

Recent labor market developments in the U.S. and nine other countries

*During 1983, unemployment declined
in the United States and Canada,
but continued up to postwar highs in Japan,
Australia, and Western Europe; for the first time
unemployment rates are available by sex*

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During 1982, the United States, Canada, Australia, and the six European countries covered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics series on comparative unemployment rates all recorded post-World War II high unemployment rates. Unemployment began to recede in the United States and Canada in the first quarter of 1983 and continued downward through the third quarter. In contrast, unemployment in most of the other countries continued to increase or stabilized at historically high rates. Even Japan, which has had much lower rates than most industrial nations, recorded a post-World War II high in unemployment during the first three quarters of 1983. Of the countries studied, Great Britain had the highest jobless rate in the third quarter of 1983 (13.6 percent), and Japan, the lowest (2.7 percent); among the European countries, Sweden recorded the lowest rate (3.7 percent).

In 1982, North American and British unemployment rates were higher for men than for women. In the United States, it was the first time that the rates were consistently higher for men than for women. In contrast, jobless rates for women in Japan, Australia, and most continental European nations remained above those for men.

This article analyzes unemployment through the third quarter of 1983 and related labor market statistics during 1982 for the United States and nine foreign nations. The foreign data have been adjusted for comparability with U.S.

definitions of employment and unemployment.¹ For some countries, data are not available to make adjustments for every difference from U.S. definitions. Nevertheless, the adjusted figures provide a much better basis for comparison than the "official rates" for these countries. The estimates presented here may differ from those previously published by BLS because of revisions of basic data and the availability of more recent survey results.² This article presents, for the first time, unemployment rates approximating U.S. concepts by sex for the United States and the nine foreign countries.

Long-term unemployment trend upward

Since the 1960's, unemployment has generally moved upward in the major industrial countries, and unemployment rates have tended to reach new highs during each successive recession. In the 1970's, the average unemployment rate for the 10 countries was 1.4 percentage points higher than in the 1960's. Over the 1980-82 period, the average rate rose by an additional 2.2 percentage points.

From the 1960's through the mid-1970's, unemployment rates were much higher in North America than in Western Europe, Japan, and Australia. However, during the late 1970's, jobless rates in several Western European nations began to match and then exceed the rates in the United States and Canada. In 1981 and 1982, British and Dutch unemployment rates surpassed U.S. and Canadian rates. (See table 1.)

The 1982 British and Dutch jobless rates of more than 12 percent were the highest annual rates of the 10 countries

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Table 1. Civilian labor force, employment, and unemployment, approximating U.S. concepts, selected countries, 1974-82

[Numbers in thousands]

