

Does “Fighting Back” Make a Difference? The Case of the Canadian Auto Workers Union

JONATHAN EATON and ANIL VERMA
University of Toronto, ONT Canada M5S 2E8

Union revitalization requires mutually reinforcing efforts in organizing, political action, and collective bargaining. We examine the experience of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). In addition to membership growth, three bargaining outcomes are analyzed: (1) wage gains; (2) the ability to resist a trend towards longer duration collective agreements; and, (3) success in negotiating same-sex spousal recognition. In each of these areas the CAW has articulated a policy and then made gains in both absolute and relative terms. The CAW’s renewal strategy links these bargaining goals with social activism and membership growth through mergers and new organizing.

“Fighting Back Makes a Difference”—CAW slogan

I. Introduction

Globalization and free trade, technological change, deregulation, privatization, and growing diversity in the workforce, have created tremendous challenges for the labor movement worldwide. In high-wage economies such as Canada, stable, full-time employment in traditional union sectors has eroded, often replaced by growth in precarious, nonstandard employment in sectors that have historically been beyond the reach of collective bargaining (Reshef, 1990). Management has become increasingly aggressive in using an array of tactics to thwart union organizing (Bentham, 2002) and displace unions with sophisticated human resource management strategies (Kochan et al., 1994). As a result, the power of unions to gain “more” at the bargaining table has diminished (Masters, 1997). Across the industrialized world, unions are seeking new strategies to revitalize in the face of these trends (Verma et al., 2002; Turner et al., 2001).

There is a growing consensus that unions must adapt and innovate in order to remain relevant in this changing environment (Kumar and Murray, 2002). As “strategic actors” (Kochan et al., 1994) in our industrial relations system, unions interact with other parties, anticipate employer and government actions, and attempt to influence outcomes; their strategic choices make a difference in determining their fate (Masters, 2004; Yates, 2000). We present evidence from the experience of Canada’s largest

private sector union, the Canadian Auto Workers,¹ to illustrate a particular style of union response to the restructuring of industrial relations.

The CAW's case is particularly interesting for both researchers and policymakers because at a time when most unions—particularly industrial unions—have been struggling to maintain their size and influence, the CAW more than doubled its membership, growing from approximately 120,000 members in 1985 to over 260,000 today. Since becoming an independent Canadian union in 1985, the CAW has expanded into new sectors, including healthcare, education, gaming, retail, railways, fishing, mining, airlines, hotels and restaurants, brewing, and transportation. With a presence in every province and territory, the CAW has achieved a unique national status. CAW president Buzz Hargrove is easily Canada's best-known labor leader. Judged simply by size and profile, the CAW—with its rapid growth during a period of adversity for Canadian unions—must be considered a success story, and thus stands out as a case worth investigating in assessing the effectiveness of union revitalization strategies.

The CAW has sought to retain a “culture of resistance,” that has positioned it as the leading exponent of renewed militancy within the Canadian labor movement (Wells, 1997). Following Kelly's (1998) classification, the CAW has clearly positioned itself as a “militant” union: It advances ambitious bargaining demands while rejecting concessions; it places a strong reliance on mobilization of union membership; it relies on collective bargaining to advance its agenda, in contrast to experimenting with non-bargaining institutions with employers; it does not shy away from the threat or use of industrial action; and it embraces an ideology of conflicting interests. Drawn largely from policy documents, speeches, and directly observed outcomes, we identify two key aspects of CAW militancy. First, in bargaining the CAW rejects “partnerships” with employers and related initiatives such as wage or workrule concessions, teamwork, profit- or gain-sharing, and long-term collective agreements. Instead, the CAW pursues an aggressive bargaining strategy focusing on wage gains and work ownership. Second, the CAW consciously pushes a broader social agenda in bargaining, signaling both to its own constituency and to nonunion workers that the CAW is a leading edge, progressive union engaged in larger issues. The CAW's strategic goal appears to be to stand out among private sector Canadian unions as a union that is tough in bargaining and actively involved in broader social causes.

The research and policy question of interest centers around the possible effect of such a stance on key outcomes. We use a unique Canadian dataset to examine the CAW's success in meeting selected objectives in bargaining given the union's stated objectives and policy. Although this analysis alone does not prove causality between achievements in collective bargaining and membership growth, our findings of the union's ability to achieve certain goals in bargaining throws new light on union strategic behavior within the context of increased competition and globalization. We find that the CAW has consistently obtained better wage settlements than its peers in certain industries. But obtaining better wages alone does not exemplify union success in the current context. The CAW has likely traded off higher wages against other possible gains. Our analysis extends beyond wages to two other outcomes, contract duration

and same-sex benefits, whose monetary impact on the employer is much smaller compared to wages. Relative gains made by the CAW in these two areas further corroborate other evidence on CAW's adopted strategy and help us better understand factors that may have contributed to membership growth since the early 1990s.

Conceptual Framework. Unions make strategic choices that affect their effectiveness in organizing, bargaining, and political action (Masters, 2004; Clark, 2000). The interaction of environmental pressures and institutional responses determines the outcomes for union members. Kochan et al. (1994) divide strategic decision making by industrial relations organizations into three tiers: (1) a top tier of strategic decision making, (2) a middle or functional tier of collective bargaining, and (3) a bottom- or workplace-level tier where policies are played out and affect individual workers daily. From the union perspective, the three tiers of strategic decision making can be summarized as in Table 1. Union responses within this strategic choice framework will depend on sources of power within and external to the union. Sources of power are, in turn, related to the union's structure. Effective unions must be strong at all levels of decision making.

This conceptual framework emphasizes that, despite all of the constraints imposed by the current environment, unions still have choices. Katz et al. (2003) suggest that to achieve revitalization, unions must adopt an aggressive triangular agenda focusing on organizing, politics, and collective bargaining. Union activities in any one of these spheres often interact with, and complement activities in, another sphere.² For example, card-check agreements negotiated through collective bargaining may be vital to future organizing success. As Katz (2001: 349) states: "To be successful, union revitalization will have to link activities across organizing, political, and collective bargaining spheres. And in the process of forging these linkages, the labor movement will have to find ways to address the often differing needs of high-wage and low-wage workers and simultaneously find ways to overcome the power advantage management is gaining from increased globalization."

Table 1

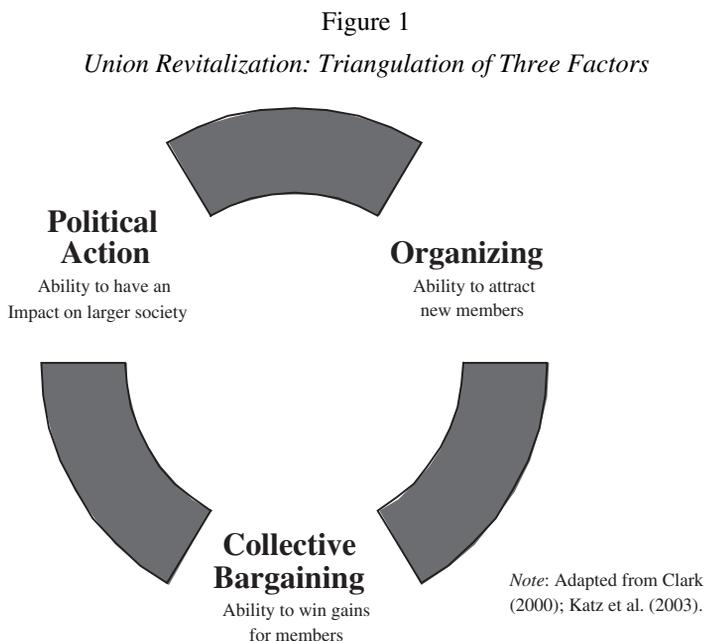
Three Levels of Union Activity

Level	Union Activity
Long-Term Strategy and Policy-Making	Political Strategies Representation Strategies Organizing Strategies
Collective Bargaining	Collective Bargaining Strategies
Workplace Organization Relationships	Contract Administration Worker Participation Job Design and Work Organization

Note: Adapted from Kochan, Katz, and McKersie (1994).

