

5-12-2004

A Study of the Relationship Between Unionization And Nonprofit Social Workers

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**A Study of the Relationship Between Unionization
And Nonprofit Social Workers**

A THESIS SUBMITTED

By

Nancy Dow Moody

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of

Nonprofit Administration

The University of San Francisco

May 12, 2004

A Study of the Relationship Between
Unionization and Nonprofit Social Workers

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This Thesis written under the guidelines of the Faculty Advisory Committee and approved by all its members, has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Nonprofit Administration

at the

University of San Francisco

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship, for nonprofit employees of the Regional Center system of the state of California, between unionization, on the one hand, and morale, salary, and relationship with management, on the other. It was conducted by means of a survey of twenty questions. Responses from one hundred seventy-two nonprofit social workers from three representative centers in the California system were received.

The results of the study supported a causal link between unionization and most of the hypothesized associations. The study found that unionization did have a positive impact on morale, salary, and relationship with management. Those working in unionized offices were more positive in regard to the income benefits achieved through unions, to their relationship and effective communication with management, and to equitable wages and increases. The only negative association was that those working in nonunion offices reported having more independence in carrying out their job tasks.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and acknowledge my professor Dr. Carol Silverman.

Her inspiration and knowledge were invaluable in this endeavor. I would like to thank my terrific son, Austin Moody for his confidence, patience and understanding. Thanks to Sam Kornhauser for his continuous encouragement and support.

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INTRODUCTION

Unionization of workers in the United States has historically been seen to benefit hourly paid, blue-collar workers. Unions offered workers the benefits of a voice in advocacy for improved wages and benefits packages, job security, pensions, and improved, safer working conditions. Before unionization, employees lacked a voice in the company negotiations. With increased pressure toward productivity, less influence in decision-making, and diminished status, nonprofit professionals are now looking to unionization to address these same issues (Tambor 1988).

Unionization has not, as a rule, been common in nonprofit organizations. It is a widely held belief that a nonprofit organization does not have the funds to offer individual workers competitive wages and conditions (Hush 1969).

A nonprofit organization is not designed to generate a profit for shareholder benefit and the general perception is that any revenue generated should be funneled back into improving benefits to the community it serves. Workers in nonprofit organizations are felt to be special people, who like to “do good,” believe in the mission of their organization, and are willing to give of themselves for its sake. Their rewards are thought to come from the satisfaction of doing something meaningful for the community. Generally they have worked for less than those in similar positions employed by government or for-profit organizations. Jeavons, in his article, “When Management is the Message,” pointed out that there is often a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the principles nonprofit management advocate for the benefit of their clients and society at large and, on the other, what they are willing to provide for their own staff. Often in a nonprofit work environment the principles set out in the organization’s stated mission, or

even general community values, are violated by its own management policies towards its own employees (1992).

To provide their services to the community social service nonprofit organizations are usually dependent on government money, grants from foundations, and the donations of individuals. In most service organizations, employee costs are the heaviest drain on the budget: on average, up to 80% of the operating costs of nonprofit organizations can be attributed to salaries and other staffing costs (McLaughlin, 1995). Overall, nonprofit organizations have a difficult time matching the compensation levels of public institutions or private industry.

In 2002, the nonprofit sector accounted for between 5% and 10% of the national GDP. The number of nonprofit organizations and employees is steadily increasing, with annual revenue of one trillion dollars and assets of two trillion dollars. The nonprofit sector employs 12 million people, which is more than the federal government civilian workforce and fifty state governments combined (O'Neill, 2002). A study by Masaoka, Peters and Richardson (2000), in the *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, reports that

community-based nonprofit organizations are increasingly an attractive market for labor unions. One reason for labor's interest is the rapid growth of the nonprofit sector, both in terms of the size of its workforce and the amount of revenue generated.... [U]nions have faced an increasingly hostile environment in business as well as a saturated market in government. (p.306)

Higher wages is a common demand, but the staff respondents' demand for a greater voice in decision making is as loud and as common. Nonprofit staff, from entry-level to veteran, seem to have an expectation of participatory management

— and to view unionization as a means of achieving it — to a degree that is likely unique to the nonprofit sector. (p 310)

In the current economic climate, with budget cuts and reduced ability to raise essential funds impacting nonprofit organizations' budgets, it is not surprising that nonprofit employees may look to labor unions to provide job security, equitable pay, suitable benefits, and most importantly, a voice within their organization.

DeHoog (1984) uses the term “contracting” to refer to the body of services which government provides for its citizens through private profit or nonprofit organizations instead of through its own employees (p. 3). This, in effect, means that because of their reliance on such contracting, many social service nonprofits are not very different from public organizations. According to Lipsky and Smith (1989-1990), with the distinction between government and nonprofit organizations narrowing, nonprofit organizations have become less attractive to social service employees. As Lipsky and Smith point out, a social worker can increase his or her salary by 20% by working for an organization that is not a nonprofit.

Nonprofit organizations have historically been able to offset their lower salaries by the quality of nonprofit work and the prestige associated with the work. The loss of status and the reduced distinction between nonprofit and public sector work could be a motivating factor for union organizing as the lower salaries no longer seem justified to the nonprofit worker (Jeavons, 1992).

In this study I have explored the impact of unionization on a group of nonprofit social workers employed as service coordinators by the twenty-one separate regional centers in the state of California. These centers disburse funds to organizations providing

service to individuals with developmental disabilities. All regional centers are independently operated and are nonprofit organizations. They receive funds from the state of California and collectively represent one of the ten largest budget items in the state.

Of the twenty-one centers, fourteen are unionized and seven are not. Each center employs client service coordinators with caseloads varying from forty to sixty clients. Although the caseloads vary, both union and nonunion service coordinators are providing case management for individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the state of California.

What is the impact of unionization on these nonprofit employees? Do they actually earn a more competitive wage than the nonunion social workers performing the same tasks? Studies indicate that it is most important that employees have a voice, or representation, in decision-making in their nonprofit organization. Is this accomplished by unionizing? Is unionization of these professional social workers beneficial in the areas of having a voice, or representation, in the decision-making process within the organization and is there a significant increase in their wages and benefits?

Pro-union literature distributed to nonprofit social service employees, “United for Quality Services, Campaign Bulletin” (February, 2003), promises that through advocacy and lobbying, the union will work to urge legislators to support “our Uniting Principles,” which include:

- Ensuring quality services and support for people with developmental disabilities;
- Expanding the choices available to consumers;
- Ensuring that workers have the freedom to choose a voice at work by forming a

union so they can work together to ensure the best possible quality services; and

- Securing adequate funding for the community system.

DeHoog describes social service organizations as providing a wide variety of services to address needs ranging from “transportation to family counseling.” As varied as these organizations are, they do have something in common in their status as nonprofit agencies (1996, p.15).

This study is broadly important to the nonprofit sector. Unionization and its effects on nonprofit social service employees, specifically service coordinators, is its main focus. Does unionization improve representation and communication with management and thereby improve employee morale? How are employee wage and benefits packages impacted? The responses to these questions have been analyzed in this study as indicators of whether unionization is beneficial to the nonprofit employee.

If there is a finding that unionization in fact does increase social service employees’ representation in the decision-making process within their organization, increase wage compensation and benefits, and improve communication with management, then it is logical to assume that unionization is a benefit to the nonprofit employee. If this were indicated, would management as well as nonprofit professional employees embrace unionization for their workplace?

