohort felt about unions and unionization. We provide details about this study below.

Data collection

We collected data for our first study using a semi-structured interview. To identify our sample, the union’s president sent a letter to all members describing the study and seeking participants. The letter included information about the project’s aims, and how their participation would help the union. The letter also indicated that the researchers might seek out participants by telephone. The union encouraged their members to participate.

The union provided the researcher team with contact information of volunteers stratified by generational cohort, region, age and job. The research team then proceeded to call numbers on

the list in search of participants. When constructing our sample our goal was to satisfy the accepted norms with respect to sample size (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998) by interviewing at least thirty members from each cohort. We over-sampled younger workers to ensure that the sample consisted of three generational cohort groups of approximately equal size. The first author of this paper performed interviews using Skype internet communication software. Interviews were recorded and transcribed prior to data analysis. The complete interview covered a range of topics and took about an hour to complete.

Sample

Our final sample consists of 100 participants: 30 Millennials, 35 Gen X, and 35 Boomers. Participants resided in 32 states and worked in 42. Over half (58%) of our participants typically worked forty-hour, five-day work weeks, while about a quarter (22%) worked compressed weeks consisting of four ten-hour work days. About one in ten (11%) worked variable schedules. On average, participants had 16.4 years of experience in the union, and had worked about 44.5 hours in the month prior to the interview. Only one of the demographic variables we examined (years of experience in the union) were associated with generation. As expected, length of tenure in the union was related to age of the member (older members were generally more tenured).

Research Instrument

For this study, we analyzed responses to one interview question: “How does your generation perceive unions?” We asked our informants about their perceptions of their own generations as opposed to their own feelings about unions because Natunion’s leadership perceived generational differences to be an issue and we wanted to see if our participants saw it this way as well. We also asked our informants to provide their age so they could be categorized by generational cohort and the data analyzed through a generational cohort lens. Follow-up

clarification questions were posed by the interviewer as needed to elucidate informants' responses (e.g., Can you tell me why you think this?) The transcribed responses to the above interview question totaled 10 pages single-spaced.

Qualitative analysis

We coded our qualitative data using the initial/focused coding process as explained by Charmaz (2006). Initial coding involved assigning emergent labels to the data to identify first-order concepts (Charmaz, 2006). The second step, focused coding, attempts to “sort, synthesize, integrate and organize large amounts of data” (Charmaz, 2006, pg. 46). Focused coding was a two-stage process. This process began with theoretical coding, in which we compared theory to our responses to uncover any relationships existing across categories. From there, we used axial coding to explore the contextual and structural conditions related to the categories found in the initial coding process. We organized and analyzed interview data using QSR NVIVO-10 qualitative analysis software.

Sensitizing concepts

Sensitizing concepts are theories, frameworks and ideas from the literature that serve as starting points for data interpretation by helping the researcher to see, organize and understand experiences reported in the data (Charmaz, 2006). As was the case in this study, the researcher typically becomes aware of the relevance of a sensitizing construct when analyzing interview data. Two concepts that we believe are relevant to the interpretation of our respondents' perceptions of unions are union instrumentality and ideological attachment to the union. Union instrumentality “represents a calculative utilitarian relationship” (Newton and Shore, 1992, pg. 279) between a member and his or her union. If a union member believes that they can benefit from union membership through higher wages or increased job security, for example, then that member is high

in union instrumentality. Union ideology refers to the extent to which a union member shares the same values as the union movement – collectivism, power in numbers, belief in workers’ rights, for example (Newton and Shore, 1992). Union instrumentality and ideological alignment are both positively associated with union commitment and participation in union activities (Tripti and Ginni, 2015).

Findings: Exploratory Study

We begin by discussing key findings obtained using the total sample. We then break the data down by generational cohort and provide a cross-cohort comparison.

“How does your generation of workers perceive unions?” In total, we created four initial codes (first-order concepts) and two focused codes (second-order themes) to categorize workers’ opinions on how their generation viewed unions. The results of this phase of the analysis are shown in Table 3-2 and discussed below.

Initial coding. Initial coding of the responses produced four coding categories. Almost half of the respondents gave answers that we coded in a category that we labeled: “Generation believes unions do not help workers (enough)”. The following quotes typify responses included in this grouping:

“a lot of them say they don't help... it's negative” Millennial

“a lot of (my generation) don't really believe that (unions) fight for what we want. A lot of them feel that they just lay down and take what they get” Gen X

“I believe that they perceive unions as basically, pretty much a useless tool.” Boomer

Responses to our follow-up question asking respondents to clarify their answer indicated that informants who gave this response perceived that unions had not been successful in acquiring two highly inter-related “instrumental goods” that matter to these respondents: money in the form

of pay, and/or job security. In both cases, the comments indicated that union members valued security and perceived that having a job and hence the capacity to earn money provided them with desired levels of security.

One in four informants talked about how their generation lacks an appreciation for the history of unions and does not see what they get in return for the union dues they pay. The following quotations illustrate this perception:

“well, I think one of the problems is a lot of them don’t understand the history behind it. They kind of walked into these jobs and they’re kind of disappearing, but they’re walking into these jobs thinking that’s the way it always was. You know, that was a kind of hard fought for thing. People (in the past) had to have the guts to stand up and say we want this this and this, and that’s a hard thing. I don’t think people appreciate that enough.” Boomer

“They don’t understand’em at all... they just think it’s a place where their \$70 a month goes and they don’t get nothing out of it” Gen X

“they just see ’em as somebody you just pay money to... no idea what for”, Millennial,

We gave this initial code the following label to reflect these ideas: “My generation does not appreciate/understand the unions’ role/history.

When asked to elaborate, their responses did support the notion that this group of informants had no connection to unions or the union movement and perceived them as something that cost them money (which they value) but did not provide any benefits.

One in four of the union members we talked to held a diametrically opposite view to those just discussed. Examination of the responses showed that this group of informants perceives that their generation believes in the union’s goals and role in society. For example, one Boomer

indicated, “*We’re strong union*” which he clarified to mean that he perceives that his generation of workers are strongly aligned with unions and their cause. Another Boomer

Table 3-2: How does your generation of workers perceive unions?

Focused Codes	Initial codes	Boomers (n = 35)	Gen X (n = 35)	Millennial (n = 30)	Sample (n = 100)
Perception Based on Ideology		69% (24)	36% (13)	53% (16)	52%
	Generation understands/appreciates the union's role/history	51% (18)	8% (3)	10% (3)	24%
	Generation does not understand/appreciate the union's role/history	17% (6)	28% (10)	43% (13)	28%
Perception Based on Instrumentally		49% (17)	72% (26)	67% (20)	54%
	Generation believes unions help workers	26% (9)	8% (3)	13% (4)	11%
	Generation believes unions don't help workers (enough)	22% (8)	56% (20)	53% (16)	43%

Note: Percentages are calculated based on the sample size of the group being considered; The numbers in the brackets represent the number of people giving this response; only responses provided by 5% of the sample (n = 5) are considered in this analysis. Responses do not necessarily add up to 100% as some respondents gave multiple answers to the question.

reinforced this view: *“my generation can still remember what it took for unions – even though we are a generation removed from the guys that fought and died for unions, it’s more in our memory more about the kinds of sacrifices made to get unions and what we have”*. One Millennial simply stated that *“If you are out here, you appreciate the union”*.

We grouped these responses into a first order code which we named: “Generation understands or appreciates history/role of unions”. Follow-up questions asking respondents why they gave the response they did indicate that this group of individuals have a positive relationship with unions and value the key principles of the union movement.

Finally, about one in ten believed that their generation valued unions because they felt that their union had obtained desired instrumental benefits for them during the bargaining process: benefits such as pay, job security, and protection from the employer. For example, one Boomer stated that, *“I think they have a positive attitude towards them. They’ve helped us make a fair wage and a decent living and have helped protect us against basically discrimination and unfair practices, really. Kept things level. I think that’s how most guys my age think of it”*.

Similarly, one Gen Xer said that, *“I think they perceive it as a good thing. The union has got us a lot of good things, and better perks, and a lot of things we wouldn’t get if we didn’t have them”*.

A Millennial, demonstrating his cohort’s appreciation for the material benefits brought by the union stated that, *“If we don’t have the union, we probably get paid about ten dollars an hour for the same work”*.

We grouped these responses into an initial code which we named “My generation thinks unions help workers”. When respondents were asked to expand on their response, all of them equated “help” with unions’ ability to get material benefits like pay, job security, and fair treatment.

Focused coding. Focused coding resulted in our classification of the four initial codes into two theoretically relevant groups: perceptions of unions based on ideological factors, and perceptions of unions based on instrumental factors (see Table 3-2). Approximately half the informants gave responses that suggested that their perceptions of unions were “ideologically-oriented.” An ideology is a set of opinions or beliefs of a group or an individual. In the context of this study, we use this term to describe informants whose perceptions of the union reflect an understanding of and in agreement with the goals and principles espoused by those in the labor movement as articulated by Newton and Shore (1992). The other half of the union members we interviewed seem to base their perceptions on the union’s ability (or inability) to obtain something of value for its members (i.e., money, job security). We felt the term instrumentality (i.e., means to an end) expressed how this group of union members felt that their generation viewed the union.

Relationship between generational cohort and perceptions of unions. One of the main objectives of this study was to determine the relationship between generational cohort and perceptions of unions. The data in Table 3-2 inform our understanding of this issue. When comparing across generations several interesting observations can be made whether a generation’s perceptions of unions are positive or negative and/or associated with ideology or instrumentality.

Boomers tended to feel that their generation perceived unions through an ideological (rather than instrumental) lens. More Boomers felt that their generation was pro-union (i.e., positive perceptions of unions) than anti-union (i.e., negative perceptions)

Those in the Gen X sample, on the other hand tended to give responses that suggested that they felt that their generation evaluated unions using instrumental (rather than ideological) evaluation criteria. We also noted that more respondents in the Gen X sample tended to feel that their generation was anti-union (i.e., report negative perceptions) than pro-union (i.e., positive

perceptions). This interpretation of the data is consistent with the fact that more than half (20 of 35) of the Gen Xers we talked to stated that their generation does not feel their union helps workers enough. It is also interesting to note that only 3 of the Gen Xers in our sample felt that their generation understands the role of the union and believes unions help workers.

Half of the respondents in the Millennial sample gave responses suggesting that they felt that their generation viewed unions through an ideological lens, acknowledging that their generation does not understand or appreciate the role of the union. Two thirds of the Millennials also acknowledged that the perceptions of their generation tended to be based on what unions could do for them (instrumentality). In this case, the majority again expressed opinions suggesting that they felt that their generation did not believe that unions were doing enough for workers. In other words, the majority believe that Millennials neither appreciate the role of unions nor feel that unions provided benefits that outweigh the financial costs of being a union member. In many ways, the responses provided by the Millennials mirror those heard by respondents in the Gen X sample (e.g., only three of the Millennials in our sample felt that their generation understands the role of unions, while four believe that unions help workers).

Overall, the data support the idea that Millennials and Gen Xers are alike in their perceptions while the Boomers' views of unions are somewhat unique. More specifically, workers in the Boomer cohort are more likely to feel that workers in their generation have a positive view of unions while Millennial and Gen X workers perceive their cohort's view as more critical. Quotations from workers of all three cohorts provide some detail pertaining to these discrepancies, but one Boomer summed it up perhaps in the most succinct manner by saying *"The older guys like (unions), the younger guys don't get it"*.

Also interesting were responses suggesting that informants, regardless of their age, believed that the older the worker the more likely they were to hold pro-union attitudes. The general stereotype articulated by our group of respondents was that the older workers had more of a connection to the union movement than did younger workers. For example, one Boomer stated, *“we appreciate it more what the union has done, the younger ones just don't seem to understand the intent of the unions, or all the years past, what's went on with corporate America and everything. I think everything's deteriorated. Corporate America just don't really care, and for some reason the younger ones just don't seem to care either.”*

A respondent in the Gen X sample expressed a similar sentiment: *“I think a lot of the younger guys haven't seen the great changes the union has brought ... they come in and oh, that's just the way it is. They don't fight because they don't see that they've been given anything. So I really don't think that they know enough to really care, but as far as I'm concerned, I understand fully what the union's done, and what the union continues to do. I try to get to the meetings, I've got my union jacket, I pay my union dues. I don't want my union to go away... what the union's brought, is why I've got my job.”*

Others talked about how they felt that younger members are less involved in their union than members in their cohort. For example, one Millennial stated, *“I'd say that they're not really as into it as the older guys”* referring to his generation's lack of an ideological connection to unions. One Gen Xer reflects back upon his own early days with the union to elaborate, *“I'd have to say for the younger guys, there's not a whole lot of them that come to the union meetings.... We try to get the guys to come to the union meetings, but I dunno, I wish we could get more to come.”*

Some respondents provided comments which are supportive of the idea that macro-level environmental shifts have reduced pro-union sentiment over time. For example, one Boomer

talked about how support for unions has changed over the years due in part to corporate efforts to reduce the union movement's power. *"Back in the old days when (unions) went on strike, people cared about them. They'd feed them - in our area, the cops wouldn't bother them - now you've gotten to the point where the companies have totally changed the public opinion, and that has never been steered back to the positive side yet. The companies still have the media convinced everyone in the union is a bad person, and everyone should make \$4/hr."* Another Boomer, referring to Fox News, the right-wing television network, discussed how the media and politics have influenced society's understanding of unions and their benefits. *"I'm not a Fox guy, but those Fox guys, they don't like unions, and the Republican Party, they're not big on unions. I don't see unions gaining much popularity, I don't see (public opinion) going up, but I think a lot of that is due to not being informed about what (unions have) done - free weekends, eight- hour workdays - they don't see it, especially the young people."*

In summary, our findings support the following observations: (1) workers from the Boomer cohort are more likely to have an ideological connection to unions, (2) workers from the Generation X and Millennial cohorts are more likely to perceive unions as "a means to an end" and say that unions do not provide their generation with desired outcomes (i.e., salary, job security). These findings are consistent with generational theory and support the idea that changes over time in how society views unions have negatively impacted the attitudes workers in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts hold towards unions as well as their awareness of and commitment to union history and the union movement.

Study Two: Descriptive Research

In the second study of our research program, we examine themes uncovered in our exploratory interview analysis. We will provide details on our descriptive follow-up study below.

Data collection

We collected data for the descriptive using a survey. As with the interview, Natunion's leadership notified its members about the survey in advance by mail, while also promoting survey participation at union meetings and through informal interactions with members. Survey questionnaires were mailed to all members of the union along with self-addressed and stamped envelopes in the summer of 2011. Unfortunately, the cost of mailing survey reminder notices to all union members made it financially infeasible for us to send any form of follow-up note to non-respondents.

Research instrument

The survey included a measure that captures pro-union and anti-unions sentiments (i.e., union attitudes) as well as generational cohort. We assessed generational cohort by asking the respondent to indicate the year in which they were born. To facilitate comparison with other studies in this area we then then classified participants into one of three generational cohorts based on the generally accepted birth years associated with each cohort identified by Lyons and Kuron (2014): Boomers (1946-1964); Gen X (1965-1979); Millennial (1980-2000).

Union attitudes are an individual's "overall perceptions about unions" (Tripti and Ginni, 2015, pg.46). While the words attitude and perception are close in meaning, and often used interchangeably, there is a subtle different between the two constructs. According to Webster's, an attitude is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something. An attitude is often reflected in a person's behaviour and can be perceived by others. Perception on the other hand, is a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something. Although the interviews focused on workers' perceptions of unions, the survey focuses on our respondent's union attitudes as research

in the area has shown that it is an excellent predictor of a behavior that is a key focus of union renewal - union participation (Tripti and Ginni, 2015).

We measured union attitudes in this study using Brett's (1980) 12-item union attitudes scale. Respondents were asked to use a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements such as: "It would be good for the country if more workers had union representation."

Sample

In total, 4717 completed surveys were returned to the research team out of a total 40,000 distributed surveys for a 12% response rate. Boomers (n = 2857) made up 65% of the sample, Gen X (n = 1256) made up 28% of the sample, while Millennials (n = 304) made up 7% of the sample. All (100%) of the respondents were male (although there are women in the union, its membership is more than 95% male). About 80% of the sample were married, while 80% had at least one child at home. About half (50%) had a high school diploma, 9% had completed college, and 36% had some college education. Just under half (48%) of the total sample had been with the union for at least 25 years, while 15% had been with the union for fewer than five years at the time of the survey. The union executive indicated that the demographics of our sample reflected the demographics of the total union membership.

Quantitative analysis.

Brett (1980) claims that people tend to have either pro-union or anti-union attitudes. To determine the veracity of this claim we undertook a principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotation of the union attitudes data to explore the possibility of breaking the measure down into two or more discrete factors (Costello et al, 2005). Through this analysis, we identified two factors across eleven items as shown in Table 3-3. One item, "Union dues are too high" had a

communality below the threshold of 0.4 suggested by Costello et al (2005), and a loading of less than 0.312 on factor 2, the lower bound suggested by Tabachnik and Fidell (2011) and was therefore eliminated from the measure.

Table 3-3: Factor Loadings: Attitudes Towards Unions

Item	Pro-union Factor	Anti-Union Factor
Unions help improve working conditions	.80	
Unions help working men and women to get better wages	.78	
Employees who have a union are better off than those who don't	.75	
Unions make sure that employees are treated fairly by supervisors	.71	
It would be good for the country if more workers had union representation	.69	
Workers are more successful getting problems resolved when they bring problems up as a group rather than individuals	.58	
When a strike is called, it is generally for a good reason	.48	
Unions are becoming too strong		.89
Unions are too powerful in this country		.88
Unions are a major cause of high prices		.68
Unions interfere with good relations between companies and workers		.60
Chronbach's alpha	.84	.81

Note: Varimax Rotation method with Kaiser Normalization

The first factor (see Table 3-3) is composed of seven items, all of which reflect pro-union attitudes. We labeled this factor Pro-union Attitudes. The second factor includes four items, all of which represent anti-union sentiments. As such, we gave it the label “Anti-union Attitudes.” The Cronbach's alpha of the two factors (Pro-union Attitudes = .84; Anti-union Attitudes = .81) indicate that both measures have high internal consistency and high reliability.

We then calculated respondents' scores on the Pro-union Attitude and Anti-union Attitude measures as a summed average of all items loading on each factor. Higher scores on the pro-union

attitudes measure reflect more positive attitudes towards unions while higher scores on the anti-union attitudes measure demonstrate more negative attitudes towards unions.

We then used MANOVA with one independent variable – generational cohort (Boomer, Gen X, Millennial), and one dependent variable – union attitudes (Pro-union Attitudes, Anti-union Attitudes) to examine the relationship between generational cohort and attitudes towards unions. Following a significant MANOVA, we conducted univariate F-tests using a Bonferroni adjustment.

Findings: Descriptive Study

Key findings from the MANOVA can be found in Table 3-4. The omnibus F-test indicated a significant multivariate main effect for generational cohort for both Pro-union Attitudes and Anti-union Attitudes with a Wilk's lambda - .962, $F(4, 4014) = 39.78$, $p < 0.001$. Both univariate F-tests were significant for all cohorts: Pro-union attitudes, $F(2, 4014) = 77.79$, $p < 0.001$; Anti-union attitudes, $F(2, 4014) = 27.059$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3-4: Union Attitudes by Generational Cohort

Generation	Pro-Union Attitudes		Anti-Union Attitudes	
	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD
Boomer	4.03**	.01	2.14**	.02
Gen X	3.73	.02	2.33	.03
Millennial	3.70	.05	2.44	.06

Notes: $n=4414$, $p > 0.05$, ** Mean scores for Boomers significantly different than other two cohorts at $p > .005$, no differences between Gen X and Millennials

Examination of the data in Table 4 show that Pro-union Attitudes are positively related to the age of the cohort (Boomers: $\bar{X} = 4.03$; Gen X, $\bar{X} = 3.73$; Millennial, $\bar{X} = 3.70$), while Anti-union Attitudes are negatively related to cohort age (Boomers: $\bar{X} = 2.14$; Gen X, $\bar{X} = 2.33$; Millennial, $\bar{X} = 2.44$). Pairwise comparisons reveal that the differences in both Pro-union Attitudes and Anti-union Attitudes observed between the Boomers and those in the two other cohorts are statistically significant ($p > 0.001$). No such differences were observed between those in the Gen X and Millennial samples in either Pro-union or Anti-union attitudes.

In summary, the findings from our quantitative analysis show that Boomers report different attitudes towards union than their counterparts in the Generation X and Millennial cohort, both of whom share a similar point of view. Data analysis supports the idea that those in the Boomer cohort are significantly more likely than their counterparts in the other two generations to believe that unions help to improve working conditions, that unions help improve wages and solve problem, and that unions are generally good for workers, and less likely to feel that American unions are too strong, too powerful, and contribute to bad relationships between employees and management. Finally, it should be noted that although respondents in the Gen X and Millennial samples reported significantly lower Pro-union Attitude scores and significantly higher Anti-union Attitudes than those in the Boomer sample, the data suggests that respondents in both groups are generally pro-union.

Discussion

Our research goal was to provide more insight into the relationship between generational cohort and union members' attitudes towards unions. Findings from both our exploratory and descriptive studies support the idea that the perceptions of and attitudes towards unions are influenced by generational cohort. More specifically, we found that Baby Boomers were the most

pro-union of the three cohorts, while Generation X and Millennials were less pro-union. In other words, the oldest of our three cohorts expressed distinctly different attitudes towards unions than workers in the two younger cohorts, the latter of which we found to be more similar than different. Figure 3-2 provides an overview of our findings.

Figure 3-2: Union perceptions and attitudes across generations

	Ideological Perceptions	Instrumental Perceptions	$\bar{X}$
Pro-union attitudes	Boomers (51% of sample)		Boomers: 4.03 Gen X: 3.70 Millennial: 3.70
Anti-union attitudes	Millennials (43% of sample)	Millennials (53% of sample) Gen X (56% of sample)	Boomers: 4.03 Gen X: 3.70 Millennial: 3.70

Why do the Boomers in our sample report higher pro-union attitudes? Examination of the qualitative data provides two possible reasons for these findings. First, it seems that most Boomers have an ideological attachment to unions – they believe in what the union movement stands for and understand its role in labor history. Second, many Boomers also mentioned that they have benefitted from their union’s instrumentality in getting them extrinsic rewards like better pay and benefits.

These findings are also consistent with the ideas espoused in the union and generational cohort literatures. More specifically it reinforces the claim that large-scale shifts in world economics, politics, and policy over time have increasingly reduced the likelihood that unions can effectively win workers over to the labour movement (EFILWC, 2010; Bryson et al., 2005).

They also support the idea that attitudes, perceptions and values can be linked to foundational experiences growing up (Mannheim, 1952).

What could explain the fact that union members in both the Gen X and Millennial samples report lower Pro-union and higher Anti-union sentiments than were observed in the Boomer group? From the qualitative data, we note that Gen Xers and Millennials largely felt that the union did not deliver what they wanted from the union (higher pay, better benefits, job security) and generally resented paying union dues when, in their view, they got little of value from the union in return for what they paid. Many also stated that their generation felt overlooked by the union. These findings are consistent with recent research which notes a disconnect between the “old guard” (i.e. Boomers) and next wave of union members and reinforces the need for unions to better adapt to the needs of and empower younger members (Kuriga, 2006; Dufour-Poirier et al., 2015; Hodder, 2014).

Our findings are also reflective of theoretical and empirical work done in the generational cohort literature. We found that while many of the Millennials and Gen Xers we talked to felt that their generation did not appreciate unions for ideological reasons (“the collective”), their comments suggested that they did appreciate the instrumental extrinsic benefits such as higher pay and job security that unions were able to provide. As indicated by Twenge et al. (2010), there is generally a negative relationship between age of cohort and extrinsic motivation. This idea is present throughout our participants’ interview responses. Our findings are, therefore, consistent with generational research which reports that over time society has shifted towards greater individualization and the notion of “Generation Me” as proposed by Twenge (2006).

It is also interesting to note that we had first-hand experience with the challenges of engaging Millennials as it was more difficult for us to identify Millennials who were willing to

participate in our research studies than to recruit those in the Gen X or Boomer cohorts. This serendipitous finding could be representative of the union's demographics (which are skewed towards Boomers), but it could also be an indication of the disengagement in union issues within the Millennial cohort observed in this study.

Conclusion

We undertook two studies, one qualitative, one quantitative, to help us better understand the relationship between generational cohort and how union members view unions. Several conclusions can be drawn from these findings. First, there are generational differences in attitudes towards unions and how union members think their cohort perceives the union. The fact that these generational differences were observed in two different studies using two very different methodologies and samples reinforces our confidence in these findings.

Second, an appreciable number (approximately half) of union members in our Boomer sample have a positive (i.e. pro-union) ideological attachment to the union (i.e. they value collectivism and power in numbers) and the union movement. By comparison, only three respondents in the Gen X sample and three respondents in the Millennial sample reported their cohort had a positive ideological attitude toward unions. The findings from the survey mirror those obtained from the interviews and support the idea that Boomers are more pro-union in their attitudes than are workers in the two younger cohorts. While this has long been held as a truism within the union literature, this study is the first we know of to verify this belief empirically.

Third, a substantive number (approximately half) of the Millennials in our sample felt that their generation did not understand or embody union ideology (i.e. they had anti-union views). Millennials were approximately twice as likely as their colleagues in the other two cohorts to talk about how their generation did not appreciate the role that unions play in society.

These findings are supportive of the ideas put forward by Gomez et al (2002), Bryson et al (2005) and others who attribute the increase in anti-union sentiment (and the concomitant decline in pro-union attitudes) over time to the fact that unions are having a harder time spreading their message and socializing younger workers to their cause. These findings imply it may be difficult to engage Millennials in any union renewal efforts by talking about the power of the collective and reducing inequality in the workforce as these objectives do not appear to resonate with them or their experiences.

Fourth, approximately half of the union members we talked to in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts noted that their generation did not believe that they would benefit from union membership (i.e. expressed anti-union views with respect to instrumentality). Their relationship with the union seems to be based on pragmatic considerations and focused on money and the here and now rather than the past. This interpretation of the data is consistent with the higher anti-union scores reported by respondents in these two groups. These two cohorts value security, which they articulated as including higher wages and promises of job security are more likely to focus on the tangible benefits to them of engaging with the union. Our findings imply that it will be difficult to re-engage these two important groups of workers into the union movement with the limits to the collective bargaining process currently in place within the United States. They also support the idea that workers in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts will be less likely to respond to union appeals to participate and mobilize for the “greater good.”