As Figure 1 suggests, the interrelation among these factors can create a “virtuous” circle. Unions that are able to maintain a strong membership base will be in a more powerful position to win gains at the bargaining table and influence public policy. The ability to make these gains will in turn play an important part in efforts to attract new members (Clark, 2000: 9). The converse is also true, as most North American unions have found: Declining membership, bargaining power, and political influence tend to reinforce each other in a “vicious” circle from which escape is difficult. There is, however, no substantial evidence documenting union strategic initiatives in these interacting areas. As Katz et al. (2003) note, most research on union revitalization has focused almost exclusively on union organizing.

We contribute to this literature by examining the effectiveness of the CAW in achieving certain bargaining goals and link these goals to the union’s renewal strategy. We investigate three bargaining outcomes: wages, contract duration, and same-sex benefit coverage. For each of these contract terms we compare the CAW with other unions in sectors where multiple unions are present. Wages are typically seen as the most important outcome for workers in bargaining and provide a variable that can be readily measured using the extensive dataset described herein. Contract duration is a non-monetary issue on which the CAW has adopted a specific policy, i.e., of resisting employer demands for contracts longer than 36 months, a policy that the union explicitly relates to its self-styled “culture of resistance.” It thus provides an opportunity to examine the union’s success in achieving its bargaining strategy with respect to an



easily measurable outcome. Extending benefits to the same-sex partners of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers has been a rapidly emerging legal, human rights, and political issue beginning in the 1990s. Unlike wages, this is not a major cost issue nor is it a membership-driven issue. Only a small minority of members benefit from such provisions. Bargaining same-sex benefits presents an occasion for the union to demonstrate its progressive and leadership credentials. Although this list is not comprehensive, taken together, they provide evidence on union bargaining objectives and effectiveness on issues that are closely tied to the CAW's strategy for continued growth.³

II. *Data and Methods*

Our data come from two main sources. Data on union profile, membership, and mergers were obtained from the union head office. Additional materials were also obtained from CAW bargaining convention reports, the CAW website (<www.caw.ca>), and through discussions with key union informants. The second source was a collective agreements database maintained by the Workplace Information Directorate of Human Resources Development Canada's Labour Program. This database contains 13,007 collective agreements between 1978 and 2002, covering bargaining units of 200 or more employees.⁴ Most agreements are multi-year agreements. For our purposes, we excluded all agreements before 1984, the year the CAW broke from the United Auto Workers (UAW). The sample was then further restricted to four industry sectors where the CAW represents workers: manufacturing, transportation, primary industries, and business and personal services. The CAW negotiated a total of 453 contracts during 1984–2002 in these four industries. All other unions negotiated a total of 3,312 agreements over the same period. In our analysis, we also compare CAW outcomes with all others for the years 1992–2002, a period during which the CAW acquired most of its non-auto bargaining units. During this period, the CAW negotiated 316 agreements in the four industries while all other unions accounted for 1,644 agreements. This sample is used in our analysis of wages and contract duration.

We calculate the wage increase for a given contract as the percentage wage increase in the first year of the contract. Thus, the later years in a multi-year contract are ignored. This approach is used widely in statistical reporting of contractual wage increases. The principal reason for emphasizing the first-year wage increase of the contract is that it is known with greater certainty than increases in second or later years. Contingent pay, such as obtained through cost-of-living allowances, becomes less predictable further into the future. It can be argued also that, politically, the first year wage increase is the most visible and saleable part of a multi-year contract. The database calculates wage increases under different assumptions of inflation. We have used a 2 percent inflation assumption throughout our calculations for reasons of consistency and its closeness to the average inflation across the country during our study period. Wherever applicable, wage increases are calculated by accounting for COLA increases and lump-sum payments.

The data for same-sex partner benefits come from a file on non-wage items from the same collective agreements. Since these benefits have been negotiated quite

recently, we examine the database for the most recent year (2002) only. Three types of same-sex benefits are found in the database: short-term leave, long-term leave, and group insurance. We count the occurrence of any one of the three types of benefits as indicating progress on this front.⁵

III. CAW Membership Growth: Ideologically Based Unionism

The creation of the CAW in 1985 was precipitated by strategic differences between the Canadian region of the UAW and its U.S. parent union over the bargaining of concessions with the major automakers (Yates, 1995). The UAW international's response to the global restructuring of the automobile industry "was to work hand-in-hand with the corporations, to re-open contracts to provide wage and rule concessions, and to allow the corporations wide latitude in pursuing technological, organizational, and geographical restructuring" (Perusek, 1988: 277). To preserve jobs, the UAW leadership in the United States became a partner in management's restructuring strategy, and agreed to management demands for lump-sum payments and profit sharing in lieu of regular wage increases, and for a transformation of union management relations from adversarial to jointness with management (Kumar and Holmes, 1993). The UAW in Canada, led by Canadian Director Bob White, refused to follow this approach. Because of the uneven development of the industry in the two countries, the Canadian UAW was in a position to bargain much harder than their U.S. counterparts. As a result, in part, of the low value of the Canadian dollar, by 1984 Canadian auto labor costs had fallen to 69 percent of American costs. Auto-industry job losses in Canada had been less severe. The Canadians also had a bargaining advantage because a more popular mix of products was produced in the Canadian plants (Holmes and Rusonik, 1991; Perusek, 1988; Hyclak and Kolchin, 1988).

But it was the *choice* of a different strategic direction by the Canadian section of the union, in the context of these environmental factors, which led to divergence in collective bargaining outcomes and approaches (Kumar and Holmes, 1993; Gindin, 1989). A resolution was adopted by the UAW Canada Council in 1981 to oppose concession bargaining and to mount an anti-concessions campaign. The Canadian section of the UAW successfully resisted concessions at Chrysler in 1980 and 1982, and at General Motors and Ford in 1982 (Holmes and Rusonik, 1991). The final straw came in 1984 bargaining with General Motors when the Canadians refused to follow the concessionary pattern set in the United States. After a 13-day strike, the Canadian UAW obtained a settlement that retained the cost of living agreement (COLA) and annual wage improvements and rejected the lump-sum payments and profit sharing accepted in the United States (Hyclak and Kolchin, 1988).

To win the strike, Bob White had to combat not just GM, but also his own leadership in the United States. As a result of this strike, a change in the relationship became inevitable (Gindin, 1995). As Holmes and Rusonik (1991: 45) note: "Even before the strike was settled in their favor, the leadership of the Canadian section of the UAW vowed that they would never again be forced into a situation where their bargaining objectives would be jeopardized by the interference of the International lead-

ership.” When the UAW’s executive board rejected a proposal from White for greater autonomy, the union’s Canadian Council voted almost unanimously in December 1984 to create a new Canadian union.

Former CAW Research Director Sam Gindin (1995: 203) suggests that ideology, rather than nationalism, was at the root of the UAW-CAW split: “This conflict between the union and its parent organization reflected national differences, but more important, it stemmed from divergent strategies and notions of the role of unions.” While the UAW had accepted the new industrial relations paradigm characterized by contingent compensation schemes (profit sharing and lump-sum payments), local variations in work rules and partnership rhetoric, the CAW insisted on maintaining the continuation of the old “Fordist” pattern of annual increases, COLA, and uniform wage and work rules—and an adversarial relationship with management (Holmes and Rusonik, 1991). The birth of the CAW in 1985 created a union committed to the model of social unionism and firmly opposed to the concessionary partnership approach of the UAW. This stand has provided the ideological touchstone for the union in subsequent years and remains the defining feature of the CAW culture (Frost, 2000).

Following the split with the UAW in 1985, the new CAW embarked on a campaign for growth based on organizing and mergers with smaller unions. This strategy was necessary for the union to establish itself as a force on a national level and as a defensive response to shrinking core membership in the auto industry (Yates, 1995, 1998). The union organized over 1,200 new bargaining units between 1985 and 2002, bringing 108,000 new members into the CAW (Table 2).⁶ The pace at which new members were added through new organizing as well as through mergers was not only high to begin with but it increased steadily over this period. As Table 2 shows, in the five-year period, 1988–92, an average of 4,019 new members were added per annum. Over the next five-year period, 1993–97, the average addition per year increased to 5,307. In the most recent five-year period, 1998–2002, this pace doubled to 10,377 new members per annum. Over a 17-year period between 1985 till 2002, the CAW added an average of 6,471 new members per annum making it one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing unions in North America.