There is something else to consider: What is the cost of unionization to the social service nonprofit organization and the individual employee? If there are findings that indicate that unionization of nonprofit social workers does not improve communications with management, does not significantly improve wage and benefits, and in fact has a negative affect on the morale of the nonprofit employee, then it would be logical to

conclude that unionization is not beneficial and in fact could be detrimental to the nonprofit employee.

CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review examines the literature concerning the growing evidence of nonprofit employees' interest in collective bargaining and union membership. The literature suggests that the impact of the changing sources of funding through government and the more recent method of Purchase of Service Contracts has influenced how nonprofit organizations are structured and even the clients they serve. The review will examine the way in which this funding change and accompanying regulations have affected the nonprofit service employees' work environment and simultaneously attracted the interest of unions. Finally, the impact of unionization on nonprofit organizations, and ultimately the employee, is considered.

Motivation for Unionization Among Nonprofit Employees

There is limited information on nonprofit organizations and their experience with unionization. It is generally understood that the motivations for nonprofit employees to unionize are similar to those of the for-profit sector: that is, equitable pay and benefits, improved working conditions, and job security.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the reason most frequently expressed by nonprofit employees as motivation to become unionized was a desire to be included in their organizations' decision-making process (Masaoka, Peters and Richardson, 2000). One reason for the lack of research into the effects of unionization on nonprofit employees is that the nonprofit sector was not permitted to organize and participate in collective bargaining prior to 1976, when Congress amended the National Labor Relations Act to include nonprofit institutions under federal labor law (Pynes, 1997).

Ruth McCambridge (2001) cited a study conducted by the researchers Richard

Freeman and Joel Rogers and reported in their book What Workers Want, which concluded, on the basis of a survey consisting of more than 2,400 telephone interviews, that “American workers want more of a say, influence, participation, voice — call it what you will — at the workplace than they now have.” Most employees believed that it was management that stood in the way of their representation and their input into organizational decision-making. The study found that this was true for all workers, not only those in the nonprofit sector: “workers long for a new institutional form that promotes cooperative and equal relations between workers and management in making workplace decisions” (p. 1).

Yet unionization and collective bargaining seemed to be out of step with the nonprofit organizations’ values and traditions of benevolence and self-denial when it came to making money. The values of a union seemed at odds with the dignified image that nonprofits promoted and with their apparent openness to communication and the sharing of ideas. Nonprofit managers and their boards have felt insulated from the threat of unionization (Hush 1969, Tambor 1973). Unions and nonprofit organizations were usually not seen as compatible. Nonprofit organizations were generally seen as enjoyable environments to work in, even if salaries were generally lower than in other private or public agencies. The thought was that nonprofit public-benefit organizations were able to respond to community needs and to offer desirable and fulfilling work to their employees (Pynes, 1997).

The dismantling of the human service network and the reduction of required professional standards, such as education and experience, for social service positions in the 1980s under the Reagan administration led to anxiety regarding job security and to a

need for improved salaries. Professionals became concerned with the right to a voice in establishing program policy, career development, influencing the quality of their work environment, professional autonomy, and affecting the standards and quality of client services. Unionization offered a vehicle to defend, influence and improve working conditions and protect professional autonomy (Pynes, 1997).

As the funding sources for nonprofit organizations evolved over the years from foundation grants and philanthropic individual donations increasingly to government contracting or “purchase of service” money, the regulations or requirements imposed by government had a direct impact on the way nonprofits conducted business. Frequently, this affected a nonprofit organization’s mission statements, the type of clients it served, and its staffing patterns and qualifications.

The standardization of professional tools, the increasing pressure toward greater productivity, and a lessening influence in policy-making decisions are cited as indications of a decline in the professional autonomy and status within social work. This industrialization of social work practice is reflected in the erosion of craft elements relating to professional judgment and skills and the emergence of repetitive and mechanistic work. (Tambor, 1988, pp.84-85)

Tambor (1988) maintained that unionization offered the social worker the opportunity to defend and improve working conditions through collective bargaining to address issues of salary, job security, caseload size, and input regarding job duties. Although there were no exact figures on the number of social workers who were union members the estimate was that of the approximately 250,000 social workers, between 22% and 33% of these individuals belonged to a union.

Besides negotiating job security and bread-and-butter issues, the social service union — along with labor organizations representing nurses and teachers — seeks to expand the scope of bargaining to include agency-level policy and decision-making processes.... The interest of social service unions in bargaining about an agency's mission and standard of service is attributable to the professional's concern with job satisfaction, the centrality of professional judgment, and identification with clients. (p. 85)

Jeavons has suggested that there may be a double standard in the nonprofit sector regarding standards and values between what management was trying to promote in improving conditions for their clients in the community and what they were willing to tolerate in the workplace for their own staff (1992).

According to the Urban Institute Project, staffing and managerial changes were implemented in response to the federal revenue losses of the 1980's (Salamon and Dewees, 2000). Salamon and Dewees also pointed out that with the reductions during the 1980s in federal spending and support for nonprofit organizations, budgetary adjustments became necessary. Examples of containing costs in reaction to loss of financial revenue support were eliminating programs, expanding caseload sizes, leaving staff positions unfilled, extending waiting-list time for clients, restricting eligibility standards, and cutting administrative support staff. All of these measures increased the pressures on nonprofit professional staff and affected their morale.

Tambor (1973) believed that now that social workers' professional colleagues in teaching had become involved in unions, they no longer saw unionization as unprofessional. Instead they recognized its benefits. His position was that

unionization will continue to influence the collective bargaining process in the private agencies. New communication links have developed, budgeting and planning procedures are being modified, and as organizing gains are realized--including the employee representation of the employees of the funding agencies--it may be necessary for all parties concerned to create new forms of bargaining. The alternative is for agencies to reduce the number of staff positions to meet contract demands for higher salaries and benefits but this way they would lose future funding for those vacancies. (p.46)

Nonprofit professional employees have always enjoyed a certain status. The nonprofit organization has had a history of autonomy and an ability to respond to changing community needs. Organizations were generally small and employees often enjoyed the benefits of being involved in all aspects of management and planning of agency policies and goals, as well as their own caseloads. But declining revenues increased pressure in the work environment, creating a workplace with less personal and organizational autonomy and lower standards of client services.

These changes have had a negative impact on employee morale and job satisfaction. As unionization has become more acceptable in the nonprofit arena, more nonprofit professionals are likely to explore unionization in order to gain representation within their organizations.

How Government Funding of Nonprofit

Organizations Affects the Nonprofit Employee

Fabricant & Burghardt (1992) reported that although government had a history of subsidizing voluntary agencies, this had been somewhat limited before 1960. "During the

period of 1960-1980, there was a rapid expansion of the dimensions and magnitude of this relationship at all levels of government” (p.118). This led to an increased dependence on government on the part of many nonprofit organizations. The two primary forms of government assistance to nonprofit organizations are the purchase of service contracts and Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement funds for eligible clients.

Government subsidy of nonprofit voluntary agencies has changed the way these organizations are structured. Government has imposed upon them its own expectations with regard to documentation and cost containment, with noticeable effects on the overall operations of an organization (Fabricant 1992, Tambor 1988).

Kramer (1994) indicated that the dependency of nonprofit organizations on government financing did have an impact on how services were delivered. The fee-for-service model, or contracting out for services, had led to nonprofit organizations’ replacing government in providing services instead of offering an alternative to the government model. The changes had also had their effects on the ways in which many nonprofits provided services. The issues facing organizations that served as vendors for community service were grouped into four clusters. These included

various time constraints such as “annualization” and multiple conflicting deadlines that contribute to uncertainty and other job pressures; underfunding and cash flow delays; reporting, red tape, paperwork, and other accountability requirements; and undesired restrictions on staffing, client eligibility, and service methods. (p.41)

The most frequent problem was underfunding. Some of the various ways that nonprofit organizations deal with this were exerting political pressure for equitable rates of pay,

resource development through fund raising, grants, fees, increasing caseload size, and taking on volunteers or low-paid, part-time staff, or hiring consultants, rather than employing full-time staff.