| Year | United States | Canada | Australia | Japan | France | Germany | Great Britain | Italy | Netherlands | Sweden |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|---------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| Labor force: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 91,949 | 9,639 | 6,053 | 52,440 | 21,590 | 26,400 | 24,890 | 19,890 | 4,770 | 4,037 |
| 1975 | 93,775 | 9,974 | 6,169 | 52,530 | 21,640 | 26,130 | 25,150 | 20,080 | 4,820 | 4,123 |
| 1976 | 96,158 | 10,206 | 6,244 | 53,100 | 21,870 | 25,900 | 25,330 | 20,300 | 4,890 | 4,149 |
| 1977 | 99,009 | 10,498 | 6,358 | 53,820 | 22,140 | 25,870 | 25,450 | 20,530 | 4,950 | 4,168 |
| 1978 | 102,251 | 10,882 | 6,399 | 54,610 | 22,310 | 26,000 | 25,630 | 20,630 | 5,010 | 4,203 |
| 1979 | 104,962 | 11,207 | 6,480 | 55,210 | 22,500 | 26,240 | 25,730 | 20,910 | 5,100 | 4,262 |
| 1980 | 106,940 | 11,522 | 6,655 | 55,740 | 22,580 | 26,500 | 25,810 | 21,210 | 5,270 | 4,312 |
| 1981 | 108,670 | 11,830 | 6,771 | 56,320 | 22,700 | 26,630 | 25,820 | 21,380 | 5,480 | 4,326 |
| 1982 | 110,204 | 11,879 | 6,876 | 56,980 | 22,900 | 26,650 | 25,610 | 21,410 | 5,580 | 4,350 |
| Participation rate:² | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 61.2 | 60.5 | 63.0 | 63.0 | 57.2 | 55.1 | 62.7 | 47.5 | 48.2 | 64.9 |
| 1975 | 61.2 | 61.1 | 63.2 | 62.4 | 56.8 | 54.4 | 63.2 | 47.5 | 49.2 | 65.9 |
| 1976 | 61.6 | 61.1 | 62.7 | 62.4 | 56.9 | 53.8 | 63.3 | 47.8 | 49.1 | 66.0 |
| 1977 | 62.3 | 61.5 | 62.7 | 62.5 | 57.1 | 53.4 | 63.3 | 48.0 | 49.0 | 65.9 |
| 1978 | 63.2 | 62.6 | 62.0 | 62.8 | 57.2 | 53.3 | 63.4 | 47.7 | 48.9 | 66.1 |
| 1979 | 63.7 | 63.3 | 61.7 | 62.7 | 57.1 | 53.3 | 63.2 | 47.8 | 49.0 | 66.6 |
| 1980 | 63.8 | 64.0 | 62.2 | 62.6 | 56.8 | 53.2 | 63.0 | 48.0 | 49.8 | 66.9 |
| 1981 | 63.9 | 64.7 | 62.0 | 62.6 | 56.8 | 53.3 | 62.6 | 48.0 | 51.4 | 66.8 |
| 1982 | 64.0 | 64.0 | 61.8 | 62.7 | 56.9 | 53.4 | — | 47.4 | 52.0 | 66.9 |
| Employment: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 86,794 | 9,125 | 5,891 | 51,710 | 20,960 | 25,980 | 24,120 | 19,340 | 4,590 | 3,956 |
| 1975 | 85,846 | 9,284 | 5,866 | 51,530 | 20,730 | 25,230 | 24,000 | 19,470 | 4,570 | 4,056 |
| 1976 | 88,752 | 9,479 | 5,946 | 52,020 | 20,870 | 25,010 | 23,820 | 19,600 | 4,630 | 4,083 |
| 1977 | 92,017 | 9,648 | 6,000 | 52,720 | 21,050 | 24,970 | 23,840 | 19,790 | 4,700 | 4,093 |
| 1978 | 96,048 | 9,972 | 5,997 | 53,370 | 21,110 | 25,130 | 24,040 | 19,870 | 4,750 | 4,109 |
| 1979 | 98,824 | 10,369 | 6,075 | 54,040 | 21,120 | 25,460 | 24,300 | 20,100 | 4,830 | 4,174 |
| 1980 | 99,303 | 10,655 | 6,250 | 54,600 | 21,120 | 25,730 | 24,000 | 20,380 | 4,950 | 4,226 |
| 1981 | 100,397 | 10,933 | 6,380 | 55,060 | 20,970 | 25,550 | 23,090 | 20,460 | 4,990 | 4,218 |
| 1982 | 99,526 | 10,574 | 6,385 | 55,620 | 20,940 | 25,090 | 22,470 | 20,390 | 4,900 | 4,213 |
| Employment-population ratio:³ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 57.8 | 57.3 | 61.3 | 62.2 | 55.5 | 54.2 | 60.8 | 46.2 | 46.4 | 63.6 |
| 1975 | 56.1 | 56.9 | 60.1 | 61.2 | 54.4 | 52.5 | 60.3 | 46.0 | 46.6 | 64.8 |
| 1976 | 56.8 | 56.7 | 59.7 | 61.1 | 54.3 | 52.0 | 59.6 | 46.1 | 46.5 | 64.9 |
| 1977 | 57.9 | 56.6 | 59.2 | 61.2 | 54.3 | 51.6 | 59.3 | 46.3 | 46.5 | 64.8 |
| 1978 | 59.3 | 57.4 | 58.1 | 61.3 | 54.1 | 51.5 | 59.4 | 45.9 | 46.3 | 64.6 |
| 1979 | 59.9 | 58.6 | 57.9 | 61.4 | 53.6 | 51.7 | 59.7 | 46.0 | 46.4 | 65.3 |
| 1980 | 59.2 | 59.2 | 58.4 | 61.3 | 53.1 | 51.6 | 58.6 | 46.1 | 46.8 | 65.6 |
| 1981 | 59.0 | 59.8 | 58.4 | 61.2 | 52.4 | 51.1 | 56.0 | 45.9 | 46.8 | 65.1 |
| 1982 | 57.8 | 56.9 | 57.3 | 61.2 | 52.0 | 50.3 | — | 45.2 | 45.6 | 64.8 |
| Unemployment: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 5,156 | 514 | 162 | 730 | 630 | 420 | 770 | 550 | 180 | 80 |
| 1975 | 7,929 | 690 | 302 | 1,000 | 910 | 890 | 1,150 | 610 | 250 | 67 |
| 1976 | 7,406 | 727 | 298 | 1,080 | 1,000 | 890 | 1,510 | 700 | 260 | 66 |
| 1977 | 6,991 | 850 | 358 | 1,100 | 1,090 | 900 | 1,610 | 740 | 250 | 75 |
| 1978 | 6,202 | 911 | 402 | 1,240 | 1,200 | 870 | 1,590 | 760 | 260 | 94 |
| 1979 | 6,137 | 838 | 405 | 1,170 | 1,380 | 780 | 1,430 | 810 | 270 | 88 |
| 1980 | 7,637 | 867 | 406 | 1,140 | 1,460 | 770 | 1,810 | 830 | 320 | 86 |
| 1981 | 8,273 | 808 | 390 | 1,260 | 1,730 | 1,080 | 2,730 | 920 | 490 | 108 |
| 1982 | 10,678 | 1,305 | 491 | 1,360 | 1,960 | 1,560 | 3,140 | 1,020 | 680 | 137 |
| Unemployment rate: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 1.4 | 2.9 | 1.6 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 2.0 |
| 1975 | 8.5 | 6.9 | 4.9 | 1.9 | 4.2 | 3.4 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 5.2 | 1.6 |
| 1976 | 7.7 | 7.1 | 4.8 | 2.0 | 4.6 | 3.4 | 6.0 | 3.4 | 5.3 | 1.6 |
| 1977 | 7.1 | 8.1 | 5.6 | 2.0 | 4.9 | 3.5 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 5.0 | 1.8 |
| 1978 | 6.1 | 8.4 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 5.4 | 3.4 | 6.2 | 3.7 | 5.2 | 2.2 |
| 1979 | 5.8 | 7.5 | 6.2 | 2.1 | 6.1 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 3.9 | 5.3 | 2.1 |
| 1980 | 7.1 | 7.5 | 6.1 | 2.0 | 6.5 | 2.9 | 7.0 | 3.9 | 6.1 | 2.0 |
| 1981 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 7.6 | 4.1 | 10.6 | 4.3 | 8.9 | 2.5 |
| 1982 | 9.7 | 11.0 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 8.6 | 5.8 | 12.3 | 4.8 | 12.2 | 3.1 |
| Unemployment rate (as published):⁴ | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 1.4 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 5.4 | 3.5 | 2.0 |
| 1975 | 8.5 | 6.9 | 4.9 | 1.9 | 4.2 | 4.7 | 3.9 | 5.9 | 5.0 | 1.6 |
| 1976 | 7.7 | 7.1 | 4.8 | 2.0 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 5.4 | 6.7 | 5.3 | 1.6 |
| 1977 | 7.1 | 8.1 | 5.6 | 2.0 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 5.7 | 7.2 | 5.1 | 1.8 |
| 1978 | 6.1 | 8.4 | 6.3 | 2.2 | 5.3 | 4.3 | 5.6 | 7.2 | 5.1 | 2.2 |
| 1979 | 5.8 | 7.5 | 6.2 | 2.1 | 6.0 | 3.8 | 5.2 | 7.7 | 5.1 | 2.1 |
| 1980 | 7.1 | 7.5 | 6.1 | 2.0 | 6.4 | 3.8 | 6.7 | 7.6 | 5.9 | 2.0 |
| 1981 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 7.5 | 5.5 | 10.3 | 8.4 | 9.0 | 2.5 |
| 1982 | 9.7 | 11.0 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 8.8 | 7.5 | 12.1 | 9.1 | 12.4 | 3.1 |