Table 2
CAW Organizing 1985–2002

Five-Year Period	Average # of Workers Organized/Year	Total Number of Units
1988–1992	4,019	206
1993–1997	5,307	33
1998–2002*	10,377	567
1985–2002*	6,471	1,228

Note: *2002 data for nine months.

Source: CAW Organizing Department.

Over the same period, 28 unions representing 136,000 workers merged with the CAW. While mergers are often seen as the primary source of the CAW's growth, both mergers and organizing clearly have had an impact, with organizing accounting for about 44 percent of the union's new members. Note that some of the sectors brought in through mergers, such as the east coast fishery, suffered catastrophic job losses in subsequent years.

In 1997 the union adopted an organizing policy that aimed to increase the annual organizing budget to about \$6 million a year by diverting a portion of dues money from the strike fund (Mertl, 1997). The recruitment of new members through organizing has not, however, kept pace with the membership losses suffered by the union as a result of layoffs and plant closures, and the union has lost ground in its core sectors. The CAW has not managed to organize the Japanese "transplants" operating in Ontario, Toyota and Honda, which now account for about 15 percent of Canadian employment in the auto industry. Only CAMI, the General Motors-Suzuki joint venture near Ingersoll, Ontario, is represented by the CAW, as a result of the union's leverage with GM (Wells, 1997; Yates, 1998). In the independent auto parts sector, union density remains just 45 percent (CAW, 2002).⁷

Mergers, says CAW president Buzz Hargrove, are the "wave of the future," enabling unions to resist pressure for concessions from employers (Canadian Press, 1992). The CAW has, in turn, been an attractive merger partner because of its high profile, reputation for militant bargaining and effective servicing, independence from the Americans, and willingness to create new, semi-autonomous locals or divisions to accommodate absorbed unions (Chaison, 1996; Yates, 1998; Gindin, 1995).

Mergers have allowed the CAW to become the leading union in some non-auto sectors. The 1994 merger of the 33,000-member Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers (CBRT&GW) was described as a "major coup" for the CAW, not only making it Canada's largest private sector union but also establishing a dominant presence in the railroads (Chaison, 1996; Van Alphen, 1994). This merger, combined with the CAW's earlier merger with the Carmen (representing workers who maintain the interior of trains) and the CAW's victory in a government-mandated vote to combine unions in the rail industry, left the CAW as by far the largest rail union. It has 14,000 members in this sector that is 80 percent unionized (Gindin, 1995; CAW, 2002). Similarly, a series of mergers and government-mandated consolidations in the airline sector between 1985 and 1990 resulted in the CAW representing passenger and ticket agents at all major airlines. In 2002 the CAW represented 14,000 members in this sector, which is 70 percent unionized (CAW *Contact*, 1990; Canadian Press, 1990; CAW, 2002). In other sectors the CAW has gained membership without establishing such clout. For example, the merger with Retail, Wholesale Canada (RWC) brought in 23,000 members at 411 workplaces, including grocery and department stores, bakeries, warehouses, dairies, hotels, and restaurants (Lu, 1999). But there are numerous unions present in this sector, and the overall unionization rate is less than 10 percent (CAW, 2002).

Ideology, rather than sector, has been the link between the CAW and its merger partners. A CAW report notes that these mergers have raised the idea of “a new kind of unionism.” The industrial model of union organizing that emerged in the 1930s was sector based, bringing all workers in particular sectors, such as auto and steel, into one union. The new model touted by the CAW is “ideologically-based,” bringing unions with a common philosophy under one umbrella (CAW, 1999: 10). For example, several former members of the nationalist, left-leaning Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU) opted to join the CAW in the early 1990s, including the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW) and the Canadian Chemical and Textile Union (CCTU), followed by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of Canada (UE) and the Canadian Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

“What ties them all together is they all fiercely believe in an independent democratic union movement and all believe in local autonomy,” says former CAIMAW leader Jess Succamore: “They are all the antithesis of business unionism” (Moses, 1994: 3). Similarly, Dick Gingerich, national secretary-treasurer of the CBRT&GW—a union with a less militant history than CAIMAW—explains that the CAW “provided a model other workers looked to, to lead the way in collective agreements and in progressive unions in being able to meet members’ needs. And we didn’t think of talking to anyone but Canadian unions” (Moses, 1994: 3).

The merger strategy has led the CAW into conflict with the rest of the labor movement. In particular, the 1987 merger with the Fishermen, Food, and Allied Workers (FFAW) of Newfoundland led to a lengthy dispute with the FFAW’s former parent union, the United Food and Commercial Workers (Deverell, 1987; Chaison, 1996; Gindin, 1995; Hargrove, 2002); the absorption of the last local of the Canadian Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers in 1993 created tensions with the rival United Steelworkers of America (Papp, 1993a, 1993b);⁸ and the attempt in 2000 to merge with eight locals of the Service Employees International Union led to a political firestorm and the temporary suspension of the CAW from the Canadian Labour Congress.⁹

Far from impeding the CAW’s progress, however, each of these battles appears to have revitalized the union as it continues to expand and diversify. Chaison (2001: 254) notes that “although researchers seldom recognize it, and it would be difficult to measure fully, mergers can energize unions.” Mergers can also contribute to union revival by providing a “safe haven” for smaller unions suffering from severe and irreversible membership losses (Chaison, 2004: 106). He adds, however, that mergers “cannot be a substitute for rethinking strategies for organizing, bargaining, and political action” (Chaison, 2001: 254). The problems faced in integrating new units into the union may in fact detract from the union’s focus on these strategies.

Along with growth, the CAW’s mergers and new organizing have created a more diverse organization. In 1984 the Canadian UAW had 120,000 members, 70 percent of whom worked in the auto sector. About seven out of eight of the members were male. The three communities of Windsor, Toronto, and Oshawa accounted for half of the

membership (UAW, 1984). By 2002 the composition of the union had changed dramatically. Today autoworkers, while still the largest and most influential component of the union, are a minority.¹⁰ There are now more than 70,000 women in the CAW, representing 27 percent of the total membership. The bulk (70 percent) of CAW members continue to be based in Ontario, but the union represents members in all parts of Canada, and is the largest private sector union in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the federal jurisdiction (CAW, 2002). While other Canadian unions such as the United Steelworkers (USWA) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) have also diversified considerably through mergers, the CAW—described as “the undisputed king of mergers” (Chaison, 1996: 65)—has taken this growth model to its furthest extent.

Effective unions must be sufficiently centralized to counter the power of corporations and state institutions that workers confront, yet decentralized enough to permit local initiative and mobilization (Gindin, 1995: 276). This balance is particularly important as unions such as the CAW expand rapidly into numerous diverse sectors. The CAW’s complex structure aims to achieve this goal. The union is led by a 13-member National Executive Board. The heart of the CAW’s organizational structure, however, is the 700-member Canadian Council which meets two or three times a year, elects its own executive, and collects its own (modest) revenue (Gindin, 1989). At each Council meeting the CAW president gives a detailed report and written recommendations that delegates debate and vote on. Yates (1995: 78) notes that while the Canadian Council has provided opportunities for rank-and-file input and debate on union strategy and policy, it has also allowed the CAW’s leadership to maintain tight control over union affairs and to construct a “unity of purpose” within the union.

There is also a Quebec Council, and sectoral councils in sectors such as autoparts, aerospace, rail, mining, hospitality, and, most recently, healthcare. Sectoral and company councils reinforce unity by bringing together stronger and weaker units to share experiences and union “best practice” (Graefe and Roberts, 1999) and provide structures to accommodate new sectors brought into the union. Accompanying these structures, the union has developed sectoral analyses and development strategies aimed at addressing job security as a union,¹¹ rather than leaving it to the enterprise level where concessions bargaining is more likely to result (Graefe and Roberts, 1999: 15).