There has been much concern over the effects on nonprofits' service delivery system of the Purchase of Service Contract (POSC) that is in place for organizations receiving government funding. The result has often been loss of flexibility in the way that services were delivered, selecting and accepting only the top referrals for service, loss of autonomy, and lack of coordination of services (Dehoog 1984, Kramer 1994).

There are those who claim that the controlling influence of governmental funding has resulted in widespread distortion of the mission and role of nonprofit organizations, that such organizations have lost much of their autonomy and distinctiveness in becoming public agents who deliver social services according to government specifications on client eligibility, staffing and service patterns. In addition, POSC is also held responsible for the nonprofit organizations' dependency, co-optation, and dilution of advocacy because of governmental control over their programs. These trends are believed to be reinforced and result in "devoluntarization" by the increased formulization, bureaucratization, and professionalization required of a public agent. (Kramer, 1994, p.47)

Kramer also observed that POSC had its positive side, namely "the recognition that it has enabled many nonprofit organizations to maintain, expand and diversify their regular services in ways that would not have been possible without governmental funding" (p.47).

Kramer (1994) also cited Gronbjerg's findings on the challenges faced by social

service providers that relied on governmental funding: “Nonprofit organizations face a daunting complexity in coping with the uncertainties, competition and scarcity stemming from their fiscal dependency on multiple funding sources” (p. 42).

As changes in funding have occurred, specifically in accepting government money, new regulations and requirements have necessitated changes in policy and structure that have negatively affected the work environment of nonprofit employees. In the past, nonprofit organizations offered an alternative, a choice to both clients and employees. In accepting government funding, while it is arguable that, without its benefits, nonprofits would have lacked the opportunity to expand and diversify their services as they have done, they have nevertheless lost that distinction.

With the changes in standards, increased work pressures, loss of autonomy, and the generally lower wages paid to nonprofit employees, it has not been surprising that many no longer see the benefit in working for a nonprofit. Many professional employees have seen unions as the vehicle to increased representation within the organization and professional autonomy, as well as improved work environments, wages and benefits packages, and job security. With other professional groups such as nurses and teachers joining unions, some in the nonprofit world, too, have come to feel that unions are increasingly acceptable for professionals.

Unions’ Interest in Nonprofit Organizations

“The Internal Revenue Service has defined no fewer than twenty-five types of agencies as eligible for tax-exempt or not-for-profit status” (Fabricant & Burghardt, 1992, p. 116). These agencies greatly vary in the services that they provide to the community.

All these agencies, however, share a common structural drive that prohibits economic profit and encourages the delivery of a service. Organizations in the voluntary sector also enjoy some degree of independence from the state or public sector. They are not directly responsible to any branch of government. Instead, (much like the corporation), they are self-contained structures. (p.117)

Salamon (1999) indicated that in 1995 the nonprofit sector included approximately 1.6 million organizations. Nonprofit organizations employed nearly 11 million people, and 6.3 million full-time equivalent volunteers. This represented 7% of this country's workforce and 11% of all paid and volunteer workers.

As previously noted, the nonprofit sector has experienced tremendous growth, and is now commonly referred to as the third sector, along with government and private. Pynes (1997) predicted that the number of nonprofit employees who were members of a labor union would increase because of the similarities in the public and nonprofit systems, the prevalence of government use of nonprofits to provide community services, the decline of union membership in the private sector, and the steady growth in the third sector. It was a logical development for unions to look to nonprofit organizations for new membership.

Disparity in Wages and Benefits Between For-Profit and Nonprofit Organizations

Deweese and Salomon (2002) reported for the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies on wages of nonprofit, government, and for-profit employees in seven states. In each of the seven, nonprofit workers consistently earned less than employees in the government and for-profit sectors. In the state of California, the average weekly wage

for the nonprofit employee was \$611.00, for a government employee \$790.00, and for a for-profit employee \$762.00 weekly.

Pynes (1997) cited U.S. Department of Labor statistics for 1995 indicating that union members earned more than their nonunion counterparts. In 1995, union members earned more than \$5,241 more in benefits than nonunion employees, even though pay rates rose only 2.8%. On average, professionals belonging to unions made \$51 more per week than their nonunion counterparts.

For boards and administrators of many volunteer agencies, union interest among staff represents a serious threat to existing relationships Also collective bargaining challenges the tradition in the voluntary agency that defined altruistic roles and service expectations for social workers and denied their self-interest as wage earners. Some staff, especially older workers assume without question that the volunteer dollar is insufficient to provide equitable salaries and benefits.

(Tambor, 1973, p.46)

The underfunding of not-for-profit grants (and restriction of reimbursables) has affected salary scales. In general, not-for-profit workers are expected to engage in the same type of service work and produce the same results as their public-sector counterparts for less money. The only countervailing force for salary parity between voluntary and government agencies is the capacity of the not-for-profit to raise funds privately. Ultimately, the underfunding of agency work represents a deemphasis of governmental responsibility for the provision of various services.

(Fabricant & Burghardt, 1992 p.121)

Fabricant and Burghardt reported on a major study by Kramer and Grossman in

1987 that “discovered an average dollar loss of 15% to 20% to voluntary agencies on most government contracts and grants” (1992, p.121).

The Effects of Unionization on Nonprofit Organizations

The move toward trade unionism and collective bargaining by the professional employees of voluntary agencies in the social welfare field poses some harsh questions: Will unions destroy, or save the voluntary agency? Will the contributors to united community funds support hard bargaining by professional employees or will they withdraw their support in protest? Who is management in the collective bargaining process of a legally autonomous agency supported by a united fund? (Hush, 1969 p.210)

Historically, human service professionals, especially social workers, have been typically sympathetic to the need for labor unions and their support for workers’ rights (Hush, 1969).

Hush presented several problems in relating the needs of hourly paid workers of for-profit industry to the professional salaried employee of a nonprofit organization. Often the management and workers of these nonprofits had similar credentials and ultimately the same goals for the community and their clients. However, in a collective bargaining situation, there are two camps, labor and management. This type of structure by nature sets up an oppositional relationship. “By legal definition, certain elements of an organization are “management” and certain other elements are “labor.” Furthermore, the adversary relationship is not restricted to the bargaining table at a given season of the year. In varying degrees it pervades the whole organization” (1969, p.210).

Once professionals join together as a group for the purpose of collective

bargaining, professional responsibilities become part of the negotiating package. Group consensus for the collective is what is acted upon, sometimes at the expense of client welfare and professional ethics. If professionals find that their clients' and their own interests are not being protected, they may then be in conflict with both the administration and the union.

In light of the implications on practice and ethics, mental health counselors considering joining a union should look long and hard at the effect union membership will have on their professional identity. It is all too easy to focus on the benefits of collectivization to the neglect of the more negative possibilities Mental health employees would be wise to note the loss of prestige and professional stature experienced by teachers and nurses once they began to unionize. (Piazza & Frost, 1993, p.195)

Once a union is employed, an outside force is inserted into the organization, one that also has its own interests to consider. Further, unions' experience tends to be in dealing with the interests of hourly paid employees in a profit-making industry. Hush (1969) stated that if staff thought "that a collective bargaining relationship is simply an orderly business-like way of employing someone to get more salary for them and that all other attitudes, relationships, and conditions of employment remain unchanged, they are naïve". Once a union was in place, both management and staff were held to a legal contract and any special compensation for merit or performance recognition was out of the question. Once a contract was signed, there could be no adjustments made by staff, executive director, or board of directors. The competitive act of collective bargaining could set up a polarization of the two sides (p.211).

