Union membership statistics in 24 countries

An analysis of "adjusted" union membership data in 24 countries yields past and present union density rates; the data provide explanatory factors for the differences and trends in unionization

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In 1991, *Monthly Labor Review* published an overview of union membership statistics in 12 countries, presenting broad trends in unionization from 1955 to 1990 and raising various critical issues concerning the comparability of the data.[1] In this article, the analysis is extended to a wider set of 24 developed countries and to recent years. Unlike the 1991 article, only "adjusted" membership data are presented, satisfying minimum comparability criteria and used as a basis for calculating union density rates, defined as union membership as a proportion of wage and salary earners in employment. Like the previous article, this one starts with a discussion of comparability issues—related to the use of sources, definitions, data coverage, reporting errors, special groups outside employment, and the selection of the employment base for calculating density rates. Next, the main findings for 1970, 1980, and 1990–2003 regarding union membership and density are presented and evaluated. The final part discusses some explanatory factors for the differences and trends in unionization, and confronts union membership statistics with data on bargaining coverage, measuring the proportion of employed wage and salary earners directly covered or affected by union-negotiated collective agreements.

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Use and comparability

Union membership, relative to the potential of those eligible to join a labor union, is the most commonly used "summary measure" for evaluating the strength of trade unions. If defined and measured in a comparable way, it describes how the position of unions changes over time and differs across countries, industries or social groups. If large variations or swings in union density rates are observed, then there have been major changes in the legal-political, social, or economic environment of labor unions. In this sense, the union density statistic provides a useful comparative indicator in industrial relations research, as was claimed by George Bain and Bob Price in their seminal work on union growth.[2]

It does not tell, of course, the whole story. Other relevant indicators of "union presence" include the following: bargaining coverage—that is, the share of workers covered by labor contracts negotiated by one or more labor union(s); election results of union candidates in employee works councils; union representation in advisory, consulting, and legislative councils; and the standing of labor unions and union leaders in public opinion.[3] Although the union density rate captures a major aspect of union bargaining power—it is probably more difficult to replace striking workers in the short run when most of the firm's or industry's workers are unionized—as a full measure of "what unions do" it is inadequate. For instance, the organization and coordination of collective bargaining over employment conditions, probably the main activity of labor unions everywhere, varies a great deal even in developed economies. Estimating the effects that labor unions have on economic performance and distribution of income

requires a great deal of knowledge about union structure and government, bargaining practice and collective action among employers, the aims of unions, legal rules, and public policy.[4] Whereas union density is closer to measuring potential union bargaining pressure, the other measures, especially bargaining coverage, are closer to measuring the effectiveness of unions in providing and defending minimum standards of income and employment protection in labor markets. Between the two measures there are considerable differences, as will be shown in the final section.

In this article, great care is taken to assure minimum comparability of the membership data. However, even when high comparability standards of counting union members are met, "membership" of a labor union may not mean the same thing in different countries. Obviously, membership can involve variable degrees of personal commitment, sacrifice, social pressure, and coercion, and it may come with various collective and individual benefits. The often-cited example is France, where union membership is sometimes taken to mean active engagement in the union as "lay representative" and "militant." Elsewhere, but also according to the rulebooks of French unions, membership implies no other obligation than the monthly payment of dues, usually with little effort, through automatic withdrawals, possibly in direct transfer ("check off") from the wage check by the employer. Other activities, including the willingness to support the union in industrial action, are voluntary.

In the new democracies—which previously belonged to the Communist bloc (here represented by the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, and Poland)—membership was hardly a free choice, and it does not surprise that the high membership numbers before 1989 proved unsustainable after the transition to democracy.[5] Compulsory membership upon taking the job has been common in some occupations (artists, printers, dockworkers) and among manufacturing workers in some countries, like Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. But these practices have been made illegal or unenforceable in the 1980s and 1990s, and in all countries in this comparison the freedom of association includes the right "not to join."

Similarly, labor unions vary in the services rendered to their members. In most countries, union-negotiated contracts are applied *erga omnes* and non-members gain the same wage increases, reduction in working hours, holiday entitlements, and benefits as members do. This obviously creates a considerable temptation to take a "free ride" as the benefits of collective action can be obtained without sharing in the costs.[6] For example, in the Netherlands as many as 70 percent of all employees and more than half of all nonmembers approve of unions and judge the activities of unions as "necessary" and "beneficial."[7] Some labor unions have been effective in offering "selective benefits," for instance through unemployment insurance, assistance with job search, or help with administrative issues such as tax forms or sickness benefit claims. Other unions, on the other hand, offer no tangible individual benefits except a moral or ideological sense of belonging. Comparative research in Europe has shown that density rates are 20 to 30 percentage points higher if unions, rather than the state, assess unemployment insurance claims even where the insurance itself is fully subsidized and nonmembers have legally the same entitlements as members.[8] It has been noted, and is shown below, that in Europe many members, after retiring from the labor market, retain their membership in the union, usually on the basis of very low or no financial contributions. In addition to a continued sense of belonging and the possibility to meet old friends and colleagues, unions may offer assistance with various administrative chores or help manage occupational and disability pension claims. The number of these members who are no longer "active" in the labor market for paid work has increased in all European trade unions, in part as a consequence of the practice of early retirement before the compulsory pension age of 65 or 67 years, as well as the ageing of union membership. Self-evidently, in cross-national comparisons of union density rates, members without an active status in the labor market must be taken out.[9]

Comparability issues

In this section, specific comparability issues are discussed—related to the use of sources, definitions, data coverage, reporting errors, special membership groups outside the labor force, and the selection of the employment base for calculating density rates.

Sources. As was explained in the 1991 article, union membership data can be derived from two types of sources: household surveys and administrative data obtained from the unions. Currently, survey data based on household surveys are available on an annual basis in the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands—and on a nonannual basis in Norway and the Republic of Ireland.

In the United States, data for 1973–81 come from the May Current Population Survey, and 1983–2003 data come from the CPS Outgoing Rotation Group Earnings Files of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[10] For 1984–87, 1989–90 and 1992–93 there are data on union membership based on the Canadian Labor Market Activity Survey, and from 1997 Statistics Canada included a question on union membership in the Labor Force Survey (LFS). The first series is not strictly comparable, because it includes membership in all jobs whereas it is common in LFS (household) surveys to consider only one

membership per person. As proposed by Chang and Sorrentino in their 1991 article, the series has been adjusted to the first-job ratio, using OECD data derived from the Canadian LFS. In Australia, information about union membership and various characteristics of members and nonmembers comes from the August LFS since 1986. Similar surveys were previously conducted in November 1976 and during the March-May 1982 period. In the United Kingdom, an annual question on trade union membership was introduced into the August LFS in 1989, and an annual series is available from 1995 (without Northern Ireland, from 1992).[11] In Sweden and the Netherlands, the LFS includes questions about union membership since 1988 and 1992 respectively, presented as annual averages. In Finland, data on union membership can be derived from the annual Income Distribution Survey (IDS) conducted by Statistics Finland since 1991. In addition, in the case of Norway, special surveys on union membership conducted as part of the LFS are available for the second quarter of 1995 and 1998.[12] Based on a special module on union membership contained in the Quarterly National Household Survey of 2004 and the Labor Force Surveys of 1994–97, data released by the Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Ireland allows an authoritative estimate of recent trends.[13] Moreover, representative employee surveys on union membership and various characteristics of members and nonmembers outside the structure of the LFS are available in France for 1996–2003,[14] for the Republic of Ireland in 2003,[15] and for the Netherlands in 1992–93.[16]