The CAW holds a constitutional convention every three years to elect the top leadership and set union policies and also holds triennial national collective bargaining and political action conventions that are timed immediately prior to bargaining with the “Big Three” automakers. A joint meeting of the Canadian and Quebec Councils is held every three years. Thus, every year there is a major national conference of CAW members, in addition to the more frequent Council meetings. This provides opportunities for issues to be raised and debated, but it also provides the leadership a constant channel of communication to transmit union strategic decisions to local leadership, activists, and members (Frost, 2000). As Hyclak and Kolchin (1988: 269) note: “The structure of the CAW emphasizes a close connection to the rank and file, a situation leading to

a tightly knit organization that is responsive to the members but which also can, through industrious staff people, control the membership.”

Mergers have transformed the CAW into a microcosm of the entire Canadian economy, rather than just of the heavy manufacturing sector (Gindin, 1995). The CAW is no longer simply an auto union, and bargaining outcomes for the majority of CAW members are no longer driven solely by the auto sector. The challenge for the union in this situation is to find a way to articulate a common set of demands for this diverse membership, so that union members will actively support union policies and campaigns (Yates, 1995; Frost, 2000). Critical to the success of building new members' commitment to the union has been the CAW's ability to translate these demands into concrete gains at the bargaining table. The CAW is generally viewed as a leader in meeting its bargaining goals (Kumar and Holmes, 1993) that are crucial to building support for militancy and belief in collective action among the increasingly diverse membership (Yates, 1998). As a recent CAW conference report notes: “Our formula for progress is the combination of clearly identified bargaining priorities, a determination to make gains and a commitment to generalize improvements from one workplace to other workplaces and other sectors” (CAW, 2003a: 19). The presence of the CAW in diverse sectors also means that comparisons with other unions are reasonable and possible. The next three sections examine more systematically the extent to which the CAW has extended its bargaining success from its core industries to the new sectors it represents. These bargaining objectives are, in turn, linked to the CAW's strategy for union renewal.

IV. *Bargaining Outcomes*

Wages. The bargaining philosophy of the CAW has continued to emphasize the futility of wage concessions as a route to job security in industries faced with technological change and foreign competition.¹² The “no concessions” strategy was unanimously reaffirmed at a CAW Council meeting in December 2001, just as layoffs were threatened in a number of key sectors within the union. “You can't buy jobs,” says CAW president Buzz Hargrove, adding that if one bargaining unit caves into pressure for wage cuts or other concessions, others will face similar demands (Galt, 2001: B6).

Although the CAW has set out principled positions in rejecting concessions and variable pay, the union has also shown repeatedly that its ideology is tempered by pragmatism. While the union under Bob White held the line on standard wage and benefit packages, for example, it selectively allowed individual plants greater flexibility in negotiating work rules and job classifications and struck compromises on compulsory overtime and team working (Rinehart, 1998). The CAW vision is centered on a philosophy of a “working relationship” with employers within an adversarial framework (Kumar and Holmes, 1993). Even though the CAW eschews formalized statements of “partnership” or “cooperation” (Frost, 2000), there is considerable informal employee participation and communications on productivity and quality issues within CAW plants (Kumar and Holmes, 1993). Kumar (1993: 11) describes the union's approach to work organization as a “pragmatic orientation . . . within the framework of

ideological resistance to any form of ‘concessions and structures that undermine union solidarity.’” Wells (1997: 169) argues that while the CAW may be “the epitome of militant unionism in Canada,” at the local level it has increasingly adopted a cooperative approach to managerial flexibility initiatives. “When push comes to shove,” Wells suggests, the CAW like other unions will do what it has to do in order to save jobs.

On the issue of wages the CAW insists that “fighting back delivers.” The report from the 2002 CAW collective bargaining and political action conference makes the case that the CAW’s militancy has translated into concrete wage gains for its members. The report states:

If a worker earned \$10 an hour in 1985 and got a wage increase every year equal to the average CAW wage settlement, today she would be earning \$17.53 an hour. But, if instead the worker got an annual wage increase equal to the average of what other unions negotiated in the private sector, that worker would be earning \$15.48 an hour—which is just enough to keep up with inflation. Highlighting our successful bargaining record is not about placing ourselves above one union or another, that is not the point. Rather, it is about making the link between a union philosophy that emphasizes fighting back (in good times and bad), and making real gains at the bargaining table (CAW, 2002: 46).

The problem with the information used to support this statement is that it lumps together the auto industry, which was booming through much of the 1990s, with many other sectors which were not. CAW president Buzz Hargrove states that, “We set the standard in the auto sector of our union because we are bargaining with the wealthiest corporations in the world. We set a standard and we take pieces of that and put it into every collective agreement in our union” (Hargrove, 2002: 16).

In order to assess the validity of this statement, CAW contract terms were compared with those of other unions using the collective agreements database described above. For this comparison we consider contracts negotiated during 1992–2002 only. During this period, the CAW represented bargaining units found primarily in four industry sectors. This examination of average wage increases indicates that the CAW has achieved some success in transferring its gains in the auto industry into other sectors. As Table 3 indicates, CAW contracts signed between 1992 and 2002 in the transportation, business and personal services, and manufacturing sectors, resulted in average wage increases significantly above the increases negotiated by the remaining unions in these sectors. In the primary industries sector there appear to be too few contracts to discern a significant effect. The CAW does not lag significantly in any sector.

Next, we compared the average wage increases after controlling for other attributes of the bargaining units. Table 4 presents the result of an OLS (ordinary least-squares) regression on percent wage increases, with controls for region, sector, contract duration, presence of a COLA clause, and number of employees covered by the contract. A dummy variable representing CAW-negotiated contracts is also included. Results indicate that CAW had a significant, positive impact on percent wage increases compared to other unions. After controlling for all the other factors, the CAW added a little more than one-half of a percentage point to the wage increase for all contracts

Table 3
Average Wage Increases: 1992–2002

	CAW Contracts		All Other Contracts		Significance of the Difference (CAW-Others)
	Number of Contracts	Average Annual Increase %	Number of Contracts	Average Annual Increase %	
All sectors	333	2.81	4,660	1.56	$p \leq .01$
Manufacturing	202	3.09	638	1.62	$p \leq .01$
Transportation	85	1.86	540	1.46	$p \leq .05$
Primary	7	2.07	94	1.87	N.S.
Business and Personal Services	22	5.18	372	1.62	$p \leq .05$

Note: Average annual wage increase weighted by the number of employees in the bargaining unit.

Source: Computed by the authors using the Collective Agreements Database, Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC-Labour.

during 1984–2002. This premium was a full percentage point higher (1.106) during 1992–2002.

In part, this evidence may reflect the CAW's strong preference for negotiating all wage gains as increases to workers' base rate, rather than accepting compensation in the form of lump-sum bonuses, profit-sharing, or other incentive programs. The empirical results for all four industry sectors combined were replicated separately for the three industry sectors in which the CAW negotiated a large number of contracts. That is, separate OLS regressions were estimated for wage increases in the manufacturing, transportation, and business and personal services sectors, using the same set of

Table 4
The CAW Effect on Percent Wage Increase Negotiated in First Year of Contract

Industry	Years	β	SE	n	R^2
Four Industry Sectors ^a	1984–2002	0.518***	0.165	3,765	0.042
Four Industry Sectors ^a	1992–2002	1.016***	0.212	1,960	0.024
Manufacturing	1992–2002	1.223***	0.360	839	0.063
Transportation	1992–2002	0.453	0.304	624	0.018
Business and Personal Services	1992–2002	1.598*	0.655	393	0.083

Notes: ^aIncludes manufacturing, transportation, primary industries and personal and business services. Estimates obtained with OLS regression with controls for region, industry, federal sector, contract duration, cost-of-living allowance, and size of the bargaining unit. *** (**, *) significant at $p \leq .001$ (.01, .05), respectively.

control variables found in Table 4. These results, also shown in Table 4, indicate that the CAW impact is positive and significant in manufacturing and in personal and business services. In the transportation sector, which was under considerable stress throughout the 1990s, the CAW was not able to negotiate wage increases significantly above the industry norm, when other variables are controlled for. In primary industries there are too few CAW contracts to make an accurate assessment.