¹Preliminary estimate based on incomplete data.

²Civilian labor force as a percent of civilian working-age population.

³Civilian employment as a percent of civilian working-age population.

⁴Published and adjusted data for the United States, Canada, and Australia are identical. Unemployment rates are computed as follows: for France, unemployment as a percent of the civilian labor force; for Japan, Italy, and Sweden, unemployment as a percent of the civilian labor force plus career military personnel; for Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, registered unemployed as a percent of employed wage-and-salary workers plus the unemployed. With the exception of France, which does not publish an unemployment rate, these are the usually published unemployment rates for each country.

Note: Data for the United States relate to the population 16 years and over. Published data for France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands relate to the population 14 years and over; for Sweden, to the population age 16 to 74; and for Canada, Australia, and Japan, to the population 15 years and over. For Great Britain, the lower age limit was raised from 15 to 16 years in 1973. The statistics have been adapted, insofar as possible, to the age at which compulsory schooling ends in each country. Therefore, the adjusted statistics for France relate to the population 16 and over, and for Germany and the Netherlands, to the population 15 years and over. The age limits of the statistics for Canada, Australia, Japan, Great Britain, and Italy coincide with the age limits of the published statistics. Statistics for Sweden remain at the lower age limit of 16, but have been adjusted to include persons 75 years and over. Dashes indicate that data are not available.

studied. Canada's 11 percent jobless rate remained well above the U.S. rate of 9.7 percent. Unemployment rates rose to about 8.5 percent in France, more than 7 percent in Australia, nearly 6 percent in Germany, and about 5 percent in Italy. The lowest rates in 1982, around 3 percent, were in Sweden and Japan—maintaining the pattern of previous years.

Unemployment rates rose steadily during 1982 in all countries studied, accelerating in the second half of the year in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. (See table 2.) By the fourth quarter of 1982, double-digit jobless rates were reached in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.³

North American unemployment rates began receding at the beginning of 1983. By October, the U.S. rate had fallen to 8.8 percent from a peak of 10.8 percent in December 1982. French unemployment stabilized at about 8.5 percent from around mid-1982 throughout the first three quarters of 1983, but unemployment continued rising in the other countries until about mid-1983. By the third quarter, it appeared that the upward trend had been halted in all countries. However, only Italy showed any significant downward trend.

Foreign worker unemployment. Since the 1973–74 European Community ban on recruitment of foreign workers from outside the Community, many unemployed foreign workers have remained in their host country. This trend has

contributed to the rising jobless rates recorded in Western Europe since the 1974–75 recession. Moreover, by the 1981–82 period, foreign workers accounted for about 9 percent of the civilian labor force in Germany, 6 percent in France, and 5 percent in Sweden.

In each country, foreign workers' unemployment rates were significantly higher than those for their native-born counterparts. This is in sharp contrast with the situation in the 1960's and early 1970's when unemployed foreign workers usually returned to their home countries and were therefore not included in host-country unemployment statistics.

The jobless rate among Germany's foreign workers has been 50 percent higher than the overall rate since 1981. Sweden's foreign worker unemployment rate has been nearly double the overall rate since 1977, the year such data were first collected in the Swedish labor force survey. By the first quarter of 1983, the ratio had declined somewhat, as the overall rate began to increase more rapidly than the foreign worker rate.

Employment showed broad declines

In 1982, employment rose in only 2 of the 10 countries studied—Japan and Australia. Employment rose by 1 percent in Japan and marginally in Australia. In North America and Western Europe, employment declined, with the sharpest drops, about 3 percent, occurring in Canada and Great Britain. U.S., German, and Dutch employment fell by 1 to