Membership data based on administrative sources or files reported by the unions come in different forms. In some countries, the National Statistical Bureaus have conducted an annual survey of union organizations and their membership beginning as early as the 19th century. Such series exist or existed in the United States (discontinued after 1980), Canada, Australia (discontinued after 1996), Japan, Korea, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. In the United Kingdom, Ireland, and New Zealand, the official register is or has been the basis of these statistics. The British data are available from the annual report of the Certification Officer and published by the Department of Trade and Industry in conjunction with the Office for National Statistics. The Irish data are not published and come from two sources, the Registrar of Friendly Societies for Irish-based unions operating in the Republic and Northern Ireland, and the U.K. register for U.K.-based unions operating in the Republic.[17] When the Employment Contracts Act of 1991 ended the practice of union registration in New Zealand, it not only removed the distinct legal status of trade unions but it also brought to an end the official collection of data on trade union membership. In the absence of official data, the Industrial Relations Center at Victoria University of Wellington began to undertake voluntary surveys of trade unions in December 1991. These surveys continue to the current date and have been used here.[18] The new Employment Relations Act 2000 reinstated the obligation for labor unions to submit an annual return of members to the Registrar of Unions, and the return to official collection of data on union membership in New Zealand began in 2001.[19]

For all other countries, the data on union membership are obtained from union confederations, in some cases published in national statistical yearbooks (Germany, Switzerland), the annual report of the Chamber of Labor (Austria), or the annual report of union research centers (Italy). In the case of Belgium, France, and Spain, and in the four Central and Eastern countries, information is "pieced together" from various sources, including annual reports or statements of union confederations, independent unions, Web sites, financial reports, tax office declarations (in the case of France), and occasional surveys.[20]

While each of the aforementioned sources has its particular problems and errors (see below), household surveys have the clear advantage of allowing individual-level analysis of union membership characteristics and the calculation of detailed union density rates—for instance, by sex, race, employment status, industrial branch, enterprise size, educational attainment, level of earnings, or other characteristics. Data obtained from recorded administrative sources are at a more aggregate level, and probably more vulnerable to distortion. However, when studying membership developments in relation to union type, size, inter-union competition, the position of peak federations, union politics, or union ideology, one must rely on administrative data.

Definitions. What is a labor union and who counts as a union member? For comparative statistics, reasonably consistent definitions are needed. Following the definition of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a labor union may be defined as "an organization, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of pay and conditions of employment for its members" or, slightly different, as "an organization which consists wholly or mainly of workers ... and whose principle purposes includes the regulation of relations between workers and employers or employer's associations."[21] A union member is a person who self-defines that he or she belongs to a labor union, employee or staff organization (in the case of household surveys), or a person who pays his or her dues and is recognized as a member by a union organization (in the case of administrative data).

These definitions include management staff unions and professional associations, but exclude associations that do not (seek to) regulate employment relations with employers. However, collective bargaining, albeit the principle method

of regulation of employment relations, is not a defining characteristic. Unions may further members' interests through assistance in individual bargaining, representation of members in legal courts or consultation with employers, and through social and political action.

Unions are worker or employee organizations, even though some of them include members who work on their own account. This is common among professional associations that combine salaried staff and self-employed members (for example, medical doctors, engineers, architects, artists, journalists, and so forth). In recent times, following the trend toward "market mediated employment relations," contracting out and freelance work—for instance, in trades like building and construction, hairdressing, nursing, business and household services—the boundary between dependent employment and self-employment is blurring. In many European countries, confederations have set up new sections or unions, and adjusted their rulebooks to widen their recruitment basis to "economically dependent workers," (that is, workers who are formally self-employed but usually depend on a single employer for their income). This phenomenon is still relatively small-scale but growing (see table 1).

Statistical coverage. Both sampling and nonsampling errors may affect statistical coverage of union membership in household surveys. Questions may be differently phrased and surveys may suffer from nonresponse in general or, specifically, with regard to the "union question." Due to the wording of the question, surveys, unlike administrative data, could count a member of a staff association that was not recognized, identified, or defined as a labor union.

The main problem of administrative data is varying statistical coverage: the identification of small and unregistered unions, administrative arrears, and the misrepresentation of paying membership. The problem of varying coverage is especially worrying in the case of data that is only obtained from main confederations and labor unions. But even in the case of an official registrar, some unions may have chosen not to register or declare their membership, although this problem is probably negligible in the democratic countries represented here. In the case of U.K. and Irish registration data, the main problem is that union members working outside the country are also counted. If uncorrected, this leads to distorted density statistics. Another general problem, common to all administrative data, is that persons who are members of two unions will be recorded twice, whereas they would be identified only once in household surveys. This problem is probably small, however, as few people will hold two (costly) memberships.

In the course of time, the coverage of unions and membership by national statistical offices has broadened, and over time more professional and staff associations have been included in the aggregate statistics. In historical statistics such artifacts may misrepresent union membership growth, but in the 1970-to-present period the problem is fairly small. However, across countries, coverage of the usually independent or unaffiliated staff and professional associations differs between a very comprehensive coverage in Scandinavia, Finland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the Netherlands, to less than complete coverage in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, France, Spain, and Italy. These differences in coverage, however, may reflect more widespread unionization in Northern Europe, where managers and professional groups like artists, doctors, architects, lawyers, church ministers, or soccer players have formed their own unions and employee associations.[22] Possibly, some of these groups are in miscellaneous or general organizations in Austria, Germany, Belgium, France, or Italy.