Fifth, we note that relatively few of our respondents sensed that their generation believes that they can gain material benefits such as higher wages, better benefits and job security from participating in the union (26% of Boomers, 8% of Gen X, 11% of Millennials). These findings suggest that the gradual eroding of the powers of unions observed over the past several decades

(see Figure 1) have taken their toll and reduced the amount of credibility younger workers place in the power of the union to deliver desired outcomes.

Finally, this study provides support for Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations. Our results support the suggestions made by Gomez et al., (2002) and Bryson et al., (2005) that the macro-level societal shifts and labour market changes that have negatively impacted unions and unionism have also impacted younger workers' receptivity to the values espoused by the union and the likelihood that they will see the union as "useful." Furthermore, the fact that the data shows variation within each cohort with respect to their union attitudes and perceptions also supports the idea that generations include sub-groups. We speculate that in this case these subgroups formed based on when the respondent entered the labour market.

How then will unions renew their membership when they have neither instrumental nor ideological levers to pull on? Fiorito and Gall (2012) suggest that one way unions could invigorate the renewal process is by segmenting their memberships based on different needs and then targeting each segment with services and mobilization efforts tailored to its needs. Our findings suggest that different cohorts of members connect to unions for different reasons – Boomers for ideological/intrinsic reasons, and Gen Xers and Millennials for more instrumental/extrinsic reasons. Unions could survey their own memberships to find out if similar divides exist, and then target how they engage with their members to meet the idiosyncratic needs of each respective cohort. Unions could also use our findings to re-assess their leadership structures from a cohort perspective. As Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) have indicated, younger workers appear to be deterred from union participation because they do not feel their needs are being met by the current structures and processes. As Boomers are predominant in

leadership roles, a re-assessment of leadership structures and functions could help unions to better embrace and reflect the needs and desires of younger workers in the future.

While our research does present some findings that are relevant for both academics and practitioners, it is not without its limitations. The first such limitation is that both our interview and survey data is cross-sectional, meaning it was collected at one point in time. The drawbacks of cross-sectional research have been pointed out in both the union and generational cohort literatures. Parks, Gallagher, and Fullagar (1995), for example, point out that the transitory nature of union membership along with the collective bargaining cycle could mean that attitudes and behaviours might vary depending on when data is collected. In the generational cohort literature, Burnett (2010) points out that cross-sectional data can conflate outcomes related to generational cohort membership with the aging curve. We suggest that future research in this area take a longitudinal approach to overcome these limitations.

A second shortcoming is that our data are idiosyncratic in nature, as our sample consists almost entirely of males who belong to one union in the U.S.A. Despite this, there are two factors that we believe increase the generalizability of our sample. First, our sample was drawn from over 20 states across the continental U.S.A. which we believe may reduce some of the homogeneity effects typically related to single-country samples. Second, the union members we interviewed and surveyed, though belonging to the same union, are employed by different companies (eight in our sample) and worked in a wide range of jobs with varied skill and expertise requirements. This helps increase the diversity of our sample. To increase generalizability, future research should identify samples that include non-unionized workers and female dominated unions (i.e., teachers, nurses).

One factor that could influence our analysis is that we asked informants about their perceptions of their own cohort's views of unions as opposed to asking about their own perceptions. We posed our questions in this manner to find out if our participants observed generational differences in their organization, a phenomenon noted in the literature (Lyons et al., 2015), and to compare these perceptions to the self-report questions featured in our quantitative analysis. Future research could directly ask participants for their views of unions. Another factor that could impact our findings is our use of Lyons's and Kuron's (2014) boundaries to identify generational cohort membership. Future research could use different boundaries and/or age to again increase our confidence in these findings. It is also possible that our findings were influenced by the fact that the union attitudes measure we used includes items asking about the impact of unions on workers more generally, not on individuals, or on specific groups of workers. Future research investigating union attitudes could be more specific in order to potentially capture a more nuanced understanding of pro and anti-union attitudes.

Finally, our findings lead us to wonder what is next for unions? How do they reverse the trends noted in this paper? Is there hope? Gomez et al. (2002) found that while structural barriers exist that can prevent younger workers from truly understanding the benefits that unions can bring workers, there nonetheless existed a desire for unions among younger workers. The key to increasing this desire, they argued, was reducing barriers to union participation which would enable more people to become exposed to the union movement's message and objectives. Researchers such as Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) and Kuriga (2006) suggest that unions start removing self-imposed barriers that prevent them from successfully engaging younger workers. Similarly, Rivers and Truitt (2014) argue that union communication is a roadblock to successful renewal. Further qualitative research into how union processes such as communication

might specifically impact the participation of younger generations of workers could help with revitalization efforts. While removing the barriers to renewal is theoretically possible, it would also require a societal shift away from the younger generation's much-reported individualism (i.e., Twenge, 2006), towards a more social mindset that has recently been observed and studied (i.e., Milkman, 2017). This supports the need for more qualitative longitudinal research into how the perceptions and attitudes of Millennials perhaps evolve over time.

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Chapter 4: Paper 2

Paper 2 aims to increase our understanding of the union participation construct by examining: (1) How do union members classify their own level of union participation? (2) What is the relationship between how union members classify their levels of union-participation (i.e. the emic view) and how researchers conceptualize this construct (i.e. the etic view)? (3) What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities (an objective measure of union participation) and their subjective perceptions of union participation? and (4) How does generational cohort affect each of these issues?

Our omnibus objective for this thesis is to explore the impact of generational cohort on the union participation construct. Paper 2 contributes to this thesis by exploring perceptions of the active and passive participation from an emic and etic perspective and through a generational lens. By providing a novel conceptualization of active and passive union participation, Paper 2 complements the other papers featured in this thesis that use a researcher-driven understanding of active and passive union participation, providing us with more nuance in the conceptualization of the union participation construct.

4.1 Abstract

Using interview and survey data, we compare emic and etic understandings of the union participation construct and identify areas where the views of the union members and researchers converge and diverge. Interview data were used to create activity-level profiles which linked how study participants labeled their level of union participation to the union activities they participated in. Survey data helped us determine the extent to which type of participation (active, passive), hours in union activities, and generational cohort impact how members view their level of

participation. We observed both overlap and divergence between emic and etic understandings of union participation.

4.2 Union Participation Through an Emic Lens: Comparing Emic and Etic Perspectives

Unions in affluent democracies have been in decline since the early 1980s (Vachon, Wallace and Hyde, 2016). While the union literature has proposed a variety of explanations for shrinking union memberships and drops in union density, there is little agreement with respect to the exact mechanisms contributing to this decline (Vachon et al., 2016). Efforts by unions to reverse the union movement's decline have prompted a growing body of scholarship on union renewal (Hickey, Kuruvilla and Lakhani, 2010) - "a process of change to rebuild the organizational and institutional strength of the labor movement (so that it will be) capable of defending and advancing the interests and (the) rights of workers" (Kumar, 2012, pg. 2). While scholars in the area continue to debate the merits of the different strategies unions can use to rebuild and revitalize, many agree that increased member participation is essential to the success of renewal initiatives (Hickey et al., 2010; Gall and Fiorito, 2012a).

Whether they call it union participation, union citizenship behaviour or union activism, most scholars and practitioners agree that union participation, defined by Redman and Snape (2004, pg. 847) as "the behavioral involvement of members in the operation and activities of the union" is inexorably linked to unions' ability to survive, grow, and affect change. Unfortunately, there is substantially less agreement within the union literature on how this construct should be theorized and operationalized (Fiorito, Padavic and DeOrtentiis, 2015). This lack of definitional clarity has resulted in estimates of union participation which vary widely depending on how the construct is measured (Fiorito et al., 2015). Also problematic is the fact that most studies of union

participation take an etic perspective (e.g. Smith, Duxbury and Halinski, 2019) such that the view of the researcher takes preeminence when the construct is conceptualized. In fact, our review of the extant literature in the area uncovered no examples of academic studies on union participation employing an emic perspective (i.e., research that takes the standpoint of the social group being studied). The lack of emic research in this area means that neither researchers nor practitioners are aware of how union members intellectualize the idea of participation and how this translates into action (Fiorito et al., 2015).

Our research program was designed to provide key policy makers and academics with a better understanding of what union participation means to union members. More specifically we use a mixed-methods (interviews followed by a survey) approach employing both emic and etic perspectives and qualitative and quantitative methodologies to improve our understanding of how union members from three different generational cohorts classify their union participation. Our research seeks answers to the following research questions: (1) How do union members classify their own level of union participation? (2) What is the relationship between how union members classify their levels of union participation (i.e., the emic view) and how researchers conceptualize this construct (i.e., the etic view)? (3) What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities (an objective measure of union participation) and members' subjective perceptions of union participation? and (4) How does generational cohort affect each of these issues?

Several factors led us to focus on generational cohort as a factor that could potentially impact how union members classify their union participation. First, research shows that younger members participate in union activities at a lower rate than do older members (Cates, 2014). This study might tell us more about why this is the case. Second, generational cohort research has

identified several significant between-cohort differences in personality attributes and work attitudes (Twenge, 2006, 2010; Wray-Lake and Hart, 2012; Lyons and Kuron, 2014). The fact that such differences exist suggests that different cohorts of individuals might have different perceptions of what constitutes “active” or “passive” union participation. Finally, despite the fact that unions must adapt to the needs of current and future generations of young workers to survive (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015), little research on unions has taken generational cohort into consideration (Cates, 2014). Information from this study should, therefore, inform those concerned with union renewal.

The decision to look at the relationship between the amount of time an individual spends in union related activities and union participation was motivated by research done by Fiorito et al. (2015) which argued that a union member’s assessment of their level of union participation depended on the number and type of activities they engaged in, how often the activity occurred and how time consuming the activity was. According to the authors, union members who engaged in passive non-time consuming activities (e.g., reading documents) could be considered to display lower levels of union-participation, while union members who engaged in less common activities that demand significant time commitment on a regular basis (e.g., held office) typified higher levels of union participation. They did not, however, include the amount of time their participants spent in union activities in their study.

How then does the amount of time an individual spends in union-related activities impact how they view their level of union participation? Do union members representing different generational cohorts view time in role differently when it comes to assessing their levels of participation? The answers to both questions are – we do not know. Our search of a variety of academic databases uncovered only one study on union participation that included hours spent in

union activities as a variable in their analysis (Smith et al., 2019). Our inclusion of time (an objective indicator of union participation) in this study will, therefore, provide union leaders and academics with further information on the various factors that union members belonging to different generational cohorts consider when they classify their level of union participation.

In summary, our study should help union leaders and academics better-understand how different generations of union members conceptualize union participation by providing an emic understanding of a concept that has traditionally been studied through an etic lens. In doing so it addresses gaps in our understanding of this construct pointed and provides important information to those interested in union renewal.

Literature Review

Our research is grounded in the union participation and generational cohort literatures. We begin with an overview of the research in these two domains that helped inspire and frame our research.

The “etic” view of the union participation construct

Our study takes as its starting point that union participation is a complex and dynamic concept with a variety of drivers. Early studies of union participation typically measured members’ activity using a unidimensional measure of the construct (McShane, 1986). More recently researchers (e.g., Redman and Snape, 2004; Fiorito et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2019) have, for theoretical and methodological reasons employed multidimensional conceptualizations of the construct. While there is no consensus on how this construct should be conceptualized and measured (Tripti and Ginni, 2015), a multidimensional conceptualization of union participation based on the union member’s level of activity (i.e., “active” versus “passive” participation) is widely held. “Active” forms of participation are typically conceptualized as those requiring more

effort and commitment from the union member (e.g., holding a position in the local office, pursuing grievances, serving on committees) than those activities typifying passive participation (e.g., reading the union newsletter, discussing union issues with colleagues) (Smith et al., 2019; Gall and Fiorito, 2012a).

Gall and Fiorito (2012b) argue that there is a need to fine-tune our understanding of the union participation construct. Recent research by Fiorito et al., (2015) which associated union members' self-reported levels of participation (Very active, Active, Somewhat active, Not active at all) to the union-related activities that these individuals indicated that they engaged in was undertaken with this goal in mind. Their survey study provides support for the idea that union participation is multi-dimensional (i.e., from passive to active), that the determinants of participation vary depending on the form of participation being considered, and that "union activism is not all of a piece ... attending union meetings and reading union emails are a very different experience time-wise, skill-wise and stress wise than handling grievances, recruiting new members and bargaining a contract" (pg. 575). Our research program builds on Fiorito et al.'s (2015) etic study and asks respondents to classify their level of participation (Very active, Moderately active, Limited activity, Inactive) and then tell us (in their own words) why they categorized themselves the way that they did. This emic exploration should provide us with a deeper understanding of union members' thinking about union participation.

Time spent participating in union activities

There is no empirical research directly linking hours spent in in union activities per week/month/year to how an individual perceives their level of union participation. Intuitively, however, it seems reasonable to believe that an individual who has been involved in pursuing a grievance (a time-consuming activity which requires continued effort from the member) would

assess their level of union participation differently than would an individual whose only involvement with the union is attendance at monthly meetings. The fact that some authors use the amount of time spent in the activity as a way to distinguish between active (“demands a significant time commitment on a regular basis”) and passive (“intermittent”, “non-time consuming”) forms of participation (see Fiorito et al., 2015, pg. 560) provides further support for the idea that hours in union activities can be linked to self-assessments of participation. To our knowledge this study is the first to explore the link between an objective measure of union participation (time in the role) and the union participation construct.

Generational differences

Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) argued that to maximize the likelihood of union renewal, unions and union researchers alike need to focus on younger cohorts of workers. This focus seems particularly relevant given recent research showing that if given the opportunity Millennial workers are more likely than Boomers to opt out of their union (Cates, 2014). Why are younger workers less likely to participate in unions? Competing explanations put forward in the literature include the idea that (1) unions are unable and/or unwilling to integrate Millennials to the union movement (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015), and/or (2) structural barriers at the macro-level such as globalization and the spread of neoliberalism have increasingly impeded subsequent cohorts of younger workers from experiencing the benefits of belonging to a union (Bryson, Gomez, Gunderson, and Meltz, 2005).

With this context in mind, we examine perceptions of union participation through a generational cohort lens. Theoretically, our study is grounded in Mannheim’s (1952) theory of generational change. Mannheim argues that people born into the same historical, cultural, and geographic context experience share formative experiences and live through significant events at

comparable phases in their development. He posits that these groups, or generational cohorts, will internalize these events in a similar way which will inform the way they view and react to the world around them.

The three generations currently most prevalent within the workforce (and therefore our study) are the Baby Boomers (born 1945-65), Gen X (born 1966-79), and Millennials (born 1980-2000). As Lyons, Urick, Kuron, and Schweitzer's (2015) recent meta-analyses in the area demonstrate, a wide body of empirical research is supportive of the idea that generational differences in attitudes and values do in fact exist. While generational cohort research is not without its critics (see for example the critique offered by Rudolph and Zacher, 2018) research done by Lyons and his colleagues (2014, 2015) demonstrated the utility of using this theory in social sciences research.

In this study, we explore the idea that generational cohort may impact how union members participate in union activities and how they think about participation in ways that may have ramifications for union renewal. Empirical research in the area is supportive of the idea that such differences may in fact exist. For example, studies showing that individualism (Lyons and Kuron, 2014) and empathy (Konrath, O'Brien, and Singh, 2011) are negatively associated with cohort age, while neuroticism (Twenge, 2006) and narcissism (Twenge, 2010) are positively associated with cohort age suggest that the union movement, which is based on solidarity among workers and collective ideals, may simply be less appealing to younger workers. If this is indeed the case, it is likely that even when the union activities that the worker participates in are the same, younger workers will self-report higher levels of union participation than older members as they are spending time in activities that they do not value or enjoy.

Also relevant is research showing that work is more important to Boomers than it is to Millennials (Wray-Lake and Hart, 2012). If, Millennials are as lazy as the popular narrative dictates (i.e., lower in work centrality), then maybe they have a lower threshold for what they consider as “active” participation than do those in other cohorts.

Case organization

The data featured in our analysis was gathered as part of a four-year research program undertaken with a large (approximately 40,000 workers) male-dominated “blue-collar” transport industry union (referred to as “Natunion” in this paper) that operates throughout the continental USA. Members of Natunion perform a variety of jobs ranging from welding to heavy machinery operation. Members are often away from home as their jobs require they travel across the country to maintain the transportation infrastructure on which their industry relies.

Our research partnership with Natunion began in the fall of 2010, as the union sought to better meet the needs of its membership and improve the engagement and participation of members. The union was motivated to participate in this research by the fact that the average age of their membership was 54 years of age and a significant proportion of their active members (and many in leadership positions) were nearing retirement and there was no clear cohort of active members to replace them.

Our research program used an action research methodology which requires researchers and practitioners to work together to diagnose, analyze, and overcome organizational issues. Our research was supported by a multigenerational research advisory board made up of National Division executives, Vice Chairmen, local leaders, and rank-and-file members. The advisory board provided practical, context-specific expertise that helped us to determine our focus, interpret our results, and shape the next steps. The research team was unpaid, but Natunion covered research

and travel costs. Our partnership ended in 2014 after two rounds of interviews and surveys that led to the implementation of several pilot programs aimed at improving communication and relationship building between the union and its members. This paper focuses on two studies we undertook with Natunion to help them better understand how their members conceptualize union participation.

Study One

We began our program of research by undertaking a qualitative study designed to increase our understanding of how union members perceive their own level of union participation. To do this we conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample of 100 union members from across Natunion's membership and asked informants' questions relating to union participation, feelings about unions and unionism, and their satisfaction and relationship with Natunion. This paper focuses only those interview questions that relate to union participation.

The sample was collected as follows. Natunion notified its members via a letter that the union was undertaking a study to help them better appreciate the concerns of their members and that they may be contacted for interviews by the research team. The letter also included information about the project's goals, the interview process, and the benefits of the study to the union. After sending out the letter the steering committee provided the research team with a list of members' names and contact information, stratified by generational cohort. We contacted a random sample of potential participants within each generational cohort using Skype internet communication software and asked if they would be willing to participate in a short (approximately one hour) interview. We conducted interviews over Skype, using SkypeRecorder software to record the interviews.

Our final sample consisted of n= 35 Boomers, n = 35 Gen X, and n = 30 Millennials, Participants lived in 32 states and worked in 42. Just over half (58%) of our informants worked typical 40 hour/5-day work weeks. The rest either worked compressed weeks that consisted of 4 ten-hour work days (22%) or had variable schedules (11%). Participants worked an average of 44.5 hours per week in the month prior to the interview.

The interview data were analyzed to identify key themes in our participants' responses typifying different understandings of participation. We coded responses using the initial/focused coding process described by Charmaz (2006). The goal of initial coding is to identify, and name, themes found within each piece of data. The focused coding process followed in this study consisted of two steps: (1) theoretical coding, where theory is used to investigate any relationships between categories of responses, and (2) axial coding which involves the analysis of factors found within categories identified in initial coding. We organized and analyzed our qualitative data using QSR NVIVO-10 software. The results from our analysis of the three interview questions relevant to our analysis are provided in the sections below.

How would you label your level of participation in the union?

Following the lead of Fiorito et al. (2015) we began by asking respondents: "Which of the following labels best describes your involvement in the union? (a) Active, (b) Moderate activity, (c) Limited activity, and (d) Inactive." As shown in Figure 4-1, approximately one in three respondents (n = 37) described themselves as "active", while one in four felt that their level of participation was either limited (n = 26) or moderate (n = 24). About one in ten participants (n = 13) labelled themselves as inactive.

Figure 4-1: Activity level by Generational Cohort, Interview data (n = 100)

The data in Figure 4-1 provides support for the idea that our informant’s view of their union participation varies by generational cohort as follows. First, a greater proportion of Boomers (63%) than Gen Xers (37%), and Millennials (7%) used the “active” label to describe their union participation. Second, a greater proportion of Millennials (50%) than Generation X (26%) and Boomers (6%) described their levels of union participation as limited. Finally, we note that 7 of the Millennials (23% of the sample) stated that they were inactive in the union – more than double the number in either of the other two cohorts who described their participation this way.

What union activities do you typically participate in?

We then asked informants to tell us the types of union activities that they typically engaged in. Initial coding resulted in the identification of nine initial codes (ten counting the “no

participation” category). For theoretical coding, we turned to the active/passive conceptualization of union participation articulated by Gall and Fiorito (2012a, 2012b). The first focused theme includes descriptors of active participation (i.e., activities that require a greater amount of commitment and effort on the member’s part). The second focused theme includes responses corresponding to passive participation (i.e., activities that require less commitment and effort on the member’s part). Those who indicated that they did not participate in union activities and did not respond to this question are included in a third group. Table 4-1 features the results from our analysis along with sample quotes for each initial code.

Active Participation: We felt that four activities mentioned by our respondents typified active forms of union participation: holds local office, pursues grievances/upholds collective agreement, attends training and/or information sessions, and serves as a union delegate/on a union committee.

“Holds local office”: Some informants indicated that they had held a formal position within their local or regional union office (e.g., Local Chairman, Trustee, Union Treasurer, Secretary). This role required them to engage in a myriad of activities including managing the local lodge’s affairs, taking care of lodge finances, keeping members informed, planning and running meetings and elections. One informant, a Boomer who was a Secretary Treasurer in his local described it as follows: *“usually I’m holding meetings, fielding phone calls, giving advice to people who ask”*.

“Pursues grievances/upholds collective agreement”. Included within this code were all responses relating to activities (e.g., pursue a grievance, lodge a complaint, file a time complaint) that arise when the employer acts in contravention of the collective agreement. Some members discussed filing grievances or bringing up improprieties on the job. *“I file a grievance for other people when I see something going on that shouldn’t be going on”*, said one Generation Xer, while

Table 4-1: Sample quotations - Types of active and passive participation

Initial Code	Focused Code	Sample Quote
Active Participation		
	Holds local office	<i>“it’s mostly setting up and running meetings, talking to guys, reading about stuff that might affect the lodge, mailing out meeting cards, taking care of the books... taking care of other local business.” –Gen X</i>
	Pursues grievances/ upholds collective agreement	<i>“I try to keep on top of things.... Some of the younger guys know I do this (report grievances/time claims), if they have a complaint, they come to me because I know where to go, so that's kind of my angle” - Boomer</i>
	Attends union training/Information sessions	<i>“I’ve done some extra union training and am always seeking more” – Boomer</i>
	Serves as a union delegate/ on a union committee	<i>“I’m the legislative committee rep for our local” – Gen X</i>
Passive Participation		
	Attends union meetings	<i>“I go to meetings whenever I can” - Boomer</i>
	Discusses union issues with other members	<i>“When we’re at work, we’re always talking about the union” - Millennial</i>
	Promotes union to others	<i>“I try to push our contract a lot in the field. I try to get the younger generation to know what grounds and what rights they have.” – Boomer</i>
	Reads union literature	<i>“a lot of guys say they take the newsletter and throw it away, but I read it.” - Boomer</i>
	Answers questions from members/ Clarifies collective agreement	<i>“Many years ago, I decided that I wanted to know what was going on... and get involved because I wanted to be informed and do what I could to help change. It gave me a sort of leadership role where people can look to me for answers” – Boomer</i>

one Boomer stated that, *“If I see things (on the job) I’ll notify an officer and bring it up.”* Other respondents spoke of instances when the employer would use non-union contract workers to do

certain jobs in place of unionized workers who have first right to those jobs. In these cases, members are to file a time claim with the union to get the pay they would have earned if management had abided by the collective agreement and hired union workers. As one Boomer points out, *“I am active in assisting our local officers in reporting claims for outside contracting violations.”*

“Attends union training/information sessions.” We grouped all responses where members talked about taking the time to go on additional union training sessions and workshops into this initial code. Members spoke about participating in training designed to improve skills related to fulfilling roles within the union or helping to enact union processes. For example, one Boomer stated that, *“I went to a claims-writing course with the union over the last year. I was looking to go to hazmat (hazardous materials) training. I would say I’m pretty active in knowing what’s going on. I try to take advantage of these training things going on.”*

“Serves as a union delegate/on a union committee” Union committees require their delegates to hold regular meetings in addition to performing the task espoused by the committee. One member discussed his time with the safety committee as follows: *“(I’ve been) the head of our safety committee for ten years, and I would facilitate a lot of our local safety issues and take concerns from union members to management.”*

Passive Participation: Our coding process also identified five activities which we felt typified passive union participation: attend union meetings, discuss union issues with other union members, promote the union to others, read union literature, and answer questions from other union members.

“Attends union meetings”: Most of our informants stated that they went to union meetings. For example: *“I go to the meetings to hear how things are going with the contract, voice any of our concerns, stuff like that.”*, and *“I go to pretty much every meeting at our local.”*

“Discusses union issues with other members”: All responses included within this code involved examples where the informant had got into discussions with their fellow members about issues concerning the union, whether it be updates about collective bargaining, the company’s use of outside contractors, or upcoming union events. For example, one Millennial said, *“we just get together and talk about union things”*. Similarly, one Gen Xer said, *“We get together, we eat and talk, think about ideas”*, while another said, *“we discuss what’s going on, like voting for the chairman and other people running our lodge”*.

“Promotes the union to others”: Other informants indicated that they vocally support the union to others and encourage attendance at meetings (i.e., fellow union members, those outside of the union). Many of the responses within this code one Boomer, for example, gave this response: *“I’m always talking to the boys at work and telling them to go to the meetings... I encourage people to go.”*

“Reads union literature”: Other informants stated that they participated in the union by keeping abreast of union news and messaging by reading union newsletters and pamphlets. One Millennial said, *“Whenever they send that newsletter in the mail, I’ll read that”*.

“Answers questions from other members”: Other respondents talked about how they answer questions from other members, providing guidance with respect to union rules and clarity on the union contract. One participant from Generation X gave a fairly typical response: *“I answer and field a lot of questions for guys and if I don’t have the answer I’ll get the answers. I do a lot of behind the scenes type of stuff because guys don’t want to call the reps.”*

After creating the coding scheme, we tallied the number of informants in the total sample/by generational cohort mentioning each response. Table 4-2 features the results of this phase of our analysis.

Several observations can be made from these data. First, more informants described passive than active forms of participation. Second, the two most consistently mentioned forms of participation are passive - attending union meetings (79%) and discussing issues with other union members (61%). Third, the most commonly mentioned active form of participation (41%) involves activities relating to pursuing grievances and holding the company to the collective agreement. The rest of the activities identified in our analysis were cited by approximately one in three of the respondents.

These data also show a relationship between generational cohort and the types of union activities the informant identifies. We note, for example, that the likelihood that an informant will mention any of the activities included within our active participation theme as well as 4 out of 5 of the activities included in the passive participation theme is negatively associated with the age of the cohort. In fact, the only union activity that was consistently mentioned by informants across the generational spectrum is union meetings (70% or more of the informants in each generational subsample declared that they go to meetings). Finally, we note that informants in the Boomer cohort were the most likely and the Millennials the least likely to identify each of the activities describing union participation identified in this study.