The report to the most recent CAW constitutional convention notes: "Today our union is in sectors where no one single union dominates, or where the large majority of workers have yet to be organized. The challenge we face is to find ways to apply the principle behind industrial unionism to these sectors and remove labor from competition in more sectors of the economy" (CAW, 2001: 33). The data described above suggest that the CAW has had some success in achieving higher wage gains in its new sectors. An important issue, beyond the scope of this study, is whether the CAW is trading off wage gains for lower investment and fewer jobs in these sectors. If CAW-represented firms are investing at comparable rates to other union-represented and nonunion firms, the CAW strategy is more promising in the longer run than if the CAW is essentially sacrificing investment for their "no concessions" model. Our research design cannot assess whether gains in wages are neutralized by losses in other areas. Economic issues are, however, only one element of the union's bargaining strategy; the next two sections examine two non-wage issues that the CAW has made a bargaining priority.

Duration of Contracts. In the 1990s there was a shift, particularly in the private sector, towards longer term collective agreements. A review of the collective agreements database indicates that the percentage of contracts negotiated with terms of longer than three years shot up in the mid-1990s (Lacroix et al., 1999). An increasing number of four- and five-year agreements were signed, and a small number of agreements had even longer terms of up to 18 years. The percentage of collective agreements of more than 36 months jumped from 1.1 percent in 1992 to 22.1 percent in 1999. This shift was much more pronounced in the private sector and the manufacturing industry (Lacroix et al., 1999: 43). The CAW adopted a policy determined to resist this trend.

A CAW discussion paper on this issue calls long-term agreements "the new concession," linking these long contract durations with "a whole package of workplace changes, often with new committees talking about the new 'partnership' with management that is focused largely on the company's interest." For employers, longer agreements offer a number of potential advantages, including labor peace and stability, enhanced ability for long-range planning, and lower negotiating costs. The CAW opposes negotiating long-term agreements because it removes the opportunity for members to have input on collective bargaining issues on a regular basis. As the Discussion Paper asserts:

Moving workers further and further away from meaningful decision-making can only weaken the union and our ability to fight back. Collective bargaining is the height of union activity for most workers. It is the time when discussions and debates occur,

and most importantly, it is a time when people have input and make real decisions that affect their daily working life. . . . Long-term agreements are the latest concession that buys into the idea that workers have to compete against one another while companies benefit. This time, however, making concessions is clearly about giving up more than money, it is about giving up the strength and health of the union—the main organization we have to defend ourselves and move forward (CAW Discussion Paper, 1997: 12).

The issue first appeared at the CAW's collective bargaining conference in 1996. The report from that conference identified four trends which caused the union to question the benefit of agreements of even as long as three years: (1) the trend towards unilateral work changes such as "speed up"; (2) the accelerating tendency of corporations to unilaterally remove bargaining unit work through outsourcing; (3) changes in labor legislation and standards which undermine worker rights; and (4) changes in social programs such as the Canada Pension Plan and unemployment insurance which affect negotiated benefits (CAW, 1996: 24). At the 1999 and 2002 bargaining conferences the CAW reaffirmed its stand opposing contracts of longer than three years (CAW, 1999: 21; CAW, 2002: 42).

On this issue, the CAW appears to have been successful in translating policy into practice. Table 5 shows the percentage of medium-term (30 to 42 months) and longer term (42+ months) contracts negotiated during 1985–2001, in four key sectors in which the CAW has substantial membership. In light of the CAW's strong preference for three-year contracts, we would expect the distribution of CAW contracts to peak at 36 months duration; a smaller proportion of CAW contracts of longer duration, compared to other unions; and a smaller variation in the duration of CAW contracts. All of these expectations are confirmed by the data. Over this period, the vast majority of CAW contracts continued to be in the range of 30 to 42 months, i.e., within six

Table 5
Contracts of Medium and Long Duration: CAW vs. Others

Year	Contract Duration 30 to 42 Months				Contract Duration > 42 Months			
	Others		CAW		Others		CAW	
	No. of Contracts	% of Total	No. of Contracts	% of Total	No. of Contracts	% of Total	No. of Contracts	% of Total
1987–1991	845	33.3	85	83.8	64	2.8	2	4.5
1992–1996	769	37.6	97	70.1	270	15.2	14	18.4
1997–2001	828	42.4	141	83.2	388	21.5	13	8.8
1985–2001	2,803	37.4	340	79.4	737	16.8	29	13.1

Note: Includes contracts from four industries: manufacturing, transportation, primary industries, and personal and business services.

Source: Computed by the authors using the Collective Agreements Database, Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC-Labour.

months of the ideal 36-month contract. In each of three five-year periods, i.e., 1987–91, 1992–96 and 1997–2001, the percentage of CAW contracts that were 36 to 42 months long was, respectively, 83.8 percent, 70.1 percent, and 83.2 percent. The comparable figures for all other unions were 33.3 percent, 37.6 percent, and 42.4 percent. Over the entire period, 1985–2001, 79.4 percent of all CAW contracts fell in this category compared to only 37.4 percent for all others. When we consider the more directly comparable period, 1992–2001, 76 percent of the CAW contracts compared to 46 percent of other contracts were between 30 to 42 months in duration.

The incidence of longer contracts, i.e., longer than 42 months, was fairly similar for the CAW and the others during the 1987–91 and 1992–96 time period. In fact, the fraction of longer contracts was marginally higher for CAW contracts but the difference was not statistically significant. It is only in the later years during 1997–2001, that the fraction of longer-term contracts becomes much lower for the CAW (8.8 percent) than for others (21.5 percent). For the entire 1985–2001 period, the difference was less dramatic: 13.1 percent among CAW contracts versus 16.8 percent for other contracts. Overall, the CAW appeared effective in getting more contracts around the 36-month mark and in thwarting attempts by the employer to seek contracts of longer duration (Table 5).

Next, we tested to see if the differences discussed above were statistically significant after controlling for other attributes of the bargaining units. Table 6 presents logit regression results on a dummy variable representing contracts of 30–42 months duration. Using controls for region, industry, percent wage increase, COLA clause, and number of employees, the CAW coefficient is both positive (1.166) and significant ($p < 0.001$). This reinforces the conclusion that the CAW policy on duration has had an impact: The CAW is significantly more likely to negotiate contracts in the 36-month range. The CAW coefficient was also significant and positive within each of the three industry sectors (manufacturing, transportation, and business and personal services;

Table 6

Logit Estimates of the Probability of Obtaining Contracts of Medium and Longer Durations: Four Industry Sectors, 1992–2002

	P (Duration = 30 to 42 Months)			P (Duration >42 Months)		
	β	SE	Sig.	β	SE	Sig.
CAW	1.166	.149	.000	-.981	.220	.000
<i>n</i>		1960			1960	
-2 Log likelihood		2,536.45			1,807.03	
Nagelkerke R^2		0.117			0.100	

Notes: Includes manufacturing, transportation, primary industries, and personal and business services. Estimates obtained with OLS regression with controls for region, industry, federal sector, contract duration, percent wage increase, cost-of-living allowance, and size of the bargaining unit. *** (**, *) significant at $p \leq .001$ (.01, .05), respectively.

results by sector are not reported for lack of space). The second panel in Table 6 shows a similar logit regression on contracts of longer (>42 months) duration. As expected, the CAW coefficient is significant ($p < 0.001$) and negative (-0.981) in conformance with the union's policy of resisting longer contracts. The CAW coefficient was also found to be negative and significant in regressions run within each of the three sectors (manufacturing, transportation, and business and personal services), although these results are not reported here.

Of interest as well is the greater variance in contract duration for non-CAW manufacturing contracts. In the earlier years the variance in duration of CAW agreements does not appear to be that much different from other contracts. However, with the growth in CAW membership across several industry sectors in 1992 and beyond, the difference in the variance of contract duration between the CAW and others began to widen. By 2002, a pattern of lower variance in duration for CAW contracts is well discernible in contrast to a higher variance in duration for other contracts. The difference in variances between CAW contracts and others during 1992–2002 is also statistically significant at .05 level.

The CAW has some long-term contracts as well—in part as a result of mergers with other unions. As contracts for units gained through mergers are renegotiated, the three-year limit is imposed. On the whole, the strategy of opposing long-term agreements has clearly had an impact. The union has successfully resisted the trend towards longer term contracts in most cases and maintained a degree of uniformity in contract duration. To the extent that long-term contracts can be seen as a “concession,”¹³ it is one that the CAW has largely been able to avoid.