In Germany, Belgium, and Austria the size of independent unionism, outside the main confederations, is believed to be small or negligible.[23] The size of "autonomous" unions outside the two (Spain), three (Italy), or five (France) main union confederations is significant, but reliable data are hard to come by. In Spain, the phenomenon is associated with regional independence or separatism—in France and Italy, with political rivalries and loyalties. In the case of Spain and France, in addition to data published by these organizations, the size of these independent unions may be estimated from their share in the vote in works council elections.[24] On this basis, we estimate an 18-percent membership share for independent unions in Spain and a 24-percent share in France. If this method is applied to Italy, the three main confederations represent between 90 and 95 percent of all members in the country. Unfortunately, membership claims of independent unions in Italy are absurdly large and wholly uncontrollable. In this case, only the membership data of the three main confederations are presented, even though this may understate the true size of union membership in Italy, especially in the public sector, by as much as 10 percentage points.[25]

Reporting errors. Union membership data are inevitably based on self-reporting: by individual workers or employers in the case of household surveys, and by union administrators in the case of recorded data. The results may be inaccurate because of sampling and nonsampling errors; nonresponse and memory failure in the case of surveys; and because of outdated record, financial interests or deliberate misrepresentation in the case of administrative data. With computerized files, now used by most unions, the difficulty of keeping files up to date may have become smaller, but the problem of misrepresentation for reasons of prestige, recognition claims, or political gain is still present, especially in countries with rival unionisms and without some external checking or recording

of files. Thus, in France, Poland, and Hungary, estimates based on as many independent sources as possible have to be provided. In the case of the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, and Spain, administrative membership data may be inaccurate or incorporate membership in arrears with payment, but they are not deliberately misrepresented. In the case of Belgium, each of the three union confederations tends to inflate its membership statistics with the same amount, currently estimated at 13 percent.[26] Another source of error consists in double counting, the reporting of nonpaying members or "supporters" outside the labor force (see table 1).

Special groups and membership adjusted to employed wage and salary earners. Historically, union movements in Europe, often in alliance with Social-Democratic or Christian Parties, have tried to achieve "comprehensive" or "inclusive" representation, extending beyond wage earners in employment. Many European unions allow or often actively seek the retention of those members who retire from the labor market (pensioners, early retirement, fully disabled workers), the self-employed, full-time students and apprentices, workers becoming unemployed or first-time job-seekers, persons in voluntary (unpaid) work, and spouses or women's groups.[27]

As shown in table 1, a sizeable share of the reported membership of European unions is outside the employed dependent labor force, the denominator usually applied when calculating union density rates. The average proportion of members who have retired from the labor market is 17.2 percent of total membership, varying from 4.5 percent in Spain to as much as 48.0 percent in Italy. Inflated membership figures and counting nonpaying adherents as full members is a factor mainly in France and Belgium. Fairly large numbers of unemployed members are observed where one would expect—that is, where unions are directly involved in the management of unemployment funds (Belgium) or provide such funds themselves (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden).[28] Elsewhere the share of unemployed workers in union membership is very small or negligible. The proportion of self-employed workers is also fairly small, though rising in Finland (associated with the membership of full-time students)[29] and the United Kingdom (where self-employment in services and construction has risen more than elsewhere in Europe). In Italy, where the main confederations used to organize tenant farmers, the share of the self-employed in total membership has decreased. In Norway, the professional associations include a significant number of self-employed members. (In Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands, they are not included in the statistics reported by the national statistical bureaus.)

In the 14 countries shown in table 1, the total adjustment on account of these "special groups" amounts, on average, to 24.2 percent—with a large variation across countries. Taking these members out from the total count, "adjusted" membership sta-

Table 1. Union membership in 14 countries, total and adjusted membership

Country	Year	Adjustment, of which on account of:				
		In percent of reported membership	Nonfinancial membership	Retired from labor market	Unemployed	Self-employed and students
Austria	2002	18.2	0.0	[1]18.2	–	–
Belgium	2002	41.7	12.9	18.2	10.6	0.2
Denmark	2003	20.4	.0	14.2	5.9	.3
Finland	2003	29.7	.0	11.5	8.2	[1,2]10.0
France	2003	33.0	13.0	20.0	–	–
Germany	2003	19.8	.0	[1]19.8	–	.0
Ireland	2003	8.0	–	[1]8.0	–	–
Italy	2004	53.1	3.1	48.0	.7	1.3
Netherlands	2003	20.1	.0	[1]19.8	–	.3
Norway	2002	26.0	.0	[1]24.0	–	2.0
Spain	2003	6.0	. .	4.5	1.5	–
Sweden	2003	20.7	.0	14.7	5.6	.4
Switzerland	2001	13.0	.0	13.0	.0	.0
United Kingdom	2003	12.8	.0	[1]10.0	–	2.8
Average		24.2		17.2		

SOURCE: Own estimates, based on administrative data obtained from unions, following the estimation methods in Ebbinghaus and Visser 2000. For Finland: study of Finnish Ministry of Labour covering 89 percent of all unions, published in February 2003 **(www.eiro.eurofound.eu.it/2003/02/feature/fi0302204f.html)**. For the Netherlands: Jo van Cruchten and Rob Kuipers, "Organisatiegraad van werknemers, 2001", Sociaal-economische maandstatistiek March 2003, pp. 17–23, The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (Statistics Netherlands).

[1] Includes unemployed and disabled workers.

[2] Of which, 6.1 percent are are students.

tistics are obtained and can be compared with the data obtained from surveys, usually reporting the estimated membership of wage and salary earners in their main job. Differences between the two series may still occur on account of varying reporting dates throughout the year, varying definitions of the dependent labor force, and the exclusion of certain occupations from the survey.

Base for union density rate statistics. Union density expresses the rate of "actual" to "potential" membership, usually as a percentage. For any one union, potential membership is given by eligibility criteria, usually defined in the union rulebook or constitution. Practices vary massively across unions, occupations, industries, and countries, and they have changed in the course of time, usually widening the definition of those eligible for membership. In some but not all countries, the law excludes particular categories (for instance, the military and security staff).[30] Following the "eligibility" criterion would render the comparison of numbers impractical, as was recognized by Chang and Sorrentino in their 1991 article in this journal. It is for this reason, in line with their article and the OECD database,[31] to use the size of civilian wage and salary employment as the domain of potential membership and the base for calculating union density rates, having excluding all other groups from the membership statistic.[32] Table 2 presents the adjusted membership statistics (employed wage and salary earners only), and table 3 the union density rates calculated from these adjusted statistics. The data on civilian employment of wage and salary earners is from the OECD Labour Force Statistics, published annually by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development and available online.[33]

Comparable statistics

This overview presents adjusted data on union membership and union density for 1970, 1980, and 1990–2003 in 24 developed economies belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[34] In addition, a series has been calculated for the European Union defined by its size as of May 2004, before the recent enlargement with eight member states from the former Communist bloc and two small island states in the Mediterranean.[35] The data and statistics presented in table 2 (pages 43–44) are, to the largest extent possible, the net of total members who are unemployed, self-employed, full-students, pensioned or disabled, or not part of the labor market.