Table 4-2: Union Participation – Total sample and by cohort

Focused Code	Initial Code	Boomers (n = 35)	Gen X (n = 35)	Millennial (n = 30)	Total (n = 100)
Active Participation					
	Holds local office	19 (54%)	12 (34%)	2 (7%)	33% (33)
	Pursues grievances/ upholds collective agreement	24 (66%)	15 (43%)	3 (11%)	42% (42)
	Attends union training/Information sessions	20 (57%)	14 (40%)	4 (14%)	38% (38)
	Serves as a union delegate/ on a union committee	22 (63%)	13 (37%)	2 (7%)	37% (37)
Passive Participation					
	Attends union meetings	31 (89%)	25 (71%)	23 (77%)	79% (79)
	Discusses union issues with other members	26 (74%)	22 (63%)	13 (43%)	61% (61)
	Promotes union to others	20 (57%)	15 (43%)	2 (7%)	37% (37)
	Reads union literature	20 (57%)	12 (34%)	5 (14%)	37% (37)
	Answers questions from members/clarify collective agreement	21 (60%)	12 (34%)	2 (7%)	35% (35)
No Participation					
	None	2 (6%)	4 (12%)	7 (23%)	13% (13)

Note: Respondents could mention more than one activity

Type of activity by participation level

As a final step in our analysis we linked the informants' self-assessments of their participation to the activities they stated that they engaged in. Results from this analysis are shown (total sample, by generational cohort) in Table 4-3.

Examination of the data shows a high degree of overlap between the active union participation construct as described in the literature and the activities informants who self-classified as active said they engaged in. Respondents who labeled themselves as actively

participating in their union were, regardless of generational cohort, more likely to state that they

Table 4-3: Union participation by activity level – All generations

Focused Code	Initial Code	Active (n = 37)	Moderate (n = 20)	Limited (n = 26)	Inactive (n = 17)	Total (n=100)
Active Participation						
	Pursues grievances/upholds collective agreement	84% (31)	40% (8)	12% (3)	0%	42% (42)
	Serves as a union delegate/ on a union committee	78% (29)	25% (5)	12% (3)	0%	38% (38)
	Attends union training/Information sessions	81% (30)	20% (4)	16% (4)	0%	38% (38)
	Holds local office	76% (28)	19% (3)	8% (2)	0%	33% (33)
Passive Participation						
	Attends union meetings	92% (34)	100% (20)	88% (23)	6% (1)	79% (79)
	Discusses union issues with other members	89% (33)	85% (17)	42% (11)	0%	61% (61)
	Promotes Union	81% (30)	25% (5)	12% (3)	0%	38% (38)
	Reads union literature	81% (30)	20% (4)	12% (3)	0%	37% (37)
	Answers questions from members/clarify collective agreement	78% (29)	20% (4)	8% (2)	0%	35% (35)

Note: Respondents could mention more than one activity.

were an officer in their union, had engaged in activities associated with the collective agreement, had undertaken committee work and attended union training than were informants who gave themselves limited or moderate labels. Also, of note are the data showing that informants who self-classified as active were, with two exceptions (attendance at meetings, discussion of union

issues) more likely to mention participating in activities included within the passive participation theme than informants who perceived their participation as moderate and limited. Third, the data suggests that discussing union issues with fellow members may differentiate informants who feel that they are moderately active in the union from those who see their participation as limited. Finally, the data implies that virtually all informants seemed to equate attendance at union meetings with union participation.

To explore the extent to which generational cohort influences members' conceptualization of different levels of participation, we performed a cross-cohort analysis, the results of which can be found in Appendix 4-1. The following observations can be made using these data. First, there is a high degree of consensus within the sample on the sorts of activities that constitute active union participation in the union. Virtually everyone we interviewed who served as a union officer, sat on a union committee, attended union training sessions and dealt with the collective agreement self-classified their level of participation using the descriptor "active." Second, we note that Boomers were more likely than those in the Gen X and Millennial groups to classify their level of participation as moderate even though they engaged in activities that researchers consider typical of active participation (i.e. serve as a union delegate, attend union training, take on officer duties). Boomers were also uniquely more likely to associate moderate levels of union participation with one of the passive activities identified in the analysis: answered questions from members about the collective agreement. Finally, we note that several of the Gen X informants classified their union participation as being limited even though they engaged in a number of activities that researchers see as representing active and passive union activities.

On average, how many hours do you spend in union activities each month?

An objective indicator of union participation was collected by asking respondents how many hours they typically spent in union activities each month. Responses are shown in Table 4-4 for the entire sample, by activity level and by generational cohort. A one-way ANOVA was calculated to test the following hypotheses: (1) level of participation (active, moderate, limited) has an impact on the amount of time spent in union activities per month, and (2) generational cohort has an impact on the amount of time spent in union activities per month. Tukey's post hoc test was used to identify between group differences in the responses when the ANOVA was significant.

Table 4-4: Hours in Union Activities Per month (From interview)

Group	Total	Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Active	Moderate	Limited	Inactive
Mean	6.21	8.55	6.73	2.87	11.73	5.50 *	1.80 *	0.00
St.Dev.	9.32	10.40	10.76	3.69	9.56	9.84	2.26	0.00

* Tukey's Post Hoc test shows that those who identified their participation as active spend significantly more hours per month in union related activities than do those who classify their participation as moderate and limited at $p < .005$

Interview informants spent an average of 6.21 hours per month in union activities (SD = 9.32). Informants who classified themselves "Active" spent, on average, 11.73 (S.D. 9.56) hours per month in union activities – a significantly higher ($F(3,100) = 12.66$; $p = .000$) amount of time per month than that reported by those who self-classified as "Moderate" ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 9.84$, $p = 0.029$) or "Limited" ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 2.264$, $p = 0.00$).

Data analysis determined that generational cohort is not significantly associated ($F(2,100) = 2.92$, $p = .060$) with the amount of time per month an informant spends in union activities with Boomers spending, on average 8.55 (SD = 10.4) hours, Gen X reporting an average of 6.75 (SD = 10.76) hours and Millennials 2.87 (SD = 3.69) hours per month in union activities.

Study Two

Study Two was designed as a follow-up to our qualitative first study. Study Two uses a larger sample and survey data to seek answers to the following questions:

- How do union members “self-classify” their degree of participation in the union?
- What is the relationship between how union members “self-classify” their degree of participation in the union and theoretical conceptualizations of the active and passive union participation construct?
- What is the relationship between the amount of time a union member spends in union activities and: (a) how they “self-classify” their degree of participation in the union? and (b) their active and passive union participation scores? and
- To what extent does generational cohort influence each of these issues?

Data Collection: A survey was used to collect the data analyzed in Study Two using the sample process as employed for Study One. Natunion’s leadership increased awareness of our research by sending out letters to members explaining why they were undertaking a survey. The survey was then sent to the home address of all their members, along with self-addressed and stamped envelopes to facilitate their return to the research team. To increase survey participation, national, regional, and local leaders promoted the survey at union meetings and through informal interactions with members.

Of the 40,000 surveys distributed, $n = 3848$ were returned to the research team, for a response rate of about 10%. This lower response rate can be explained by the fact that informants were away from home for significant periods of time and did not get the survey questionnaire until after the data collection period was closed, the union had the wrong home addresses for some of

their members (surveys were returned) and to reduce costs the union did not send follow-up cards asking their members to respond.

Measures: How members “self-classify” their level of participation in the union was quantified by asking respondents to choose from the following list of four labels the one that best describes how they view their level of participation in the union: “I am a member of the union but do not participate in any activities”; “I am a member of the union and participate in a limited number of activities”; “I am a moderately active member of my union” and “I am an active member of the union” (Fiorito et al., 2015).

Union participation was quantified using Smith et al. (2019)’s two-factor active/passive union participation scale which asked employees “how often in the past year have you: (1) served on a committee, (2) attended a union sponsored training session or educational seminar, (3) been involved in the settling of a grievance, (4) helped promote the union, (5) helped a new member learn about the union, and (6) voted in union elections.” A five-point Likert scale (Almost Always = 5; Sometimes = 3; Almost Never = 1) was used to collect responses. Items 1 to 3 measure active participation while items 4 to 6 quantify passive participation.

Generational cohort was identified by using data on respondent age and commonly accepted generational boundaries (Burnett, 2010) to classify respondents into three groups: Baby Boomers (1946-1964); Generation X (1965-1979); Millennial (1980-2000). We also asked respondents to estimate how many hours that they had spent in union activities in the past month: 5 hours or less, between 6 and 10 hours, between 11 and 15 hours, 16 to 20 hours, and more than 20 hours.

Data analysis: Ordered logistic regression is a statistical technique that is used to predict ordinal level dependent variables (i.e. a variable whose value exists on an arbitrary scale

where only the relative ordering between different values is significant) with a set of independent variables (Winship and Mare, 1984). Ordered logistic regression was used in this study to explore the relationship between how respondents “self-classified” their level of union participation - an ordinal variable - and: 1) the respondent’s level of Active and Passive union participation as quantified using Smith et al.’s (2019) measure, 2) and the amount of time respondents indicated that they spent in union activities per month, and 3) generational cohort – an ordinal variable. Post-hoc testing was performed using a test of parallel lines as recommended by UCLA Institute for Digital Research and Education (2019). An insignificant Chi-square statistic for the test of parallel lines means that the proportional odds assumption holds true and the model can be considered valid.

The Sample: Consistent with the demographics of this union, most respondents (65.2%) were Boomers (n = 2509). Just over one in four (27.9%) were in the Gen X cohort (n= 1073), and 6.9% were Millennials (n = 266). The sample was 99.5% male (the membership is more than 95% male). The majority of respondents were married (79.9%) and had one or more children at home (80%). Half (50.3%) had a high school diploma, 8.9% had completed college, and 35.1% had some college education. Just under half (46.3%) had been with the union for 25+ years, while 16.2% had been with the union for fewer than five years.

Results.

We began our quantitative analysis by dividing the sample into the three cohorts of interest and calculating for each cohort and the total sample mean active and passive union participation scores, the percent who self-classified their union participation as inactive, limited, moderate, and active, and the percent who spent less than five hours per week, 6 to 10 hours per week, 11 to 15

hours per week and 16 to 20 hours per week in union activities (none of our respondents spent more than 20 hours per week in union activities). These data are shown in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5: Descriptive Survey Data

	Boomer (n = 2509)	Gen X (n = 1073)	Millennial (n = 266)	Total (n = 3848)
<i>Mean scores</i>				
Active participation	2.40(SD = 0.88)*^	2.10(SD = 0.71)*^	2.01(SD = 0.55)*^	2.28(SD = 0.83)^
Passive participation	3.57(SD = 1.00)*^	3.11(SD = 1.03)*^	3.00(SD = 1.00)*^	3.41(SD = 1.03)^
<i>% of cohort who “self-classified” their participation as:</i>				
Inactive (n = 3266)	84.7%**	87.7%**	90.3%**	84.9%
Limited (n = 413)	11.6%	8.7%	7.2%	10.7%
Moderate/active (n = 169)	4.7%	3.6%	2.5%	4.4%
<i>Hours in union activities, by cohort</i>				
5 hours or less	23.9%**	31.0%**	33.3%**	26.8%
6-10	46.7%	43.2%	44.1%	46.4%
11-15	12.5%	10.1%	8.1%	11.3%
16-20	16.9%	15.6%	14.5%	15%

*Indicates significant cross-cohort differences based on ANOVA results

**Indicates significant cross-cohort differences based on Chi-Squared results

^ Indicates significant differences (active vs. passive participation) based on paired-samples t-test

Just over one in four respondents (26.8%) spent 5 hours or less in union activities per month; 46.4% spent 6 to 10 hours per month, 11.3% spent 11 to 15 hours and 15% spent between 16 and 20 hours per month in union activities. Respondents reported low levels of active ($X = 2.28$, $SD = 0.83$) and moderate levels of passive ($X = 3.41$, $SD = 1.03$) union participation. The vast majority (84.9%) of respondents self-classified their level of union participation as “inactive”. The rest of the sample “self-classified their participation as “Limited” (10.7%) and “Moderate/Active” (4.4%).

Four paired-sample t-tests were calculated to determine if respondents reported higher scores in one form of union participation (active/passive) than in the other. This analysis

determined respondents reported significantly higher passive than active participation scores ($t(3848) = -81.34, p < .001$), regardless of generational cohort membership: Boomer ($t(2509) = -69.63, p < .001$); Gen X ($t(1073) = -38.95, p < .001$); Millennial ($t(266) = -17.41, p < .001$).

Two one-way ANOVAs were calculated to determine the relationship between generational cohort (predictor) and active/passive union participation (outcome). The following conclusions can be drawn from these analyses. First, those in the Boomer cohort ($M = 3.57, SD = 1.00$) reported significantly higher levels of active participation than their counterparts in either the Gen X ($M = 3.11, SD = 1.03$) or Millennial ($M = 3.00, SD = 1.00$) cohorts: $F(2, 3848) = 105.54$. Second, Boomers ($M = 2.40, SD = 0.88$) reported significantly higher levels of passive participation than respondents in either the Gen X ($M = 2.10, SD = 0.71$) or Millennial ($M = 2.01, SD = 0.55$) cohorts: $F(2, 3848) = 60.07$. Finally, those in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts report similar levels of passive and active union participation.

Chi-Square testing was then undertaken to examine the relationship between generational cohort and how members self-classified their level of union participation. Because Chi-square testing measures differences between categorical variables (UCLA, 2019), we created binomial variables called InactiveYesNo, LimitedYesNo, and ActiveModerateYesNo. We then coded participants as “1” for their chosen classification and “0” for all others (for example, those who indicated they were inactive were coded as “1” for InactiveYesNo and “0” for the other two variables). We then ran a Chi-Square using Generational Cohort and each participation-level as variables. This testing revealed significant cross-cohort differences at the “Inactive”, $X^2(2, N = 3848) = 19.13, p < .001$, and “Limited” $X^2(2, N = 3848) = 12.85, p < .01$ levels of participation.

We performed a second Chi-square test to assess the relationship between generational cohort and the amount of time members spent in union activities per month. We again created

Binomial variables, this time for each hours category (lessthanfiveYesNo, sixtotenYesNo, eleventofifteenYesNo, and sixteentotwentyYesNo). As above, we coded participants as “1” for the category they indicated and “0” for each other category. We then ran a Chi-Square with Generational Cohort and each hours category as variables. This analysis uncovered significant cross-cohort differences only for those who devote fewer than five hours per month in union activities: $X^2(2, N = 3848) = 21.63, p < .001$.

We then ran an ordered logistic regression to determine the extent to which union members’ stated levels of active and passive participation, as well as the cohort to which they belong, lead to variance in how they “self-classify” their participation. Our analysis produced significant Chi-square model test $X^2(2, n = 3848) = 720.509, p < .05$, with a Nagelkerke Pseudo R-Square of .262 and a McFadden Pseudo R-Square of .179. Of the predictor variables, only active participation and passive participation had a significant impact on members’ self-classification of their level of union participation. Hours in union activities per month and generational cohort did not predict this construct.

According to our model, an increase in Active Participation was associated with an increase in the level that the member used when self-classifying their participation: an estimate of 1.183 (95% CI, 0.989 to 1.376), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 143.193, p < .05$. We also found that an increase in Passive Participation was also associated with an increase in the level of activity self-assessment, with an estimate of 1.443 (95% CI, 1.224 to 1.662), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 167.441, p < .05$. Post-hoc testing determined that the test of parallel lines was not significant ($p = 0.32$). This means that the proportional odds assumption holds true, and that the slope coefficient is the same for each response category (Active/Moderate, Limited, Inactive) (UCLA, 2019).

Discussion

In this paper we present the key findings from a multi-method research study designed to give academics and practitioners a better understanding of how researchers' "etic" notion of active and passive union participation correspond to and differ from union members' "emic" conceptualization of this construct. Figure 4-2 provides an overview of key findings from our analysis. In the section below this figure is used to guide our discussion and draw relevant conclusions.

Emic versus Etic Views of Participation

Although recent work by Fiorito et al. (2015) reports convergent validity between the active/passive conceptualization of union participation found in the literature and how union members self-classify their participation our study shows some divergence. While our multi-method analysis does uncover some overlap between etic and emic understandings of active and passive forms of participation (particularly at the active end of the continuum), there are differences between these two conceptualizations that we feel need to be recognized. Although some researchers (etic) partition union participation into passive and active constructs, union members (emic) themselves seem to have a more nuanced view of the construct. The fact that the majority of those we surveyed perceived that their participation in the union was non-existent (84.7%), limited (10.7%) or moderate/active (4.4%) does not align with their union participation scores as quantified using a validated measure of this construct (Smith et al., 2019) and suggests that the etic conceptualization and measurement of active/passive participation could be broadened and refined. We would, for example, suggest that measures of active/passive participation provide respondents with the option of indicating that they "never" engage in a particular activity as opposed to "Almost never" as is sometimes the case.

The younger the average age of the member, the more likely they are to be in this group

Boomers who self-classify as having moderate participation (i.e. emic view) are likely to engage in activities researchers classify as “active” (i.e. officer duties, pursue grievances, service on union committees, attend training) (i.e. etic view)

The view of what consists active participation does not vary with generational cohort

Members who “self classify” as active (i.e. emic view) engage in activities that researchers classify as active and passive (i.e. etic view)

Zero hours in union activities per month

Approximately 2 hours in union activities per month

Approximately 5 hours in union activities per month

Approximately 12 hours in union activities per month

Vast majority of union members (Approximately 85%)

Approximately 10% of the union membership

<5% of the union in this group

<5% of the union in this group

No participation

Do not engage in any union activities

Passive Participation

Attends meetings

Moderate Participation

Attends meetings
Discusses union issues with others

Active Participation

Holds local office
Union delegate/Serves on committees, Attends union training, Promotes unions to others, Answers questions from members, Attends meetings, Discusses union issues with others, Reads union newsletter

“non-intensive and common” – Fiorito et al, (2015, p. 549)

“less-common activities that demand significant time commitment on a regular basis”- Fiorito et al, (2015, p. 549)

Figure 4-2: Summary of findings

Findings from our qualitative study, which shows that the types of activities union members use to self-classify their union participation are somewhat different than those typically used by researchers to quantify these constructs, support this conclusion. Details on how emic views of participation converge or diverge from the etic interpretation are highlighted below.

Active Participation in the Union

Fiorito et al. (2015, pg. 549) summarize the etic view of active forms of participation in the union as including “*less-common activities that demand significant time commitment on a regular basis*”. The findings from the emic phase of our research support the idea that many of the activities performed by “active” participants are indeed less common and demanding. They also imply that members who see themselves as “active” in the union tend to “do it all.” Not only do active members say that they engage in those duties that researchers consider to represent “active” forms of participation (i.e., hold a local office position such as lodge president or secretary, participating on union committees, or fighting to uphold the collective agreement), they also engage in activities that researchers would consider as indicative of “passive” participation (e.g. attend union meetings, discuss union issues with others, read the union newsletter). While few in number (only 1% of those who answered our survey and 37% of those who were interviewed self-classified their participation as active), these are the members upon which unions rely most heavily and who play a vital role in the day to day operation of the union (Gall and Fiorito, 2012a). The fact that active union members uniquely indicated that they spent time promoting the union to others also highlights the critical role individuals in this group may play in union renewal where peer to peer socialization and social networks have been found to encourage buy-in to the union among new and/or inactive members (Bailey et al., 2010).

Passive/Limited Participation in the Union

Fiorito et al. (2015, pg. 549) summarize the etic view of passive union participation to include activities that are “*non-intensive and common*” and require little obligation on the part of the member. While researchers include a number of different activities in their measures of passive union-participation (e.g. vote in union elections, talk about the union to others), the union members we interviewed seem to be much more restrictive in terms of how they view passive participation. More specifically, the emic view of passive participation as expressed by our respondents, seems to equate to attending union meetings – no more, no less. Such participation requires a very limited amount of time or energy from union members (our data suggests about 2 hours per month). Those whose participation consisted of more than meeting attendance typically classified themselves as either active or moderately active, suggesting perhaps our understanding of “passive” forms of participation needs reassessment. While the activities that are used to typify passive participation may be non-intensive, they are not, as illustrated by this study, common.

Moderate Participation in the Union

The emic phase of our research contributes to the union participation literature by suggesting further research focus on those who are moderately active in the union. Members who self-classify their participation in the union as moderate augment their attendance at union meetings by spending a couple of hours each month discussing union issues with colleagues. This group seems to have received limited recognition within the union literature. This is unfortunate as those with moderate levels of participation may be critical to the success of union-renewal initiatives, particularly if unions can identify strategies to encourage members of this group to move up to the next level of participation (i.e., active). While our data suggests that this group is small (3% of survey respondents, one in five interview informants) work by Dufour-Poirier and

Laroche (2015), who argued that less-active members would likely participate more if their union made more of an effort to reach out to them, listen to and incorporate their views, and make them feel like they are valued, suggests that their role in the union renewal process is critical. Unions could, for example, use their interactions with those with moderate levels of union participation to make these members feel important, and to bring them into the union's informal social network of active members. As Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) demonstrated, failing to do so is likely to leave potentially active members (i.e., those with moderate participation in our case) feel left out and discouraged from participation. Similarly, a greater focus among researchers on the circumstances of union members with moderate levels of participation could help unions determine which factors may be discouraging or preventing them from becoming more active and take corrective action.

Inactive Members of the Union

Finally, we note most our survey respondents (85%) and one in ten of those we interviewed indicated that they were not active in their union. This finding is consistent with the research literature that has highlighted union participation's downward trend over time (Vachon et al., 2016) and provides yet more impetus for unions to find ways to increase their members' involvement as a means to achieving union renewal (Cates, 2014). These findings reiterate the importance of research that goes beyond just the exploration of active and passive participation to a focus on identifying those factors that have contributed non-participation (e.g., a lack of interest in and/or an inability to participate in their union) as well as identifying how such obstacles can be overcome.

The importance of meetings

Our analysis determined that with one exception (“inactive” members) all members, regardless of their level of participation, typically attend union meetings. While the etic view conceptualizes attendance at meetings as typifying a relatively passive, low-obligation form of participation (Redman and Snape, 2004) results from our research remind us that meetings could be envisioned as a “gateway” activity that if managed appropriately could increase other types of participation and ultimately encourage union renewal. Union organizers should, therefore, view union meetings as an important organizing tool in which members can not only learn about and vote on union issues, but also interact and bond with other union members, learn from more active members and union leaders (Parker and Gruelle, 2005) and are socialized into the union movement (Clark, Fullagar, Gallagher and Gordon, 1993). Unions and researchers who are focusing on renewal also need to identify how best to encourage members from different generational cohorts to attend meetings (i.e., How are meetings advertised? What is talked about at meetings? How are union members’ views collected and distilled?) Encouragement to attend meetings could occur through formal union communications and/or more organically by convincing moderate and active members to reach out to inactive members to promote the benefits of attending meetings (Clark et al, 1993). Alternatively, unions could seek to identify and reduce barriers that currently prevent members from attending union meetings (e.g., meeting times, meeting locations).

Hours in Union Activities

Our study also explored the relationship between the number of hours our participants spend in union activities and both emic (“self-assessment”) and etic (active/passive union participation scores) indicators of participation. A number of important observations can be made from these data. First, involvement in the union imposes relatively few additional demands on a

member's time, even for those at the active end of the participation spectrum. No one who completed the survey indicated spending more than 20 hours per month in union-related activities and interview informants who self-classified as active in the union spent approximately 12 hours in union-activities a month. This would suggest that members do not participate in union activities because they do not have the time but rather because they do not see the link between participating in union activities and the realization of outcomes they value. Our study, therefore, provides support for the idea that one key to union renewal is to convince members that they want to engage (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015). Second, our emic/interview study showed a clear link between hours spent per month in union activities and how the member "self-classified" their level of participation with informants who self-classified themselves in the Active and Moderate participation categories spending significantly more hours per month in union activities than those who "self-classified" their participation as Limited and Inactive. The direction of causality is not, however, clear from our cross-sectional data and we cannot determine if people who spend more time in union activities see themselves as more active or if people who are more active spend more time engaged in union activities. Longitudinal studies are required to disentangle these relationships. Third, analysis of the survey data found no relationship between hours in union activities per month and how members' self-classified their level of participation. In this case we suspect that the way in which we collected time in union activities per week (the union requested we use a categorical variable which did not allow respondents to explicitly report that they spent no time at all participating in the union to measure this construct) may have hindered our ability to find a relationship. Future work in the area would benefit from the use of an open-ended question (such as the one we used in the interview study) to quantify this construct.

Generational differences

This study contributes to the limited available recent research into the influence of cohort on outcomes related to union renewal (Smith et al., 2019; Smith and Duxbury, 2019; Cates, 2014; Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015) by exploring the possibility that there are generational differences in the way in which members “self-classify” their level of union participation. Analysis undertaken using the survey data determined that: (1) those in the Boomer cohort were significantly less likely and those in the Millennial and Gen X cohorts significantly more likely to place themselves in the “limited participation category”, (2) those in the Boomer cohort reported significantly higher active and passive union participation scores than their counterparts in the Millennial and Gen X cohorts, and (3) those in the Gen X and Millennial samples were significantly more likely than their colleagues in the Boomer sample to spend 5 or fewer hours in union activities per month. These findings are consistent with both the theory (Wray-Lake and Hart, 2012) as well as previous empirical work on generational differences in union participation (Smith et al., 2019; Smith and Duxbury, 2019; Cates, 2014) and provides addition evidence supporting the need to re-engage younger workers in the union.

Findings from our emic study provide us with additional information on this important relationship. First, we note that generally speaking, generational cohort had little impact on how members conceptualized the activities associated with active and passive participation. Second, we again note that those in the Boomer sample were significantly more likely to “self-classify” themselves as an active participant in the union while those in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts were more likely categorize themselves in the limited or inactive participation categories. Third, we note that informants within the Boomers in our interview sample self-classified their level of participation at a lower level than an academic would have, given the activities that they said that

they engaged in (see Appendix). More specifically, about one-quarter of the Boomer cohort rated their level of union participation as “moderate” despite the fact that many also said that they participated in union activities (e.g., acting on a union committee, holding a position in their local office) that etic studies would conceptualize as characterizing active participation. Again, while it is impossible to know with certainty why these differences exist we speculate that one potential reason why some Boomers “underestimate” their level of participation could be attributed to the fact that they became union members at time when unions were more powerful, had higher rates of participation, and better public support than they do currently (Smith et al., 2019). It is possible, therefore, that Boomers use a different metric (union participation in the 1970s and 1980s) during the “self-classification” process than younger workers who have a different set of formative union experiences. If this is indeed what is going on, this could also explain why many Boomers perceive that younger members do not contribute enough to the union movement. This interpretation of the data is consistent with Smith et al.’s (2019) study of cross-cohort perceptions of unions which found that some Boomers felt that Millennials were not active enough in their union and Dufour-Poirier and Laroche’s (2015) research which found that Millennials were discouraged from being active in their union because they felt as though they did not fit in. Again, these findings provide support for additional research in this area based on generational theory.