Table 2. Quarterly unemployment rates, approximating U.S. concepts, selected countries, seasonally adjusted, 1978–83

| Period | United States | Canada | Australia | Japan | France ¹ | Germany ¹ | Great Britain ¹ | Italy ² | Sweden |
|-------------|---------------|--------|-----------|-------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| 1978: | 6.1 | 8.4 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 5.4 | 3.4 | 6.2 | 3.7 | 2.2 |
| I | 6.3 | 8.4 | 6.6 | 2.2 | 4.8 | 3.4 | 6.5 | 3.7 | 2.2 |
| II | 6.0 | 8.5 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 5.3 | 3.4 | 6.4 | 3.6 | 2.3 |
| III | 6.0 | 8.5 | 6.2 | 2.4 | 5.7 | 3.3 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 2.4 |
| IV | 5.9 | 8.1 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 5.6 | 3.2 | 6.0 | 3.9 | 2.0 |
| 1979: | 5.8 | 7.5 | 6.2 | 2.1 | 6.1 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 3.9 | 2.1 |
| I | 5.9 | 7.9 | 6.4 | 2.1 | 5.8 | 3.2 | 5.8 | 3.8 | 2.2 |
| II | 5.7 | 7.6 | 6.3 | 2.1 | 6.2 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 3.8 | 2.2 |
| III | 5.9 | 7.1 | 6.2 | 2.2 | 6.3 | 2.9 | 5.5 | 4.0 | 2.1 |
| IV | 5.9 | 7.2 | 6.2 | 2.1 | 6.2 | 2.8 | 5.5 | 3.9 | 1.8 |
| 1980: | 7.1 | 7.5 | 6.1 | 2.0 | 6.5 | 2.9 | 7.0 | 3.9 | 2.0 |
| I | 6.3 | 7.6 | 6.1 | 1.9 | 6.2 | 2.7 | 5.7 | 4.0 | 1.8 |
| II | 7.3 | 7.8 | 6.3 | 2.0 | 6.5 | 2.8 | 6.4 | 3.9 | 2.0 |
| III | 7.7 | 7.4 | 6.1 | 2.1 | 6.5 | 3.0 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 1.9 |
| IV | 7.4 | 7.2 | 6.0 | 2.2 | 6.6 | 3.2 | 8.6 | 3.9 | 2.1 |
| 1981: | 7.6 | 7.6 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 7.6 | 4.1 | 10.6 | 4.3 | 2.5 |
| I | 7.4 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 7.0 | 3.4 | 9.5 | 3.9 | 2.2 |
| II | 7.4 | 7.2 | 5.5 | 2.3 | 7.7 | 3.8 | 10.3 | 4.3 | 2.2 |
| III | 7.4 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 7.9 | 4.3 | 11.1 | 4.2 | 2.5 |
| IV | 8.3 | 8.4 | 5.9 | 2.2 | 7.9 | 4.8 | 11.6 | 4.8 | 3.0 |
| 1982: | 9.7 | 11.0 | 7.1 | 2.4 | 8.6 | 5.8 | 12.3 | 4.8 | 3.1 |
| I | 8.8 | 8.9 | 6.3 | 2.3 | 8.3 | 5.3 | 11.9 | 5.0 | 3.0 |
| II | 9.4 | 10.5 | 6.6 | 2.4 | 8.5 | 5.6 | 12.1 | 5.0 | 3.2 |
| III | 10.0 | 12.1 | 7.0 | 2.4 | 8.7 | 6.0 | 12.6 | 4.6 | 3.4 |
| IV | 10.7 | 12.7 | 8.7 | 2.4 | 8.6 | 6.5 | 12.9 | 4.5 | 3.0 |
| 1983: | | | | | | | | | |
| I | 10.3 | 12.5 | 9.7 | 2.7 | 8.6 | 7.0 | 13.5 | 4.9 | 3.3 |
| II | 10.1 | 12.4 | 10.3 | 2.7 | 8.6 | 7.4 | 13.8 | 5.7 | 3.6 |
| III | 9.4 | 11.7 | 10.3 | 2.7 | 8.6 | 7.5 | 13.6 | 4.8 | 3.7 |

¹Preliminary for France from 1981 forward, and for Germany and Great Britain from 1982 forward.

²Quarterly data are for January, April, July, and October.

NOTE: Quarterly figures for France, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain are calculated by applying annual adjustment factors to current published data, and therefore should be viewed as only approximate indicators of unemployment under U.S. concepts. Published data for Australia, Canada, Japan, and Sweden require little or no adjustment.

Table 3. Labor force participation rates approximating U.S. concepts, by sex, selected countries, 1970-82