Table 2. Union membership in 24 countries and the European Union, adjusted data, 1970–2003, in thousands

Year	United States	Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Japan	Republic of Korea	European Union	Germany	France	Italy	United Kingdom	Ireland
1970	[1]18,088.6	2,211.0	[9]2,512.7	[14]529.0	11,605.0	473.3	33,939.5	6,965.6	3,458.0	4,736.2	10,068.3	381.7
1980	[2]17,717.4	[6]3,543.3	[10]2,567.6	714.0	12,369.0	948.1	43,663.6	8,153.6	3,282.0	7,189.0	11,652.3	490.7
1990	16,739.8	3,897.6	2,659.6	603.2	12,265.0	1,932.4	39,261.6	8,013.8	1,968.0	5,872.4	8,952.3	441.5
1991	16,568.4	—	–	514.3	12,397.0	1,886.9	43,093.0	11,969.4	1,935.0	5,913.3	8,626.5	441.1
1992	16,390.3	3,802.8	2,508.8	428.2	12,541.0	1,803.4	41,707.8	11,083.1	1,940.0	5,906.1	8,142.9	437.9
1993	16,598.1	3,768.0	2,376.9	409.1	12,663.0	1,734.6	40,084.7	10,264.9	1,870.0	5,661.0	7,831.3	428.6
1994	16,740.3	—	2,283.4	375.9	12,699.0	1,667.4	38,742.2	9,709.5	1,800.0	5,489.5	7,450.2	432.9
1995	16,359.6	—	2,251.8	362.2	12,614.0	1,659.0	37,558.4	9,334.8	1,780.0	5,341.2	6,791.0	453.4
1996	16,269.4	—	2,194.3	339.0	12,451.0	1,614.8	36,677.7	8,826.5	1,650.0	5,266.4	6,631.0	475.0
1997	16,109.9	3,517.0	2,110.3	327.8	12,285.0	1,598.6	36,286.9	8,538.0	1,650.0	5,142.3	6,643.0	472.6
1998	16,211.4	3,553.0	2,037.5	306.7	12,093.0	1,484.2	36,335.8	8,326.9	1,650.0	5,123.4	6,640.0	491.6
1999	16,476.7	3,595.0	1,878.2	302.4	11,825.0	1,401.9	36,620.4	8,218.3	1,720.0	5,276.8	6,622.0	—
2000	16,258.2	3,740.0	1,901.8	318.5	11,539.0	1,480.7	36,640.5	8,067.0	1,780.0	5,212.2	6,636.0	—
2001	16,288.8	3,831.3	1,902.7	329.9	11,212.0	1,527.0	36,361.9	7,601.8	1,800.0	5,332.6	6,558.0	512.3
2002	15,978.7	3,923.6	1,833.7	334.8	10,801.0	1,568.7	36,261.2	7,433.9	1,840.0	5,308.5	6,577.0	519.7
2003	15,776.0	4,036.5	1,866.7	—	10,531.0	1,606.0	—	7,120.0	1,830.0	5,327.7	6,524.0	515.7
1970–1980	[3]1,034.8	1,276.2	[9]54.9	[15]185.0	764.0	474.9	9,724.1	1,188.1	–176.0	2,452.8	1,584.0	109.0
1980–1990	[4]–977.6	[7]354.3	[10]92.0	–110.8	–104.0	984.3	–4,402.1	–139.8	–1,314.0	–1,316.6	–2,700.0	–49.2
1990–2003	–963.8	138,9	–792,9	[16]–268.4	–1,734.0	–326.4	[16]–3,003.3	–893.8	–138.0	–544.7	–2,428.3	74.4
1970–2003	[5]–1,940.4	[8]493.2	[11]–646.0	[17]–194.2	–1,074.0	1,132.7	[17]2,321.7	154.4	–1,628.0	591.5	–3,544.3	134.2
Percent change												
1970–1980	[3]5.4	57.7	[11]2.2	[15]35.0	6.6	100.3	28.7	17.1	–5.1	51.8	15.7	28.6
1980–1990	[4]–5.5	[7]10.0	[12]3.6	–15.5	–.8	103.8	–10.1	–1.7	–40.0	–18.3	–23.2	–10.0
1990–2003	–5.8	3.6	–29.8	[16]–44.5	–14.1	–16.9	[16]–7.6	–11.2	–7.0	–9.3	–27.1	16.9
1970–2003	[5]–11.3	[8]22.3	[13]–25.7	[17]–36.7	–9.3	239.3	[17]6.8	2.2	–47.1	12.5	–35.2	35.2

NOTES: [1]1973; [2]1983; [3]1973–1981; [4]1983–1990; [5]1983–2003; [6]1984; [7]1984–1990; [8]1984–2003; [9]1976; [10]1982; [11]1976–1982; [12]1982–1990; [13]1976–2003; [14]1971; [15]1971–1980; [16]1990–2002; [17]1970–2002.

Where available on an annual basis, the use of survey data has been preferred;[36] elsewhere, administrative data has been adjusted to approach as much as possible the same definitions and coverage. Changes in sources, constituting possible breaks in the series, are underlined in table 2, but generally very small. A major break of a substantive nature did occur in Germany in 1990, following unification with former East Germany, when large numbers of "card-holding" members were added to those of former West Germany (but soon dwindled as a consequence of transition to a free market economy).

Union membership. Looking at the membership statistics in table 2, membership decreased in 18 countries (and on aggregate in the European Union) since 1990, and increased in 6: Canada, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain. Considering each of the three decades, from the point of view of unions and especially in Western Europe, the 1970s were associated with large gains (France being the only exception, with losses setting in around 1976). Depending on the sources used, unions in the United States increased their membership by just more than 1 million from 1973 and 1981 according to survey data, or by a little more than half a million from 1970 to 1980 according to administrative data. Canadian unions, instead, grew spectacular in this period, by more than 50 percent.

In the 1980s, the unions gaining members were in the following countries: Spain (where unions return to democracy after the Franco era); Korea (where union organizing activities are eased); Australia; Canada; and the four Northern European countries—with unions in Japan, Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland being relatively stable. In contrast, U.S., French, Italian, British, Irish, and Dutch unions suffer large membership losses; in the European Union, half of the membership gained in the preceding decade is lost. In the 1990s, in addition to the large membership losses in the four transition economies (but largely reflecting the change from compulsory to voluntary membership), there are very large membership reductions in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Japan, Germany (both West and East), Italy, Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland, whereas decline seems to have "bottomed out" in France—and unions in Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium made significant membership gains.

Table 2. Continued—Union membership in 24 countries and the European Union, adjusted data, 1970–2003, in thousands