Limitations

While our studies do present some outcomes that are relevant for both academics and practitioners, they are not without limitations. One limitation is the cross-sectional nature of our research. Researchers have pointed out shortcomings with cross-sectional instruments for union (Parks, Gallagher, and Fullagar, 1995) and generational cohort (Burnett, 2010) research. Future research could take a longitudinal approach, studying how conceptualizations of levels of

participation change (or remain constant) over time. Future research could also ask Baby Boomers and Gen Xers if they feel their participation level in the union changed from when they were younger, if so, how and why?

A second shortcoming is the idiosyncrasy of our dataset (American, male, union operating in transportation sector). We feel, however, that this limitation is somewhat mitigated by the fact that respondents were employed by eight different companies and had a wide variety of trades within the union, each with its own required skillsets and expertise (i.e. truck/heavy machinery operation, welding). Studies such on this that draw samples from other types of unions could help broaden the generalizability of our findings. Lastly, we would ideally have used the same “self-classification” and time in union activities per month measures in both the qualitative and quantitative studies, but this was not possible as: (1) the union placed limitations on how we measured time in union activities in the survey, and (2) we had to collapse the “moderate” and “active” categories in our quantitative study due to the relatively low number of respondents who self-classified themselves as moderate or active members. It is very likely that the comparatively high proportion of “active” participants (about 30%) who engaged in the interview process indicates a self-selection bias among more active members for the interview suggesting that the survey, with its much larger sample and lower level of “active” members, is likely a more accurate indication of this unions level of participation. These findings do, however, reinforce the need to do targeted research with extreme samples when exploring a phenomenon that may be rare in the environment (e.g., active union participation).

Conclusions and Implications

In summary, our study makes a number of important contributions to the union participation literature. First, to our knowledge our study is the first to explore the link between an

objective measure of union participation (time in the role) and the union participation construct. Second, the fact that we employed both emic and etic lenses to explore the union participation construct broadens our understanding both of how union members conceptualize participation and provides strong support for greater research in this area employing an emic lens. More specifically, our study supplements quantitative analysis with rich interview data that provides insights into the experiences of our participants that helps to explain some of the “why” behind the quantitative results. Finally, Cates (2014) and Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) present a case for further study of cohort differences in union research, tying the sustainability of union renewal to the successful engagement of young cohorts of union members. Our paper helps to expand the field of research in the area by exploring differences in perceptions of participation levels across cohorts. Our findings provide support for the idea that while each cohort conceptualizes participation similarly, there are important areas where cohorts are more different than similar. The study also provides evidence supporting the idea that the younger the generational cohort the less likely they are to participate in the union movement.

In addition to its academic contributions, our paper could potentially help unions in their quest for renewal. First, Gall and Fiorito (2010) argued that unions should look for new ways to segment their memberships in order to target the specific needs of different groups. Our findings present two potentially meaningful ways this could be done: generational cohort, and level of participation. Specifically, unions could look to leverage their more active members (typically Boomers) in helping to integrate less active (typically Millennial) members. Our data also indicates that union meetings are the most frequently cited form of participation. As past research shows (Clark et al., 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1998), union meetings could be an important organizing tool through which unions could build commitment and ultimately increase participation. Combining

these two findings, unions could renew by encouraging active members to get younger members and those less involved in the union to attend meetings. This could then be used as a springboard to encourage further participation

Appendix 4-1: Participation by activity level by generational cohort, Interview data

	Boomer	Active (n = 22)	Moderate (n =9)	Limited (n = 2)	Inactive (n =2)
	Gen X	Active (n = 13)	Moderate (n = 4)	Limited (n =9)	Inactive (n =9)
	Millennial	Active (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 7)	Limited (n = 15)	Inactive (n = 6)
Active Participation					
Pursues grievances/upholds collective agreement		86% (19) 100% (13) 100% (2)	56% (5) 50% (2) 14% (1)	0% 22% (2) 0%	0% 0% 0%
Serves as a union delegate/ on a union committee		77% (17) 85% (11) 100% (2)	56% (5) 0% 14% (1)	0% 22% (2) 0%	0% 0% 0%
Attends union training/Information sessions		73% (16) 85% (11) 100% (2)	44% (4) 0% 14% (1)	0% 22% (2) 0%	0% 0% 0%
Officer Duties		73% (16) 77% (10) 100% (2)	33% (3) 0% 14% (1)	0% 22% (2) 0%	0% 0% 0%
Passive Participation					
Attends union meetings		82% (18) 100% (13) 100% (2)	100% (9) 100% (4) 100% (7)	100% (2) 78% (7) 87% (12)	0% 11% (1) 0%
Discusses union issues with other members		73% (16) 100% (13) 100% (2)	89% (8) 100% (4) 86% (6)	50% (1) 56% (5) 33% (5)	0% 0% 0%
Promotes Union		73% (16) 85% (11) 100% (2)	33% (3) 50% (2) 14% (1)	0% 22% (2) 0%	0% 0% 0%
Reads union literature		73% (16) 77% (10) 100% (2)	33% (3) 0% 28% (2)	0% 22% (2) 7% (1)	0% 0% 0%
Answers questions from members/clarify collective agreement		77% (17) 77% (10) 100% (2)	44% (4) 0% 14% (1)	0% 33% (3) 0%	0% 0% 0%

Chapter 5: Paper 3

Paper 3 examines the link between union communication processes and member participation. It does this by seeking answers to the following questions: (1) How the union communicates information to its members; (2) Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications; (3) The types of changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members, and (4) How generational cohort impacts each of these issues.

This thesis aspires to improve union participation amongst all cohort groups. Paper 3 contributes to this goal by examining the extent to which a union process (i.e. communication) can impact union participation.

5.1 Abstract

A multi-method (survey, interviews) study with a large labor union identified several problems with how the union communicates information to its members in addition to suggestions for improvement. Members want their union to make more use of face-to-face and electronic communication technologies. Problems and solutions were associated with generational cohort.

5.2 It's not just what you say, but how you say it: A case study exploring union-member communications

Union membership density and bargaining power have been in marked decline over much of the industrialized world in recent decades and not least in the USA (Visser, 2006; Rosenfeld, 2014). Transformations in the terrain of engagement have been explored and highlighted by researchers: the imposition of hostile laws; shifts in employment from

manufacturing to services; the move from secure core occupations to insecure, temporary and fractional posts; globalisation and off-shoring; and, the spread and deepening of neo-liberal policies of de-regulation and privatisation. (Kochan, Riordan, Kowalski, Khan, and Yang, 2019; Murray, 2017; Rosenfeld, 2014; Hodder, 2014). The above factors have limited unions' access to the workplace, made it harder for workers to join unions and reduced unions' ability to socialize society and younger workers into the benefits of unionism.

To remain relevant, unions need to identify tactics that will allow them to reverse this long-standing decline in their numbers. More specifically, they need to engage in activities that will contribute to union renewal - "a process of change to rebuild the organizational and institutional strength of the labor movement (so that it will be) capable of defending and advancing the interests and (the) rights of workers" (Kumar, 2012, p. 2). The question remains, however, as to how unions can renew when many of the factors contributing to their decline are outside their control? Recent research in the area (Gall and Fiorito, 2012; Rivers and Truitt, 2014; Benson and Brown, 2011) provides one possible answer – they can focus their efforts on improving their internal processes so that they provide more value to members.

This paper reports on two studies (one quantitative, one qualitative) undertaken with a large American union to explore the utility of such an approach. Our research focuses on one key internal process – communication between a union and its members (i.e. union-member communication) – with the goal of elucidating: (1) How the union communicates information to its members; (2) Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications; (3) The types of changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members, and (4) How generational cohort impacts each of these issues.

A substantive body of research exists elucidating the importance of union-member communications practices. Studies range from early work of the Webbs (1896) and Michels (1915) to more recent studies by writers such as Geelan and Hodder (2017). Of particular relevance to this paper is research by Rivers and Truitt (2014) which argues that unions with effective communication processes should be more able to broadcast their vision, goals, values, and strategy to members throughout the organization and a study by Kerr and Waddington (2013) linking effective union-member communication to increases in union member engagement and participation and, ultimately, union renewal. Our paper builds on these studies by looking at union members' perceptions of union-member communication practices through a generational cohort lens.

The inclusion of generational cohort in any study on union renewal is supported by data showing that the number of younger workers who belong to and participate in union activities has declined over time (Cates, 2014; Gall and Fiorito, 2012; Bailey, Price, Esders, and McDonald, 2010; Geelan, 2015, Hodder, 2014). Cates (2014) reports that Baby Boomers (born 1945-1964) make up the greatest proportion of the union movement's membership and have higher levels of union participation than their colleagues who belong to the two younger generational cohorts: Generation X (born 1965-1979) and Millennials (born 1980-2000). This study seeks to offer suggestions on how unions can reverse these trends by identifying how unions could change their internal communication processes so that they are more relevant to their younger members.

This research adds to the growing (but limited) body of empirical research linking generations and unions (Cates, 2014; Smith and Duxbury, 2019; Smith, Halinski and Duxbury, 2019) and communication between unions and their members (Rivers and Truitt, 2014). It also

provides practical information to union leaders on how to target their communications to different generations of members. Such actions should help the union movement attract, integrate, and engage “younger workers” (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015; Hodder, 2014). This study also contributes to the theory of generations by providing insight into relationship between generational cohort and communication preferences (Campbell, Twenge, and Campbell, 2017).

We begin our paper by providing an overview of the research that has motivated and informed our studies. We then outline the methodologies used in the two studies referred to in this paper (quantitative and then qualitative) before discussing our results. The key findings from the two studies are integrated in the final section of the paper.

Literature Review

The literature review begins with an introduction to the generational cohort concept. We then discuss union communication and its role in renewal. The section concludes with a discussion of why attitudes towards union communication may vary with generational cohort.

Generational Cohort

Mannheim’s (1952) “Theory of Generations” argues that people who are born within a similar span of time, in a similar geographic location and cultural context will experience and interpret events similarly. Three generational cohorts - those who share a “collective memory” that goes on to shape the way they think and behave - are prominently active within the workforce today – Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (Lyons and Kuron, 2014).

Despite a growing body of research in the area, there remains an ongoing debate as to the validity of the generational cohort construct. On the one side of the debate, Rudolph and Zacher (2018) argue that we should abandon the pursuit of generational research, providing a list of

criticisms of the concept to support their claim. On the other side of the debate, Lyons, Urick, Kuron and Schweitzer (2015) and Lyons and Kuron (2014) establish the validity of the theory and refute those who criticize its use. We provide a short summary of this debate below.

Rudolph and Zacher (2018) claim that the generational cohort concept is overly deterministic, leading to simplified stereotypes that do not reflect reality. This view is countered by Lyons et al. (2015) who state that generational research does not aim to create stereotypes meant to describe all within a cohort, but rather prototypes, which researchers can either support or refute with further research in more contexts.

Rudolph and Zacher (2018) also note that it is difficult (if not impossible) to truly know if a difference between members of different generational cohorts can be attributed to actual cohort differences as opposed to the aging process (physically, mentally, socially), or general societal changes. Lyons et al. (2015) contest this idea by pointing out that the human life-cycle that drives “aging” effects is not static, but rather changes over time alongside society and that from a theoretical perspective, generation should be viewed as a confluence of age/cohort/period. They reinforce this claim by noting that people are waiting longer to start families than they did in the past, which acts to push back steps in the life-cycle. While acknowledging that life-cycle does produce individual differences in peoples’ behaviours and attitudes, they also argue that research involving life-cycle stage (or age) should focus on comparisons between people who have experienced similar steps in the cycle at the same time – i.e. those within the same generational cohort.

Finally, Rudolph and Zacher (2018) argue that there is little empirical evidence for the existence of generational differences and cite several studies (e.g. Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, and Gade, 2012; Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, and Shepard, 2017) to support

their assertion. Lyons and Kuron (2014) counter with a meta-analysis identifying research reporting cross-cohort differences in personality traits (e.g. individualism, neuroticism, narcissism, and self-esteem are negatively associated and empathy is positively associated with cohort age) work-values and work-attitudes (e.g. work orientation, work centrality and organizational commitment are positively associated with cohort age while the value an individual places on leisure is highest in younger cohorts). The interested reader is referred to Twenge and Campbell (2001, 2010) and Gentile, Twenge, and Campbell (2012).

Our review of the literature (see for example Cates, 2014) found little empirical research that looks at the relationship between generational cohort and union attitudes and behaviors. This is unfortunate as research by Lyons and Kuron (2014) showing that people have become more individualistic over time may have implications for union renewal which is based on the ideal of the collective (Clawson and Clawson, 2007).

The few studies that explore issues associated with union renewal through a generational cohort lens (Cates, 2014; Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015; Hodder, 2014; Smith and Duxbury, 2019; Smith, Halinski, and Duxbury, 2019) do, however, provide empirical support to the idea that generational cohort has relevance to this discussion. Cates (2014), for example, found that although Millennials demonstrated the most pro-union attitudes of any cohort in popular polling, when given the choice, Boomers (36%) were least likely and Millennials most likely (55%) to opt out of their union (Gen Xers [41%] were in-between). He attributes these differences to social changes that have manifested themselves in the Millennial generation's apparent individualistic leanings, such as a lack of alignment between their own career development goals and the typical availability of such opportunities in a unionized environment.

Other researchers argue that macro-level changes in the union environment have contributed to generational differences with respect to attitudes towards unions. Geelan (2015) claims that anti-union sentiment present within the popular media is partially to blame for generational cohort differences with respect to attitudes towards unions. Smith and Duxbury (2019) provide evidence that the socio-cultural climate has become more anti-union over time. Their study also identified a connection between these macro-level environmental shifts and how three generational cohorts of union members perceive unions. More specifically they found that Boomers were the most pro-union and had the best understanding of what unions do and why they do it; Millennials were the least involved in the union and less aware of the union's mission and history. Smith and Duxbury's findings are consistent with arguments made by Bryson et al. (2005) and Bailey et. al. (2010) who point out that union membership can be considered an "experienced good" (i.e. the benefits of unionism are not obvious and need to be experienced to be truly understood). These authors make case that because younger workers today are less likely than younger workers in the past to have experienced the benefits associated with union membership and are less likely to be involved with a union.

Union communication

The study of communication has been central to our understanding of organized labour. Work in the area ranges from early studies by the Webbs (1896) and Michels (1915) to more recent studies by those such as Geelan and Hodder (2017), demonstrating the importance of union communication with respect to transmitting organizational vision, goals, and strategies to members (Hodder, 2014), as well as encouraging engagement and participation among members (Kerr and Waddington, 2013). In contemplating routes to renewal in the 21st century, the role of communications in facilitating union revitalization has retained center stage by linking renewal

to more frequent and effective union–member communications (Rivers & Truitt, 2014) and giving union members a voice (Dufour-Poirier & Laroche, 2015).

Research on the specific use of internet based communication technologies by unions has been a relatively recent addition to the field ranging from Shostack's (1999) hopeful elaboration of the potential ways unions could use technology to recruit, organize, mobilize, educate, and share information with members to Castells' (2002) scepticism about the capacity of centralised bureaucracies to manage the challenge of the networked form.

Of relevance to our research is a study by Rivers and Truitt (2014) which found that union members felt that their union had not adequately implemented communication technology in a way that facilitated union-member communication. These findings echo earlier work by Ward and Lusoli (2003), who found that unions are typically slow at adopting new technologies.

Other research in the area implies, however, unions that do manage to successfully implement communication technologies benefit in a number of important ways that can be linked to union renewal. At the outset of the debate about the implications of internet based communications for trade unions, a number of writers highlighted how the availability of distributed communication technologies facilitate challenges to oligarchy, the centralization of union governance and associated bureaucratic inertia. (See: Hogan and Grieco, 1999; Hogan and Grieco 2000; Hogan and Greene, 2002; Greene, Hogan and Grieco, 2003; Lee, 2000; Bailey, 2006)

More specifically, a number of writers have highlighted how the availability of distributed communication technologies facilitate challenges to oligarchy, the centralization of union governance and associated bureaucratic inertia. (See: Hogan and Greene, 2002; Greene, Hogan and Grieco, 2003; Lee, 2000; Bailey, 2006). In a similar vein, Wood (2015), analyzed the

role of mass self-communication networks such as Facebook and YouTube, in the mobilization of disgruntled Wal-Mart workers. She found that such technologies helped leaders inform workers of their rights, build a sense of collective identity among workers, and organize and affect direct action. These findings offer support for Greene et al.'s (2003) idea that online communication tools help mobilization efforts by creating electronic proximity.

Other work by Geelan and Hodder (2017) and Geelan (2015) support similar conclusions. Geelan and Hodder (2017), who undertook a study of Union Solidarity International, a UK-based organization that promotes unionism internationally, report that social media enabled the organization to reach a geographically dispersed target group, and that the adoption of social media technologies helped the union build an activist network, promote their mission and educate people about unions. Geelan (2015) studied an information campaign directed at building awareness of the union movement among young workers in Denmark. His study showed that while attitudes towards unions can be difficult to change, the internet has the potential to be an effective tool for informing potential union members about the purpose of and benefits gained from union membership.

Other researchers link the use of communication technology to a variety of factors associated with union renewal including organizing, socialization, solidarity building, member research, and public relations (Cockfield, 2005; Lucore, 2002; Panagiotopoulos and Barnett, 2015), and internal dispute resolution (Kerr and Waddington, 2013).

Extant research in the area supports the idea that there are generational differences in attitudes towards communications technologies. Bennett, Maton and Kervin's (2008) pioneering study exploring technology adoption across generations lead to the creation of their "digital natives"/"digital immigrants" framework. According to this research younger people who have

grown up with modern technology are “digital natives”, while older people who have had to learn about and adapt to new technology are “digital immigrants.” While debate exists within the literature as to the accuracy of this dichotomy (Spector, 2008), subsequent research findings suggest that the labels are accurate (Helsper and Eynon, 2010). A diversity of researchers (Campbell et al., 2017; Ignatius and Hechanova, 2014; Wilson, Scalise and Gochyyev, 2015; Geelan, 2015), for example, have found that openness to the use of online modes of communication such as e-mail, text and instant messaging email is negatively associated with cohort age.

Finally, the need for more study into the relationship between generational cohort and preferences with respect to union communication is reinforced by research showing that unions are typically slow to adopt new modes of communication (Ward and Lusoli, 2003) which puts them at odds with the preferences of their younger members (Ignatius and Hechanova, 2014; Geelan, 2015).

Case organization

The data featured in our analysis was gathered as part of a four-year research program undertaken with a large male-dominated “blue-collar” American transport industry union (referred to as “Natunion” in this paper). Natunion represents about 40,000 workers across the continental U.S.A. The union is structured into regional divisions, which are served by Vice Chairs who act as liaisons between union locals within their region and the national office.

Our research relationship began when Natunion’s leadership came to us looking for help with their renewal efforts. Their motivation to address this issue was driven by two factors: (1) involvement in union activities among members was in decline, as meeting attendance waned, and volunteer positions went unfilled, and (2) their membership was getting older (i.e.

members were, on average, 52 years of age) and the union had few members in either the Gen X or Millennial cohorts. These two factors motivated the union's leaders to support research designed to help them identify how they could better attract and engage younger members.

We used an action research methodology, in which researchers and practitioners work together to diagnose, analyze, and overcome organizational issues. As such, the research process we describe here involved frequent consultation with a multigenerational research advisory board made up of National Division executives, Vice Chairs (regional representatives who act as liaisons between local and national offices), local leaders, and rank-and-file members. The advisory board provided practical, context-specific expertise that helped us to determine our focus, interpret our results, and shape the next steps. The research team was unpaid, but Natunion covered research and travel costs.

Lyons et al. (2015) suggest that researchers interested in the generational cohort construct employ a mixed-method approach which allows them to quantify generational differences in the area of exploration and to dig deeper into why such differences may or may not occur. These suggestions informed the research methodology followed in this paper. The first study, which is quantitative in design, examines the union's communication practices and members' communication preferences and identifies differences between the two. The second study, which we conducted as a follow-up to the first, was qualitative in design and done to provide us with insights into how members felt about the union's communication practices.

Study One

Study one has three main objectives: (1) to determine how the union communicates information to its members ("current communication practices"), (2) to determine how members

would prefer this information be communicated to them (“preferred communication practices”), and (3) to examine how generational cohort impacts each of these issues. In the sections below we outline the research methodology followed in Study One and present key findings from this phase of our research.

Sample

The union sent questionnaires with self-addressed and stamped envelopes to all (approximately 6400) members of one division of the union between the Spring and Fall of 2014. The fact that this division was having problems getting younger members to participate in union activities motivated its leadership to volunteer it for this research study. Just over 700 ($n = 720$) surveys were returned for a response rate of about 11%. Approximately half the sample ($n = 382$) were members of the Baby Boomer cohort while one in three ($n = 256$) were classified as Generation X and one in ten ($n = 73$) were Millennials. Only 7 respondents indicated that they were Female (about 1% of sample). The sample make up in terms of generational cohort and gender was virtually identical to the data the union had on their membership. About 48% of the participants worked locally, while 52% worked on mobile crews which covered wide geographic regions requiring travel for work.

Measures

To quantify Natunion’s “current communication practices” we asked respondents: “How do you usually hear about opportunities to get involved with the union? Please circle all that apply: Through the mail; Word-of-mouth; By telephone; Text messages; By email; On the union’s website”. To quantify our participants’ “preferred communication practices” we asked respondents: “How would you prefer to receive information about: (1) opportunities to get

involved with the union?; (2) union meetings?; and (3) bargaining updates?. In each case, respondents were asked use a five-point Likert scale (1 = “Not at all preferable”, 3 = “Neutral”, 5 = “Very preferable”) to indicate their preference for each of six different modes of communication: Mail; Word-of-mouth; By telephone; Text messages; By email; On the Union’s Website”. Analysis of these data showed that the communication preferences of our respondents were essentially the same for all three types of union-member communications examined (e.g. opportunities to get involved, union meetings, bargaining updates). As such, to keep the paper length within allowable limits we decided to limit our discussion in this paper to responses given to the question with the most relevance to union participation within the renewal literature (Gall and Fiorito, 2012): communication preferences with respect to “opportunities to get involved with the union.”

Data Analysis

We began our quantitative analysis by recoding the “current communication practices” data such that each “yes” (i.e. circled) response was coded as a 1 and each “no” (not circled) response was coded as a 0. We then calculated the percent of the total sample and the percent of respondents in each generation cohort subsample who stated that “yes” they receive information from their union this way. Second, we recoded the “preferred communication practices” data such that those respondents who responded either 4 (preferable) or 5 (very preferable) were recoded as a 1 (yes, the respondent “preferred” to receive union-member communications in this fashion). All other responses were recoded as a 0 (do not prefer this method of communication). We then calculated the percent of the total sample and the percent of respondents in each generation cohort subsample who stated that “yes” they “prefer” to receive information from their union this way.

Three different sets of analysis were used to identify the relationship between generational cohort and how members currently receive and prefer to receive information from their union. We began with a Chi-square analysis. We then performed a series of one-way ANOVA with generational cohort (Boomer, Gen X, Millennial) as our independent variable and the degree to which respondents preferred the union communicate with them by Mail, Work-of-Mouth, Telephone, Text, Email, and using the Union Website, as our continuous dependent variables. Tuckey's post-hoc test was used to interpret all significant ANOVAs. Finally, we calculated the "gap" between current and preferred practices for each of the six communication practices considered in this study for the total sample and by generational cohort by subtracting the percent of the sample who indicate that this is how the union communicates information to them from the percent of the sample who indicated that they "preferred" this type of communication. The bigger the positive gap the greater the unmet demand for this form of communication. The greater the negative gap, the more this method of communication is being over-used.

In the section below we begin by presenting our findings with respect to current and preferred communication practices. This is followed by the results from our gap analysis. In all cases we begin by presenting results obtained using the total sample. We then highlight any significant between-cohort differences uncovered during the analysis.

Current Communication Practices

How do union members say that their union is communicating opportunities to get involved? Data answering this question are shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Current and Preferred Union-Member Communication Practices by Generational Cohort

	“Current Communication Practices”				“Preferred Communication Practices”			
Method	Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Total	Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Total
Mail	88%	81%	70%	84%	68%	65%	56%	66%
Word-of-Mouth	28%	35%	33%	28%	31%	25%	33%	29%
Telephone	5%	4%	6%	5%	23%	23%	33%	24%
Text Message	7%	9%	10%	8%	28%	37%	48%	33%
Email	4%	4%	6%	4%	28%	43%	54%	36%
Union Website	1%	2%	2%	1%	25%	23%	24%	24%
I don’t receive this information	6%	12%	22%	10%				

Several important observations can be made from the data in Table 5-1. First, one in ten of our respondents (10%) indicate that they do not receive this type of information from their union. Second, there was consensus within the sample (85%) that the union uses the mail system to communicate opportunities to get involved. Third, one in four respondents (28%) said they typically get this type of information through word-of-mouth – either from a union representative, a fellow union member or at union meetings. Finally, very few of our respondents (less than 5%) receive union-member communications via telephone calls, emails, and the union’s website.

Chi-square analysis revealed only two between-cohort differences in these data. The first (and perhaps more important) difference relates to our analysis showing that a quarter (22%) of the respondents in the Millennial cohort say that the union does not communicate this type of information to them – a significantly ($\chi^2 (2, 701) = 39.00, p > 0.000$) higher percent giving this response than was observed in the Boomer (6%) or Gen X (12%) subsamples. The second

difference relates to the percent of the sample indicating that the union uses the mail system to communicate with them. In this case, those in the Boomer (88%) and Gen X (81%) subsamples were significantly more likely to give this response than were those in the Millennial cohort (70%): $\chi^2 (2, 701) = 16.23, p > 0.000$).

Communication Preferences

How would union members prefer that their union provide them with information on opportunities to get involved? Data answering this question are shown in Table 5-1. A number of observations can be made regarding the data in Table 5-1. First, a majority of members say that they prefer that the union communicate opportunities to get involved through the mail (66%). Second, a substantive portion of our respondents would like the union to use of communication technologies such as Email (36%) and text messaging (33%) to get this information into the hands of its members. Approximately one in four seem to prefer a more personal/interactive form of communication, indicating a preference for the use of word-of-mouth (29%) and a telephone conversation (24%) about such opportunities. Finally, one in four prefer the union put such information on their website (24%) – a more passive form of communication that requires more effort on the part of the member.