| Year | United States | Canada | Australia | Japan | France ¹ | Germany | Great Britain | Italy | Netherlands ¹ | Sweden |
|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------|-------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Men: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1970 | 79.7 | 77.8 | 84.1 | 81.5 | 74.9 | 78.7 | 82.2 | 73.5 | (²) | 78.5 |
| 1971 | 79.1 | 77.3 | 83.8 | 81.9 | 74.4 | 77.8 | 81.6 | 73.2 | (²) | 78.0 |
| 1972 | 79.0 | 77.5 | 83.6 | 81.9 | 74.1 | 76.1 | 81.3 | 71.8 | (²) | 77.3 |
| 1973 | 78.8 | 78.2 | 83.2 | 81.9 | 73.3 | 75.3 | 82.8 | 71.0 | 75.5 | 76.8 |
| 1974 | 78.7 | 78.7 | 82.7 | 81.6 | 73.0 | 74.1 | 81.2 | 70.8 | (²) | 76.7 |
| 1975 | 77.9 | 78.4 | 82.2 | 81.2 | 73.2 | 73.1 | 81.4 | 70.4 | 74.7 | 77.0 |
| 1976 | 77.5 | 77.6 | 81.5 | 81.0 | 72.6 | 72.1 | 81.3 | 70.2 | (²) | 76.5 |
| 1977 | 77.7 | 77.6 | 81.0 | 80.4 | 71.6 | 71.6 | 80.7 | 69.2 | 73.4 | 75.6 |
| 1978 | 77.9 | 77.9 | 79.8 | 80.1 | 71.4 | 71.3 | 80.2 | 68.6 | (²) | 75.1 |
| 1979 | 77.8 | 78.4 | 79.5 | 79.9 | 71.6 | 71.1 | 79.5 | 68.2 | 71.8 | 75.1 |
| 1980 | 77.4 | 78.3 | 79.2 | 79.6 | 70.6 | 70.4 | 79.2 | 67.8 | (²) | 74.9 |
| 1981 | 77.0 | 78.3 | 78.9 | 79.6 | 69.9 | 70.2 | ³ 78.6 | 67.6 | 71.8 | 73.8 |
| 1982 | 76.6 | 76.9 | 78.4 | 79.3 | (²) | ³ 70.0 | (²) | 66.6 | (²) | ³ 73.6 |
| Women: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1970 | 43.3 | 38.3 | 40.4 | 49.3 | 40.1 | 38.4 | 42.4 | 26.2 | (²) | 50.0 |
| 1971 | 43.4 | 39.4 | 41.0 | 47.7 | 39.8 | 38.5 | 42.5 | 26.1 | (²) | 50.9 |
| 1972 | 43.9 | 40.2 | 41.2 | 46.8 | 40.5 | 38.6 | 43.3 | 25.4 | (²) | 51.5 |
| 1973 | 44.7 | 41.9 | 42.4 | 47.3 | 41.0 | 38.9 | 45.0 | 25.9 | 27.4 | 51.7 |
| 1974 | 45.7 | 43.0 | 43.5 | 45.7 | 41.6 | 38.8 | 46.2 | 26.3 | (²) | 53.3 |
| 1975 | 46.3 | 44.4 | 44.5 | 44.8 | 42.5 | 38.4 | 46.7 | 26.6 | 28.0 | 55.2 |
| 1976 | 47.3 | 45.2 | 44.3 | 44.8 | 42.9 | 38.2 | 47.1 | 27.5 | (²) | 55.8 |
| 1977 | 48.4 | 46.0 | 44.8 | 45.7 | 44.2 | 37.8 | 47.5 | 28.6 | 28.8 | 56.7 |
| 1978 | 50.0 | 47.8 | 44.5 | 46.4 | 43.3 | 37.8 | 48.1 | 28.6 | (²) | 57.5 |
| 1979 | 50.9 | 48.9 | 44.3 | 46.6 | 44.3 | 37.9 | 48.4 | 29.2 | 30.2 | 58.5 |
| 1980 | 51.5 | 50.3 | 45.5 | 46.6 | 42.7 | 38.2 | 48.3 | 29.9 | (²) | 59.3 |
| 1981 | 52.1 | 51.6 | 45.5 | 46.7 | 43.1 | 38.6 | ³ 48.1 | 30.1 | 33.3 | 60.1 |
| 1982 | 52.6 | 51.6 | 45.4 | 47.0 | (²) | ³ 38.9 | (²) | 29.9 | (²) | ³ 60.7 |

¹Data are for March for France and for March-May for the Netherlands.

²Not available.

³Preliminary estimate.

NOTE: Data relate to the civilian labor force approximating U.S. concepts as a percent of the civilian noninstitutionalized working age population. Working age is defined as 16

years and over in the United States, France, and Sweden; 15 years and over in Australia, Canada, Germany, and Japan; and 14 years and over in Italy. For Great Britain, the lower age limit was raised from 15 to 16 in 1973. For the Netherlands, the lower age limit was raised from 14 to 15 in 1975. The institutionalized working age population is included in Japan and Germany.

2 percent, and lesser declines occurred in France, Italy, and Sweden.

For Canada, 1982 was the first year in nearly a quarter of a century in which employment declined. During the recessionary periods of the 1960's and 1970's, Canadian employment growth was maintained, although at a slackened pace. In 1974-75, employment dropped in most countries, but Canadian employment rose 1.7 percent.

During the second half of 1982, employment declined in most countries studied. By mid-1983, employment was rising in North America, Japan, Australia, Italy, and Sweden. Between the first and third quarters of 1983, employment rose sharply in the United States and Canada (each by about 2.5 percent) and moderately in Australia, Italy, and Sweden (all by less than 0.5 percent).

Employment maintenance programs. In several Western European nations, special employment and training programs cover a significant number of persons in the labor force. In March 1983, 657,000 persons were covered by various employment and training schemes in Great Britain. In fact, these schemes kept approximately 365,000 persons, or 1.4 percent of the British labor force, from becoming unemployed, according to the British Department of Employment.⁴

In Sweden, the number enrolled in programs to assist the jobless has exceeded the number of unemployed since 1973. In 1982, total enrollment in the various public works and

training programs accounted for 3.2 percent of the labor force, compared with a 3.1-percent unemployment rate.

Programs subsidizing employees placed on reduced work schedules were extensive in France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy. In France, 200,000 such workers, nearly 2 percent of the work force, received partial unemployment benefits in 1982. While even more workers had collected short-time benefits in 1981, the average number of hours subsidized per worker was greater in 1982.

In Germany, the number of persons on short-time work schedules increased 75 percent to nearly 610,000, approximately 2.3 percent of the labor force in 1982. In Britain, the Temporary Short-Term Working Compensation Scheme subsidized 124,000 persons, or 0.5 percent of the 1982 labor force. In Italy, the number of hours subsidized by the Wage Supplement Fund rose 86 percent in 1982. An estimated 1.4 percent of the labor force were covered by this program.

Employment-population ratios. In 1982, employment-population ratios declined in all nations studied except Japan. Because Japanese employment growth matched growth of the working-age population, the ratio remained unchanged. The decrease in the proportion of the working-age population with jobs was most pronounced in Great Britain and Canada, the countries with the largest percentage declines in employment.