Year	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Netherlands	Belgium	Spain	Switzerland	Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic	Slovak Republic	Poland
1970	828.4	2,325.2	683.2	1,107.7	1,429.9	1,230.6	—	759.8	1,355.4	—	—	—	—
1980	1,332.2	3,038.7	937.5	1,604.5	1,517.2	1,650.5	1,030.0	852.6	1,443.5	—	—	—	—
1990	1,526.8	3,259.9	1,033.7	1,755.5	1,347.8	1,645.6	1,193.4	820.2	1,374.6	3,000.0	3,820.0	1,920.0	[6]6,300.0
1991	1,510.2	3,198.0	1,022.5	1,762.7	1,381.1	1,657.8	1,424.1	821.0	1,364.5	—	—	—	—
1992	1,451.0	3,146.3	1,022.6	1,762.5	1,459.0	1,651.4	1,545.4	823.1	1,359.8	—	—	—	—
1993	1,396.1	2,965.4	1,023.5	1,757.4	1,502.0	1,649.1	1,613.9	807.2	1,343.2	—	2,680.0	—	—
1994	1,376.1	2,923.2	1,042.1	1,749.3	1,491.0	1,636.1	1,586.7	802.8	1,325.1	–	—	—	—
1995	1,419.7	2,943.1	1,061.2	1,784.6	1,536.0	1,680.7	1,517.5	789.5	1,310.5	1,860.0	2,000.0	1,150.0	3,420.0
1996	1,442.7	2,920.1	1,080.7	1,809.7	1,533.0	1,695.7	1,544.3	787.9	1,269.6	—	—	—	—
1997	1,461.6	2,875.7	1,103.7	1,814.0	1,578.0	1,715.6	1,582.9	769.7	1,237.6	—	—	—	—
1998	1,478.8	2,892.1	1,128.2	1,822.6	1,606.0	1,728.9	1,741.0	753.2	1,221.5	1,000.0	—	—	2,700.0
1999	1,499.5	2,931.6	1,121.3	1,799.3	1,661.0	1,745.2	1,852.0	731.1	1,209.3	—	—	—	—
2000	1,504.4	2,950.5	1,114.3	1,803.5	1,578.0	1,805.7	1,963.6	687.3	1,187.3	—	—	—	—
2001	1,529.0	2,976.9	1,103.6	1,780.9	1,571.0	—	2,040.6	642.6	1,165.2	650.0	1,075.2	700.0	1,500.0
2002	1,513.4	2,985.1	1,114.4	—	1,578.8	1,849.8	2,117.5	—	1,151.0	—	—	—	—
2003	1,495.0	2,984.2	1,108.7	1,710.5	1,575.2	—	2,196.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Absolute change													
1970–1980	503.8	713.5	254.3	496.7	87.3	419.9	—	92.7	88.1	—	—	—	—
1980–1990	194.6	221.2	96.2	151.0	–169.4	–4.9	163.4	–32.4	–68.9	—	—	—	—
1990–2003	–31.8	–275.7	75.0	–45.0	227.4	[1]204.2	1,003.4	[4]–177.6	[1]–223.6	[7]–1,210.0	[7]–924.8	[7]–450.0	[7]–1,920.0
1970–2003	666.6	659.0	425.5	602.8	145.3	[2]619.2	[3]1,166.8	[5]–117.2	[2]– 204.4	—	—	—	—
Percent change													
1970–1980	60.8	30.7	37.2	44.8	6.1	34.1	—	12.2	6.5	—	—	—	—
1980–1990	14.6	7.3	10.3	9.4	–11.2	–.3	15.9	–3.8	–4.8	—	—	—	—
1990–2003	–2.1	–8.5	7.3	–2.6	16.9	[1]12.4	84.1	[4]–21.7	[1]–16.3	[7]–65.1	[7]–46.2	[7]–39.1	[7]–56.1
1970–2003	80.5	28.3	62.3	54.4	10.2	[2]50.3	[3]113.3	[5]–15.4	[2]–15.1	—	—	—	—

NOTES: [1]1990–2002; [2]1970–2002; [3]1980–2003; 41990–2001; [5]1970–2001; [6]1989; [7]1995–2001.

Union density. These statistics provide a much better comparison when measured against the size of the employed wage and salary earners. Table 3 presents the union density rates. Now the picture becomes more sobering for labor unions. In fact, union density rates in 2002 or 2003 are lower than in 1970 in all but four small European economies (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium). These four happen to be the only ones in which unions are involved in the administration and execution of un-

Table 3. Union density in 24 countries and the European Union, adjusted data, 1970–2003, in percent

Year	United States	Canada	Australia	New Zealand	Japan	Republic of Korea	European Union	Germany	France	Italy	United Kingdom	Ireland
1970	[1]23.5	31.6	[9]50.2	[14]55.2	35.1	12.6	37.8	32.0	21.7	37.0	44.8	53.2
1980	[2]19.5	[6]34.7	[10]49.5	69.1	31.1	14.7	39.7	34.9	18.3	49.6	50.7	57.1
1990	15.5	32.9	40.5	51.0	25.4	17.6	33.1	31.2	10.1	38.8	39.3	51.1
1991	15.5	—	—	44.4	24.8	16.1	34.1	36.0	9.9	38.7	38.5	50.2
1992	15.1	33.1	39.6	37.1	24.5	15.1	33.4	33.9	9.9	38.9	37.2	49.8
1993	15.1	32.8	37.6	34.5	24.3	14.5	32.7	31.8	9.6	39.2	36.1	47.7
1994	14.9	—	35.0	30.2	24.3	13.4	31.7	30.4	9.2	38.7	34.2	46.2
1995	14.3	—	32.7	27.6	24.0	12.9	30.4	29.2	9.0	38.1	32.6	45.8
1996	14.0	—	31.1	24.9	23.4	12.2	29.5	27.8	8.3	37.4	31.7	45.5
1997	13.6	28.8	30.3	23.6	22.8	11.9	28.8	27.0	8.2	36.2	30.6	43.5
1998	13.4	28.5	28.1	22.3	22.5	12.1	28.2	25.9	8.0	35.7	30.1	41.5
1999	13.4	27.9	25.7	21.9	22.2	11.1	27.8	25.6	8.1	36.1	29.8	—
2000	12.8	28.1	24.7	22.7	21.5	11.1	27.3	25.0	8.2	34.9	29.7	—
2001	12.8	28.2	24.5	22.6	20.9	11.2	26.6	23.5	8.1	34.8	29.3	36.6
2002	12.6	28.2	23.1	22.1	20.3	11.1	26.3	23.2	8.3	34.0	29.2	36.3
2003	12.4	28.4	22.9	—	19.7	11.2	—	22.6	8.3	33.7	29.3	35.3
Absolute change												
1970–1980	[3]–2.5	3.3	[11]–.7	[15]13.9	–4.0	2.0	1.9	2.9	–3.4	12.6	5.9	3.9
1980–1990	[4]–4.0	[7]–1.8	[12]–9.0	–18.1	–5.8	3.0	–6.7	–3.7	–8.1	–10.8	–11.4	–6.1
1990–2003	–3.1	–4.7	–17.6	–28.9	–5.6	–6.5	–6.7	–8.6	–1.9	–5.1	–10.0	–15.8
1970–2003	[5]–11.1	[8]–6.5	[13]–27.3	[16]–33.1	–15.4	–1.5	[17]–11.5	–9.5	–13.4	–3.3	–15.5	–17.9

NOTES: [1]1973; [2]1983; [3]1973–1981; [4]1983–1990; [5]1983–2003; [6] 1984; [7]1984–1990; [8]1984–2003; [9]1976; [10]1982; [11]1976–1982; [12]1982–1990; [13]1976–2003; [14]1971; [15]1971–1980; [16]1990–2002; [17]1970–2002.