Chi-square analysis revealed only two significant between-cohort differences with respect to our findings with respect to communication preferences: informants in the Millennial and Gen X cohorts are significantly more likely than their Boomer counterparts to want the union to send them text messages on how to get involved ($\chi^2 (2, 701) = 13.84, p > 0.001$) or communicate such information by email ($\chi^2 (2, 701) = 24.86, p > 0.000$).

To better understand these differences, we performed a series of six ANOVA analyses, with generational cohort as the predictor variable, and level of preference for the different forms of

communication (scale of 1 to 5) as the dependent variable. Results from these analyses are shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 - ANOVA RESULTS

	Mail		Word-of-Mouth		Phone		Text		Email		Website	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Boomer	4.41*	0.97	3.05	1.49	2.68	1.49	2.95**	1.61	2.76*	1.62	2.51	1.48
Gen X	4.03*	1.25	2.91	1.41	2.66	1.44	3.32**	1.54	3.25*	1.53	2.48	1.37
Millennial	3.76*	1.44	2.91	1.60	2.62	1.43	3.27	1.60	3.68*	1.45	2.55	1.46
Total	4.22	1.15	2.98	1.57	2.66	1.46	3.13	1.59	3.05	1.60	2.50	1.43

***Indicates significant difference between Gen X and Boomers and Millennials and Boomers, but not Gen X and Millennials**

****Indicates significant difference between Gen X and Boomers only**

One-way ANOVAs revealed significant generational differences in preferences with respect to three of the six forms of communication considered in this analysis: a preference for mail, $F(2, 720) = 34.14, p = .000$; a preference for text messaging, $F(2, 720) = 18.87, p = 0.02$; and a preference for Email, $F(2, 720) = 56.33, p = 0.000$. Post-hoc Tukey tests reveal the following significant between-cohort differences in communication preference. First, the preference for communications by mail was significantly higher for Boomers (4.41) than for those in either the Gen X (4.03, $p = .000$) or Millennial (3.76, $p = .000$) cohorts. Millennials' preference for mail is not, however, significantly different, from Gen X's preference for this form of communication ($p = 0.10$). Second, Gen Xer's (3.32) preference for text messaging as a mode of communicating was significantly greater than that reported by Boomers (2.95, $p = .008$). No significant differences in preference for this form of communication were, however,

observed between Boomers and Millennials (3.27) ($p = 0.16$), or between Gen Xers and Millennials ($p = 0.84$). Finally, we found significant differences in preferences for Email communication between Gen Xers (3.25) and Boomers (2.76) ($p = .000$) and between Millennials (3.68) and Boomers (2.76) ($p = .000$) but no difference between Millennials and Gen Xers ($p = 0.061$). In this case, members in the two younger cohorts were more likely to prefer this form of communication than were those in the Boomer sample.

Gap Analysis

Finally, we undertook gap analysis (see Figure 5-1) to get a better understanding of the degree to which current union-member communications conform to how members prefer such information be sent. Examination of the data in Figure 5-1 show that, there is an appreciable difference between members and the union with respect to how the union communicates information on how to get involved versus how members want such information to be disseminated. This gap can be observed for five of the six modes of communication examined for all three generational cohorts. This analysis also shows that members receive more communications from the union by mail and fewer technology or telephone supported communications than they want and – regardless of generational cohort. Finally, apart from those in the Gen X cohort, members who word-of-mouth communication seem to get their information transferred in this fashion.

Figure 5-1: Results of Gap Analysis (preferred versus actual communication) by generational cohort

Note: Data rounded up/down for display purposes.

Study Two

To help us better understand our results and generate useful recommendations to Natunion on communication practices that might help them better engage younger workers we undertook a qualitative study as a follow-up to Study One. Study Two had two objectives: (1) to help find out what Natunion's members like and dislike about their union's communication practices, (2) to identify strategies that Natunion could implement to increase member satisfaction with union communications. Details on this study are provided below.

Data collection

Questions on the communication practices of the union were embedded in an interview script we administered in the Fall of 2014. The interview included queries relating to union participation, members' feelings about unions and unionism, and what the union means to them. Study Two focuses on the analysis of the following three interview questions: "Think about how the union gets information out to its members and tell us": (1) "What do you think that the union is doing well?," (2) "What, do you think that the union could improve upon?" and (3) "Do you have any advice for the union with respect to improving the way it communicates information to its members?".

The sample was drawn from a list of members (stratified by generational cohort) that the union steering committee provided to the research team. We selected our sample ($n = 75$) to ensure equal representation for each cohort by randomly calling potential participants from each cohort using Skype software. All interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient to the informant. Interviews were recorded using Skype recorder software. The audio files were then transcribed for coding. The final sample includes 25 Millennials, 25 Gen X, and 25 Boomers.

Participants lived in 17 states. Three-quarters of the respondents were required to travel for work with 47% spending 100% of their time working away from home and one in five spending between 50% and 99% of their time on the road. Experience with the union data maps onto our sample demographics with one in four participants stating that had 30+ years of experience with the union and one in five reporting fewer than five years of experience. Only 26% of participants had experience working for a union prior to joining Natunion.

Data Analysis

Charmaz' (2006) two-stage coding methodology was used to analyze our semi-structured interviews. The technique begins with an emergent process called "initial coding" which involves using the informants' own words to create a specific code for each piece of data, producing a potentially large number of codes. This is followed by "focused coding" which categorizes coded data based on thematic or theoretical similarity. We discuss the results from our analysis of the three interview questions of interest in the sections below.

Getting information out to its members: What is the union doing well?

The two-step coding process described above resulted in the identification of eight initial codes which were associated with three focused codes: mode of communication is effective; union makes an effort to keep members informed; and union not effective at communicating with members. Results are provided in Table 5- 3 and discussed below.

All four initial codes included within the "*Mode of Communication is Effective*" focused code relate to satisfaction with the various channels the union uses to communicate information to its members. Comments which spoke to the respondent's satisfaction with the union's use of communication technology (email, internet, text messaging) were grouped and labeled "Union uses electronic communication to send information to members". Some members spoke about how useful the union website is when one needs to find information "Oh, I think they're doing what they need to. Like I said, it comes by, you know, internet and then mail. So, I'd say they're doing a good job of going to get the information out the way it is." Another added that "Recently this last bargaining agreement that we came to, they did real well by putting it up on the website, and people can go to it and read it now." Others talked about how the union sometimes uses text messages or email to get information to members: "They've basically showed that they could

Table 5-3: What is the union doing well?

Focused Codes	Initial Codes	Sample Quotes
<i>Mode of communication is effective</i>	Union uses electronic communication (i.e. email, internet, text messaging) to provide information to members	<i>They're keeping their website pretty updated</i> <i>Well, I think that trying to communicate through the web, or electronic media, I think that's probably the right thing.</i>
	Union uses postcards to notify members about meetings	<i>I do receive a postcard when there is a union meeting. I think they do that right.</i>
	Union newsletters are effective at getting information out to members	<i>The NATUNION journal. You know, they get quite a bit of information out. You know, the Secretary Treasury Report, President's Report. That's... all that's pretty good. I don't mind getting that.</i>
	Union reps make sure that members are kept informed	<i>Most of the guys in the lodge, like the president and the vice president ..., most of them guys are, kind of, local guys, you know, and they kind of pass the word around and stuff.</i>
<i>Union makes an effort to keep members informed</i>	Generally doing a good job of keeping members informed	<i>For the most part, I feel adequately informed from national division</i>
	They are doing the best they can (they are constrained)	<i>I wouldn't know what else they could do besides call people, and ... you know, calling people, you don't know what their schedules are, you know, whether they're working and such. So I'd say they're doing a good job of ...getting the information out the way it is.</i>
<i>Union not effective at communicating with members</i>	Nothing/Unsure	<i>You know, I don't know, because I really... other than the newsletter, I don't hear about a lot. So I wouldn't,.... I would say probably not a great job.</i>

share information by sending it to your text message through my phone”, and “like I said the emails good for the younger generation”.

A second group of informants talked about how the union’s current method of mailing postcards to send members information about upcoming meetings was effective (i.e. “Union uses postcards to notify members about meetings”). As one member observed: “... I get mailed when the meetings are... they’re letting me know”, while another simply stated that “I mean, like, the mail cards are pretty good”.

A third group of respondents all felt that the union newsletter was an effective way to keep members informed of union news such as bargaining updates and more general union-related news. These responses were coded as “Newsletters are effective”. One member spoke about how he appreciates the leadership reports found in the newsletter. “The (union) journal. You know, they get quite a bit of information out. You know, the Secretary Treasury Report, President’s Report. That’s... all that’s pretty good....” Another member pointed out how useful he finds the newsletter for providing general updates about union goings on: “it’s good that they send us [the newsletter] in the mail to know that ... they’re still there and they’re still, you know, letting us know about certain things that’s going on in the union.”

A final group of participants spoke about how their union representatives at the national, regional, or local level are effective at passing on vital information. These responses were coded as “Union reps make sure that members are kept informed”. Some respondents specifically named representatives who they believed to be especially helpful, or particularly good at informing members. For example, “If something important comes up, [My Representative] usually calls me”, Others spoke about how communications from their representatives are effective: “they always keep in contact on what’s going to happen with the next agreement”, and

“around here in this territory at, our system division officers do amazing at (keeping members informed).”

All responses in which participants indicated satisfaction with the union’s communication processes were grouped in a second focused code which was given the label *“Union makes an effort to keep members informed.”* Participant comments that spoke to how the union was successful at communicating important information to members, without elaborating on specifics were given the initial code *“Generally doing a good job of keeping members informed”*. For example, one member said: *“I think... they keep everybody informed. They state the facts.”*

Other participants stated that the union was doing the best they could given the constraints placed upon it by outside factors such as the employer, disinterested members, and/or society. These responses were coded as *“They are doing the best they can (they are constrained)”*. One informant stated: *“I mean they try... You know, on-the-property visits, spending money for union reps to go out on the property and, you know ... mailings and webpages and everything else. I think they’ve done a good job. I mean you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink, you know. That’s basically the way I look at it. I think they’ve done a pretty good job.”* A second informant expressed a similar view: *“.... as far as getting the information out.... you can only make people do so much, you know. Sometimes it’s just... they’ll whine about it, but I mean ... you can lead the horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”* Another member points to the nature of the job – constantly travelling with sporadic work hours – as an obstacle to successful communication with which the union is fighting (see quote Table 5-3).

The third focused code, *“Union not effective communicating with members”* includes all responses where the informant either stated that they could not think of anything that the union was doing well with respect to communicating with its members or indicated that they felt that

the union was doing nothing well. The following quotation is typical of the responses in this code: “I would really have to think long and hard in order to come up with some way that I’m impressed by the way they communicate with us.”

After coding the data we proceeded by counting the number of informants included within each of the coding groups. The results from this analysis are shown for the total sample and by generational cohort in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4: What is the union doing well? Response by generational cohort

Focused Codes	Initial codes	Boomers (n =25)	Gen X (n = 25)	Millennial (n = 25)	Sample (n = 75)
Mode of communication is effective		17	13	18	48
	Union uses electronic communication (i.e. email, internet, text messaging) to provide information to members	7	2	1	10
	Union uses postcards to notify members about meetings	5	1	3	9
	Union newsletters are effective at getting information out to members	1	3	4	8
	Union reps make sure that members are kept informed	4	7	10	21
Union makes an effort to keep members informed		7	7	4	18
	Generally doing a good job of keeping members informed	5	4	4	13
	They are doing the best they can (they are constrained)	2	3	0	5
Union not effective at communicating with members					15
	Nothing/unsure	3	7	5	15

Almost two-thirds ($n = 48$) of our participants described union-member communications as being effective. Of note are the data showing that these individuals were talking about four quite different forms of communication: electronic communication ($n = 10$), mail/postcards ($n = 9$), the union newsletter ($n = 8$) and face-to-face communication ($n = 21$). While one in five ($n = 18$) appreciated the union's attempts to keep members informed, a similar number ($n = 15$) had nothing good to say about how their union communicated information to its members. One in four ($n = 21$) praised their union representatives for doing a good job of keeping members informed, a finding that reinforces the importance of word-of-mouth communications to some members. Lastly, five seemingly sympathetic members felt that the union was doing the best that it could, despite facing constraints such as pressure from management and the logistical issues caused by job-related travel.

Cross-Cohort Analysis: What impact does generational cohort have on informant's perceptions of what the union is doing well with respect to union-member communications? Answers to this question can be found in the data in Table 5-4. These data support the following observations. First, with three exceptions, generational cohort membership has little to no impact on informants' views of union-member communications. Second, the likelihood of identifying union reps or the union newsletter as something the union is doing well with respect to communication is negatively related to age, as Millennials are most likely to give these responses and Boomers the least. Third, the likelihood of identifying the union's use of communication technology as an effective way to communicate with members is positively related to age as the Boomers in our sample were essentially the only cohort to flag this something the union does well – perhaps because younger employees have higher expectations in this regard. Lastly, we note that the youngest members in our sample (Millennials) were the

only group who did not mention outside constraints on the union's ability to effectively communicate information to its members.

Getting information out to its members: Where are improvements needed?

Analysis of the responses to our second interview question (see Table 5-5) uncovered 10 initial codes describing areas where our participants felt their union was falling short with respect to union-member communications. These ten initial codes were grouped into two focused codes: flow of information and structural barriers to communication. Details are provided below.

The first focused code, "*Flow of information*" includes four different initial codes all of which speak to perceived shortcomings in the flow of information from the union to its members. Many respondents told us that they felt uninformed by the union (e.g. "the news about what's going on, it's almost nonexistent"). Others provided specific examples of situations in which they were disappointed with the union's communication of a specific event as illustrated by the following quote: "our last Vice Chairman for our division... I had no idea that he was impeached... I just found out a couple of weeks ago that he was no longer there.... I didn't know until I found out from other different people." Another expressed frustration with the lack of information on happenings in the national office "there's a lot of stuff we don't hear... like, stuff that's still going on in our national division." Others remarked upon a lack of information about bargaining, "the bargaining aspect of it, you know... they really haven't gone out of their way to let us know what kind of bargaining is being done." This initial code was given the label "not enough information communicated to members" to reflect its content.

A second set of responses related to feelings that union communications, particularly explanations of the collective bargaining agreement, were often unclear. Responses included in

Table 5-5: Data Structure: What is the union doing poorly?

Focused Codes	Initial Codes	Sample Quotes
<i>Flow of information</i>	Not enough information communicated to members	<i>I don't get a whole lot of information from the union.</i>
	Communications are unclear	<i>Some of the wording they use is kind of confusing, because we're not college graduates working (out here). We are just high school graduates. If they make it simple and more brief, then members can understand that</i>
	Information is not being provided in a timely fashion	<i>It's putting the information out after the circumstances. They aren't putting the information out ahead of time</i>
	Relevant information does not arrive	<i>I'd say they could do ten times better because the guys that are so spread out, they don't get the information if they don't see a certain person.</i>
<i>Structural barriers to communication</i>	Not enough outreach to members	<i>What they're doing wrong is I don't think they're getting one on one communication to the members. I don't think we're seeing them in person enough. You know, we don't see much of them, you know</i>
	A lack of role clarity between union leaders and reps as to who should be communicating what	<i>Seems like you kind of get shuffled back and forth</i>
<i>Union does the best they can</i>	Nothing	<i>Hard to say. I mean, I think they make a good effort and they try. I don't know how they... I don't know any way you could really do it better.</i>

this initial code, which we labeled “communications are unclear” all spoke to the fact that, in the informant’s opinion, the information provided to members by the union is often hard to understand and in need of further explanation. The most common complaint we heard related to the trouble some members have interpreting the collective agreement and its convoluted language: “I mean... when they re-did the contract, there was a bit of confusion as to, you know, at what point do we get our percentage of raise on this one ...”. Another member bluntly stated, “they’re not really good at presenting [information] to us”, in reference to the union’s inability to communicate clearly.

Some respondents complained that the union’s communications were not presented in a timely fashion. One Millennial said that a greater use of technology could help speed up the flow of information, stating “they could have more stuff put, like on the web page, or something like that, that we could access a heck of a lot quicker than by mail or by trying to get a hold of your vice chairman.” One Gen Xer brought up how he felt the union did not keep members adequately updated on the collective bargaining process during the most recent round of negotiations, “in the last bargaining agreement, things that they, you know, gave up ... that seemed like really important points to our guys around here, and we didn’t hear about it until after.” These comments were included in a third initial code labeled “Information is not given in a timely fashion”

Responses included within the final initial code included inside the “*information flow*” focused code, “Relevant information does not arrive” all referred to frustrations respondents felt when information they sought such as a schedule of upcoming meetings, clarification on the collective agreement, or news about the union’s leadership structure did not get to them, despite being sent. Many informants felt that the large amount of time they spent away from their home

meant that sending information using the U.S postal system was an ineffective way to communicate with members. One participant explained that “there are times I won't even look at my mail for 13 to 14 days.... so I do not get the information.” Another Millennial complained that the union has outdated contact and mailing information for its members which meant - “the hiccup is when people move and, you know, when they get mailed stuff... somehow it don't get to them....’

The second focused code, “*Structural barriers to communication*”, includes two initial codes which speak to two different structural barriers to union-member communication: internal union structures (role clarity), and union processes (communication/member outreach).

The “not enough outreach to members” initial code included responses where informants complained that the union does not make enough of an effort to reach out to its members. Some of these members believed that the union could do more with respect to relationship-building with new and young members. One Millennial member expressed his disappointment with the union's effort to keep young members informed: “I just don't know how you get more of the younger guys like me... I mean...I've got 34, 34 and a half years to retire from this shithole... so I want to know what's going on, you know? I don't want to be left in the dark”. Another member complained that the union only gets in touch with members when there is a problem “Like you hear only when somebody gets in trouble, you know?” Other members dislike how the union assumes it knows what is best for members rather than seeking out their opinions: “The union thinks they know what the members want, instead of getting information from the people out doing their job... the upper management of the union is thinking they know what's best for the members instead of getting the members opinions.”

The other initial code within this theme, “a lack of role clarity between union members and reps about who should be communicating what” included respondent’s complaints that there is a lack of consistency in messaging between different union representatives. These informants talked about how this created confusion among members, “because we’ve got three representatives, and I guarantee you, on one topic, those three representatives will give you three... totally different stories.” Another member highlighted this inconsistency between representatives, stating “you call one guy, you get one answer, you call somebody else...” leaving the sentence hanging for effect.

The last focused code, the “Union does the best they can” included responses where the informant stated that they could not think of anything the union is doing poorly with respect to communication (initial code labeled “nothing”). This response implies some level of satisfaction with the current communication process (see Table 5-5).

After developing the coding scheme, we counted the number of informants providing each of the responses noted above. The result from this stage of the data analysis process are shown for the total sample and by generational cohort in Table 5-6.

These data support a number of observations. First, the most common ($n = 51$) complaints about union-member communications relate to issues around information flow. By comparison, just 22 people identified issues relating to “Structural barriers to communication”. Finally, thirteen respondents were not able to identify any areas in which the union was doing poorly when it came to communication to members. Further examination of the data suggests that the most overriding concern of our participants with respect to union-member communication is their perception that not enough information is being communicated to

Table 5-6: What is the union doing poorly? Response by generational cohort

Focused Codes	Initial codes	Boomers (n =25)	Gen X (n = 25)	Millennial (n = 25)	Sample (n = 75)
Flow of information		18	20	14	51
	Not enough information communicated to members	9	11	8	28
	Communications are unclear	3	3	1	7
	Information is not provided in a timely fashion	4	0	3	7
	Relevant information does not arrive	2	5	2	9
Structural barriers to communication		4	2	6	22
	Not enough outreach to members	2	1	4	7
	A lack of role clarity between union leaders and reps as to who should be communicating what	2	2	2	6
Union does the best they can		1	6	6	13
	Nothing	1	6	6	13

members (n = 22). The rest of the frustrations were each expressed by a similar (albeit smaller) number of informants.

Cross-Cohort Analysis: What impact does generational cohort have on informant's perceptions of where union-member communications need to be improved? These data in Table 5-6 support the following observations with respect to generational differences in perceptions. First, those in the Boomer (n = 18) and Gen X (n = 20) cohorts were more likely than Millennials (n = 14) to complain about "Information flow". Those in the Gen X group, in particular, perceived that "not enough information is communicated to members" (n = 11) and "relevant information does not arrive" (n = 5). Second, more informants in the Millennial (n = 6) than Gen X (n = 2) cohorts identified problems associated with "structural barriers to communication". Third, more Millennials than members in the Gen X and Boomer cohort felt that the lack of outreach from the union's leadership to the members was problematic. Finally, the fact that only one informant in the Boomer sample felt that the "union does the best they can" (as compared to 6 Gen Xers and 6 Millennials) supports the idea that Boomers have higher expectations with respect to union-member communications than their younger colleagues.

Advice for the Union

Analysis of the responses to the final interview question identified seven initial codes and three focused categories (see Table 5-7). These are discussed below.

Many respondents gave advice to the union relating to how they would prefer the union pass on information to them. All such responses were included in a focused code which was labelled "*Changes to how the union communicates with its members*". Two initial codes were identified relating to this theme. The first set of responses, which all spoke to how the union

Table 5-7: What advice do you have for the union?

Focused Codes	Initial Codes	Sample Quotes
<i>Changes to how the union communicates with its members</i>	Make more use of electronic communication technology	<p><i>The only thing I could say is collect emails, because everybody gets them. I get mine just like everybody else who has a smart phone, you get it when you have it. And that's the easiest way for anything.</i></p> <p><i>This is going to sound pathetic but it's kind of the way of the world: text messages</i></p>
	More face-to-face interaction	<p><i>I personally would love to see somebody from the union, usually the chairman or someone like that that are out on the property, physically come out and see the people. In the old days they used to do that. I haven't... I don't think a union official's come on the property in 30 years, or at least 20 years anyway.</i></p>
<i>Changes to information flow within the union</i>	Listen to members	<p><i>The union thinks they know what the members want, instead of getting information from the people out doing their job, they're... the upper management of the union is thinking they know what's best for the members instead of getting the members' opinions</i></p> <p><i>I think they need just to be more forthcoming with negative and positive things.</i></p>
	Make communications more transparent	<p><i>So I mean, there's things that we would like to be informed on in our headquarters that... lawsuits and stuff that where our money's being spent, a little more defined... Because these people, you know, we voted these people in and we don't hear... it's months and months later and we haven't heard a lot from them here lately about certain things.</i></p>
	Provide more timely information	<p><i>I think things could be more current</i></p>
	General request to improve communication	<p><i>I mean, just, just better... get better at it.</i></p>
No advice	No advice	<p><i>Not right off the top of my head, I can't think of any.</i></p>

needed to take advantage of current communication technologies such as text messaging, email, social media, and the union website to communicate information to members, were all grouped within an initial code which was labeled “more use of communication technology.” Some informants spoke of their disappointment with the union’s implementation of communication technology and expressed the hope that the union would embrace new technologies in the future. Other members thought that sending texts or emails would be a simple and effective solution due to the ubiquity of cell phones: “You know, if (the union) had a way to send a text, because everybody's got a cell phone and everybody can get texts.” Some members talked about how a text messaging strategy could be rolled out: “I think, you know, it would be nice if they had a site somewhere where a member could go and sign up and have updates sent to their phone... That would be amazing”. Similarly, “There’s a bar in my hometown that you send a text message to and they type something on the computer and they can update specials or when they’re having bands, and it gets sent out to text message or email. So that could be something that they could look into for the future.” One Vice-Chairman discussed his email strategy, indicating that it could be implemented across the union: “I created an email tree where I will cascade any information I get or any notices or anything to my local officers and then have them send it to their rank and file just to keep them apprised of anything that's relevant that they need to know. And, you know, modern technology has made that really easy compared to 20 years or so...” One Boomer suggested that the union might benefit from an increased social media presence, particularly with respect to keeping Millennial members informed; “maybe with the younger generation coming in and the older generation going out, it’s something to consider... you know, Facebook page or Tweets ... something along those lines that the younger generation is going to be more in to that make it faster, easier to get information like that.”

Other respondents also believed the union could improve the way it communicates with members by providing for “more face-to-face interaction”. Responses included in this second initial code typically referred to members’ desire to have their union representatives spend more time at the job site. Many wanted to see their vice- chairman (representative at the division level) out in the field more. More than one Boomer observed that while seeing a union representative in the field was once common, it is now a rarity (see quote Table 5-7). One member felt that their representatives spend too much time in the office and not enough in the field, saying “I think the vice-chairmen need to come out and communicate a little more ... rather than being in the office so much. Come out in the field a little more often.” Other members wanted to see more on-site visits from union representatives stating that face to face interaction and outreach is an opportunity to build a relationship and increased involvement with the union: “If they could really just make it a personal thing between us and them, because we really just kind of feel on the outside of them. Like, it’s them and then there’s us and then [the employer]. And we’re stuck kind of in the middle. Get to know your members, get to, you know, get out in the field and talk with us, you know.” Similarly, “Just reach out and say, ‘Hi, how you doing? This is what’s going on. I’d like to see you in the meetings. A meeting’s coming up, just to give you guys a heads up.’ That would be great.”

The second focused code, “*Changes to information flow within the union*” included four initial codes, each referring to a different form of advice on how information should flow from the union to its members. Some respondents wanted the union to extend their view of communication beyond just dispensing information to one where they actively “Listen to members”. For example, one member said, “quit worrying so much about what the (employer) wants and worry about what the members want.” Another pointed out why members feel the

need to be heard, stating “if we are the people, and the unions for the people, we should have a say in what goes on a little bit more.”

Some respondents indicated a desire for “more transparency” from the union in its union-member communications. For example, one member just wanted the union to be up front with members whether the news is good or bad (see quote Table 5-7). Another stated that he often felt that the union is hiding something from members “I don’t think we’re getting the full picture.” Another member’s response was more complete: “I’d like to know what they’re doing with all our money we’re paying them. I understand that they do an accounting of what they’re doing, but the terminology that they use for each account or where money is spent is left wide open. It’s pretty vague, you know.”

Other respondents claimed that information from the union often arrives too late and asked for “more timely communication” from the union. Several complained that members do not get enough warning about upcoming meetings and requested that the union send such notifications out earlier noting that “further in advance is better”. Finally, some people just gave very general answers to this question. These were grouped and given the label “general request to improve communication.

Finally, some informants had no advice for the union with respect to improving their communication processes replying: “*Not right off the top of my head, I can't think of any.*” These responses were collected together in the final focused code identified in our analysis: “*No advice given*”:

After developing the coding scheme, we counted the number of informants providing each of the responses noted above. The result from this stage of the data analysis process are shown for the total sample and by generational cohort in Table 5-8.