The employment-population ratio continued to be highest in Sweden, 65 percent, and lowest in Italy⁵ and the Neth-

erlands, about 45 percent. The ratios ranged between 55 and 60 percent in the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, and Great Britain, and were slightly lower in France and Germany.

Participation rates steady

In 1982, labor force participation rates rose in the Netherlands and held virtually steady in the United States, Japan, France, Germany, and Sweden. As shown in table 3, rising female participation rates offset declining male rates in the United States, Japan, Germany, and Sweden. (Data by sex were not yet available for France.)

Participation rates declined in Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and Italy. In Italy, the decline may have been exacerbated by a new law introduced in April 1981 which increased opportunities for early retirement.⁶ In Great Britain, voluntary early retirement contributed to falling participation rates.

Discouraged workers. Several of the countries studied collect data on the number of discouraged workers—persons not in the labor force who state a current desire for work but who are not actively seeking a job because they think they cannot find one. Data are available on a regular basis for the United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, and Italy, although each nation's definitions of these workers vary.

In the United States, discouraged workers increased by

more than one-third between the first and fourth quarters of 1982, and averaged 1.5 million (compared with around 10.7 million unemployed persons) for the year. During the first three quarters of 1983, the number of such workers moved downward along with the number of unemployed. The ratio of discouraged workers to unemployment, however, remained at about 15 percent. In Canada, where the definition of discouraged workers is more restrictive than the U.S. definition, the number of these workers nearly doubled during 1982 to 110,000, comparable to more than 8 percent of the unemployed. In Australia, discouraged jobseekers rose by 13 percent in 1982, and were roughly comparable to 16 percent of the unemployed. In Sweden, the number of discouraged workers has remained about half the number of unemployed since 1978.

According to the Italian definition, discouraged jobseekers declined steadily in that nation to about 8 percent of the number of unemployed. In Italy, discouraged workers are defined as persons not in the labor force who declare their desire and availability for work but who have not sought work because they think they cannot find a job. However, nearly half of the recorded unemployed, under Italian definitions, had not actively sought work in the past 4 weeks. They have been excluded from the BLS adjusted unemployment figures for Italy because U.S. definitions require active jobseeking within the past 4 weeks. However, they would be classified as discouraged under U.S. concepts. The ratio

Table 4. Unemployment rates by sex, approximating U.S. concepts, selected countries, 1970-82

| Year | United States | Canada | Australia | Japan ¹ | France ² | Germany | Great Britain | Italy | Netherlands ³ | Sweden |
|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|-------|--------------------------|--------|
| Men: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1970 | 4.4 | 5.6 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.5 | .5 | 3.4 | 2.2 | (⁴) | 1.4 |
| 1971 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.7 | .5 | 4.2 | 2.2 | (⁴) | 2.4 |
| 1972 | 5.0 | 5.8 | 2.0 | 1.4 | 1.7 | .7 | 4.7 | 2.6 | (⁴) | 2.5 |
| 1973 | 4.2 | 4.9 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.6 | .6 | 3.5 | 2.4 | 2.8 | 2.2 |
| 1974 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 3.1 | 2.0 | (⁴) | 1.7 |
| 1975 | 7.9 | 6.2 | 3.8 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 3.3 | 4.9 | 2.2 | 3.8 | 1.4 |
| 1976 | 7.1 | 6.3 | 3.9 | 2.1 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 6.3 | 2.4 | (⁴) | 1.3 |
| 1977 | 6.3 | 7.3 | 4.6 | 2.0 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 6.6 | 2.5 | 4.0 | 1.5 |
| 1978 | 5.3 | 7.6 | 5.4 | 2.2 | 3.7 | 2.7 | 6.2 | 2.6 | (⁴) | 2.1 |
| 1979 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 5.2 | 1.9 | 4.3 | 2.3 | 5.5 | 2.7 | 3.7 | 1.9 |
| 1980 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 5.1 | 1.7 | 4.3 | 2.3 | 7.3 | 2.6 | (⁴) | 1.7 |
| 1981 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 4.8 | 1.9 | 5.4 | 3.4 | 11.4 | 2.9 | 6.3 | 2.4 |
| 1982 | 9.9 | 11.1 | 6.3 | 1.9 | (⁴) | ⁵ 5.2 | 13.3 | 3.4 | (⁴) | 3.0 |
| Women: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1970 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 4.1 | .6 | 2.5 | 4.5 | (⁴) | 1.7 |
| 1971 | 6.9 | 6.6 | 3.1 | 2.7 | 4.6 | .8 | 3.3 | 4.5 | (⁴) | 2.8 |
| 1972 | 6.6 | 7.0 | 3.9 | 2.9 | 4.7 | .8 | 3.4 | 5.2 | (⁴) | 3.0 |
| 1973 | 6.0 | 6.7 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 4.5 | .9 | 2.7 | 5.4 | 4.2 | 2.8 |
| 1974 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 4.1 | 2.9 | 4.8 | 1.8 | 3.0 | 4.5 | (⁴) | 2.4 |
| 1975 | 9.3 | 8.1 | 7.0 | 3.8 | 6.3 | 3.6 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 6.9 | 2.0 |
| 1976 | 8.6 | 8.4 | 6.4 | 3.8 | 7.2 | 4.0 | 5.4 | 5.8 | (⁴) | 2.0 |
| 1977 | 8.2 | 9.4 | 7.5 | 4.3 | 7.6 | 4.5 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 6.7 | 2.2 |
| 1978 | 7.2 | 9.6 | 7.9 | 4.3 | 8.0 | 4.4 | 6.3 | 6.1 | (⁴) | 2.4 |
| 1979 | 6.8 | 8.8 | 8.2 | 4.1 | 9.0 | 4.1 | 5.6 | 6.4 | 8.1 | 2.3 |
| 1980 | 7.4 | 8.4 | 7.9 | 3.3 | 9.8 | 3.8 | 6.6 | 6.6 | (⁴) | 2.3 |
| 1981 | 7.9 | 8.3 | 7.4 | 3.6 | 11.1 | 5.1 | 9.4 | 7.2 | 11.0 | 2.7 |
| 1982 | 9.4 | 10.8 | 8.5 | 4.0 | (⁴) | ⁵ 6.9 | 10.8 | 7.6 | (⁴) | 3.4 |

¹Adjusted rates estimated on the basis of special March survey data for 1977 through 1980. Adjustments for 1970-76 are based on March 1977 data, and adjustments for 1981-82 are based on March 1980 data.