Table 3. Continued—Union density in 24 countries and the European Union, adjusted data, 1970–2003, in percent

	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Nether-lands	Belgium	Spain	Switzer-land	Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic	Slovak Republic	Poland
1970	51.3	67.7	56.8	60.3	36.5	42.1	—	28.9	62.8	—	—	—	—
1980	69.4	78.0	58.3	78.6	34.8	54.1	12.9	31.1	56.7	—	—	—	—
1990	72.5	80.8	58.5	75.3	24.3	53.9	12.5	24.3	46.9	—	78.8	78.7	[6]53.1
1991	75.4	80.6	58.1	75.8	24.1	54.3	14.7	22.7	45.5	—	—	—	—
1992	78.4	83.3	58.1	75.8	25.2	54.3	16.5	23.0	44.3	—	—	—	—
1993	80.7	83.9	58.0	77.3	25.9	55.0	18.0	22.9	43.2	—	—	—	—
1994	80.3	83.8	57.8	77.5	25.6	54.7	17.6	23.3	41.4	—	—	—	—
1995	80.4	83.1	57.3	77.0	25.7	55.7	16.3	22.8	41.1	63.4	46.3	57.3	32.9
1996	80.4	82.7	56.3	77.1	25.1	55.9	16.1	22.9	40.1	—	—	—	—
1997	79.5	82.2	55.5	75.3	25.1	56.0	15.7	22.6	38.9	—	—	—	—
1998	78.0	81.3	55.5	75.6	24.5	55.4	16.4	21.7	38.4	32.8	—	—	24.2
1999	76.3	80.6	54.5	74.1	24.6	55.1	16.2	21.0	37.4	—	—	—	—
2000	75.0	79.1	53.7	73.3	23.1	55.6	16.1	19.4	36.5	—	—	—	
2001	74.5	78,0	52.8	72.5	22.5	—	16.1	17.8	35.7	19.9	27.0	36.1	14.7
2002	74.8	78.0	53.0	—	22.4	55.4	16.2	—	35.4	—	—	—	—
2003	74.1	78.0	53.3	70.4	22.3	—	16.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
													—
Absolute change													
1970–1980	18.1	10.3	1.5	18.3	–1.7	12.0	—	2.2	–6.0	—	—	—	—
1980–1990	2.9	2.8	.2	–3.3	–10.4	–.2	–.3	–6.8	–9.8	—	—	—	—
1990–2003	1.6	–2.8	–5.2	–4.9	–2.0	[1]1.4	3.7	[4]–6.5	[1]–11.5	[7]–43.6	[7]–19.3	[7]–21.2	[7]–18.2
1970–2003	22.8	10.3	–3.5	10.1	–14.2	[2]13.3	[3]3.4	[5]–11.2	[2]–27.3	—	—	—	—

NOTES: [1]1990–2002; [2]1970–2002;[3]1980–2003; [4]1990–2001; [5]1970-2001; [6]1989; [7]1995–2001.

employment insurance. Also, each decade became progressively worse from the perspective of union organizing (except in Spain where the unions, after a difficult start after the fall of the Franco dictatorship, managed to acquire organizing rights and succeeded to build a reasonably loyal membership base among permanent workers in large firms). Thus, even in countries in which unions made strong membership gains in the 1990s, as was the case in Ireland or the Netherlands, the rapid employment growth caused the union share in wage and salary employment to fall. Elsewhere in Europe—for instance, in Germany, France, or Austria—union density fell in spite of extremely slow employment growth.

The density statistics in table 3 show a very large degree of variation—from very low rates in the United States, Korea, France, Poland, and Spain to very high rates in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, closely followed by Belgium and Norway. Union density is twice as high in the European Union as in the United States, but trends are similarly downward and may be expected to converge somewhat when current membership trends in the largest European economy (Germany) and the largest of the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland) continue. Also, current levels of unionization in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland—with just more than one-fifth of the employed wage-earning population joining a union—tend toward the lower end of the spectrum. It may be that union decline has "bottomed out" in France or Britain, or that there will be reversals in union fortunes in the near future, but to make any such prediction, a reasonably accurate idea about what caused the current decline and variation in union organizing is needed.

Some explanations and further data. Explaining the variations and differences in union membership and density is beyond the scope of this article, which has its focus on evaluating the state of comparative statistics on the subject. However, some explanations, aided by some analytical data, may be mentioned here. The combination of a general downward trend or a general trend reversal occurring in recent decades, and the observation of cross-national divergence, shown by the data in table 3, suggests that structural, cyclical, and institutional factors are at work.[37] A common trend reversal suggests similar structural forces and economic and/or political cycles with roughly similar timing and impacts. Persistent and increasing cross-national differences are prima facia evidence that unions and union membership must be seen in the context of institutions specific to national labor markets.

Table 4 presents data on union density for specific groups or categories of employees. In the case of the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway, these disaggregated statistics are derived from surveys; for Finland, France, Spain, Austria, Germany, and Japan, they are based on adjusted administrative records.

One striking finding is that in a number of countries the female unionization rate is equal with (Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland) or even higher (Sweden, Norway, Finland) than the male unionization rate. The rapid advance of female union

Table 4. Union density rates and bargaining coverage in 14 countries – analytical table

Category	Survey data								Administrative data					
	United States	Canada	Australia	United Kingdom	Ireland	Netherlands	Sweden	Norway	Finland	France	Spain	Austria	Germany	Japan
	2004	2004	2004	2004	2003	2001	1997	1998	2001	2003	1997	1998	1997	2003
Total	12.5	30.3	22.7	28.8	37.7	25.0	82.2	55.5	71.2	8.2	15.7	38.4	27.0	19.6
Men	13.8	30.6	25.9	28.5	38.0	29.0	83.2	55.0	66.8	9.0	—	44.0	29.8	22.0
Women	11.1	30.3	21.7	29.1	37.4	19.0	89.5	60.0	75.6	7.5	—	26.8	17.0	17.0
16–24	4.7	—	–	9.7	27.8	11.0	45.0	25.0	[4]53.5	—	—	—	—	—
Full-time	13.9	32.0	25.0	31.5	39.6	27.0	90.0	[3]62.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Part-time	6.4	23.6	17.0	21.1	29.2	19.0	83.0	[3]57.0	49.1	—	—	—	—	—
Standard	—	—	[1]36.0	29.5	40.8	26.0	—	[3]61.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Casual	—	—	[1]13.8	17.2	22.1	10.0	—	[3]35.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Private	7.9	17.8	17.4	17.2	30.4	22.4	77.0	43.0	[5]55.3	5.2	14.5	29.8	21.9	17.9
Public	36.4	72.3	46.4	58.8	68.0	38.8	93.0	83.0	86.3	15.3	32.0	68.5	56.3	58.1
Manufacturing	12.9	30.5	[2]35.0	24.6	40.0	28.0	95.0	54.0	[6]83.8	[6]7.5	24.0	57.0	45.0	27.0
Coverage	13.8	32.4	50.0	35.0	—	82.0	92.0	77.0	95.0	95.0	81.0	99.0	63.0	23.5