Same-Sex Spousal Recognition. Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers is not new. However, in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s there was a growing awareness of this issue, propelled in large part by the highly successful drive for legal equality based on sexual orientation. Legal challenges by gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers demanding equal treatment for same-sex relationships were initially unsuccessful, but gained momentum with a string of key victories in the 1990s (Petersen, 1999; Berg and Nunnolley, 2002). A 1996 ruling of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal states: “It is now crystal clear that the law is that the denial of the extension of employment benefits to a same-sex partner which would otherwise be extended to opposite-sex common-law partners is discrimination on the prohibited ground of sexual orientation.”¹⁴ In 1998 the CAW was successful in winning an array of same-sex spousal benefits for its gay and lesbian members (including health and dental care, legal services, and various forms of leave, but not survivor pension benefits) as a result of an arbitration case filed against Chrysler Canada Ltd. (Petersen, 1999).¹⁵

Hunt (1997: 800) concludes that the CAW “stands out . . . as the private sector union most active in the area of equal rights for gays and lesbians.” The CAW's 1999 *Statement on Working with Pride* states that: “As a union, the CAW is committed to fight homophobia at all levels and build solidarity,” on the basis of education, support for lesbian, gay, and bisexual caucuses, and bargaining equality provisions in collec-

tive agreements. The CAW now has active “Pride Caucuses” in seven locations across the country, has held national and regional “Pride Conferences,” publishes *Pride in Print* (a newsletter for CAW activists), and has participated in Gay Pride events in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Halifax.

The growing recognition of this issue through the 1990s is reflected in the reports of the CAW’s collective bargaining and political action conferences. In the 1990 report the issue is raised, but the tone of the report is muted and it does not put forward a clear recommendation (CAW, 1990: 109). In 1993 the issue recedes even further. The conference report contains a single reference to same-sex spousal benefits (in a list of 12 benefit issues) with no discussion whatsoever (CAW, 1993: 88).

In 1996, however, the CAW took an unambiguous stand. “The CAW has been a leader in extending these rights through collective bargaining, from white-collar workers to blue-collar miners, and in workplaces under federal as well as provincial jurisdiction, from coast to coast,” the report notes. But, it continues, “Having said this, same-sex benefit provisions are not yet found in the majority of our collective agreements. We need to consolidate our gains by embarking on *a major initiative to ensure same-sex spousal benefits are systematically negotiated in all of our agreements* and that our gay brothers and lesbian sisters are treated equally under our collective agreements” (CAW, 1996: 79; emphasis added.). This position was reiterated in 1999 and 2002 (CAW, 1999: 97–98; CAW, 2002: 122). In fact, a CAW document states that bargaining committees can only withdraw same-sex benefits from the bargaining table with the permission of CAW president Buzz Hargrove (*CAW LGBT History*, undated).

A review of collective agreements on the federal government’s collective agreement database indicates that well under half of CAW contracts in the union’s four key sectors (manufacturing, transportation, primary industries, and business and personal services) include some coverage of same-sex partners in provisions for leaves and benefits (Table 7). We count the occurrence of any one of the following three benefits found in the database: short-term leave, long-term leave, or group insurance plans. Of the 109 CAW contracts in 2002, 34 of them (approximately 44 percent when weighted by the size of the bargaining unit) included at least one of these same-sex benefits. From these numbers, the CAW has clearly been more successful than other unions in negotiating this provision. In the manufacturing sector, for example, 44 percent of CAW members enjoy these benefits, compared to 7 percent of non-CAW union members. The CAW lead over all other contracts in negotiating same-sex benefits is statistically significant for all four industries combined as well as within each industry sector. The CAW lead is the highest in primary industries (65 percent vs. 1 percent) and the lowest in transportation (44 percent vs. 30 percent), with business and personal services (49 percent vs. 10 percent) closer to the pattern in manufacturing.

The union has driven the issue forward even in the face of some rank-and-file opposition (Hunt, 1999). CAW President Buzz Hargrove estimates that he receives more mail from members on the CAW’s stand on gay and lesbian issues than any other policy area—most critical of the union’s position (Hunt, 1997: 801). Same-sex bene-

Table 7
The Incidence of Same-Sex Contract Provisions^a in 2002: CAW vs. All Other Unions

	Four Sectors				Transportation	Business and Personal Services		Primary Industries
	CAW	Other	Manufacturing	Other		Personal Services	Business and Personal Services	
Total # of Contracts	109	671	61	318	32	141	14	2
					160			52
# of Contracts with Same-Sex Benefits	34	60	15	22	9	9	15	1
					22			1
% with Same-Sex Benefits ^b	44**	44**	44**	44**	44*	49**	49**	65**
	16	7	7	7	30	10	10	1

Notes: **, * Pearson Chi-Square significant at .01, .05 respectively. ^aIncludes short- or long-term leaves and group insurance applying to same-sex partners. ^bPer cent figures weighted by the number of employees in the bargaining unit.

Source: Computed by the authors using the Collective Agreements Database, Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC-Labour.

fits were successfully negotiated at General Motors in 1996. Reflecting on this bargaining achievement, Hargrove states: "The tolerance of our membership is really good if you've dealt with their issues. If we'd gone into [the General Motors local] to ratify same-sex spousal benefits in and of itself, believe me, it would have been a bit of a meat grinder. We had it as part of the package including wages, benefits, and an outsourcing agreement. My role, as I see it, is to challenge my members' thinking on the broader issues of the day" (Lawton, 1997: C3).

The issue of same-sex spousal recognition illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of the CAW leadership style. Even with the power of the leadership behind this issue—and the backing of supportive human rights tribunal and court decisions—the union has not yet bargained this provision in the majority of its contracts. But the CAW has succeeded in negotiating an extension of contract benefits to same-sex partners at a significantly higher rate than other unions. This is of both symbolic and practical significance for the many gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of the CAW.¹⁶

The leadership of the union has made the case for this issue and ensured that it had a high profile within the union. While the issue became more prominent over the 1990s, the CAW foresaw the trend—and led it. The union has gained recognition and credibility as an advocate for human rights.¹⁷ This approach to social activism is a key part of the union's growth strategy. As a recent CAW policy statement on diversity notes: "[O]ur goal is not only to respond to the changes that we have seen in the union but also to position the union for the future so that we can attract and organize new members. Ultimately, our objective is to build on our progress . . . thereby solidifying our reputation in the labor movement as being at the forefront of progressive change" (CAW, 2003b: 2).

By taking a lead in negotiating benefits for gay, lesbian, and bisexual union members, the CAW aims to demonstrate progressive leadership which will in turn appeal to new members and activists, and make the union more attractive to potential merger partners. As with labor's efforts at political mobilization in the United States (Masters, 2004), the CAW's social activism is intended to help the union rejuvenate and grow. The union's efforts on this issue, as with wages and contract duration, illustrate its strategy aimed at creating a "virtuous circle" where social activism, bargaining, and membership growth through organizing and mergers are mutually reinforcing.

V. Conclusion

Collective bargaining remains at the heart of unionism. As other dimensions of collective action such as broad-based alliances and political action grow in importance, the issue should not become a shift in emphasis away from collective bargaining but an expansion into these other domains. Unless the union is fighting (and fighting effectively) in collective bargaining, it will not establish the authority or credibility to act in other spheres (Gindin, 1989: 86).

The CAW has established a strong collective bargaining reputation based on its precedent-setting agreements in the auto industry. In the 1980s, it resisted the shift of its own international union to concessionary contracts and a partnership relationship

with management. The subsequent secession to form the CAW left the new union well positioned to grow through both traditional organizing and mergers with smaller Canadian unions that sought to join an independent, militant industrial union. The CAW leadership seized this opportunity and the union's growth has been impressive, especially since it occurred while economic forces were eroding union strength in the private sector. However, the model of expansion through mergers is not one that most unions in Canada can follow, nor one that yields substantially wider union penetration across Canada. The potential for further growth through mergers, even for the CAW, may already be tapped out.