Table 5-8: Advice for the union: Response by generational cohort

Focused Codes	Initial codes	Boomers (n =25)	Gen X (n = 25)	Millennial (n = 25)	Sample (n = 75)
Changes to how the union communicates with its members		11	15	12	38
	More use of communication technology	5	10	8	23
	More face-to-face interaction	6	5	4	15
Changes to information flow within the union		8	9	6	23
	Listen to members	2	2	3	7
	Make communications more transparent	4	2	0	6
	Provide more timely information	1	1	3	5
	General request to improve communication	1	4	0	5
No advice given		3	5	6	14

These data support several observations. First, over half ($n = 38$) of our respondents wanted the union to make “Changes to how the union communicates with its members”, making it the most highly-cited focused code in our analysis. Just under one in three ($n = 23$) of our participants gave responses that spoke to the need to make “Changes to information flow within the union”. Only one in five ($n = 14$) informants had no advice to give the union with respect to improving communication processes – which either implies that they are happy with the way things currently are or indifferent to communications from the union.

Additional information on the types of changes informants would like to see in union-member communication flows can be obtained by looking at the frequency with which the various initial codes were mentioned. It is interesting to note that while one-third ($n = 23$) of our respondents wanted the union to make greater use of communication technology, a substantive number ($n = 15$) asked for the opposite - “more face to face interaction”. The frequency with which the rest of the suggestions were given was smaller.

Cross-cohort analysis: Examining the advice to the union through a generational lens supports some interesting observations. First, Gen Xers are most likely to give advice ($n = 24$) on how the union can improve communications. This would suggest either that this group is more dissatisfied with the way things are and/or more likely to have given the matter some thought. Second, more members within the Generation X ($n = 10$) and Millennial ($n = 8$) cohorts than Boomers suggested that the union make greater use of communication technology when communicating with members. Third, more Gen Xers ($n = 4$) than Millennials or Boomers provided somewhat vague advice relating to the need to improve communication, without giving

specifics. Finally, more Boomers ($n = 4$) asked that union-member communications be more transparent. No one in the Millennial group provided such advice.

Conclusions

This paper uses a multi-method research approach to examine how unions could change their communication processes to better support union renewal efforts. In the conclusions section, we integrate the findings from the quantitative and qualitative to provide answers to the four research questions guiding our analysis.

How does Natunion communicate with its members?

The survey data informs several conclusions with respect to union-member communications. First, we note that virtually all respondents stated that the union uses mail and word-of-mouth (i.e. traditional communication channels) to get information on how to get involved with the union into the hands of their members. Second, our data show that newer forms of technologically-supported communication are not typically used by the union involved in our case study. The fact that one in ten members say they do not get information on how to get involved from their union implies that unions can no longer rely on mail and face-to-face communication channels alone to communicate with their members. Third, our data determined that members in the Millennial cohort are significantly more likely than their counterparts in the Boomer and Gen X cohort to say that they do not receive information on how to get involved (22%) and significantly less likely to say that their union communicates to them via the mail (70%). These findings support the idea that “snail” mail is not a good mechanism to use to communicate important information to younger union members. These findings also shed light on why younger union members are less likely to be involved in union renewal initiatives – they simply do not know about them.

Results from the interview study provide additional insight into current union-member communication practices. In this case, we note that a substantive number ($n = 18$) of respondents responded to our question asking what the union is doing well in terms of communicating with its members with a list of factors that their union (and likely other unions) faced in trying to get information out to members (e.g. disinterested members, constraints associated with employer, members' travel schedules). Given these challenges, unions would be well advised to follow the advice of Harris and Nelson (2009) and Cockfield (2005) and use multiple channels when communicating important information to their members. They could also follow the suggestion offered by Wood(2015) and Geelan and Hodder (2017) and use social media to broaden their reach.

Union members' preferences with respect to union-member communications;

The survey data support the following conclusions with respect to how Natunion members would prefer their union connect with them. First, we note that members in the Boomer cohort are significantly more likely to favor mail as a way to disseminate union-member communications than are their younger Gen X and Millennial counterparts. Second, approximately half of the respondents in the Millennial subsample express a preference for communications from their union that are sent by text or email – almost double the number of Boomers who favour these forms of communication. While Gen X share the Millennials' preference for email from their union as a way to keep them informed, their views with respect to text messaging falls in between those expressed by those members older and younger from them. Taken together, these findings support the idea that younger union members are more likely to prefer asynchronous, technology supported communications from the union than are older union members.

Third, we note that between one in four and one in three of the union members in our survey sample expressed a preference for either more personal/interactive forms of communication such as face-to-face or telephone conversations and/or favoured a more passive form of communication between themselves and the union (e.g. union posts information on how to get involved on the website). The fact that neither of these preferences were associated with generational cohort implies that they are more likely to be related to member's communication style (Harris and Nelson, 2009). These findings reinforce our earlier recommendation that the union use multiple channels when communicating information important to renewal with members.

Responses to our interview question asking members' perceptions on what the union was doing well confirm (and shed some insights) into our survey findings. Of note are the data showing that over a quarter of the union members ($n = 21$) we interviewed appreciated the face-to-face discussions they had with their union representative. This finding, which mirrors the findings from the survey, supports several important ideas: (1) that union representatives are key to keeping members informed, (2) face-to-face communication is important to relationship building activities, and (3) members appreciate the efforts made by the union representatives to keep them informed.

Changes in union-member communication practices desired by union members

Gap analysis using the survey data support several important observations. First, union members, regardless of generational cohort, want the union to make more use of electronic communication media (text, e-mail, internet) and the telephone when communicating with them. Second, the difference between what is currently in place and what members see as ideal

with respect to the use of electronic communication media increases as age declines. Third, members receive more communications from the union by mail than they want – regardless of generational cohort. Fourth, apart from those in the Gen X cohort, members who prefer information be communicated face-to-face (i.e. word-of-mouth) seem to be happy with the amount of information being transferred in this fashion.

The qualitative data collected during this study provide an abundance of rich information which further informs this issue. First, we examine responses to our interview question asking union members where they see the need for improvements in how the union communicates with its members. A clear majority of the individuals we interviewed ($n = 51$) identified shortcomings in how information flowed from the union to its members. They complained that the union was not transmitting enough information to its members (the fact that 22 informants shared this view reflects the urgency with which it needs to be addressed); that communications were not clear (not targeted to the audience, too much use of jargon); were not timely (more often than not arrived too late or not at all); and difficult to find (e.g. schedule of upcoming meetings not on website). Many respondents also felt that the union could address these issues by making better use of communication technology (to address issues associated with speed) and the union's website (this would make things easier to find and give the union the opportunity to keep members informed and, in the loop). Others talked about structural barriers that hindered effective information flow and talked about how this could be addressed by increasing role clarity with respect to who was supposed to be communicating what.

A substantive number of informants ($n = 22$) also complained about the union's approach to union-member communications. This group of members perceived that the union focused their attention on one-way downward communication (mail from the union to the

members) while members wanted more opportunities for upward communication. These informants wanted the union to reach out to its members, listen to them, seek input, and engage in relationship-building with new and young members. Not surprisingly, younger members in the Millennial cohort were more likely to find the current situation problematic.

A second interview question – “Do you have any advice for the union with respect to improving the way it communicates information to members?” - provides additional information on how the union could change its communication practices to better meet the needs of its members. Analysis identified two different changes that members felt would improve union-member communication processes: (1) changes to how the union communicates with its members (n = 38) and (2) the need for the union to build channels to facilitate the upward flow of information (n = 23). Details on each are provided below.

Half of the people we interviewed wanted the union to make changes to how the union passed on information to them speaking of the need for greater use of electronic communication technology (n = 23) and face-to-face communication (n = 15). One in three informants expressed their disappointment with the union’s current deployment of communication technology. This group of members wanted the union to take advantage of communication technologies such as text messaging, email, social media, and the union website to communicate information to members in a timelier fashion.

One in five wanted more face-to-face interaction with both union representatives and executive. Their responses revealed that context seems to be important to members’ perceptions of union-member communications. Members felt it was important that their union “come to them”, not vice versa (i.e. asked that the face-to-face interactions take place at the job site rather than formal union-member meetings). Again, the importance of context to how communications

are interpreted and perceived has been highlighted in the organizational communication literature (Harris and Nelson, 2009)

We also note that what appears on the surface to be contradictory pieces of advice (informants said they wanted greater use of communication technology and “more face-to-face” communication) can be explained using Daft and Lengel’s (1986) media richness theory. This theory argues that richer communication channels such as face-to-face and telephone conversations facilitate real-time feedback and the dissemination of complicated information. Communication technology such as text and email, while low in media richness, have the benefit of being asynchronous and fast. Analysis of the interview responses show that the members who were lobbying for greater use of communication technology were dissatisfied with the timeliness of the information they received and the fact that they were unable to find needed information. Those who advised the union to increase their use of face-to-face union-member communication, on the other hand, tended to be unhappy with the amount of time the union spend in relationship building activities and ensuring that members understood complex issues and union jargon. These individuals also felt that face-to-face discussions would provide members the opportunity for a back and forth discussion with their union representative, facilitate upward feedback and enhance transparency of communications.

Finally, we note that many of the findings from this study are consistent with research done by Ward and Lusoli (2003) and Rivers and Truitt (2014) who found that unions are often late in adopting new technology in general and communication technology in particular. The need to address this issue moving forward is supported by research linking poor union-member communication practices to problems with respect to union renewal (Rivers and Truitt, 2014; Benson and Brown, 2010).

Impact of Generational Cohort

Key between-cohort differences in the attitudes and perceptions regarding how unions should communicate information on how members can get involved with the union are summarized in Table 5-9.

Table 5-9: Significant and Substantive Between-Cohort Differences in Attitudes and Perceptions

	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
Significant differences: Survey			
Union does not send them information on how to get involved (Survey)	22%	12%	6%
Mail used by union for union-member communications (survey)	70%	81%	88%
Preference for email communications	2.76	3.25	3.68
Preference for text communications	2.95	3.32	3.27
Preference for mail communications	3.76	4.03	4.41
Substantive differences: Interview			
What is the union doing well?			
Union makes effective use of electronic communication (text, email) to provide information to members	n = 1	n = 2	n = 7
Union makes effective use of mail (postcards) to provide information to members	n = 3	n = 1	n = 5
Union newsletters are effective at getting information to members	n = 4	n = 3	n = 1
Union reps make sure that members are kept informed	n = 10	n = 7	n = 4
Union is doing the best they can	n = 0	n = 2	n = 3
Cannot think of anything union is doing well with respect to communicating opportunities to get involved	n = 5	n = 7	n = 3
What is the union doing poorly?			
Information not provided in timely fashion	n = 3	n = 0	n = 4
Relevant information is hard to find	n = 2	n = 5	n = 2
Not enough outreach to members	n = 4	n = 1	n = 2
No improvements needed in how union communicates with members	n = 6	n = 6	n = 1
Advice to Union			
Make more use of communication technology	n = 8	n = 10	n = 5
Make communications more transparent	n = 0	n = 2	n = 4

Note: generational cohort not associated with preference for No generational difference in preference for face-to-face, phone, website

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the data in this table. First, our findings are consistent with Bennett et al.'s (2008) idea of digital natives as the younger the union member the more open they are (and the more open they want the union to be) to the use of online modes of communication such as e-mail, text and instant messaging email (Campbell et al., 2017; Ignatius and Hechanova, 2014). Second, the establishment of differences in union-member communication preferences and perceptions supports authors such as Lyons et al., (2015), Smith and Duxbury (2019) and Smith, Halinski, and Duxbury (2019) who have defended the idea of generational cohort as a useful lens through which to explore potential differences in attitudes, values and perceptions. Our findings also offer strong support to Mannheim's theory of generations and encourage unions, researchers and organizations to take generational cohort into account when designing how best to encourage and support union renewal.

Findings from this study also inform the union communication literature. The between-cohort differences identified in this study along with the large gaps identified with respect to how younger union members want their union to communicate with them as compared to the communication practices currently in place provides further evidence for unions to change how they are communicating information to their members. The research evidence linking union-member communication processes to a variety of outcomes, such as members' satisfaction with their union (Fiorito, Gallagher and Fukami, 1988), the union's ability to increase member buy-in to union goals, strategies, and norms (Rivers and Truitt, 2014), member education (Geelan, 2015) and mobilization (Greene et al., 2003) demonstrates why addressing these disconnects can be considered somewhat urgent.

Our findings are also consistent with Dufour-Poirier and Laroche's (2015) argument that unions renewal efforts need to provide younger members with a social network through

which they can engage with (and be engaged by) their union, while also finding ways to give them a voice in the shaping of their own union. More specifically we note that members in the two younger cohorts in our sample wanted more face-to-face communication with their union representative and wanted the union to introduce mechanisms to facilitate member-union communications (i.e. upward communication channels), listen to their members and engage in more outreach programs with members. Research by Wood (2015) showing that communication technologies can help to improve union democracy by removing both physical/geographic and hierarchy/power-based distance between members and the union leadership and by Geelan and Hodder (2017) which links internet-based communications to the development of informal networks suggests that unions could address these issues by adopting internet-based communication technologies.

Our data show that while many younger union members want their union to incorporate technology to their communication practices, many also expressed a preference for union-member communications sent by mail or a telephone calls. These results support the idea that unions need to use multiple channels to communicate with members, a finding which is consistent with the arguments of Panagiotopoulos and Barnett (2015) who found that communication practices using multiple modes/channels were more effective than those that employed fewer channels. We suggest that moving forward, unions modernize their communication practices while also maintaining their current approach.

Finally, we note that the Boomers in our sample were more likely than those in the two younger cohorts (who have grown up with the newer technologies) to express satisfaction with the union's use of communication technology such as text messages and email. The fact that this group of employees are not unhappy with the union's relative lack of innovation with respect to

its communication practices may be problematic, however, given their dominant numbers in both the union movement and union leadership positions. These findings imply that the Boomers may pose a barrier to needed change moving forward.

While our research provides implications for study and practice, it does feature some shortcomings. First, due to the nature of the case study approach, our sample is limited to a single union, which represents members in a single industry within one country. While this limits the generalizability of our findings our case study approach does allow us to dig deep within a single context (Bryson and Bell, 2009). Another limitation of our study is the cross-sectional nature of our data. From a generational perspective, cross-sectional data can be problematic because it makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the differences observed in the data can be attributed to cohort or to life-cycle stage (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Cross-sectional data can also be problematic within a union context given the cyclical nature of the bargaining process. We would, for example, expect the number of union-member communications to be higher in the years when the union is engaged in bargaining than in years when the collective agreement is not up for negotiation. This can be overcome with the use of longitudinal research methodologies. One additional limitation is that due to Natunion's lack of social media presence, we did not explicitly explore the potential use of social media, which research demonstrates can be effective in union communications.

Finally, our research uncovers some preliminary findings about cohort differences in perceptions of union communication, which open the door for future research. Knowing that cohorts view communication differently, and have varying perceptions of union communication, future studies could more directly explore the role of communication on participation and renewal.

In summary, our multi-method case study identified a number of different ways in which unions could more effectively communicate information on how to get involved to three generational cohorts of members. Implementation of our recommendations should help unions improve their communication processes, adapt to changing workforce demographics and facilitate renewal efforts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The omnibus objective of this thesis is to better understand what unions can do to increase union participation amongst union members of all generational cohorts. To achieve this objective, we have studied the relationship between generational cohort and three factors that are of importance to union participation: 1) how members view unions; 2) how union members conceptualize active and passive participation; and 3) union members' perceptions of their union's communication practices. To investigate these relationships, we performed three mixed-method studies that form the core of this thesis document. The fact that we used both emic and etic perspectives in all three studies enriches our understanding with respect to the issues explored in this thesis.

Over the course of this conclusion chapter, we will highlight how our research improves our understanding of the relationship between generational cohort and factors that are important to the union renewal process, while also pointing out our study's shortcomings, and avenues for further exploration. We begin with section 6.1, which provides context for our study, explaining why union renewal (and the potential impact of generational cohort on such renewal) is important. From there, section 6.2 details the main contributions of the thesis to the union and generational cohort literatures, as well as the implications for practitioners. Section 6.3 discusses the limitations and future avenues of research in the area, while section 6.4 provides a brief summary of our contributions.

6.1 Context for Thesis – Union Renewal and Generational Cohort

Our research focuses on unions and the greater union movement at a critical point in their history and at a time when they are seeking renewal after decades of decline with respect to membership density, breadth, and power (Vachon, Wallace and Hyde, 2016). Our review of the

union renewal literature highlighted the need for researchers to focus on improving union participation among younger union members, who for decades have been ignored by unions (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015) and conditioned by macro-level forces (Bailey et al., 2010) into lower levels of participation and desire for membership than older cohorts of workers (Cates, 2014). This review motivated our analysis which examines union participation through a generational cohort lens.

6.2 Contributions of thesis

Through three mixed-methods studies, we used a generational cohort lens to learn more about how unions can encourage union renewal through the participation dimension. This thesis' main interview (emic) and survey (etic) findings are summarized in Table 6-1a and 6-1b. Findings included in this table contribute to researchers' and practitioners' understanding of the union participation construct and inform discussions with respect to how generational cohort may impact workers' views of and participation in their union. As such they all have implications with respect to the key macro-level construct underlying this exploration – union renewal.

Key findings from the three papers that make up this thesis are combined in Figure 6-1. In the center of the diagram (reflecting its position at the core of this thesis) is an arrow representing the union participation continuum. Labels on this continuum correspond to the levels of union participation observed in this research initiative and range from no activity (inactive) to limited activity (what is referred to in the literature as passive participation), moderate participation and high levels of activity (what researchers in the area call active participation). This continuum reflects the idea that not all participation is equal - that members can vary with respect to the number of union activities they engage in, the types of activities they engage in and the time commitment required to participate in various ways. Above the participation continuum we

Table 6-1a Interview (Emic) Findings

Paper 1: Perceptions of unions through a generational lens	Paper 2: Conceptualization of Union Participation Construct through a generational lens	Paper 3: Perceptions of union communication through a generational lens
Interview (Emic) Findings		
<p>Relevant to Participation: Many members do not perceive instrumental benefits of unions and/or understand history of unions More members would participate if the union demonstrated benefits of unions to members</p> <p>Generational Differences: Those in the Boomer sample most likely to have favourable perceptions of unions and to understand history and role of unions and appreciate the material benefits unions can bring workers A lower proportion of those in the Millennial and Gen X have favourable perception of unions. A higher proportion of those in the Gen X and Millennials samples view unions through instrumental lens</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: Socialization to benefits and history of unions could combat anti-union narrative in society</p>	<p>Relevant to Participation: Members at all levels of union participation (active, moderate, limited) attend union meetings</p> <p>Generational Differences: The Boomer sample had the highest proportion of members who classified their participation in the union as “active” and moderately active Those in the Millennial sample had the highest proportion of members who classified their participation as “inactive”</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: Unions could use those who are more active in the union (i.e. Boomers) to socialize/encourage participation among those less active (i.e. Millennials) members Some union members report “Moderate” levels of union participation. Employees in this group could be the key to renewal. Further research in the area is required.</p>	<p>Relevant to Participation: More use of technology could improve union participation More outreach from union could help build relationships that should result in greater participation</p> <p>Generational Differences: A higher proportion of those in the Millennials and Gen X samples want the union to use communication technologies such as text and email A higher proportion of those in the Boomer sample want face to face communication in the form of on-site visits from union representatives</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: To facilitate renewal, unions should develop more effective ways to better communicate their message to their membership and develop relationships with their members.</p>

Table 6-1b Survey (Etic) Findings

Paper 1: Perceptions of unions through a generational lens	Paper 2: Conceptualization of Union Participation Construct through a generational lens	Paper 3: Perceptions of union communication through a generational lens
Survey (Etic) Findings		
<p>Relevant to Participation: Most members seen to be pro-union. This could facilitate future participation</p> <p>Generational Differences: Those in the Boomer sample are significantly more pro-union and significantly less anti-union than those in Gen X and Millennial samples</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: Most members seen to be pro-union. This could help renewal efforts succeed</p>	<p>Relevant to Participation Most of the respondents self-classify as “inactive” in the union; very few respondents self-classify their level of participation as “moderate/active” There is a close relationship between how a respondent classifies their level of participation in the union and their actual level of participation; hours in union activities is not associated with union participation</p> <p>Generational Differences: Generational cohort is not associated with how members self-classify their union participation Those in the Boomers sample are significantly more likely to classify their participation as active and less likely to classify their participation as inactive</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: Study shows a need to increase participation in the union across union membership</p>	<p>Relevant to Participation: A plurality of those in our sample do not get information about opportunities to participate in the union; Union members want the union to supplement postal mail with email and text message as means of communication</p> <p>Generational Differences: A higher proportion of those in the Millennial and Gen X samples want the union to use communication technologies such as text and email to communicate information to members</p> <p>Implications for Renewal: The union needs to do a better job of disseminating information to members to encourage participation, and ultimately, renewal</p>

summarize key findings from both our research as well as the literature relating to the union participation construct. Directly above the continuum line we include emic and etic descriptions of each level of activity found along the continuum (taken from the literature) and our key findings from our research typifying the activities included within each participation category. At the top of the figure are the main factors that the literature and/or our research have linked to either the encouragement or discouragement of union participation. Together, the elements included in the top half of the figure illustrate how societal forces, union processes and practices, as well as individual perceptions and attitudes work together to affect union participation.

Information from this study that informs our understanding of the relationship between generational cohort and the thesis' objectives is summarized directly below the line presenting participation. Each cohort's place along in the participation continuum aligns in a general sense with their level of union participation as reflected by the results of this study. Millennials for example, are placed at the far left-hand side of the diagram as our research findings showed that many of our informants who were members of this cohort reported that they were either inactive in the union or only engaged in activities that typify passive participation. Boomers' placement, on the other hand, at the far right of the participation continuum is consistent with the fact that many of the respondents in this cohort conformed to more traditional representations of active participation. Finally, at the bottom of the page is a line representation the average age of the cohort. It is interesting to note the negative association between the average age of the cohort and their participation in the union.

In the sections below we use this visual representation of our integrated findings to guide our discussion of the main conclusions supported by the data analyzed for this thesis. Implications for union practitioners are also included where relevant.

Figure 6-1 - Integrated Findings

Emic and etic conceptualization of union participation

To start the discussion of our main findings and how they contribute to literature and practice, we use the findings from the three papers included in the thesis to compare emic and etic understandings of union participation. First, both our interview and survey data showed that a significant proportion of union members are completely inactive in their union. This finding, which is consistent with recent research into participation's downward trend (Vachon et al., 2016), highlights the importance of research that can help both researchers and practitioners reconceptualize participation in ways other than the more typical active/passive continuum. Emic findings from our interviews demonstrated there is room for more nuance in the way we describe different types of union participation when compared to etic understandings of the construct. While we found that the idea of "active" union participation resembles the understanding of the construct found in the literature (i.e., taking on a wide variety of union duties, ranging from meeting attendance to holding a position in the local office) there was much less overlap as we moved down the participation continuum going from active to moderate and passive levels of participation. For example, activities such as promoting the union to others, and discussing the union with others, which are typically considered by etic researchers to represent passive forms of union participation, were only mentioned by union members who self-classified their level of participation in the union to be moderate or active. Interviewees who classified their participation as limited, on the other hand, typically only described attending union meetings. Taken as a whole, these findings support the need to: (1) re-think what we qualify as "passive" forms of participation, and (2) explicitly recognize that union members may engage in moderate levels of union participation, and (3) place more importance on the study of activities that union members who

self-classify as “moderately” active in order to gain more clarity on these nuances. They also imply that current etic conceptualization of the union participation construct as reported in the literature need further clarification. This conclusion echoes the work of others (Fiorito et al., 2015; Gall and Fioritio, 2012b)

By gaining an emic perspective on the active/passive continuum and identifying the need for further nuance in our understanding of union participation, our study helped to address what Gall and Fiorito (2012b) call the problematic conceptualization of union participation. By taking such a novel, participant-driven approach to studying the union participation construct, and finding differences between researchers’ and union members’ conceptualizations, we also contributed to Fiorito et al.’s (2015) quest to find an understanding of union participation that can be widely applied, with the goal of reducing measurement (and cognitive) inconsistencies concerning the construct’s conceptualization.

Generational differences

One focus of this thesis was the study of generational differences in how union members relate to and participate in their union. In this thesis, we explored generational differences in several factors that may impact union renewal, including attitudes towards/perceptions of unions; union participation, perceptions of active and passive participation; and preferences with respect to how union members would like their union to communicate important information to them. All three studies included in this thesis support the following conclusion: Boomers have a different relationship with unions than do Gen Xers and Millennials. Each of this thesis’ three papers speak to this issue.

The nature of these differences first became evident through our analysis of each cohort’s perceptions of unions (paper 1). In this analysis, we observed that Boomers were more likely to

be pro-union and to connect with unions, typically had a better understanding of union history and the gains unions have made for workers over time and appear to be more ideologically connected to the union movement and its goals than were the younger two cohorts. According to our data the younger two cohorts, on the other hand, were more likely to feel disconnected from their union and the union movement, and to report that their attachment to the union was tied more to the instrumental benefits they felt were to be gained from belonging to a union than an ideological connection to what unions stand for. Those in the Gen X and Millennial cohorts also seemed to lack an appreciation for union solidarity, which was more likely to be embraced by the Boomers.

These generational differences were also apparent in our analysis of how members of each cohort self-classified their levels of union participation as well as their quantitative scores on an etic measure of active/passive union participation (paper 2). We note that both the emic and etic data analyzed in conjunction with paper 2 support the following conclusion: compared to informants in the other two cohorts, Boomers were the most likely to self-classify their participation in the union as active and reported significantly higher active participation scores on the union participation measure.

Finally, our analysis of data relating to how union members would prefer their union communicate information to them (paper 3) also revealed important differences in preferences between those in the Boomer cohort as compared to those in the Gen X and Millennial groups. In this case, we noted that those in the Millennial cohort were less likely than informants in the other two groups to hear about opportunities to get involved with the union. We also found differences in the mode of communication each group preferred, as Gen Xers and Millennials wanted to see the union employ text messaging, emails, and make better use of the internet when informing members of opportunities to get involved with the union, while Boomers wanted to see more

outreach in the form of face to face interactions with their union representatives out on the work site.