With many of the incentives of working for a nonprofit organization disappearing, employees in the voluntary sector are looking to unions to ensure representation within the organization, job security, and competitive wage and benefit packages. Yet, as already noticed, there is concern that nonprofit professional employees are naïve in their expectations of what unionization and collective bargaining can do for them. There is also a question of compatibility between unions and the nonprofit professional employee, and of its ultimate impact on the employee and the clients they serve. The union is an outside force with its own interests to protect. The literature suggests that it is important to consider the impact of unionization and collective bargaining on the long-term relationship between professional employees and management.

Summary and Implications Of the Literature

The literature addressing the current changes in the nonprofit sector in regard to government funding and the effects on professional autonomy, workplace environment, employee morale, and wage and benefits suggests that nonprofit employees will continue to explore the benefits of collective bargaining and unionization.

The literature suggests that additional information is needed regarding the ability of unions to satisfy the complex needs of professional employees and their clients when it comes to collective bargaining. There is a question of compatibility between unions and the nonprofit sector. Some feel that unions are becoming more acceptable while others feel that unionization compromises the professional stature and ethics of the nonprofit professional employee and damages morale and the overall relationship with management. Additional information is necessary to determine the overall benefit or damage to the nonprofit professional who participates in collective bargaining and

unionization.

Research Questions

- How do nonprofit professionals view unionization in terms of its benefits for nonprofit employees?
- Do collective bargaining and union membership affect the relationship between the nonprofit professional and management?
- Is there a relationship between unionization and wage levels for the nonprofit professional?
- Do collective bargaining and unionization affect benefits packages?
- How do collective bargaining and unionization affect communication between management and the nonprofit professional?
- Is there a relationship between unionization, professional autonomy, and independence in performing job tasks?
- Do collective bargaining and unionization provide the nonprofit professional representation or “a voice” in the organization?
- Does unionization affect job security?

Importance of the Study

There has been relatively little research on the effects of unionization on the nonprofit professional social service employee. As the numbers of union members in the government and for-profit arena decrease, unions look to the growing third sector for increasing their membership. The impact of unionization on these workers is yet unclear. This study will add to the information currently available regarding the advantages and disadvantages of collective bargaining and unionization for nonprofit workers.

It is important to investigate what the reality is for the nonprofit professional in terms of benefits, morale and relationship with management. With additional information, employees and their managers can make informed decisions regarding unionization that can impact their own welfare, their workplace environment, and the welfare of their clients.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

There are twenty-one Regional Centers in the state of California, of which fourteen are unionized and seven are not. The study canvassed nonprofit employees working in three of them, including nine office sites, comparing those working in two unionized centers with those working in one nonunion center. The instrument for gathering information was a questionnaire that relied upon self-reporting by respondents. The first contact was made by sending numbered questionnaires and a cover/consent letter to the Director of Case Management or designee at each of the three nonprofits that had agreed to participate. The questionnaires were then distributed by those officers to the individual Service Coordinators through their personal mailbox.

Subjects/Respondents

The subjects in this study were nonprofit service coordinators employed by the California Regional Centers that provide case management services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Each nonprofit worker in this category provided case management services to individuals, ranging in number from forty to sixty, with developmental disabilities. Three regional centers, which included nine office sites, participated in the study. Two were union centers and one was nonunion. Three hundred and fifty surveys were mailed. There were one hundred seventy-two responses. All responses were used. All respondents were nonprofit professionals and represented one large state.

Operationalization of Concepts/Variables

The study examined the effects of unionization on nonprofit employees in the social services. Unionization was the independent variable considered. This variable is a

dichotomy. The two independent groups studied were those service coordinators who worked in a union office and those who did not. Questions 1–3 pertained to whether the office was unionized, whether they belonged to the union, and whether they thought the union was beneficial.

There were three dependent variables that were compared separately to the independent variables of unionization. Questions 4–6 dealt with length of time in the position, job security, and opportunity for advancement, and can be linked to morale. Questions 9–11 dealt with independence, effectiveness, and interest in job duties, and were also indicators of morale. Questions 7, 14, and 17–19 all referred to wages and benefits and could impact morale. The relationship between senior management and staff was analyzed through questions 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 20. These could also be indications of morale.

Procedures

Each service coordinator was requested to complete a three-page questionnaire containing twenty questions. They were asked to answer each of the questions and return the questionnaire in the addressed, stamped envelope provided. Any individual that chose not to participate simply did not return the questionnaire. The questions were grouped into three categories pertaining to wages and benefits, job satisfaction, and relationship with senior management.

The first contact was of a questionnaire and cover letter sent to the Director of Case Management or designee via U.S. mail, to be distributed to individuals through their personal mailboxes. A postcard followed one week later thanking them for their participation and/or offering contact information if they would like another survey sent.

Three hundred and fifty questionnaires were mailed. There were one hundred seventy-two responses. All returned data were considered.

Treatment of Data

The independent variable considered was unionization, which is a dichotomy. The study examined three dependent variables: income, morale, and relationship with senior staff. Income represented interval data because it deals with numbers. Morale and relationship with senior staff were all coded on a 1–5 scale and are thus treated as ordinal data. The study looked at the association between whether or not a workplace was unionized and each of the dependent variables separately. A significance level of .05 was used in order to determine the statistical significance of the responses: a significance level lower than .05 would indicate a significant difference and that unionization did make a difference in the respects covered by the survey, and we would reject the null hypothesis. A Gamma measured strength of association.

The dependent variable of income is interval. The inferential statistics used in the study to compare income between the two independent sample groups was a two-sample T-Test for difference of means. This gave the mean income for each of the sample groups and permitted inferences to be made for the general population based on our sample. The descriptive statistics method used was Cross-Classification Tabulation, which showed whether there was a correlation between the independent variable of union or nonunion and income levels in the two samples. The Pearson Chi-Square was employed to test the null hypothesis and determine a significant difference at the .05 level. A significant difference allowed us to reject the null hypothesis and infer results to the general population of nonprofit employees. The Gamma showed the strength of the association at

0–1.

The dependent variable of morale was rated on a scale of 1–5. This variable was ordinal, because ranges are used, and it was not exact. Because the independent variable was a dichotomy, and the dependent variable was ordinal data, the descriptive statistic used was a Cross-Classification Tabulation, which allowed a comparison and showed whether there was a correlation in the two samples between the independent variable of union or nonunion and the dependent variable of morale. The Pearson Chi-Square was used to test the null hypothesis and determine a significance difference at the .05 level. Where there was a significant difference, this allowed us to reject the null hypothesis and to infer or predict results in the general population of nonprofit employees. The Gamma value showed the strength of the association at 0–1.

The dependent variable of relationship of social workers with senior management staff was rated on a scale of 1–5. The descriptive statistic used with this ordinal data was Cross-Classification Tabulation in order to show a correlation between the dichotomous independent variable of union or nonunion and the relationship of social workers with their senior management staff. The inferential statistic used was the Pearson Chi Square. The chi-square tested the null hypothesis and showed the strength of the correlation and allowed us to generalize to the general public. A .05 significance level was used. The Gamma showed the strength of the correlation.