Although the CAW's growth strategy has brought dividends, increasing diversity has created new challenges for the union. The union has developed a structure that attempts to balance local autonomy and opportunities for grass-roots activism with the centralized leadership needed to build unity and coherent direction (Frost, 2000). Through its triennial collective bargaining and political action conferences, the CAW has attempted to articulate a bargaining agenda that both reflects the diverse interests of its members and builds solidarity by mobilizing this diverse membership behind a common vision. There is a danger, however, that the CAW will become a "general workers union" that lacks sufficient density outside of its core sectors to significantly improve standards. Mergers can improve collective bargaining outcomes for workers by gaining access to large strike funds, research departments, and experienced and skilled negotiators but mergers do not change the *context* of bargaining that unions face (Chaison, 2001, 2004).

Yet continued bargaining success is key to the CAW's growth strategy. The CAW leads the manufacturing sector in terms of wage increases, and a CAW wage premium is apparent in other sectors such as business and personal services. The potential that the CAW is trading off wage gains for lower investment must be acknowledged and is an important topic for future research. At the same time, the CAW's leadership on human rights has led to important gains for gay, lesbian, and bisexual members. While the union has fallen short of its goal of recognizing same-sex relationships in all contracts, it has outpaced all other unions in the private sector in negotiating these provisions, winning respect for its human rights advocacy. And the union has resisted a trend towards longer term contracts, staking out a position on this issue and effectively implementing it across a range of industries. Here too, however, the union faces a challenge in transferring this practice to new units from merged unions that come into the relationship with their own culture and practices.

The choices unions make have important consequences for workers' well-being and the survival of unions as an independent voice (Kumar and Holmes, 1993). The CAW's strategic choices have created a platform for collective action and continued growth. The challenge for the union now is to solidify these gains by organizing to expand not only membership, but also density, in the new sectors that it represents; to build the power needed to win its ambitious collective bargaining agenda outside of its core industries. As Sam Gindin points out, it is this success that gives the union the credibility and clout needed to have a broader impact on society.

NOTES

¹The official name of the union is the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation, and General Workers' Union of Canada. More commonly known simply as the "CAW," we use that form throughout.

²The CAW itself similarly describes the strategic determinants of union strength as: membership levels, bargaining power, mobilizing capacity, and political influence, "all guided and shaped by a compelling vision" (CAW, 2003: 16).

³A limitation of our research design is that we do not test a wide range of outcomes; we cannot say if gains on these three bargaining issues are neutralized by concessions in other areas. Analyzing the entire bargain achieved by the union is beyond the scope of this study. We have the more limited objective of assessing the CAW's success in bargaining on selected key issues that the union itself has identified as important to its overall strategy.

⁴The 200-employee threshold for this dataset means that a large number of CAW workplaces in newly organized or merged bargaining units are likely to be unrepresented. For example, in the retail-wholesale component of the union the average bargaining unit size is just 75 workers. Even in the auto parts sector, the trend has been towards smaller workplaces: The average size of CAW units in the independent parts sector is 180. Unfortunately, to the authors' knowledge, there is no dataset available that would allow us to extend our analyses to these smaller units. However, this size limit affects all of the unions in the dataset equally, and given the relatively large sample size comparisons between CAW and non-CAW units can appropriately be made.

⁵Given that this dataset is limited to workplaces with 200 or more employees, it may tend to overstate the extent of same-sex coverage. These provisions are more likely to be found in larger workplaces (Brown, 2003). But the dataset provides a valid means of comparing the success of the CAW in bargaining these benefits relative to other unions in the same sector.

⁶The substantial jump in workers organized in Ontario in 2000 and 2001 reflects the dispute between the CAW and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). During this time period over 13,000 workers in bargaining units formerly represented by the SEIU joined the CAW through certification votes (see note 9). The inclusion of these workers tends to inflate the organizing results. Unfortunately, it is not possible using the available data to segregate out all members who were organized as a result of displacement applications.

⁷The outsourcing of parts and modular production (where suppliers assemble entire components of a vehicle) has been contentious issues in the automobile industry and has led to the erosion of union jobs and membership. The CAW has won contract limits on outsourcing. In 1996 the union negotiated the principle of "work ownership," by which firms are restricted from outsourcing CAW jobs to nonunion or lower wage producers (Hargrove, 1996). But the CAW has had considerable difficulty organizing auto parts manufactures. In 1996 the CAW attempted to address this issue in Big Three bargaining by negotiating a "neutrality" letter from the automakers to bolster the union's effort to organize auto parts giant Magna International, Inc. While the agreement was largely symbolic, in its wake the CAW was, in fact, successful in organizing the 700 workers at Integram Windsor Seating, Magna's vehicle seat-making plant (Lancaster House, 2001).

⁸Local 598 of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union in Sudbury, with 1,600 members, was the last remaining local of a union that once represented 30,000 workers nationwide. Most of the Mine, Mill locals were swallowed by the Steelworkers' union as a result of an epic labor battle in the 1950s and 1960s. While the Steelworkers saw mining as their jurisdiction, Mine, Mill Local 598 members could never have accepted a merger with that union, according to local president Rick Briggs (Papp, 1993a, 1993b).

⁹The attempt by the eight locals of the SEIU to merge with the CAW was blocked when the SEIU international union obtained an injunction preventing a planned merger vote, and placed the eight locals under trusteeship. In response, the CAW and dissident SEIU local leadership launched a campaign to apply for cer-

tification at each or the bargaining units within these locals during the “open period” at the end of the term of each collective agreement. The CAW was suspended from the CLC after an impartial umpire found that the CAW had violated the CLC constitution’s ban on raiding. In May 2001, the CAW and the SEIU reached an accord allowing “an orderly resolve of the issues between them.” As a result, the CAW was re-admitted to the CLC (CLC, 2001).

¹⁰Because auto wages are significantly higher than average, CAW auto members contribute well over half of the CAW’s total revenues (CAW, 2002: 7).

¹¹See for example: *Getting Back in Gear: A New Policy Vision for Canada’s Auto Industry* (CAW, 2002).

¹²See CAW (1990, p. 84); CAW (1993, p. 58); CAW (1996, p. 25); CAW (1999, p. 31); CAW (2002, p. 46); Hyclak and Kolchin (1988); and Frost (2000).

¹³This conclusion is supported by the regression results presented in Table 4, which indicate that duration of contracts has a significant and negative impact on percent wage increases. However, this may also represent a rational trade-off between reduced pay and longer-term job security. The interaction between contract duration and wage increases merits closer scrutiny.

¹⁴*Ackerstrom and Moore v. Treasury* (1996) 25 C.H.R.R. D/351.

¹⁵*Re Chrysler Canada Ltd. and CAW, Locals 1498 and 444*, unreported decision of Ross Kennedy, 6 March 1998.

¹⁶The CAW does not keep records of the number of members who are accessing benefits for their same-sex partners. When asked about possible costs, CAW staff point to evidence that has been presented when the issue of same-sex benefits was litigated. In *Ackerstrom and Moore v. Treasury* (1996) 25 C.H.R.R. D/351, for example, “expert” witnesses for both the complainants and the respondent testified that the cost of extending benefits would likely be in the range of 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent of benefit costs. But they both acknowledged that there were no hard numbers to support these estimates.

¹⁷Demonstrated, for example, by positive coverage in *Xtra*, Toronto’s gay weekly (Battista, 1994).

REFERENCES

- Battista, Michael. “Planes, Trains and Automobiles: The Labour Movement Is Taking Up the Same-sex Benefits Battle.” *Xtra*, June 10, 1994.
- Bentham, Karen. “Employer Resistance to Union Certification: A Study of Eight Canadian Jurisdictions.” *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 57 (Winter 2002): 159–85.
- Berg, Bradley E. and Sophie Nunnolley. “Working Out There: Same-Sex Employment Benefits in Ontario.” *Canadian Labour and Employment Law Journal* 9 (2002): 209–33.
- Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). “Georgetti Announces Resolution of SEIU-CAW Dispute.” Press Release, May 23, 2001.
- Canadian Press. “Airline Employees Vote to Join Auto Union.” *Toronto Star*, April 4, 1990.
- Canadian Pride Legal History*, (undated): <www.caw.ca/whatwedo/pride/pridehistory.asp>.
- CAW Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History, (undated): <www.caw.ca/whatwed/pride/lgbthistory.asp>.
- CAW Contact. “Workers at Canadian Airlines Vote to Join CAW.” April 16, 1990, p. 1.
- CAW Canada. *A New Decade—Challenging the Corporate Agenda: Our Response—Solidarity in Collective Bargaining and Political Action*. Report to the National Collective Bargaining and Political Action Convention, Toronto, May 29–June 1, 1990.