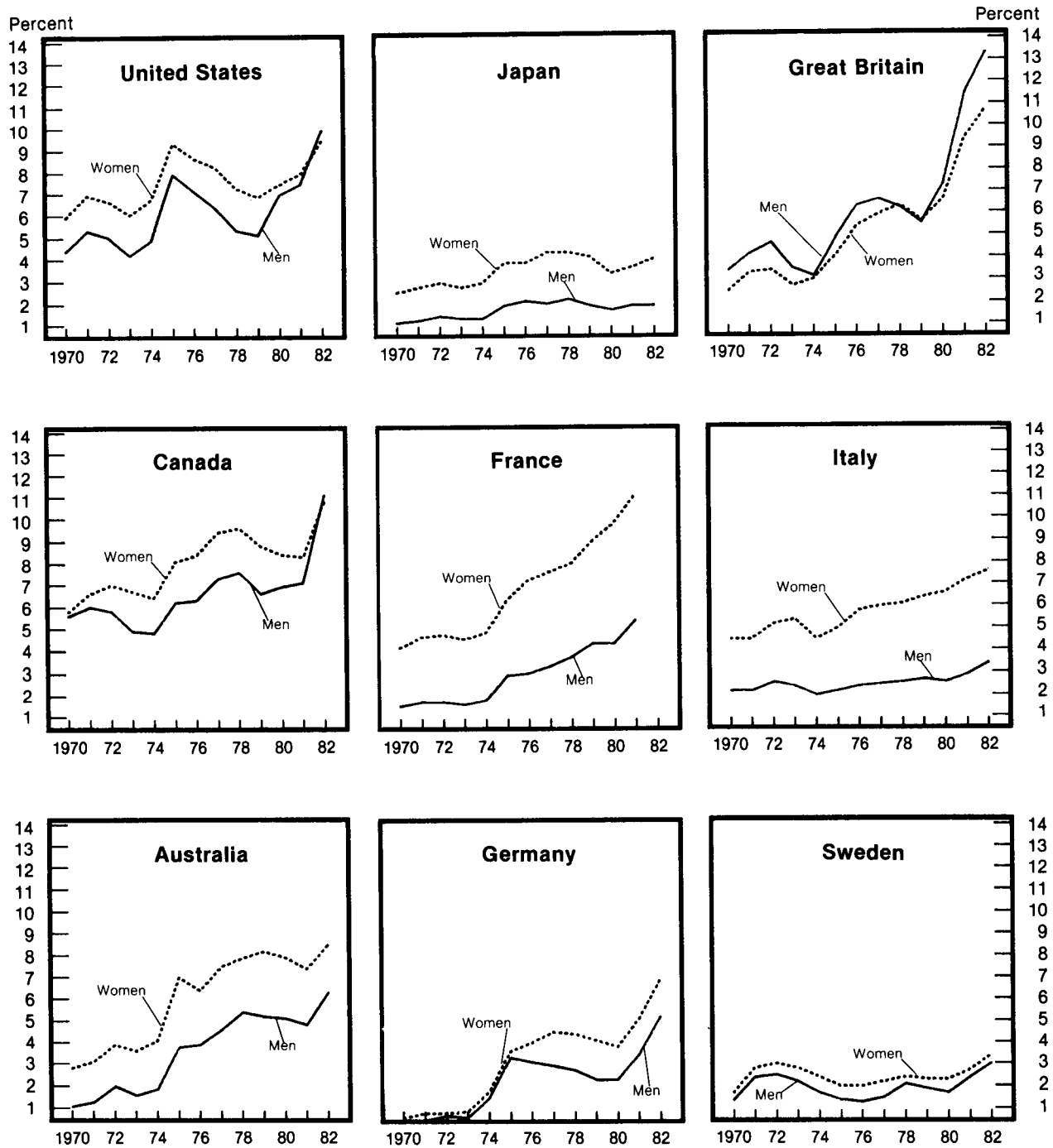
²Data refer to March.

³Data refer to March-May.

⁴Not available.

⁵Preliminary estimate based on incomplete data.

Chart 1. Unemployment rates by sex, approximating U.S. concepts, selected countries, 1970-82



of all discouraged workers to adjusted unemployed would thereby be more than 100 percent.