Limitations of the Study

The results of the study demonstrated a causal link between unionization and the three variables of wage, morale, and relationship with senior management for the nonprofit employee. The null hypothesis was rejected. Unionization does have an

impact on morale, wages, and relationship between the nonprofit employee and senior management. But there are limitations to consider. All data gathered were self-reported by the individual nonprofit social workers and represented only one type of nonprofit organization, which may limit the possibility of generalizing to other types of nonprofit organizations. The personalities of individual managers and employees may have been a factor. Additionally the study was conducted in only one state, and of the twenty-one regional centers in California, three were represented, which included nine offices sites.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

There is very little information on how, if at all unionization affects the nonprofit professional social worker. This study looks at the impact of unionization on a group of service coordinator/social workers in the offices of the Regional Center system in the state of California. The two independent sample groups studied were social workers that worked in a union office and social workers that worked in a nonunion office. Three regional centers of the twenty-one-center system agreed to participate. This consisted of nine office sites, each center having three sites. Two of the centers (six offices) responding were union and one (three offices) was nonunion. The study examined three dependent variables that may or may not have been affected by unionization, namely morale, relationship with senior management, and income. Three hundred and fifty questionnaires were mailed to social workers in the three offices, eliciting replies from one hundred seventy-two respondents. Of those who responded, one hundred twenty were from union offices and forty-two were from a nonunion office. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions.

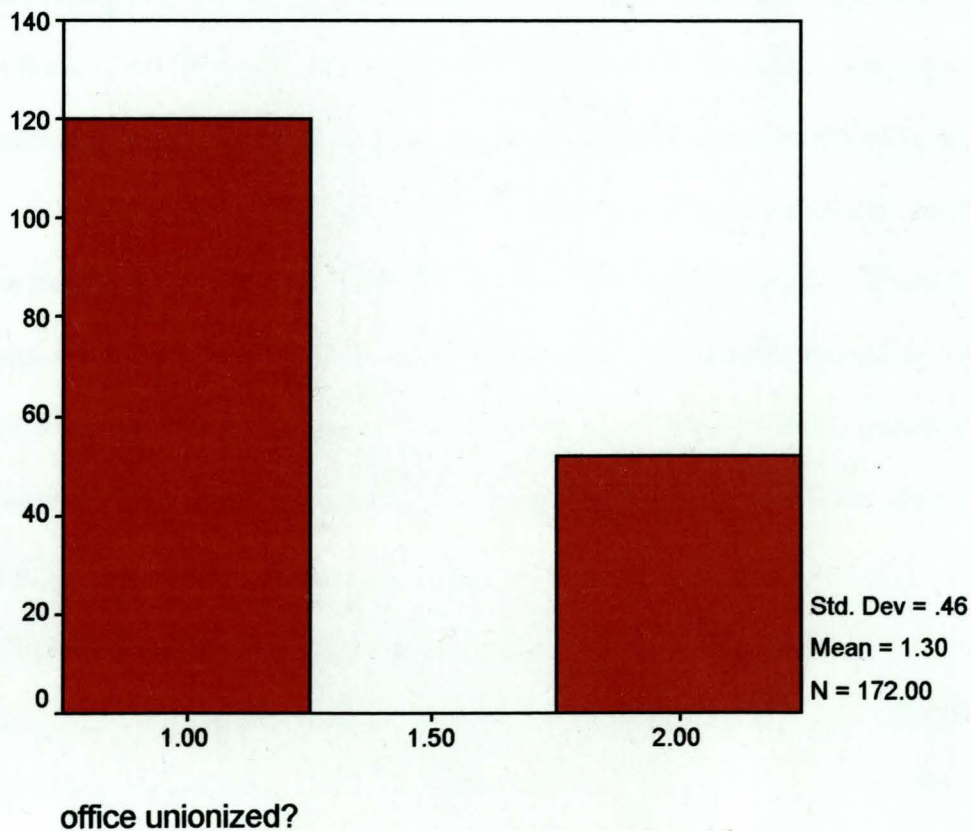
Because of the cell size, the data was collapsed and recoded, combining the lower and higher choices of the scale to indicate the two extreme responses for each question, that is, least satisfied/most satisfied. The statistical method used was a Cross-classification tabulation, Pearson Chi-square, and a gamma to show the strength of the correlation.

Several questions were designed to indicate whether the office the individual service coordinator worked in was unionized or not, and if so, did the individual belong to the union. Three Regional Centers (nine offices) participated in the study, of which

study, of which two were unionized and one not. The following bar graph indicates the number of respondents working in union and nonunion offices.

Bar Graph1

Respondents in Union/Nonunion Offices



Morale

Many questions were designed to indicate morale. The hypothesis was that unionization did affect the morale of the nonprofit service coordinator. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on how beneficial unions were to the nonprofit social worker. The data indicated that there was a correlation between the union/nonunion office and whether the worker held the opinion that unions were more or less beneficial.

When the office was unionized, 69.2% of the social workers indicated that unionization was more beneficial to nonprofit workers; when the office was nonunion, 32.6% of the workers believed that unionization was beneficial for nonprofit workers.

The data indicates a significant correlation of less than the .05 level between union/nonunion and the opinion that unions were more or less beneficial to nonprofit workers. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. There was a correlation between unionization and the opinion that unions are beneficial to the nonprofit social worker.

Table 1 presents the percentage of those who held the opinion that unionization was beneficial and those who held the opinion that unionization was not beneficial to nonprofit social workers in the regional center system. The table shows clearly that there was a correlation between whether or not the nonprofit social worker worked in a unionized office and the opinion they held regarding the benefits of being unionized.

Table1

Nonprofit Social Workers' Opinion of Unions Beneficial/Not Beneficial

	<u>Union</u>	<u>Nonunion</u>
Union Not Beneficial	30.8%	67.4%
<u>Union Beneficial</u>	<u>69.2%</u>	<u>32.6%</u>
	N=120	N=43
<u>P=.000</u>	<u>Gamma=-.646</u>	

The length of time in the position, job security, and opportunity for advancement are variables that may be linked to morale. The study showed no significant correlation between these variables and unionization. Effectiveness in performing job tasks and interest in job duties are also indicators of morale. The study showed no significant

correlation between unionization and effectiveness in carrying out job tasks.

Additionally, there was no correlation between how interesting the job duties were and unionization.

The degree of independence enjoyed by the nonprofit social worker in performing job duties may affect morale; the loss of autonomy is one of the motivations adduced for the nonprofit professional seeking unionization.

The standardization of professional tools, the increasing pressure toward greater productivity, and a lessening influence in policy-making decisions are cited as indications of a decline in the professional autonomy and status within social work. This industrialization of social work practice is reflected in the erosion of craft elements relating to professional judgment and skills and the emergence of repetitive and mechanistic work. (Tambor, 1988, pp.84-85)

Table 2 displays the percentage of respondents who experienced a high degree of independence and the percentage of those who experienced low independence in performing their job duties, relative to whether or not their workplace was unionized.

Table 2

Unionization and Independence of Nonprofit Social Workers

	Union	Nonunion
Low Independence	51.7%	34.6%
High Independence	48.3%	65.4%
	N=120	N=52
P=.046	Gamma=.338	

The data show there was a negative correlation between amount of independence

and unionization. The Cross-tabulation shows that for the union office 51.7% of nonprofit social workers indicated that they had low independence, whereas only 34.6% of nonunion office nonprofit social workers indicated low independence. In the union office 48.3% of workers indicated high independence, whereas 65.4% in nonunion offices indicated high independence. The Pearson Chi-Square shows significance of less than .05 level and the null hypothesis is rejected. The gamma, at .338 shows a clear negative relationship between unionization and independence in performing job tasks. Unionization did affect the level of independence for the nonprofit social worker, but affected it adversely.