- . *Hard Times, New Times: Fighting for Our Future*. Report to the National Collective Bargaining and Political Action Convention, Toronto, May 4–7, 1993.
- . *Solutions, Growing Protests: Recapturing the Agenda*. Report to the National Collective Bargaining and Political Action Convention, Toronto, June 4–7, 1996.
- . *Discussion Paper: Long Term Agreements: The New Concession*, 1997.
- . *Statement on Working with Pride*, 1999.
- . *New Century: Same Struggle*. Report to the CAW-Canada Constitutional Convention, Quebec City, August 21–24, 2001.
- . *Bargaining in Tough Times*. Report to the CAW Collective Bargaining and Political Action Convention, Toronto, May 7–10, 2002.
- . *Union Resistance and Union Renewal*. Report to the 7th CAW Constitutional Convention, Toronto, August 19–22, 2003a.
- . *Building Our Union Through Diversity, Equality and Solidarity*. Report to the 7th CAW Constitutional Convention, Toronto, August 19–22, 2003b.
- Chaison, Gary N. *Union Mergers in Hard Times: The View from Five Countries*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1996.
- . “Union Mergers in the U.S. and Abroad.” *Journal of Labor Research* 25 (Winter 2004): 97–115.
- . “Union Mergers and Union Revival: Are We Asking Too Much or Too Little?” In Lowell Turner, Harry C. Katz, and Richard W. Hurd, eds. *Rekindling the Movement: Labor’s Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2001, pp. 238–255.
- Clark, Paul. *Building More Effective Unions*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2000.
- Deverell, John. “Fishermen’s Union Calls for Revival.” *Toronto Star*, April 24, 1987.
- Frost, Ann C. “Union Involvement in Workplace Decision Making: Implications for Union Democracy.” *Journal of Labor Research* 21 (Spring 2000): 265–86.
- Galt, Virginia. “CAW Digs in Against Rollback Requests.” *Globe and Mail*, December 1, 2001.
- Gindin, Sam. “Breaking Away: The Formation of the Canadian Auto Workers.” *Studies in Political Economy* 29 (1989): 63–89.
- . *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union*. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1995.
- Graefe, Peter and Chris Roberts. “Can Labour Lead? CAW and CSN Responses to Competitiveness in Ontario and Quebec.” Paper prepared for joint meeting of the Society for Socialist Studies and the Progressive Economics Forum, Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities Federations, Bishops University, Sherbrooke, June 7, 1999.
- Hargrove, Buzz. “Owning Our Work, Protecting Our Communities.” *Policy Options* (December 1996): 10.
- . *Speech to the CAW Collective Bargaining and Political Action Convention*, May 7–10, 2002.
- Holmes, John and Anthony Rusonik. “The Break-Up of an International Labour Union: Uneven Development in the North American Auto Industry and the Schism in the UAW.” Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen’s University, 1991.
- Hunt, Gerald. “Sexual Orientation and the Canadian Labour Movement.” *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 52 (Fall 1997): 787–809.
- . “No Longer Outsiders: Labor’s Response to Sexual Diversity in Canada.” In Gerald Hunt, ed. *Laboring for Rights: Unions and Sexual Diversity Across Nations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999, pp. 10–36.

- Hyclak, Thomas and Michael Kolchin. "The Drive for Autonomy by Canadian Auto Workers." Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association, New York, December 38–30, 1988, pp. 265–71.
- Katz, Harry C. "Afterward: Whither the American Labor Movement?" In Lowell Turner, Harry C. Katz and Richard W. Hurd, eds. *Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2001, pp. 339–49.
- , Rosemary Batt, and Jeffrey H. Keefe. "The Revitalization of the CWA: Integrating Collective Bargaining, Political Action, and Organizing." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 56 (July 2003): 573–89.
- Kelly, John. *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Low Wages*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Kochan, Thomas, Harry Katz, and Robert McKersie. *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.
- Kumar, Pradeep. "Canadian Labour's Response to Work Reorganization." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Industrial Relation Association, Ottawa, June 3–5, 1993.
- and John Holmes. "Change, But in What Direction? Divergent Union Responses to Work Restructuring in the Integrated North American Auto Industry." Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, Queen's University, 1993.
- and Gregor Murray. "Canadian Union Strategies in the Context of Change." *Labor Studies Journal* 26 (Winter 2002): 1–28.
- Lacroix, Marc, Michel Hébert, Nancy Amyot, Angèle Charbonneau, and Tania Plante. "Long-Term Collective Agreements and Reopener Clauses." *Workplace Gazette* 2 (1999): 42–57.
- Lancaster House. "C.A.W. Signs Break-Through Agreement with Magna." *Collective Agreement Reporter* 25 (November/December 2001): 10.
- Lawton, Valerie. "Labor's Tough Sell." *Toronto Star*, August 11, 1997.
- Lu, Vanessa. "Retail Union Votes for CAW Merger." *Toronto Star*, November 2, 1999.
- Masters, Marick F. *Unions at the Crossroads: Strategic, Membership, Financial, and Political Perspectives*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1997.
- . "Unions in the 2000 Election: A Strategic-Choice Perspective." *Journal of Labor Research* 25 (Winter 2004): 139–82.
- Mertl, Steve. "Auto Union Stresses Membership Drive." *Toronto Star*, August 14, 1997.
- Moses, Art. "CAW Follows in CBRT's Nationalist Footsteps." *Labour Times*, April 3, 1994.
- Papp, Leslie. "Labor Split Threatened in Sudbury Union Rift." *Toronto Star*, January 8, 1993a.
- . "Miners' Merger Sours Union Relations." *Toronto Star*, August 24, 1993b.
- Perusek, Glenn. "The U.S.-Canada Split in the United Automobile Workers." Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association, New York, December 38–30, 1988, pp. 272–8.
- Petersen, Cynthia. "Fighting It Out in Canadian Courts." In Gerald Hunt, ed. *Laboring for Rights: Unions and Sexual Diversity Across Nations*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999, pp. 37–57.
- Reshef, Yonatan. "Union Decline: A View from Canada." *Journal of Labor Research* 11 (Winter 1990): 25–39.
- Rinehart, James. "The Canadian Auto Workers: An Inspirational Story." *Monthly Review* (November 1998): 58.

- Turner, Lowell, Harry C. Katz, and Richard W. Hurd, eds. *Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2001.
- UAW Canada. *Goals in '84—Making Progress in the 1980s: United in Collective Bargaining and Political Action*. Report to the Canadian UAW Collective Bargaining and Legislative Conference. Toronto, April 13–15, 1984.
- Van Alphen, Tony. "Railway Union Plans to Merge with CAW." *Toronto Star*, January 27, 1994.
- Verma, Anil, Thomas Kochan, and Stephen Wood. "Union Decline and Prospects for Revival: Editor's Introduction." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 40 (September 2002): 373–84.
- Wells, Donald M. "When Push Comes to Shove: Competitiveness, Job Insecurity and Labour-Management Cooperation in Canada." *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 18 (1997): 167–200.
- Yates, Charlotte. "Mergers, Organizing, and Collective Identity: The CAW at the Crossroads." In Mercedes Steedman, Peter Suschnigg and Dieter K. Buse, eds. *Hard Lessons: The Mine Mill Union in the Canadian Labour Movement*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1995, pp. 68–80.
- . "Unity and Diversity: Challenges to an Expanding Canadian Autoworkers' Union." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 35 (February 1998): 93–118.
- . "Staying the Decline in Union Membership: Union Organizing in Ontario, 1985–1999." *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* 55 (Fall 2000): 640–71.

Copyright of Journal of Labor Research is the property of Transaction Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.