Unemployment rates by sex

Historically, women have had higher unemployment rates than men in all countries studied except Great Britain. This reflected their relatively higher rate of movement into and

out of the labor force and their lower levels of experience and seniority which make women more vulnerable to layoff. During economic downturns, however, the concentration of men in the more seriously affected goods-producing sector worsened their position relative to women. In 1982, the unemployment rates were consistently higher for men than for women for the first time in the United States. (See table

Table 5. Ratio of female to male unemployment rates, selected countries, 1970–82

| Year | United States | Canada | Australia | Japan | France | Germany | Great Britain | Italy | Netherlands | Sweden |
|------|---------------|--------|-----------|-------|------------------|---------|---------------|-------|------------------|--------|
| 1970 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 1.2 | .7 | 2.0 | (¹) | 1.2 |
| 1971 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 1.6 | .8 | 2.0 | (¹) | 1.2 |
| 1972 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.8 | 1.1 | .7 | 2.0 | (¹) | 1.2 |
| 1973 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.8 | 1.5 | .8 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.3 |
| 1974 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 2.2 | (¹) | 1.4 |
| 1975 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.1 | .8 | 2.3 | 1.8 | 1.4 |
| 1976 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 1.3 | .9 | 2.4 | (¹) | 1.5 |
| 1977 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 1.6 | .9 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| 1978 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 2.3 | (¹) | 1.1 |
| 1979 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 1.2 |
| 1980 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 2.3 | 1.6 | .9 | 2.5 | (¹) | 1.4 |
| 1981 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 1.5 | .8 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 1.1 |
| 1982 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 2.1 | (¹) | 1.3 | .8 | 2.2 | (¹) | 1.1 |

¹Not available.

4 and chart 1. Rates for the Netherlands are not shown in the chart because annual data are not available.) Canada showed a similar pattern.⁷ In Australia, Japan, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden, such a turnabout did not occur: unemployment rates for women remained well above those for men. However, the difference between the rates by sex narrowed in most countries. In Great Britain, the unemployment rate for women continued to be significantly lower than that for men.

The unemployment rates by sex have been adjusted to approximate U.S. concepts by the same procedures that are used to adjust the overall unemployment rates for all countries, except Japan. Special March labor force surveys conducted from 1977 through 1980 have been used to obtain the male and female unemployment rates for Japan. These special surveys indicate that the regular monthly Japanese survey overstates unemployment rates for men and understates those for women.⁸ The regular Japanese surveys show little difference between the jobless rates for men and women, while the more probing March surveys show a rather wide differential. For the 1970–76 period, male and female unemployment rates for Japan were estimated based on 1977 relationships. Similarly, 1981 and 1982 rates were estimated based on 1980 relationships. Therefore, figures for years other than the 1977–80 period should be regarded with caution.

From 1970 through 1982, the average ratio of female to male unemployment rates was widest in France, Italy, and Japan, where the ratio was greater than 2. In the United

States, Canada, and Sweden, the ratio was much lower, slightly above 1. In Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands, the ratio was about 1.5. Britain was the only country studied where the ratio was less than 1. (See table 5.)

The ratio of female to male unemployment rates declined between the 1970's and early 1980's in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, France, and Sweden. Furthermore, while declines were evident during the 1974–75 recession, they were more marked in the 1980–82 period. Two reasons underlie this narrowing of the differential. First, the goods-producing sector, which employs relatively more men than women, was especially hard hit during 1980–82. In contrast, employment in the service-producing sector, with its high concentration of women, increased or stabilized, except in Great Britain where it has been falling in recent years. Second, the rate of female labor force growth has slowed substantially since 1979, thereby easing the upward pressure on female unemployment.

In 1982, the ratio of female to male jobless rates rose in only one country studied—Japan. Withdrawal from the labor force in response to job loss has long been the practice among Japanese women. Recently, however, they have remained in the labor market, immediately seeking work upon becoming jobless. The number of Japanese women re-entering the work force has also grown, reflecting the greater availability of childcare and part-time jobs.⁹ In 1982, the growth rate of the female labor force increased for the first time since 1977, putting upward pressure on jobless rates among Japanese women. □

FOOTNOTES

¹ Beginning with January 1983 data, the national U.S. employment and labor force statistics are available including and excluding the resident Armed Forces. The data presented in this article are on the civilian labor force basis. Foreign data including the Armed Forces—the total labor force basis—are available upon request.

² German data have been revised to reflect new estimates of labor force

and employment based on 1980 population census results. For Great Britain, new estimates of employment based on the September 1981 Census of Employment and new figures on registered unemployment based on a new method of collecting the data have been incorporated. For further information, see *International Comparisons of Unemployment*, Bulletin 1979 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978), Appendix B; and Supplement to Bulletin 1979 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1983), Appendix B.

³Seasonally adjusted quarterly jobless rates approximating U.S. concepts are not available for the Netherlands. However, there is very little difference between the adjusted and as published unemployment rates, and the seasonally adjusted published rates have been more than 10 percent since the fourth quarter of 1981. The registered unemployment rates have risen steadily throughout 1982 and the first half of 1983.

⁴"Trends in Labour Statistics-Commentary." *Employment Gazette*, May 1983, p. S4. The actual effect on the unemployment register is less than the number of persons covered by the various measures. The Department of Employment estimates that only a portion of those covered by these measures would have become unemployed in their absence.

⁵The employment ratio for Italy is understated because of the significant

number of persons whose employment goes unrecorded—black labor. For further information, see *International Comparisons of Unemployment*.

⁶Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Economic Survey of Italy* (Paris, OECD, December 1982), p. 14.

⁷Unlike women in the United States, Canadian women have not always had higher annual average jobless rates than men prior to 1982. During the 1960's, there were also a few years when female rates were slightly below the male rates in Canada.

⁸See Constance Sorrentino's comment on Japan's low unemployment in a forthcoming issue of the *Review*.

⁹U.S. Embassy's (Tokyo) summary of the Japanese Ministry of Labor's *Annual White Paper*, Aug. 20, 1983, p. 1.

ERRATA

In "Trends in employment and unemployment in families," by Deborah Pisetzner Klein, the chart 3 legends should be transposed and the left vertical axis labeled "Millions," instead of "Thousands" (December *Monthly Labor Review*, p. 23). A corrected version of the chart appears below.