It follows that if nonprofit professionals are searching for increased independence and autonomy, these data indicated that unionization was not a vehicle to that goal.

Relationship With Management

The relationship of nonprofit social workers with senior management can be linked to morale. Overall effectiveness of communication with senior management shows a significant positive correlation with unionization. The cross-tab shows that 29.4% of nonunion office social workers indicated that communication with senior management was not effective. Of union office social workers 12.7% responded that communication with management was not effective. Data showed 87.3% of union office social workers indicated that communication was effective between senior management and nonprofit social workers and 70.6% of nonunion social workers indicated that communication with senior management was effective. The Chi-Square showed a significant correlation between unionization and effective communication between nonprofit social workers and senior management of less than .05 level and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Unionization did impact communication with management.

Overall relationship with senior management was rated. The cross-tabulation data showed that overall 84.2% of respondents chose the most positive response regarding relationship with management, but union office respondents gave the most positive response on 88.3% of occasions while only 74.5% of positive respondents represented nonunion offices. The Chi-Square showed a significant correlation of less than .05 level and the null hypothesis was rejected. The Gamma, at .443, showed that the relationship between unionization and positive relationship with administration is strong.

Unionization does make a difference in the nonprofit social worker's perception of an overall positive relationship with administration.

Table 3 presents the respondents who selected the most positive/effective and the least positive/least effective answers to the questions regarding evaluation of relationship and communication with management.

Table 3

Unionization, Communication, Relationship with Management

	Union	Nonunion	Total
Most Positive Relationship	88.3%	74.5%	84.2%
Least Positive Relationship	11.7%	25.5%	15.8%
	N=120	N=51	N=171
<u>P=.037 Gamma=.443</u>			
Effective Communication	87.3%	70.6%	82.2%
Not Effective Communication	12.7%	29.4%	17.8%
	N=118	N=51	N=169
<u>P=.015 Gamma=-.482</u>			

Table 4 presents the percentage of all respondents who selected the most positive and least positive answers to each of the questions regarding communication and relationship with management. The cross tabulation indicated that, overall, 84.2% of respondents chose the most favorable response regarding a positive relationship with management, whether the office was union or nonunion.

Table 4

Overall Respondents

Communication and Relationship with Management

	<u>Least Positive</u>	<u>Most Positive</u>
Communication/Management <u>N=169</u>	17.8%	82.2%
Relationship/Management <u>N=171</u>	15.8	84.2%

The most frequently expressed desire by nonprofit workers in a study by Masaoka, Peters, and Richardson (1999) was the desire to be included in their organizations' decision-making processes and the most frequently cited reason for seeking unionization. Similarly, Richard Freeman and Joel Rogers reported in their book, What Workers Want (1999), that what American workers wanted, regardless of the nonprofit status, was to participate in the decision-making process in their workplace.

The association of the nonprofit professional with unionism seems to conflict with the dignity of image that nonprofit organizations like to project of themselves and of their claims to openness to communication and to the sharing of ideas. In the past, nonprofit

managers have felt insulated from the threat of unionization (Hush 1969, Tambor 1973). Nonprofit organizations have generally liked to be seen as enjoyable places to work; unions and the nonprofit have generally been seen as incompatible (Pynes, 1997).

The changes to the human service network in the 1980s have led to concerns for job security and a need for improved salaries. Professionals have become increasingly concerned over their ability to play a part in establishing program policy, in determining career development and maintaining professional autonomy, and in influencing the quality of their work environment and the standards and quality of client services. Unionization has offered a vehicle to defend, influence, and improve work conditions and protect professional autonomy (Pynes, 1997). "The standardization of professional tools, increasing pressure toward greater productivity, and a lessening influence in policy-making decisions are sited as indications of a decline in the professional autonomy and status within social work" (Tambor, 1988, pp. 84-85). Tambor maintained that unionization offered the social worker the opportunity to defend and improve working conditions through collective bargaining to improve and address issues of caseload size, salary, and input regarding job duties.

The data supported the notion of the importance of communication with management and supported the correlation of unionization and effective communication between the nonprofit professional and management. The data also supported the correlation between unionization and a good relationship with senior administration.

Table 5 presents the percentage of all respondents, regardless of union status, who selected the least satisfied and the most satisfied answers to each of the questions involving evaluation. For example, 82.2% of all respondents said that in their opinion

communication with management was effective.

Table 5

Respondents' Evaluation of Communication, Independence and Job Security

	<u>Least Satisfied</u>	<u>Most Satisfied</u>
<u>Communication</u> <u>N=169</u>	17.6%	82.2%
<u>Independence</u> <u>N=172</u>	46.5%	53.5%
<u>Job Security</u> <u>N=172</u>	45.3%	54.7%

Income/Salary

It was possible that the level of education attained by the social worker may have been linked to choosing unionization, but the data showed no correlation between educational degree and unionization for the nonprofit social worker. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of the benefit package for the nonprofit social worker. The benefit package can be seen as part of income. Again, the data showed no correlation between unionization and benefit package for nonprofit social workers. Table 6 presents the percentage of respondents who considered themselves least satisfied and most satisfied in response to each of the following questions regarding evaluation of wages and benefits. For example, 94.8% of all respondents, regardless of union status, rated their benefit package as excellent.

Table 6

Respondents' Evaluation of Wage and Benefit

	<u>Least Satisfied</u>	<u>Most Satisfied</u>
<u>Paid Equitably</u> <u>N=170</u>	37.6%	62.4%
<u>Benefits Package</u> <u>N=172</u>	5.2%	94.8%

Salaries were compared in the union and nonunion offices to determine whether there was a correlation between income and unionization. The data indicated that nonprofit social workers working in a union office had a significantly higher salary than those working in a nonunion office. The Chi-square showed a significance of less than the .05 level, therefore we can conclude that unionization did make a difference in the income of nonprofit social workers in the Regional Center offices. The null hypothesis was rejected. Salary level is an indication of morale in the workplace. Of the respondents that placed themselves in the higher range of \$46,000–\$55,000, 66.7% worked in the union office, compared with 30.8% from the nonunion offices. A two-sample t-Test to compare equality of means was carried out. The t-Test was significant at the .05 level. Equal variances were not assumed. There was a clear relationship between unionization and salary for the nonprofit social worker. The mean for salary in the union office was 46683.333 and the mean for the nonunion office is 42211.538. The mean difference was 4471.7949.

Table 7 presents the percentage of respondents who selected income range of \$25,000-\$45,000 and \$46,000-\$55,000. The independent variable of unionization clearly makes a difference in wage/salary. The means for union/nonunion are shown.

Table 7

Salary Range and Mean for Nonprofit Social Workers

<u>Salary</u>	<u>Union</u>	<u>Nonunion</u>
\$25,000-\$45,000	33.3%	69.2%
\$46,000-\$55,000	66.7%	30.8%
	N=120	N=52
<hr/>		
<u>Mean</u>	46683.333	42211.538

P=.000 Gamma=-.636

“The underfunding of not-for-profit grants (and restriction of reimbursables) has affected salary scales. In general, not-for-profit workers are expected to engage in the same type of service work and produce the same results as their public-sector counterparts for less money” (Fabricant et al., 1992, p.121). “On average, professionals belonging to a union make more that \$51 more per week than their nonunion counterparts” (Pynes, 1997).