Together, our studies brought us a better understanding of the influence of cohort on factors related to unions and unionism. In doing so, we contributed not only to the union literature, but also the generational differences literature, adding further empirical data in an area (union renewal/participation) currently under-studied through a generation lens (Cates, 2014; Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015). The studies included in this thesis, which focus on generational differences within one specific social context (as recommended by Lyons and Kuron, 2015) contribute to the broadening of the scope of generational research into currently under-studied realms – unions. In Paper 1 we set the stage for the other papers in this series by establishing a timeline of socio-cultural changes in the union environment and showing how each of these events could contribute to generational differences in attitudes and values with respect to unions and unionization. Our cross-cohort analysis also helps to bring the macro-level of union renewal research together with the micro-level of union participation literature, as suggested by Gall and Fiorito (2012a), and answering recent calls for a more holistic study and understanding of union renewal (Fairbrother, 2015; Murray, 2017).

Factors affecting union participation

In this thesis, we undertook three emic explorations, all of which provided valuable information relating to how unions can encourage renewal through the participation dimension. Our focus on participation was deliberate in concordance with Behrens (2004), who argued that participation is the dimension through which unions could have the most direct impact on renewal. In the section below, we separate our discussion of factors impacting participation into the two

themes arising from the data: factors that discourage union participation and factors encourage union participation.

Factors discouraging participation: Participants' interview responses provided us with insight into the factors that union members believe have led to the ongoing decline in union participation. One recurring topic of discussion among interviewees was that young people nowadays (i.e., Millennials) are not as interested in unions as they used to be (i.e., Boomers). A number of our informants talked about how they felt that younger members did not appreciate the union's history, and therefore did not identify with the union. Other, younger informants, discussed how the material benefits offered by union membership were not good enough to encourage instrumental attachment to the union.

Our participants also identified several societal factors they felt had contributed to this trend. They felt that society had become more anti-union over time as companies gained power, government policies weakened unions, and the media promoted an anti-union narrative, which ultimately combined to lessen the public opinion of unions and unionism. Other participants spoke about union-level factors related to union communication that they felt were suppressing participation. Much of this discussion related to the perception that the union had to implement technology such as email and text messaging more widely in their communication strategy if they wanted to encourage greater participation. These informants argued that the current practice (e.g. communication by postal mail) was not a timely or effective method for communicating opportunities to get involved with the union to members. They also felt that their union fell short in providing opportunities for members to interact with their union representatives face to face, arguing that the current level of outreach was not adequate to develop the relationships between members and representatives that would encourage members to participate.

Factors encouraging participation Our three studies not only highlighted some of the issues that have plagued unions and reduced union participation, but also identified some potential solutions to reverse the downward trend in the future. First, our data suggests that unions could increase participation by doing a better job of socializing new (potentially younger) members to the union life. Suggestions from these studies on how this could be done include specifying information which gives members a clear picture of why unions are important, providing a history of the impact of unions over time, clearly establishing how unions benefit workers today, and making gains that provide concrete evidence of how unions benefit workers.

Our data also made it clear that for unions to get this message, and other vital information related to union participation, across to members, their communication processes need to be improved. Again, data from our research provide suggestions on how this could be done. First, our respondents indicated that the increased adoption of modern communication technologies such as email and text messaging could help relay important information to members in a timely manner. Second, our linked increased participation to the provision of opportunities for the members to give feedback to the union on policies and practices. Third, our participants made it clear that they felt that more outreach from the union in the form of increased on-site visits and other face to face interactions from their union representatives could help develop the relationships between union members and their union that help to grow commitment to and participation within the union. Older members pointed to the erosion of the union's presence in the workplace, arguing that in the past there was more face to face interaction between union representatives and its members on a day to day basis, which allowed the union to keep members informed, and allowed the members a way to voice their opinions back to the union's leadership. By attempting to increase this type of on the job face to face presence, unions could also help develop the types of social

networks that researchers argue are integral to integrating and involving young workers to the union.

The research done for this thesis also highlights an important link between union meetings and increased union participation. We note, for example, that our analysis determined that even the less active members of our sample tend to go to union meetings. This reiterates the notion that union meetings can be an important tool for increasing participation among less-active members (Clark et al., 1993; Bronfenbrenner et al., 1998). Union organizers see meetings as a venue through which members can not only get updated union information, and vote on union elections and motions, but also to interact with fellow members, providing them an opportunity to see that they are not alone, to voice their opinions, and to become familiar with the union's network of active members (Parker and Gruelle, 2005). Our findings support the need for unions to take advantage of meetings as an opportunity to reach out to less-active (potentially younger) members, to listen to their issues and needs, and to make them feel like they belong and that they have a say in the direction of the union. These findings help inform a need for more research into how unions can impact members' participation (Dufour-Poirier and Laroche, 2015; Gall and Fiorito, 2012b; Hodder, 2014).

In addition to helping us achieve our goal of learning more about the factors affecting union participation in the context of renewal, our analysis of the various factors that members perceived to be affecting union participation helps to fill gaps in the union literature. The findings that cite the impact of societal changes on union participation help respond to Gall and Fiorito's (2012a) suggestion of bringing together macro level (i.e. union renewal) research with micro-level (i.e. union participation) research, and for a more holistic understanding of union renewal (Fairbrother, 2015; Murray, 2017). The findings related to the union's current communication practices help to

fill the gap identified by Gall and Fiorito (2012a) and Dufour-Poirier and Laroche (2015) with respect to the need for more research into union processes and their impact on renewal, and Rivers and Truitt's (2014) call for more study of, more specifically, union communication process' impact on renewal.

Fiorito and Gall (2010) argued that one way unions could improve mobilization and buy-in among members is by segmenting their memberships based on certain variables and tailoring mobilization campaigns (among other things) to the specific needs of each group. Our studies make a significant contribution in this area by identifying two ways in which unions could segment their memberships to enhance renewal efforts: cohort (Boomers vs. Gen X and Millennials); and activity level (Active, Moderate, Limited, Inactive) groups. Unions could target younger or less-experienced workers for information sessions or mobilization drives. Similarly, the union could leverage the experience and knowledge of the older, more active members to take younger and less-active members under their wing to help share knowledge and build social networks that bridge the gap between new members and the union's inner-circle of active members.

6.3 Limitations and future research

We end the thesis with an overview of the main limitations that could impact the findings of the thesis as a whole. Limitations to the individual papers have been addressed in the write-ups of those respective papers and will not be included in this section unless they are more macro in nature and have a bearing on the generalizability of the thesis findings as a whole. In addition to a summary of our research's main limitations, this section will also provide an assessment of new directions for future research that could help overcome the limitations of this research, as well as potential future areas of study that our research here has helped to stimulate.

The fact that our research is based on a case study of a single organization in a single industry in a single country could limit the generalizability of our findings, as our results could stem from idiosyncrasies related to the organization, industry, or country in which our study takes place. The potential lack of generalizability that is associated with the case study method has long been understood (Yin, 2004). However, proponents of case study research argue that the method's focus is not on producing generalizable findings, but rather to provide a deep understanding of the phenomena under study (Stake, 1994). While we feel that this benefit does, in some ways offset the limits to generalizability inherent in our sample, we would also think that our findings would be strengthened if researchers could replicate our analyses using other case organizations, spanning a variety of organizational/geographic contexts that could be compared to gain a better understanding of the phenomena we have identified and analyzed in our research.

Another shortcoming of this thesis is the nature of generational cohort research itself. This limitation stems specifically from the dual nature of time (i.e., the historical sense and the biological sense). Some critics of generational theory believe that any differences found between people of different ages are related to their progression through the developmental life-cycle rather than the sort of "generation gap" that theorists like Mannheim describe. The developmental life-cycle concept adds a layer of methodological difficulty to the study of generational differences as its inclusion makes it impossible (Glenn, 2005) to determine exactly how much observed differences in a given variable is caused by life-cycle, cohort, and historical effects, respectively. Lyons and Kuron (2014), however, de-emphasize the impact of this shortcoming by arguing that generation is a confluence of historical and biological time, and that disambiguating between the two is unnecessary. Nevertheless, this inability to disambiguate between effects is particularly relevant to cross-sectional research, which only captures a snapshot at one point in time (Zacher

and Rudolph, 2015). Future research could take a longitudinal approach, tracking changes in variables related to perceptions of unions and communication preferences, among others, over time, and therefore gaining a better understanding of whether any cross-cohort differences are likely to be driven by life-cycle, cohort, or historical factors.

Similarly, cross-sectional research designs can also present problems for studies of union participation. We note, for example, that collective agreements require re-negotiation on a cyclical basis (whether it is every three, five, or however many years). This implies that the timing (in relation to the collective bargaining cycle) of union participation research could impact the opportunity for and extent of a union participation within a union membership. Specifically, the opportunity to and need for participation increases as the negotiation process approaches and begins, and then declines once an agreement has been made. To help reduce this impact, we asked our participants to describe the extent of their participation over the course of the past year. Future studies could take a longitudinal approach, studying member participation over the course of the bargaining cycle, or a comparative approach, contrasting bargaining years to non-bargaining years.

Two sampling issues could also limit the generalizability of our findings. First, as detailed in Paper 2, our interview samples are skewed towards more active members in the continuum. More specifically, approximately one in three of our interview participants self-classified as “active” members in the union, which is a substantially higher proportion of active members than was observed in the survey sample (i.e. 5% of the survey sample self-classified as “active”). Our work with the union and their motivation for participating in the survey suggests that the 5% active figure is likely to be a more accurate representation of the union’s actual level of participation than the 30% observed in the interview sample. While we cannot say with certainty why this discrepancy occurs, we can speculate as to why it might have happened. First, the relatively large

proportion of “active” participants in the interview sample could come as a result of our data collection process. For example, several of our participants provided their contact information directly to a member of our steering committee as someone who was interested in participating in this research initiative. We speculate that these individuals were more likely to be active union participants and that it was their activity in the union that made them interested in devoting time to a study designed to help the union. If this is indeed the case, it would explain why our interview sample included a higher proportion of “active” members than are present in the total population. The higher proportion of “active” participants in the interview sample might also represent a self-selection bias whereby those who cared about the union and were interested in its wellbeing (i.e. “active” members) were willing to devote the required amount of time to this research project than were those who were less active.

A sample skewed towards active members could limit our findings in terms of our level of understanding of the views, attitudes and behaviours exhibited by the less active, or inactive members. The generalizability of our findings to the sample as a whole could also be affected, as our results may be less representative of the membership’s actual perceptions, but rather reflect the beliefs and behaviours of the more active members. That being said, the large proportion of active members in our sample provides us with a number of benefits with respect to our understanding of issues relevant to union renewal and participation. Our sample can, in fact, be considered an extreme sample (Patton, 2002) as it focuses on participants with unique or special characteristics. One of the key benefits of extreme (also called purposive) sampling is that it can provide significant insights into a phenomenon which is relatively rare in the population – in our case individuals who participate actively in the union. Purposive sample in this case gives us a better understanding of the behaviours and attitudes of union members within this group. This

facilitates our ability to can learn more about the specific perceptions and attitudes of “active” union members which could ultimately inform practical and academic outcomes with respect to increasing activity among less active members.

Similarly, our survey samples are skewed towards the Baby Boomer cohort, as they make up the majority of respondents while Gen Xers and Millennials (to a greater extent) are less represented in our sample. While this breakdown is representative of the union body as a whole, it could skew the interpretation of our findings, as “total sample” findings are largely driven by Boomers in the sample. We overcame this limitation in our papers by including analysis by generational cohort where ever possible. Future research could overcome these potential limitations by including samples that are stratified by either activity level or cohort, as the case may be.

6.4 Summary

The aim of this thesis was to learn more about how unions could increase union participation among all cohorts of members, in the context of union renewal. Through a generational cohort lens, our analysis provides several overarching conclusions. First, we found that Boomers have a different orientation to unions than do Gen Xers and Millennials, as they are generally more pro-union, they participate more, and they participate in more “active” types of activities. Second, we analyzed union communication practices with an eye on increasing participation, finding that union members wanted the union to embrace communication technologies such as text and email (particularly among Gen Xers and Millennials), while also seeing a need for more outreach in the form of face to face interactions on the worksite (particularly among Boomers). Our participants saw these changes to communication processes as a means through which unions could better inform and engage members. Lastly, our comparison of emic

and etic views of the union participation continuum indicated that the construct is in need of further study, as our identification of “moderate” participation complicates the understanding of union participation as an active/passive dichotomy.

This thesis produced several implications for the union participation/renewal and generational cohort literatures. Specifically, we helped inform several areas of the union literature that were previously under-studied. First, by using a cohort lens throughout the thesis, we studied the influence of generational cohort on various factors (attitudes towards unions, union participation, communication preferences) related to union renewal. Second, we helped inform the renewal literature with respect to the extent to which unions themselves (through processes such as communication) can impact union participation and ultimately renewal. Lastly, our research provided an emic voice to the ongoing conceptual clarification of the union participation construct, identifying a need for further study.

Our research has also produced practical implications for unions. First, we identified two variables through which unions could segment their memberships – by cohort and by activity level. This could be useful for unions, as they could target the respective needs of each group when it comes to service or mobilization of members. This information could also be useful in the socialization of new or young union members, as they could leverage the experience of more active and experienced union members to build relationships (particularly through union meetings) with younger or more experienced union members. This would provide new members with a social network through they can learn about the importance of unions to workers, while also providing a channel through which new or inexperienced members can have their voices heard, impacting the goals and operations of the union. Our study of union communication also helps unions by

providing empirical evidence that union members desire both more implementation of communication technology and more personal outreach from their union representatives.

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Appendix A: Interview 1 Script

Contact Script – Telephone Interview

May I speak to _____?

My name is _____ from the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University. I am working with Dr. Linda Duxbury from the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University and Dr. Christopher Higgins who have been contracted by Natunion to look at a number of issues of relevance to the Union's membership such as recruitment and retention of railroad workers, succession planning within the Union, and how workers feel about their union and their employer.

You are one of about 200 members of the Union who were randomly selected from within various age groups to participate in this study.

This interview will be done by telephone and will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes of your time. The interview asks a series of questions which are designed to help us gain a deeper understanding of the perceived positive and negative factors that exist within your working environment. This will help us to understand the extent to which recruitment, retention, and succession planning is likely to be a problem within your Union. With this information, the Union can take strategic action to address key issues regarding the workplace and the relationship between the Union and its membership. This is why I am calling you today.

Do you have a moment to talk? If not, then when would be a better time for me to call back?

_____ Date and time for call back.

On call back, mention the study again and then begin here/OR if they can talk immediately, continue with this material:

Are you still interested in participating in the interview?

If yes: Thank you very much for agreeing to participate. We would like to schedule your interview at a time that is convenient to you in the next one or two weeks. Could you suggest a few times that you would be available and willing to participate in the interview. We will contact you within the next few days with the date and time for the telephone interview (**or confirm now if you can**). How would you like to be contacted?

Telephone (at what number) _____

E-mail (what is your e-mail address) _____

If you are calling back for an interview appointment, explain briefly the objectives, as above before proceeding.

Thanks again for agreeing to take part in this follow up study. The interview today will be audio taped to support the analysis of the data. Audio files will be stored on a password protected PC and will be deleted once the data has been coded and analyzed. Names and other identifying information will not be recorded or shared with the Union or your employer. You will only be identified by a code number assigned to you. Are you happy to go ahead?

If they are unhappy, try to identify and calm their concerns. If you cannot, end the interview and thank them for their time

ID Code #: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Time: _____

Section 1: Background Information

This first set of questions give us a little information about you to help us interpret the results of the interview

1. Current work experience

a. The name of the organization that they currently work for: _____

b. The state they live in: _____

c. States that they typically work in:

d. Can you describe your work schedule?

e. How many hours did you work in the month prior to the interview: _____ (hours)

2. Previous work experience:

a. How many organizations did you work for before you started work for your current employer? _____

If they have had several employers ask them:

b. Why did you leave your their previous jobs?

(Prompt: laid off, too much travel, better offer elsewhere)

c. How long have your worked for your current employer?: _____ Years

a. General Demographics

b. Age: _____

Section 2: Attitudes towards current job

This second set of questions will focus on your experiences working for your current employer.

1. I am interested in what initially attracted you to work for *name of employer*?
Specifically, why did you take the job?

3. In retrospect how satisfied are you with your decision to work for *name of employer*?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unsatisfied			neutral			Very Satisfied

Why did you give the score that you did? Specifically,

- a. What do you like about working for *name of employer*?
(Prompts: the work itself, pay and benefits, colleagues....).

- i. Why do you say this?

- b. What don't you like about working for *name of employer*?
(Prompts: work expectations, your immediate supervisor)

- ii. Why do you say this?

3. What, if anything, can your employer do to help you do your job better? (*Prompts: communication, resources ...*)

4. Is there one thing that if it were changed, would make you consider leaving your job?
Why do you say this? (*Prompts: your boss changed jobs, the organization did not follow through on a promise ...*)

Section 3: Relationship with Natunion

The next set of questions were included to help us understand your relationship with your union – (NATNUNION).

1. Perceptions of union membership

- a. Overall, how do you think your generation of workers perceives unions?

- b. Do you feel that perceptions of union membership in the United States are becoming more positive, more negative or essentially the same as they always were?

- c. Why did you give this answer?

2. Individual expectations of union membership

- a. Overall, what do you expect from your union? (*Prompts: current expectations around collective agreement, work, compensation, conditions at work*)

- b. Can you give me an example of a case where the union met (or exceeded) your expectations of them? How did this make you feel?

- c. Can you give me an example of a case where the union did not live up to your expectations of them? How did this make you feel?

3. How satisfied are you with your current collective agreement?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unsatisfied			neutral			Very Satisfied

4. Why did you give the response you did? Specifically,

- a. **What do you like about the current agreement?**
-
-
- b. **What needs improvement?**
-
-
- c. **What is left out that you think is important?**
-
-
- d. **What could the union do to increase your level of satisfaction with the collective agreement?**
-
-
5. **Unions give workers a voice in workplace decisions that affect their lives – things such as workplace policies on issues like hours of work and working conditions.**
- a. **What are the key workplace decisions that are affecting your life right now?**
-
-
- b. **What has been the union’s response to these concerns? (*prompt: included in the bargaining process, offered support*)**
-
-
- c. **What are the key workplace decisions that you see affecting your life in the next ten years? (*prompt: work/family balance, benefits, job security*)**
-
-
- d. **How can your union best meet your needs in these areas? (*prompt: included in the bargaining process, offered support*)**
-
-

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: By belonging to this union I have more of a say in decisions that affect my life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly agree neutral Strongly disagree

- a. What could the union do to increase your level of satisfaction in this area?

The union offers a number of ways that members can get involved with their union. They can go to meetings, sit on committees, represent the union within the workplace, run for elected office, get involved in the collective bargaining process, take on leadership roles, etc.

7. We are interested in know how involved you are with your union? More specifically, which of the follow labels best describes you:
- I am a member of the union but do not engage in any union activities
 - I am a member of the union and engage in only a limited number of union activities
 - I am a member of the union and engage in a moderate number of union activities
 - I am an active member of the union.
 - None of the above – ask them to tell you how they would describe their involvement

After they have selected one of these ask them the following:

- a. Why did you put yourself in this category?

- b. What union activities in particular do you engage in?

i. Why these?

- c. How many hours per month do you spend in union related activities?

- c. What could the union do to increase your level of involvement with Natunion (i.e. make union membership more relevant to you)?

Union membership often provides advantages to its members other than the negotiation of a collective agreements such as better benefits, paid vacation, paid days off, higher wages, an increased focus on health and safety, access to support services such as family counseling, training, and grievance procedures to resolve workplace problems.

8. In your opinion, is your union doing a good job of representing your interests? It would be helpful if you began by awarding their performance to date a grade (i.e. give them an A if they are doing an excellent job, a B if they are doing some things well but have room for improvement, an F if they are not addressing these issues adequately).

a. Grade: _____

b. Why did you give them the grade you did? What are they doing right? What could they do better?

c. What issues are they missing (i.e. just not dealing with even though they are important)?

Section 4: Succession Planning (only ask those 20 to 45)

The impending departure of the Baby Boomers means that Natunion needs to be concerned with how they can increase the number of younger members who are willing to seek leadership positions within the union. The next set of questions deal with this issue.

1. How likely is it that you will seek a leadership position within Natunion in the next several years?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unlikely			Unsure		Very Likely	

Why did you give this response? More specifically,

2. What factors (if any) have encouraged you to seek a leadership position within your union?

3. What factors (if any) have discouraged you from seeking a leadership position within your union?

4. What could Natunion do to increase the probability that people like you would seek a leadership position within the union?

Section 5: Wrap Up (All Respondents)

These last questions were designed to get your opinion on the key issues facing your union and your employer in the next decade. In summary:

1. What one piece of advice would you offer to your employer with respect to:

- a. Recruitment of people into a job such as yours?

- b. Retention of people such as yourselves?

2. If someone came to you and said that they had been offered a job in your unit – what advice would you offer them?

3. If someone came to you and asked if they should become actively involved in Natunion– what advice would you offer them?

4. If someone came to you and said that they were considering taking on a leadership role in Natunion,– what advice would you offer them?

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview.

Is there anything important that I missed? Do you have any questions that you wanted to ask me?

Would you like to receive a copy of the results of this study?

If yes: Could you give me an e-mail address so I can send it to you? _____

Appendix B: Survey 1

Listening to the Rank and File: Natunion's Survey of a Changing Membership

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this important survey. Please be assured that all of the information you provide will be kept confidential by the researchers. Only summary results will be presented to NATUNION. If you have any questions please contact your Local Chairman or local System Officer. Please return your completed survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. Thank you for taking time to provide this valuable information to the NATUNION.

Section 1: Participation in Natunion Activities

The first set of questions explores your involvement with and attitude towards your union – Natunion.

1. How many years have you been a member of Natunion?

Less than 5
At least 5 but less than 10
At least 10 but less than 15
At least 15 but less than 20
At least 20 but less than 25
25 or more

2. Did either or both of your parents belong to a union?

Both belonged to a union
One parent belonged to a union
Neither parent belonged to a union

3. Have you ever held an elected position within Natunion?

No
Yes: Local Lodge
Yes: System
Yes: National Division

4. We are interested to know how involved you are with your union. More specifically, which of the following labels best describes you? Choose one:

I am a member of the union but do not engage in any union activities
I am a member of the union and engage in only a limited number of union activities
I am a member of the union and engage in a moderate number of union activities
I am an active member of the union - I get involved whenever possible

5. How many hours per month do you spend in union-related activities?

Less than 5
At least 5 but less than 10
At least 10 but less than 15
At least 15 but less than 20
At least 20 but less than 25
25 or more

6. How familiar are you with the content of your current collective agreement?

Choose one:

I have never read the collective agreement

I read the collective agreement only when I am asked to vote on a new contract term

I read the collective agreement only when I believe I have a grievance

I read the collective agreement out of interest

I am so familiar with the collective agreement that I assist others who have questions about it

7. What could the union do to increase your level of involvement with Natunion (i.e., to make union membership more relevant to you)?

	Little Impact		Some Impact		A Lot of Impact
A. Schedule the union meetings at a more convenient time	1	2	3	4	5
B. Hold the union meetings at a more convenient location	1	2	3	4	5
C. Do a better job of communicating to its members	1	2	3	4	5
D. Make me believe that participating matters by listening and acting on our feedback	1	2	3	4	5
E. Make it easier for me to get information on the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
F. Explain the collective agreement to me	1	2	3	4	5
G. Let me know how I can help	1	2	3	4	5
H. Reach out to the members (advertise union positions)	1	2	3	4	5
I. Show me that the union matters to me (do something that improves my work situation)	1	2	3	4	5
J. Cut out the favoritism for jobs	1	2	3	4	5
K. Cut out the favoritism for promotions	1	2	3	4	5
L. Increase the visibility of the union within the workplace	1	2	3	4	5

8. When you feel that you have a grievance because the company violated the agreement, do you take it up or let it go by?

Always let it go by				Let it go by about half the time			Always take it up
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

9. How often in the past year have you:

	Almost Never		Sometim es		Almost Always
A. Helped a new member learn more about the union	1	2	3	4	5
B. Attended a local union meeting	1	2	3	4	5
C. Voted in a union election	1	2	3	4	5
D. Been personally informed about contract provisions of particular importance to your job	1	2	3	4	5
E. Been personally informed about union activities occurring at the local level	1	2	3	4	5
F. Been personally informed about union activities occurring at the national level	1	2	3	4	5
G. Helped promote the union	1	2	3	4	5
H. Attended a union sponsored training session or educational seminar	1	2	3	4	5
I. Discussed union issues with coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
J. Served on a union committee	1	2	3	4	5
K. Read the union newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
L. Been involved in the settling of a grievance	1	2	3	4	5

10. The following questions ask about your experience with Natunion. Please think back over the last year and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strong ly Agree
A. I understood what the union expected of me	1	2	3	4	5
B. I enjoyed being a member of the union	1	2	3	4	5
C. I felt supported by the union	1	2	3	4	5
D. I felt that the union ignored issues that were important to me....	1	2	3	4	5
E. The union tried to influence my beliefs and opinion	1	2	3	4	5

11. Listed below are a number of things that members expect from their union. How important are each of these things to you?

	Little Importan ce		Nice to have, but not Essential		Criticall y Importa nt
A. Good representation	1	2	3	4	5
B. To be treated respectfully	1	2	3	4	5
C. A fair contract (good pay and benefits)	1	2	3	4	5
D. Regular communication with union representatives	1	2	3	4	5
E. To have a union that listens to me/the members	1	2	3	4	5
F. Good information about the collective agreement	1	2	3	4	5
G. Good benefits	1	2	3	4	5
H. Job security and stability	1	2	3	4	5
I. To keep health care costs in check	1	2	3	4	5
J. To provide better health benefits	1	2	3	4	5
K. Good benefits when working away from home	1	2	3	4	5
L. Dealing with the issue of subcontractors	1	2	3	4	5
M. Some control over my work schedule	1	2	3	4	5
N. A voice in workplace decisions that affect my life	1	2	3	4	5
O. Safe working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
P. Having someone to fight for us/stand up for us (against subcontractors, management harassment)	1	2	3	4	5
Q. Interpret the contract for us	1	2	3	4	5
R. Keep us informed	1	2	3	4	5
S. Respond to our concerns in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	5
T. Have a visible presence in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5

12. The following questions ask about your experience with Natunion. Please think back over the last year and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

NATUNION:	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
A. Represents our interests	1	2	3	4	5
B. Treats people with respect	1	2	3	4	5
C. Has got us a fair contract (good pay and benefits)	1	2	3	4	5
D. Regularly communicates with union representatives	1	2	3	4	5
E. Listens to me/the members	1	2	3	4	5
F. Informs us about the contract	1	2	3	4	5
G. Has ensured that we have good benefits	1	2	3	4	5
H. Has ensured that we have good levels of job security	1	2	3	4	5
I. Has kept health care costs in check	1	2	3	4	5
J. Has negotiated good benefits when working away from home	1	2	3	4	5
K. Has dealt with the issue of subcontractors	1	2	3	4	5
L. Has ensured that we have control over our work schedules	1	2	3	4	5
M. Have given workers a voice in workplace decisions that affect our lives	1	2	3	4	5
N. Has ensured that we have safe working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
O. Fight for us/Stands up for us (against subcontractors and management harassment)	1	2	3	4	5
P. Has a visible presence in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
Q. Interprets the contract for us	1	2	3	4	5
R. Keep us informed	1	2	3	4	5
S. Responds to our concerns in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	5

13. How satisfied are you with your current collective agreement?

Very Unsatisfied				Neutral				Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. By belonging to this union I have more of a say in decisions that affect my life.