NOTES: [1]1997; [2]2002; [3] 1994; [4]16-29 years; [5]private services only; [6]including mining and construction.

membership and density, combined with the fall in male unionization, is probably the "biggest and most profound transformation in union membership"[38] and not only in Canada. It probably reflects the greater attachment of women to the market for paid labor, as shown in rising participation rates and longer tenure; the higher female share in public services (in Europe); and the adoption of equal opportunity policies. In the German-speaking countries and the Netherlands, female membership is still relatively low, though it is rising there as well. One factor is the rise of part-time jobs, mostly held by women. Interestingly, the gap in unionization between part-time and full-time employees is narrowing in some countries in Northern Europe—most strongly in those wherein a part-time job is both widely diffused and "normalized" in the sense of being covered by the same rights, benefits, and employment conditions that apply to full-time workers. This is increasingly the case in, for instance, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands; whereas in the United Kingdom or the United States, or Japan, part-time jobs are more often flexible and less covered by union contracts.

A rather universal research finding is the decline of union density among the young. This is observed even in the Scandinavian countries. Whether this represents a lower demand for unionization among the young, is a cohort or age effect, or reflects the increased use of part-time and flexible employment contracts and lower pay rates for those that enter the labor market is hard to say and requires further study. The lower unionization rate among those that hold casual or temporary jobs is also a general finding across countries and may reflect the greater difficulty of union organizing ("union supply") and/or a lower attachment to the labor market, and possibly a lower "demand" for union representation.

The decline in unionization is concentrated very strongly in the market or private sector of the economy, with rates of unionization in the public or government sector remaining very high in most countries. Depending on the size of the public sector—which is usually much larger in Europe (including the new transitional economies) than in, for instance, the United States—this has been an important resource for labor unions and federations. Union rates in manufacturing, although often above average (and always above rates calculated for private services, without the public sector), have decreased in many countries, in particular the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, and in recent years, Germany. But unionization in manufacturing, together with public-sector unions, still constitute the vertebrate of today's labor unions and federations in terms of bargaining power and wage setting—especially where there is pattern bargaining or if wage setting is coordinated nationally across industries (as is still the case in many if not most European economies, with the exception of the United Kingdom and all but few of the new member states of the European Union).[39]

These differences are reflected in the coverage rates—that is, the share of employed wage and salary earners whose terms of employment are affected by collective agreements negotiated between unions and employers. Bargaining coverage is only slightly above union membership in the United States, Canada, or—with a wider margin—the United Kingdom. This reflects the fact that bargaining is mostly organized on a decentralized basis, as company bargaining. The union-negotiated contract applies only to union members and some nonunionized employees in the same bargaining unit (possibly with the right to opt out of membership). Multi-employer bargaining and public policies extending the negotiated contract to nonorganized firms guarantees very high coverage rates in most European countries, far in excess of union density rates. It is likely that such contracts are less detailed—and that in countries such as Spain or France, with low unionization rates outside large firms and the public sector, employers have much leeway to disregard the letter if not the spirit of the contract. On the other hand, research in a country like the Netherlands has shown that general application and extension of contracts still have the support of a large majority of employers. These factors tend to lower the opposition of employers against unions, as all share the same costs inflicted by unions (as well as benefits from union cooperation).[40]

In conclusion, it can be argued that sharper international competition ("globalization"), the rise of service employment, slower growth—or even decline of government employment ("privatization"), much higher (long-term) unemployment rates (especially in Europe), the increased use of flexible employment contracts, also the lower inflation rates and the control of inflation by means of tighter monetary policies—have limited union power and union recruitment. However, these influences are mediated by labor market institutions, legal rules, and politics. Most cross-national comparative *and* longitudinal studies on the subject find that such institutional factors as union-administered unemployment funds, the accepted presence of unions in the workplace, coordinated nationwide bargaining, and consultation correlate positively with union density—because it provides direct incentives for membership, underpins the "social custom" of membership in the workplace, and lowers employer opposition.[41] □

Notes

[1] Clara Chang and Constance Sorrentino, "Union Membership Statistics in 12 Countries," *Monthly Labor Review*, December 1991, pp. 46–53.

[2] George Sayers Bain and Robert Price, *Profiles of Union Growth: A Statistical Portrait of Eight Countries*. (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980).

[3] For Western Europe, data on these indicators have been presented in Lars Calmfors, Alison Booth, Michael Burda, Daniele Checchi, Robin Naylor, and Jelle Visser, "The Role of Collective Bargaining in Europe," pp. 1–156 in T. Boeri, A. Brugiavini and L. Calmfors, eds.,*The Role of the Unions in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).

[4] See Robert Flanagan, "Macroeconomic Performance and Collective Bargaining: an international perspective," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 37, 1999, pp. 1150–75.

[5] See, for instance, the collection of studies in Steve Crowley and David Ost, eds., *Workers After Workers' States* (Lanham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

[6] The classical source is Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action. Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1965).

[7] According to a national survey, reported and analyzed in Bert Klandermans and Jelle Visser, *De vakbeweging na de welvaartsstaat* (Assen, van Gorcum, 1995).

[8] Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, "When Institutions Matter: Union Growth and Decline in Western Europe, 1950–1995," *European Sociological Review,* Vol. 15, February 1999, pp. 1–24. See also Bertil Holmlund and Per Lundborg, "Wage Bargaining, Union Membership, and the Organization of Unemployment Insurance," *Labour Economics*, Vol. 6, March 1999, pp. 397–415. Unemployment insurance funds administered by the unions are still common, though not exclusive, in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. This explains why in these countries the unemployed retain membership and union membership tends to go up in recessions, contrary to the "pro-cyclical" movement of union membership and density found in other countries. See Bruce Western, *Between Class and Market – Post-war Unionization in the Capitalist Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997); also, Daniele Checchi and Jelle Visser, "Pattern Persistence in European Trade Union Density – A Longitudinal Analysis 1950–1996," *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 21, January 2005), pp. 1–22.

[9] As proposed by Chang and Sorrentino in their 1991 article, and by Jelle Visser, "Trends in Trade Union Membership," *Employment Outlook 1991* (Paris, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), pp. 97–134.

[10] There were no union questions in the 1982 CPS.

[11] In 2004, the series has been revised and no longer allocate people who did not report their union status on a pro-rata basis. Thus, figures for previous years are lower than was previously reported. Heidi Grainger and Heather Holt, "Trade Union Membership 2004," (London, Dept. of Trade and Industry, April 2005).

[12] Kristine Nergaard, *Organisasjonsgraden målt gjennom AKU 2. Kvartal 1995* (Oslo, FAFO Institute for Applied Social Research, 1996); and Kristine Nergaard, *Organisasjonsgrad og tariffavtaledekning målt ved AKU 2. Kvartal 1998* (Oslo, FAFO Institute for Applied Social Research, 1999).