The opinion that one is paid equitably for the work performed may be an indicator of how well one is paid; it may also be an indicator of morale. The opinions of nonprofit social workers in union and nonunion offices were compared. In union offices 30.3% of respondents indicated they were not paid equitably compared with 54.9% in nonunion offices. In union offices 69.7% of respondents indicated they were paid equitably

compared with 45.1% in union offices.

Table 8 presents the union and nonunion percentages of respondents least and most satisfied that their pay was equitable, given the work performed and their office status. Additionally the table presents the total respondents who selected most satisfied and least satisfied with their pay regardless of whether they worked in a union or nonunion office. The data indicated that, regardless of union status, 62.4% of nonprofit social workers held the opinion that they were paid equitably for the work that they did.

Table 8

Equitable Pay for Job Duties

	Union	Nonunion	Total
Inequitable Pay	30.3%	54.9%	37.6%
Equitable Pay	69.7%	45.1%	62.4%
	N=119	N=51	N=170
P=.003	Gamma=-.475		

A Cross tab, the Pearson Chi Square, and a Gamma were performed. The data indicated a significant difference; that is, less than the .05 level. There was a correlation between union/nonunion and the respondents' opinions of how equitable their pay was. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND REVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Unionization has historically been reserved for hourly paid workers. Unions offered workers a vehicle to negotiate in pursuit of safer working conditions, better benefits and wages, and greater job security. Unionization gave workers a voice in company negotiations.

With the more recent infusion of government dollars, the nonprofit, or third sector has grown dramatically and has experienced many changes, now representing some seven percent of the country's workforce. At the same time there has been a decline in union membership in the private sector. It is logical that unions would look to nonprofit organizations for new membership. With the greater involvement in unionism of teachers, professional colleagues of the social workers, there has been a decline in the view that sees unions as unprofessional (Tambor, 1973).

The nonprofit organization has had a history of autonomy and of flexibility in responding to the changing needs of the community. Often organizations were small and employees frequently had the benefit of being involved in all aspects of management and planning. but government subsidization of nonprofits has changed the way they are organized. Government has imposed regulations aimed at cost containment and standards of documentation that affect the way these organizations do business (Fabricant, 1992, Tambor, 1988).

There are those who claim that the controlling influence of governmental funding has resulted in widespread distortion of the mission and role of the nonprofit organizations, that such organizations have lost much of their autonomy and distinctiveness in becoming public agents who deliver social services according to

government specifications on client eligibility, staffing and service patterns. Additionally, government money has enabled some nonprofit organizations to expand and diversify their services (Kramer 1994, p.47).

Deweese and Salomon (2000) reported that nonprofit workers consistently earn less than employees in the government and for-profit sector. In the state of California at the time of their study, the average weekly income for the nonprofit employee was \$611.00, for a government employee \$790.00 and for a for-profit employee \$762.00 weekly.

With the changes in standards, increased work pressures, loss of autonomy, and the generally lower wages paid to nonprofit employees, it is not surprising that many do not see the benefit of working for a nonprofit organization. Given the disadvantages, it is no surprise that nonprofit professionals increasingly see unions as a way to gain representation in the organization, improve their work environment, increase wage and benefit packages, and preserve professional autonomy and job security.

Thirty-five years ago, Hush (1969) set out several problems for professional employees arising out of union concerns with the needs of hourly paid workers. In nonprofit organizations, he noted, management and employees often had the same credentials and shared the same goals for the organization. But in a collective bargaining situation there are two distinct and opposed camps, management and labor. His view was that unionization set up an adversarial relationship between the nonprofit employee and management. Once a union was employed, there was an outside force with its own interests to consider.

But in fact there is very little information on how unionization affects the

nonprofit professional. Some feel that unions are becoming more acceptable, while others feel that unionism compromises professional stature and damages both general morale and the relationship of employees with management. Additional information is necessary to explore the ability of unions to meet the complex needs of professional employees in collective bargaining. It is important to determine the overall benefit or damage to the nonprofit professional who participates in unionization.

The objective of this study was to explore the possibility of a correlation between the union status and the variables of morale, relationship with management, and salary and benefits. If nonprofit employees seek unionization to improve their pay, work environment, and relationship with management, it is important to determine whether collective bargaining is in fact likely to accomplish that goal.

Findings

The study focused on morale, relationship with management, and income in relation to unionization. Overall the study found that unionization does have an impact on each of these areas for nonprofit social workers in the regional center system in the state of California.

The data showed a significant correlation between unionization and the opinion that unions were beneficial to nonprofit employees. More than two thirds of those social workers that worked in a union office were of the opinion that unions were beneficial and approximately the same proportion in nonunion offices did not think they were beneficial. This could mean that nonprofit social workers holding the opinion that unions are beneficial seek employment in a union office and those not of that opinion choose to work in nonunion offices. The correlation could also be interpreted to mean that those

nonprofit social workers with experience working in a union office are better informed as to the benefits that unionization offers.

Independence in performing job tasks, or professional autonomy in the workplace, may affect morale. The loss of professional autonomy is seen as a reason for nonprofit professionals to seek unionization but the study showed a significant negative correlation between unionization and independence in performing job tasks. While the literature indicates that unionization is sought by nonprofit professionals to ensure independence and professional autonomy, the data in fact showed that in the union office only 48.3% of social workers rated their independence as high, whereas 65.4% of nonunion office social workers chose the rating of high independence in performing their job tasks. This result indicates that unionization does not increase independence for the nonprofit social worker and possibly fosters a management/employee structure that limits the amount of independence for the nonprofit employee in carrying out job tasks.

On the other hand, the study examined effective communication with management as a measure of morale and found that 82.2% of respondents chose the most positive response in rating the effectiveness of their communication with management, which indicating that, in general, communication between nonprofit social workers and management in the regional center system was good. But there was an even stronger correlation between unionization and effective communication with management. Unions do improve communication of employees with management. Respondents in union offices chose the most positive response 87.3% of the time where effective communication with management was concerned, whereas 70.6% of nonunion nonprofit social workers made that choice of response. While the literature indicates that

unionization may set up an adversarial relationship between nonprofit professional employees and management, this study indicated that the opposite was true. The data indicated that unionization promotes more effective communication between the nonprofit employee and management.

Relationship with senior management was also rated. Overall, 84.2% of respondents chose the most favorable response for positive relationship with management, indicating a generally positive relationship between management and the nonprofit social service employee. But the data showed an even stronger correlation between unionization and a positive relationship between employee and management. The finding may be attributable to the possibility that unionization offers both a structure for communication and clear expectations that it will occur, and therefore promotes positive interactions in the workplace.

Having a positive relationship and effective communication, “a voice” with management, can have an important impact on the morale of the nonprofit social worker. The literature suggests that, regardless of union status, this is what workers want. The data indicated that, regardless of union status, ratings for overall relationship and communication with management are positive for the nonprofit professional in this setting. The study showed that unionization does have a significant impact and may improve relationships and communication with management and therefore does have a positive impact on morale. The literature suggests that nonprofit employees seek unionization to have a voice within their organization, and this study confirms that unionization helps facilitate that goal.

The length of time in a position, job security, opportunity for advancement, and

effectiveness in carrying out job tasks were evaluated as a measure of morale. The data showed no significant correlation between these variables and unionization. Further, there was no correlation of unionization with employees' evaluation of their job duties as interesting or with their level of educational.

The benefits package can be considered part of compensation, and respondents were asked to evaluate its quality. Of all respondents 94.8% rated themselves as most satisfied. This was an overwhelmingly positive response to the benefit package available to nonprofit social workers in the regional center system. The data showed no correlation between benefit package and unionization, indicating that both the union and nonunion nonprofit employee were satisfied with their benefits.