Strongly Disagree				Neutral			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
A. I feel a sense of pride being a part of this union	1	2	3	4	5
B. The member does not get enough benefits for the money taken by the union for initiation fees and dues	1	2	3	4	5
C. The record of this union is a good example of what dedicated people can get done	1	2	3	4	5
D. The only reason I belong to the union is because it is a requirement under the agreement with the railroad	1	2	3	4	5
E. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort in order to make this union be successful	1	2	3	4	5
F. It is every union members' responsibility to see to it that management "lives up" to the collective agreement	1	2	3	4	5
G. Moving ahead in this company is more important to me than staying in the union	1	2	3	4	5
H. I feel little loyalty towards this union	1	2	3	4	5
I. I talk up my union to my friends as a great union to be a member of	1	2	3	4	5
J. As long as I am doing the kind of work I enjoy, it does not matter if I belong to a union	1	2	3	4	5
K. It is every union members duty to support or help another worker use the grievance procedure	1	2	3	4	5
L. There is a lot to be gained by joining this union	1	2	3	4	5
M. Very little that the membership wants has any real importance to the union	1	2	3	4	5

16. How much do you agree with the following statements about NATUNION?

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
A. Union members are listened to	1	2	3	4	5
B. Union members feel free to tell union leaders what they think	1	2	3	4	5
C. Union members are not afraid to express their feelings	1	2	3	4	5
D. The union communicates with its members	1	2	3	4	5
E. The union handles things well	1	2	3	4	5
F. The union is known for getting things done	1	2	3	4	5
G. The union has a good local grievance committee	1	2	3	4	5
H. The union has good system officers	1	2	3	4	5
I. The union has good national division officers	1	2	3	4	5
J. The union has good collective bargaining processes	1	2	3	4	5
K. There is constant bickering in the union	1	2	3	4	5

17. How much say do you think you have in each of the following union decisions?

	Very Little		Some		A Lot
A. Deciding who will serve on committees	1	2	3	4	5
B. Bargaining issues	1	2	3	4	5
C. Dues	1	2	3	4	5
D. Spending local funds	1	2	3	4	5
E. Nominating people for local office	1	2	3	4	5
F. Resolving conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
G. Grievances	1	2	3	4	5
H. Bargaining strategies	1	2	3	4	5

Section 2: Succession Planning

The next set of questions were included to help us appreciate the challenges Natunion is likely to have with respect to succession planning.

18. The impending departure of the Baby Boomers means that Natunion needs to be concerned with how they can increase the number of younger members who are willing to seek leadership positions within the union. How likely is it that you will seek a leadership position within Natunion in the next several years?

Very Unlikely				Unsure				Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

19. To what extent have the following factors discouraged you from seeking a leadership position within Natunion?

	Very Little extent		Some extent		Very Large extent
A. It is too much work (too time consuming)	1	2	3	4	5
B. The nature of the position itself (too many rules, too much politics)	1	2	3	4	5
.....					
C. It is hard to get involved (difficult to get your foot in the door)	1	2	3	4	5
.....					
D. I do not know what the job entails	1	2	3	4	5
E. I often disagree with the actions taken by the senior leadership	1	2	3	4	5
.....					
F. I just do not care that much about the union	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Attitudes towards Unions

The next set of questions was included to help us understand your attitudes toward unions in general and your level of job satisfaction

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of unions?

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
A. The union is a positive force that fights for the rights of workers .	1	2	3	4	5
B. Unions are out of touch with the workers they represent	1	2	3	4	5
C. Workers appreciate what the union has done for them	1	2	3	4	5
D. Unions give in to management too often (make too many concessions)	1	2	3	4	5
E. Unions do good things with pay and benefits	1	2	3	4	5
F. There is no need for unions (they are a waste of time)	1	2	3	4	5
G. Workers want to belong to a union	1	2	3	4	5
H. Unions are too political	1	2	3	4	5
I . Unions do a good job of protecting their members	1	2	3	4	5
J. Unions are too lenient with lazy/bad workers	1	2	3	4	5
K. Unions protect workers that don't pull their weight	1	2	3	4	5

21. How important are each of the following to you in your job?

	Not Important		Somewhat Important		Very Important
A. Accomplishing something worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5
B. Doing a wide variety of jobs	1	2	3	4	5
C. Learning new skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
D. Doing things well	1	2	3	4	5
E. Pay	1	2	3	4	5
F. Benefits	1	2	3	4	5
G. Opportunities to get a better job	1	2	3	4	5
H. Job security	1	2	3	4	5
I. The opportunity to take part in decisions and have influence	1	2	3	4	5

22. In your current job, how often do you:

	Never		Sometimes		Very Often
A. Have the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5
B. Have the opportunity to do a wide variety of jobs	1	2	3	4	5
C. Have the opportunity to learn new skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
D. Have the opportunity to perform well	1	2	3	4	5
E. Have the opportunity to get a better job	1	2	3	4	5
F. Feel well paid	1	2	3	4	5
G. Feel satisfied with your benefits	1	2	3	4	5
H. Feel your job is secure	1	2	3	4	5
I. Have the opportunity to take part in decisions and have influence	1	2	3	4	5

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
A. Employees who have a union are better off than those who don't	1	2	3	4	5
B. Workers are more successful getting problems resolved when they bring problems up as a group rather than individuals	1	2	3	4	5
C. It would be good for the country if more workers had union representation	1	2	3	4	5
D. Unions help improve working conditions	1	2	3	4	5
E. Unions are too powerful in this country	1	2	3	4	5
F. Unions are becoming too strong	1	2	3	4	5
G. Unions make sure that employees are treated fairly by supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
H. Unions help working men and women to get better wages	1	2	3	4	5
I. Unions interfere with good relations between companies and workers	1	2	3	4	5
J. Union dues are too high	1	2	3	4	5
K. When a strike is called, it is generally for a good reason	1	2	3	4	5
L. Unions are a major cause of high prices	1	2	3	4	5

24. Please indicate how satisfied you are with:

	Very Dissatisfi ed		Neutral		Very Satisfie d
A. Your job in general	1	2	3	4	5
B. The amount of pay you get	1	2	3	4	5
C. The number of hours you work	1	2	3	4	5
D. The schedule of your working hours	1	2	3	4	5
E. The sorts of things you do on the job	1	2	3	4	5
F. Your current work load	1	2	3	4	5
G. The training/development opportunities offered by your organization	1	2	3	4	5
H. Your ability to meet career goals and aspirations	1	2	3	4	5
I. The amount of job security you have	1	2	3	4	5

Section 4: Information About You

Finally, we need some information about you to help us interpret this questionnaire. To answer the following questions please circle the number of the answer that best describes you and/or fill in the information requested. Please be assured that your responses will be held in confidence by the researchers.

25. What is your gender?

Male

Female

26. What is your age?

Under 30
30-34
35-39
40-44
45-49
50-54
55-59
60 and over

27. What is your race/ethnicity?

Black
White
Hispanic
Native American
Asian
Other

28. What is your marital status?

Single
Married or living with a significant other
Divorced
Widowed

29. How many children do you have in each of the following age categories (please skip this question if you have no children)?

Number of children:

Less than 5 years of age 1 2 3 CHILDREN

6 to 12 years of age 1 2 3 CHILDREN

13 to 18 years of age 1 2 3 CHILDREN

Over 18 years of age who are living at home 1 2 3 CHILDREN

Over 18 years of age who are not living at home 1 2 3 CHILDREN

30. Which of the following best describes your educational background.

Did not complete high school

High school graduate

Some college

College diploma

31. Which of the following best describes your current work schedule? Choose one:

I'm furloughed

Normal Days – 40 hours per week, five days per week

Shift work

Nights

Compressed work week (4 days per week, 10 hour days)

Other compressed work schedule (8 days, 6 rest days, etc.)

On call

Other

32. How many hours did you work last month?

None

At least 50 but less than 75

At least 75 but less than 100

At least 100 but less than 125

At least 125 but less than 150

At least 150 but less than 200

200 or more

33. How many companies did you work for before your current employer?

None

At least 1 but less than 3

At least 3 but less than 5

At least 5 but less than 7

7 or more

34. How many years have you worked for your current employer?

Less than 5 years

At least 5 but less than 10

At least 10 but less than 15

At least 15 but less than 20

At least 20 but less than 25

25 or more

Have you any comments you would like to make?

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Please mail this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided by March 15, 2011.

Appendix C: Interview 2

Contact Script – Telephone Interview

May I speak to _____?

My name is Chris Smith and I am a PhD student from the Sprott School of Business, Carleton University. Along with my supervisor Dr. Linda Duxbury and under the guidance of a steering committee made up of representatives from National Division, Regional Systems officers, Local lodge officers, and members, I am working to find out how satisfied Natunion members are with communication within their union, and what the union can do to improve members' satisfaction in this area.

You are one of about 150 members of the Union who were selected from various age groups to participate in this study. By speaking with members like you, we hope to find out in what ways the union is communicating effectively, and where it needs to improve. With this information, the union will identify areas in need of improvement, and will follow up by implementing actions in order to increase the satisfaction of its members. Once changes have been implemented and given time to set in, we will then get in contact with members again in order to find out whether the changes were successful or not.

Your participation in this study will consists of today's initial interview and short accompanying survey, as well as an additional interview and survey in about a year's time to see if what the union has done address the issues identified in the first set of interviews has impacted how you feel about the union. This research is on communication between members and the union and we are happy to communicate to you what we have found from the interviews etc if you would like.

I am calling you today to complete the first part of this study. Today's interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes of your time. The interview asks a series of questions that are designed to help us gain a deeper understanding of communication within the union: way the union communicates information to you, how you communicate with the union, and how you interact with fellow members.

Do you have some time to talk? If not, then when would be a better time for me to call back?

_____ Date and time for call back.

On call back, mention the study again and then begin here/OR if they can talk immediately, continue with this material:

Are you still interested in participating in the interview?

If yes: Thank you very much for agreeing to participate. We would like to schedule your interview at a time that is convenient to you in the next one or two weeks. Could you suggest a few times that you would be available and willing to participate in the interview. We will contact you within the next few days with the date and time for the telephone interview (**or confirm now if you can**). How would you like to be contacted?

Telephone (at what number) _____

E-mail (what is your e-mail address) _____

If you are calling back for an interview appointment, explain briefly the objectives, as above before proceeding.

Thanks again for agreeing to take part in this study. The interview today will be audio taped to support the analysis of the data. Audio files will be stored on a password protected PC and will be deleted once the data has been coded and analyzed. Names and other identifying information will not be recorded or shared with the Union or your employer. You will only be identified by a code number assigned to you. Are you happy to go ahead?

If they are unhappy, try to identify and calm their concerns. If you cannot, end the interview and thank them for their time

ID Code #: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Section 1: Background Information

This first set of questions give us a little information about you to help us interpret the results of the interview

1. Current work experience

- a. What is the name of the organization that you currently work for: _____
- b. The state they live in: _____
- c. States that they typically work in: _____
- d. Can you describe your work schedule? _____
- e. How many hours did you work in the month prior to the interview: _____ (hours)
- f. What percentage of your typical schedule is spent working on the road?

2. Previous work experience:

- a. How many organizations did you work for before you started work for your current employer?

If they have had several employers ask them:

- b. Why did you leave your their previous jobs?

(Prompt: laid off, too much travel, better offer elsewhere)

3. Union experience:

- a. How long have you been a member of Natunion? : _____ Years

b. Did you have any union experience before joining Natunion ? If so, how many years experience? In how many organizations?

c. Do you have a history of union membership in your family? Were your parents or grandparents union members?

d. What does the union mean to you?

4. General Demographics

a. Age: _____

Section 2: Top-Down Communication

This section of the interview focuses on what we are calling “Top down communication” – communication that the union leadership is providing to its members. A lot of important information (and some that you may not think is important) is communicated in this direction, including meeting times and locations, bargaining updates, training opportunities, and job postings, among others. In this section we want to find out how effective you think the union is at communicating to its members and what you think the union could do to improve your satisfaction with the way it communicates information to you.

1. Typical union communications

We want to begin by finding out how the union typically communicates different information to you, and whether or not you think that these methods are the best options available... so to begin...

1. How does the union typically contact you (or not contact you as the case may be) about each of the following? On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with these methods? How would you prefer the union contact you about each?

- i. Meeting times and locations
- ii. Training opportunities
- iii. Opportunities to get involved with the union
- iv. Job postings
- v. Bargaining updates
- vi. Union news
- vii. Are there any I missed... ? How are you contacted about these?

2. Downward communication positive episode

I would now like to ask you to think of a time when you were really satisfied with how the union communicated with you... so if you could please think of a positive communication you received from the union within the last 6 months, that would be great...got it? Ok...first off

- a) What was the subject of this communication? (Prompt: Meeting info, bargaining update, etc.)
- b) How was this information communicated to you? (Prompt: Mail, e-mail, phone call, face to face interaction)
- c) How much attention did you pay to this communication?
- d) How did you feel about this communication? (prompt: Angry, frustrated, interested,)
- e) What was it about this communication that contributed to you being satisfied?
- f) In what way was this communication effective?
- g) In what way was this communication ineffective?

3. Downward communication negative episode

I will now ask you to think of a time when you were really dissatisfied with how the union communicated with you (or failed to communicate with you)... so if you could please think of a communication that meets this criteria you received from the union within the last 6 months, that would be great...got it? Ok...first off

- a) What was the subject of this communication? (Prompt: Meeting info, bargaining update, etc.)
- b) How was this information communicated to you? (Prompt: Mail, e-mail, phone call, face to face interaction)
- c) How much attention did you pay to this communication?
- d) How did you feel about this communication? (Prompt: Angry, frustrated, interested,)
 - a. Why did you feel like this?
- e) In what way was this communication effective?
- f) In what way was this communication ineffective?

4. General downward communication

The discussion above was about a specific communication. We now want to know more about your general satisfaction with top-down communication from the union. To start

1. What are they doing right?
2. What are they doing wrong?
3. Are there any outside factors that you feel impact the union's ability to effectively communicate with you? (Supervisors/management, the company in general, distance/travel, technology, coworkers)
4. Is there anything that you heard through the grapevine that you wish the union had communicated to you directly? If yes,
 - a. what was it you heard?
 - b. How did you hear about it?
 - c. Why should you have heard about it from the union?
 - d. How should they have communicated this to you?
5. Do you have any general advice for the union in terms of how it communicates information to members? More specifically, what kind of improvements would you like to see? What could they do differently? What should they stop doing?

Section 3: Upward Communication

This section of the interview focuses on what we are calling "Upward communication" which is information that you and other union members want to provide the union leadership. In this section we want to find out how effective you think the union is at listening to its members and what you think the union could do to ensure that members are being "heard".

1. Positive upward communication episode

I will begin by asking you to walk me through an example of a time when you communicated with the union and you came out of the situation satisfied ...so if you could please think of a time that you contacted the union within the last 6 months, that would be great...got it? Ok...first off

- a) Why did you contact the union? (ie: filing a grievance, requesting information, giving feedback etc.)
- b) How did you try to contact them? (Prompt: Mail, e-mail, phone call, face to face interaction)
- c) Did they respond? If yes, how did they respond (Prompt: They phoned me, ...)
- d) How did you feel about this communication? (prompt: Angry, frustrated, interested,)

- e) In what way was this communication effective?
- f) In what way was this communication ineffective?

2. Negative upward communication episode

Now we are going to go through the same set of questions, only this time I would like you to think of a time when you tried to communicate with the union in some way and you came out of the situation dissatisfied ...so if you could please think of a time that you contacted the union within the last 6 months, that would be great...got it? Ok...first off

- a) Why did you contact the union? (ie: filing a grievance, requesting information, giving feedback etc.)
- b) How did you try to contact them? (Prompt: Mail, e-mail, phone call, face to face interaction)
- g) Did they respond? If yes, how did they respond (Prompt: They phoned me, ...)
- c) How did you feel about this communication? (prompt: Angry, frustrated, interested,)
- d) In what way was this communication effective?
- e) In what way was this communication ineffective?
- f) Do you feel that the union listened to you?
- g) What, if anything could the union do to improve this type of communication?

3. General upward communication

We now want to know more about your general satisfaction with respect to upward communication.

- a) When you initiate communication with the union, what percentage of the time are you left satisfied at the end of the situation?
- b) What are they doing right?
- c) What are they doing wrong?
- d) Are there any outside factors that you think might currently or potentially impact the union's ability to effectively listen to you? (Supervisors/management, the company in general, distance/travel, technology)

- e) How would you prefer to communicate with the union? What's the best way for you to contact the union?
- f) Do you have any general advice for the union in terms of upward communication? More specifically, what could they do to make such communications more effective? What should they stop doing?

Section 4: Horizontal communication – between members

Research shows that a member's commitment to and satisfaction with his or her union can be influenced by his/her interactions with fellow union brothers or sisters. We want to find out how these interactions with fellow members impact the overall union experience, and if there are any ways the union can increase cohesion between its members.

1. Positive interaction

To start, could you please think of an interaction you had with another member that has impacted the way you feel about the union in a positive way

- a) What did this interaction involve? (Prompts: veteran mentorship, pro-union sentiment, promotion of union event)
- b) Why did this encounter make you feel more positively towards the union?
- c) Did it affect your involvement in union activities in any way? If yes, how?
- d) Is there anything the union could do to promote this type of interaction – so more members can benefit?

2. Negative interaction

Could you please think of an interaction you had with another member that has impacted the way you feel about the union in a negative way?

- a) What did this interaction involve? (Prompts: politics, anti-union sentiment, harassment)
- b) Why did this communication make you feel more negatively towards the union?
- c) Did it affect your involvement in union activities in any way?
- d) Is there anything the union could do to prevent this type of interaction from occurring in the future?

3. Socialization and other interactions

This section will focus mostly on how new members are welcomed into the union.. first of all...

- a) How were you welcomed into the union?
More specifically...
 - i. Did you have another member “show you the ropes”? If so, who?
 - ii. Did you get a history lesson from the other members? If so, who?
 - iii. Did someone make it clear to you why the union is important? If so, who?
 - iv. Was it a formal or informal process?
- b) What are the differences in the way that guys are brought in now compared to when you started?
- c) Typically, how do you personally welcome a new member?
- d) What advice do you have for the union in terms of getting new members informed and involved in union activities?
- e) We are really interested in how older and younger members interact with each other. You are a member of _____, how would you describe your interactions with (TWO OTHER GENERATIONS).
- f) What advice do you have for the union in terms of creating cohesion between members of various age groups?

Section 5: Change Readiness

We want to know whether or not you think the union is prepared to successfully implement the changes needed to keep its members satisfied... the following questions will explore the union's change readiness...

- 1. Based on your experiences, what percentage of the union's past change initiatives have been successful?
- 2. What is the union doing right?
- 3. What is the union doing wrong?
- 4. What are the major obstacles preventing successful change?
- 5. What advice would you give to the union in terms of improving the way it implements change? How can it overcome the obstacles you've identified?

Section 6: Wrap-up

Thank you for your input up to this point. I just have a few quick wrap-up questions for you to close out the interview...

1. What is one piece of advice you would give to Natunion with respect to communication?
2. Is there anything that we missed? That you would like to add?
3. Would you like to be contacted with results? Yes?
4. Would you be willing to be interviewed again in the next 6 months or so we can see if your satisfaction has increased or decreased once changes have been made?

Contact Info: _____

Thank you for your participation

Improving Communication Within Natunion

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. The information from this survey will give us a better understanding of how union members feel about the current state of communication within the union. We plan to use the results from this survey to help us understand whether or not proposed changes to how Natunion communicates with its members affects members' satisfaction and member involvement in the union. Please be assured that all of the information you provide will be kept confidential by the researchers. Only summary results will be presented to Natunion. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call us at the numbers below.

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Section 1: Your Relationship with NATUNION

The first set of questions explores your involvement and satisfaction with your union. For each of the questions in this section please circle the answer(s) that best describe(s) your situation or fill in the required information.

35. How many years have you been a member of NATUNION? ____ YEARS

36. Did you have any union experience prior to joining NATUNION?

- a. Yes
- b. No

37. Has anyone in your immediate family (mother, father, grandfather, grandmother) ever belonged to a union?

- c. Yes
- d. No

38. For each of the questions listed below please circle the answer that most represents your views.

Being a union member is important to me because...

	Not at all true		Somewha t true		Very true
Unions stand up for the rights of workers	1	2	3	4	5
Unions promote solidarity among workers	1	2	3	4	5
Union jobs pay well	1	2	3	4	5
Union jobs provide good benefits packages	1	2	3	4	5
The union protects me from the employer	1	2	3	4	5
The union provides me with job security	1	2	3	4	5

39. Approximately how many hours per month do you spend in union-related activities? ____ HOURS

40. Have you ever held an elected position within NATUNION?

- A. No, not interested
- B. No, but plan to in the future

- C. Yes: Local Lodge
- D. Yes: System
- E. Yes: National Division

41. How familiar are you with the content of your current collective agreement?

- A. I have never read the collective agreement
- B. I read the collective agreement only when I am asked to vote on a new contract term
- C. I read the collective agreement only when I believe I have a grievance
- D. I read the collective agreement out of interest
- E. I am so familiar with the collective agreement that I assist others who have questions about it

42. What do you do when you have a grievance because the company violated the collective agreement? Do you take it up or let it go by? Please circle the answer that is most applicable.

Always let it go by		Let it go by about half the time		Always take it up
1	2	3	4	5

43. How often in the past year have you:

	Almost Never		Someti mes		Almos t Alway s
Helped a new member learn more about the union	1	2	3	4	5
Attended a local union meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Voted in a union election	1	2	3	4	5
Helped promote the union	1	2	3	4	5
Discussed union issues with coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
Served on a union committee	1	2	3	4	5
Read the union newspaper	1	2	3	4	5

Been involved in the settling of a grievance 1 2 3 4 5

44. Overall, how satisfied are you with your union?

Very dissatisfied		Neutral		Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

45. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

Very dissatisfied		Neutral		Very satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

46. Have you changed jobs in the company in the last two years

- A. Yes
- B. No, but plan to in the future
- C. No (please go to next section of the survey)

We are interested in understanding why you either changed jobs within your company or plan to change jobs in the near future. Please consider the list below and indicate the degree to which each factor impacted your decision to change jobs or think of changing jobs.

	Not at all		Somewh at		Very much
I did not like (do not like) my manager	1	2	3	4	5
I wanted to (want to) obtain additional seniority rights	1	2	3	4	5
My previous job was (or will be) eliminated by the carrier	1	2	3	4	5
I was displaced (will be displaced) by someone with more seniority in the union					
A job opportunity I wanted (want) opened up because another employee retired or left the company	1	2	3	4	5
I was (feel) pressured to take the job because there are many more job opportunities available within the company than people able to fill them	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Please write in below)	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

Section 2: Satisfaction with Communication

The second set of questions explores your satisfaction with the types of communication you receive from the union. For each of the questions in this section please circle the answer(s) that best describe(s) your situation or fill in the required information.

2.1 Communication about the time and location of union meetings

- a. How do you usually hear about the time and location of union meetings? Please circle all the responses that apply.

- A. Through the mail
- B. Word of mouth
- C. By telephone
- D. Text messages
- E. By email
- F. On the internet
- G. Other (please specify) _____
- H. I don't usually hear about meetings

- b. How satisfied are you with how the union communicates this information to you?

Very dissatisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

- c. How would you prefer to hear about time and location of union meetings? Please indicate the extent to which you prefer each option.

	Not at all preferabl e		Neutral		Very preferabl e
Through the mail	1	2	3	4	5
Word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5
Telephone call	1	2	3	4	5

Text message	1	2	3	4	5
By email	1	2	3	4	5
Union website	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please write in below)	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

2.2 Communication about opportunities to get involved with the union

- a. **How do you usually hear about opportunities to get involved with the union (votes, elections, volunteering, etc.)? Please circle all that apply.**

- A. Through the mail
- B. Word of mouth
- C. By telephone
- D. Text messages
- E. By email
- F. On the internet
- G. At meetings
- H. Other (please specify) _____
- I. I don't usually hear about opportunities to get involved

- b. **How satisfied are you with how the union communicates this information to you?**
Very dissatisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Very Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

- c. **How would you prefer to hear about opportunities to get involved with the union? Please indicate the extent to which you prefer each option.**

	Not at all preferable		Neutral		Very preferable
Through the mail	1	2	3	4	5

Word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5
Telephone call	1	2	3	4	5
Text message	1	2	3	4	5
By email	1	2	3	4	5
Union website	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please write in below)	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

2.3 Communication about bargaining updates

a. How do you usually hear about bargaining updates? Please circle all that apply.

- A. Union Newsletter
- B. Word of mouth
- C. By telephone
- D. Text messages
- E. By email
- F. On the internet
- G. Other (please specify) _____
- H. I don't usually hear about meetings

b. How satisfied are you with how the union communicates this information to you?

Very dissatisfied		Somewhat		Very Satisfied
		Satisfied		
1	2	3	4	5

c. How would you prefer to hear about bargaining updates? Please indicate the extent to which you prefer each option.

	Not at all preferable		Neutral		Very preferable
Through the mail	1	2	3	4	5
Word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5

Telephone call	1	2	3	4	5
Text message	1	2	3	4	5
By email	1	2	3	4	5
Union website	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please write in below)	1	2	3	4	5

Other: _____

Section 3: Information About You

Finally, we need some information about you to help us interpret this questionnaire. To answer the following questions please circle the number of the answer that best describes you and/or fill in the information requested. Please be assured that your responses will be held in confidence by the researchers. Please circle the answer that best describes you, or fill in any blanks.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
3. Please indicate which Local Lodge do you belong to? (If unsure, write “unsure”)

4. Which of the following best describes the nature of your job?
 - a. Travelling with Systems Gangs
 - b. Working Local Section or Extra Gangs
5. Which of the following best describes your typical work schedule
 - a. 5 days a week, 8 hour days
 - b. 4 days a week, 10 hour days
 - c. Compressed halves
6. Do you have any children who still live at home?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

Have you any comments you would like to make? Attach an extra sheet if desired.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Your responses will be held in confidence by the researchers. Please e-mail us or call collect if you have any concerns.

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