[13] Central Statistical Office (CSO) of the Republic of Ireland, data from the Quarterly National Household Survey, Dublin, September 2005.

[14] Derived from the "Enquêtes permanentes sur les conditions de vie de ménages," a representative household survey conducted by the French official statistical office INSEE. See Thomas Amossé, "Mythes et réalités de la syndicalisation en France," publication of French Ministry of Labour, in *DARES: Premières synthèses et informations*, no. 44.2, October 2004.

[15] Philip O'Connell, Helen Russell, James Williams, and Sylvia Blackwell, *The Changing Workplace: A Survey of Employees' Views and Experiences* (Dublin, 2004). Report published by the National Centre for Partnership and Performance in cooperation with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

[16] Bert Klandermans and Jelle Visser, *De vakbeweging na de welvaartsstaat* (Assen, van Gorcum, 1995).

[17] This data is unpublished and sorting out trade union membership in Irish- and British-based unions in the Republic has been a laborious task. See Ebbinghaus and Visser, *The Societies of Europe ....*, chapters 9 and 17. Fortunately, since 1990 the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has published separate membership statistics for its British- and Irish-based affiliates operating in the Republic and Northern Ireland, covering about 97 percent of total membership in the Republic.

[18] Robyn May, Pat Walsh, Raymond Harbridge, and Glen Thickett, *Unions and Union Membership in New Zealand: Annual Review for 2002*, Working Paper (Wellington, New Zealand, Victoria University's Industrial Relations Centre). Albeit provided on a voluntary basis, this survey appears to have a very high compliance rate.

[19] See the New Zealand Department of Labour Web site, on the Internet at **www.ers.dol.gov.nz-union-registration**.

[20] The 2001–02 figures for the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, and Poland are based on the "Representativity Survey of Unions and Employers Associations" conducted by the Institut des Sciences du Travail of the Catholique University of Louvain (Belgium) on behalf of the European Commission. Older figures are from the global unionization survey by Jelle Visser on behalf of the ILO and published in the *World Labour Report 1997–98: Industrial Relations, Democracy and Social Stability* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 1998). For the other countries, sources are listed and discussed in Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, *The Societies of Europe: Trade Unions in Western Europe Since 1945* (London, Macmillan, 2000), with CD-ROM database.

[21] Annual Report of the Certification Officer 2002–2003 for the United Kingdom, page 8.

[22] From the special survey, reported by Lipset and Katchanovski, it appears that in the United States, against a background of union decline, union density among professionals has doubled from 9 to 19 percent in the four decades since the late 1950s with large advances among teachers, nurses, physicians, psychologists, social workers, librarians, and speech therapists. Seymour Martin Lipset and Ivan Katchanovski, "White-Collar and Professionals – their attitude and behavior towards unions II," (Research Paper, George Mason University, Washington, DC, 1999).

[23] In the case of Germany, in addition to the membership statistics on the German Confederation of Trade Unions and the Civil Servant's Federation published in the Statistical Yearbook of the Federal Statistical Office, data on the smaller organizations (a Christian union confederation, a federation of manager unions, of medical, court, and military staff, and various occupational unions) have been obtained from the *Institut der deutsche Wirtschaft* (IW) in Düsseldorf. In the case of Switzerland, in addition to data included in the Statistical Yearbook, we rely on the extensive survey of organizations by Robert Fluder of the University of Zürich, reported in Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, *The Societies of Europe ...*, chapter 16. In the case of Belgium, a small federation of manager unions (with an estimated 2 percent of total membership) has been left out. In Austria, there seem to be no independent unions or at least no recognized ones.

[24] In fact, it is often argued that rather than the (not always verifiable) membership claims, voting in these elections (usually with a high turnout) establishes the credibility and representation legitimacy of Spanish and French unions. This argument must of course be seen against the very low membership and density figures in both countries.

[25] For an overview of independent unions in Italy, see Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, *The Societies of Europe ...*, chapter 10.

[26] Patrick Pasture and Jo Mampuys, *In de ban van het getal: Ledenanalyse van het ACV 1900–1990* (Louvain, Acco); and chapter 4 in Bernhard Ebbinghaus and Jelle Visser, *The Societies of Europe ...*

[27] The latter applies to the Netherlands, but the Central Bureau of Statistics published aggregate data on union membership without such "secondary" affiliations of, for instance, spouses and women outside the labor force.

[28] In each of these countries, an estimated 80 percent of the unemployed are unionized, although this percentage has declined somewhat in

recent years in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, following the availability and increased take-up of nonunion-related unemployment insurance.

[29] In the case of Finland, use has been made of a special survey, carried out by the Ministry of Labor in 1989, 1994, and 2002, on the membership of students, pensioners, the self-employed, and the unemployed.

[30] This is the case in, for example, Italy, Spain, Poland, and the United Kingdom.

[31] Jelle Visser, "Trends in trade union membership"; and Jelle Visser, Sebastien Martin, and Peter Tergeist, "Trade Union Members and Union Density" (Paris, OECD, 2004), on the Internet at **www.oecd.org**.

[32] In some countries—for instance, the Netherlands, Sweden, or Norway—this means that military staff, often with extremely high unionization rates, are to be taken off the membership count.

[33] Using these data rather that the national figures may cause a small difference in the published figures by national sources, on account of different reference dates. For instance, the union density figures for the United States published by BLS tend to be .1 or .2 of a percentage point higher than those presented in table 3. In the case of the United Kingdom, using the OECD averages causes a drop of more than 1 percentage point in the union density figures; I have therefore decided to use the August LFS figures used by the Department of Trade and Industry.

[34] Of four OECD members (Greece, Mexico, Portugal, Turkey) we have only rough estimates of union membership, and we have decided not to include the two smaller ones (Iceland and Luxembourg) in this comparison. Estimates and data on these countries can be found in the OECD data set on the Internet at **www.oecd.org**.

[35] The EU figures combine those of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (estimates for Greece and Portugal, and data for Luxembourg included).

[36] Unfortunately, the IDS data for Finland are not currently available in any detailed form, and the statistics in table 2 are based on adjusted administrative data.

[37] Bernhard Ebbibnghaus and Jelle Visser, "When Institutions Matter …"; Bruce Western, *Between Class and Market …*

[38] Statistics Canada, "Fact Sheet on Unions," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, August 2004.

[39] European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2004.* Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).

[40] *Cited in European Commission, Industrial Relations in Europe 2004, chapter 1.*

[41] Daniele Checchi and Jelle Visser. "Pattern Persistence …"; Bruce Western, *Between Class and Market …*; see also Sven Oskarsson, "Class Struggle in the Wake of Globalisation – Union Organization in an Era of Economic Integration," in L. Magnussenand J. Ottosson, eds., *Europe: One Labour Market?* (Brussels, Peter Lang, 2003); and Linda Scruggs and Peter Lange, "Where have all members gone? Globalization, Institutions and Union Density," *Journal of Occupational Psychology,* Vol. 64, pp. 125–53.