Salary, as an indicator of morale, was compared in the union and nonunion offices. The data indicated that there was a significant correlation between unionization and salary earned by the nonprofit social worker. The significance was less than the .05 level and therefore we may conclude that unionization does make a real difference to the salary level of the nonprofit social worker. The income of 66.7% of unionized social worker respondents was in the higher range of \$46,000-\$55,000, compared with only 30.8% of nonunion social workers. On average, professionals belonging to a union made more than \$51 per week above the rate of the nonunion professional (Pynes, 1997). If wage is a concern for the nonprofit professional, unionization clearly has a positive impact.

The opinion that one is paid equitably for the work one does is an indicator of morale. In union offices 69.7% of the respondents chose the most favorable answer regarding equitable pay. The data shows a significance less than the .05 level. There is a

significant correlation between unionization and the perception that employees were paid equitably for work performed. The data indicated that unions made a difference both to the wage level of the nonprofit social workers and to those employees' perception that they were paid equitably, which is also linked to morale.

Implications for the Literature

There is a legitimate question of compatibility between unionism and collective bargaining, on the one hand, and the nonprofit sector, on the other. There is literature that suggests that the effect on the nonprofit employee who engages in unionization in the areas of morale and relationship with management is detrimental. On the contrary, however, the results of this study indicate a positive correlation between unionization and employee morale and communication and relationship with management.

Clearly, the results of this study indicate that belonging to a union benefits the nonprofit employee. They can be generalized to the effect that unionization is beneficial in relation to morale and salary and with regard to relationship with management to those nonprofit professionals in the Regional Center System in the state of California. The literature suggests that union organizing could have a negative affect on professional stature, morale, client services, and relationship with management. Additional information is needed to determine whether unions can satisfy the complex interests of nonprofit employees and ascertain the impact on the needs of their clients.

Practical Implications

In theory, the results of this study should encourage nonprofit employees to explore union organization for themselves. In fact what it should do is encourage additional exploration by managers and nonprofit professionals of the overall benefits as

well as the possible damaging affects of unionization to the nonprofit employee and the organization, and its impact on clients and community services.

An important action for all nonprofit professionals and managers is to establish open communication in addressing the question of unions and collective bargaining.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined a group of nonprofit employees working for one type of nonprofit agency in the state of California and the effects of unionization. The study could be expanded to include other nonprofit professional organizations, and in other states.

→ The results and the related literature on nonprofit professional social service employees and unionization poses some questions for further research as follows:

- How does collective bargaining and union membership affect professional ethics for the nonprofit professional employee?
- Is there a relationship between government funding of the nonprofit organization and nonprofit employees seeking unionization?
- What are the implications of collective bargaining and union membership of nonprofit professionals on client welfare and community services?
- Is there a relationship between nonprofit employees involvement, or lack of it, in policy-making decisions within the organization and their readiness to unionize?
- Is there a loss of prestige and professional stature for the nonprofit professional employee who chooses union membership?

The answers to these questions are important in determining the impact of unionization for the nonprofit employee and the third sector.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Nonprofit Client Service Coordinator/Social Worker Questionnaire

Please circle only one answer.

1. Is your office unionized?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

2. If yes, do you belong to this union?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

3. In your opinion, how beneficial are unions for nonprofit workers?

Not beneficial

Extremely beneficial

1 2 3 4 5

4. How long have you been employed in your current position?

- 1. 0-3 years
- 2. 4-6 years
- 3. 7-10 years
- 4. 11 years and over

5. Please rate job security in your position with the Regional Center?

Not secure at all

Extremely secure

1 2 3 4 5

6. What are the chances for your career advancement at the Regional Center?

- 1. Excellent
- 2. Very good
- 3. Good
- 4. Fair
- 5. Poor

7. What is your highest degree completed?

1. High School Diploma
2. Bachelors Degree
3. Masters Degree
4. Doctoral Degree
5. Other, please list _____

8. Overall, please rate your relationship with senior administration.

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

9. How interesting do you find your job duties?

Not interesting at all

Extremely interesting

1 2 3 4 5

10. Please rate how much independence you have in performing your job duties.

No independence at all

a great deal of independence

1 2 3 4 5

11. Under the present conditions, overall how do you feel about your ability to be effective in carrying out your job tasks?

1. As effective as possible
2. Very effective
3. Effective
4. Somewhat effective
5. Not effective

12. Please rate overall the senior administration's job performance.

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good

4. Fair
5. Poor

13. Please rate the overall effectiveness of communication between you and the senior administration.

Not effective communication

Extremely effective communication

1 2 3 4 5

14. Please rate your benefit package, including insurance, retirement and vacation/sick time.

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

15. In general, is senior administration appreciative of the work you do?

Not appreciative

Extremely appreciative

1 2 3 4 5

16. In your opinion, how much recognition do you get from the Regional Center's senior administration for your work efforts?

No recognition

A great deal of recognition

1 2 3 4 5

17. What is your current salary range?

1. Under \$25,000
2. \$25,000-\$35,000
3. \$36,000-\$45,000
4. \$46,000-\$50,000
5. \$50,000 above

18. If you have received an increase in pay in the past year, how much was it?

1. None at all
2. 1%-2%
3. 3%-4%
4. 5%
5. Over 5%

19. In your opinion, are you paid equitably for the work that you do?

Not equitably at all

Very equitably

1

2

3

4

5

20. In your opinion, are your views given consideration by senior administration when workplace decisions are made?

No consideration

A great deal of consideration

1

2

3

4

5

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Your information is greatly appreciated!

If you would like a copy of the questionnaire results please write your name and address on the back flap of the enclosed envelope.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

May 16, 2003

Dear Service Coordinator/Social Worker,

My name is Nancy Dow Moody and I am a graduate student in the College of Professional Studies, Nonprofit Administration at the University of San Francisco. As part of my thesis research, I am conducting a survey of nonprofit Service Workers within the CA Regional Center system. I want to know how Service Coordinator/Social Workers who are unionized and those who are not unionized perceive their work environment.

I am asking for your participation in this research study because of your position as a Service Coordinator/Social Worker for a nonprofit Regional Center in the state of California. Of the 21 centers, 14 are unionized and 7 are not. It is important to get your input so that we can understand how to create a better work environment for you as a nonprofit worker. The results of this study may indicate if unionization is or is not beneficial to Service Coordinator/Social Workers in this system.

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached survey and return it in the enclosed pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope as soon as you are able.

You are not being asked to put your name on the survey. Individual results will not be shared with anyone. Individual identities and responses will not be used in publications/reports resulting from this study.

There is no cost to you or direct benefit for taking part in this study and there will be no reimbursement for your time/participation. If you have questions regarding the research/study, you may contact me at 415-381-1458. If you have additional questions you may contact IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which deals with the protections of volunteers in research projects. You may also reach them through voicemail by calling 415-422-6091, e-mail them at IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2131 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to not answer any question that you do not want to. If you would like a copy of the results, put your return address on the back envelope flap. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Nancy Dow Moody
Graduate Student
University of San Francisco

APPENDIX C: POSTCARD

June 27, 2003

Dear Service Coordinator/Social Worker,

Last week I mailed a questionnaire to you requesting information regarding unionization and your position with the regional center.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, thank you! If not, please do so today. I am especially grateful for your participation because it is only through your help that we may find statistical research that indicates the effects of unionization on the nonprofit employees like you.

If you did not receive your questionnaire, or if it has been misplaced, please call me at 415-381-1458 or e-mail me at njdmoody@aol.com and I will mail you another.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy Dow Moody
Graduate Student, University of San Francisco