

*Part Two*

**KEY ISSUES FOR LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL POLICIES**



## Chapter 4

### TRENDS IN TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP\*

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Trade unions are important for several reasons. Unions not only negotiate wages for their members, they also affect fringe benefits, productivity, work allocation, job security and employee participation practices. In the words of Freeman and Medoff (1984), unions "alter nearly every ... measurable aspect of the operation of workplaces and enterprises". They also influence the employment terms for non-union members through spill-over effects, extension of agreements, and employer responses to the union environment. Finally, a good deal of protective legislation – ranging from unemployment compensation, sickness insurance to employment protection and occupational health and safety regulation – would perhaps not exist, or be very different, but for the influence of organised labour.

Over the last decade, the traditional role of unions has come under increased strain. Global and more intense competition, continuing employment shifts from manufacturing to services, soaring unemployment rates, and a changing profile of the labour force were among the factors challenging the customary patterns and practices of labour-management relations. The main level of interaction in industrial relations shifted from national fora to industries, and from industries to individual firms and workplaces. At the same time, power and initiative appear to have drifted away from trade unions as well as state actors.

Although this chapter focuses on union membership, industrial relations arrangements and practices differ among developed countries in ways that go beyond unionisation rates. For example, in Sweden trade union federations negotiate national wage agreements with central organisations of employers; in Germany industrial union headquarters supervise regional but industry-wide collective agreements; in the United Kingdom different and often rival unions organise, and negotiate, within the same firm; in Japan tens of thousands of enterprise unions each year tune their wage claims in a

common campaign; in Australia unions and employers' associations argue wage cases before arbitration tribunals; in the United States thousands of local unions bargain individually with company managements arriving at detailed agreements; and in France employers and unions often still appear reluctant to negotiate and sign collective agreements at all.

In most continental European countries, collective agreements have the force of a legal contract, often with a peace clause for its duration and with the possibility of extension to non-union employers. By contrast, in British law a collective agreement is no more than a gentleman's agreement, a compromise for as long as neither of the parties wants to withdraw from it. Extension of agreements to non-organised employers is anathema in U.S. labour relations, but a common feature not only in European countries, but also in the pay awards in Australia and, until recently, New Zealand. In, *inter alia*, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, legal company-based institutions of worker representation exist that are formally independent, but in practice linked to unions. In Norway and Sweden the law assists union-based institutions of a similar kind. Such "second channels of representation" are not found in the United Kingdom, North America or Australia, and have generally been rejected by unions in those countries.

On condition that one keeps in mind such institutional and organisational differences, which will be reviewed in the final section of this chapter, data on union membership serve as a fruitful starting point for the examination of cross-national trends in industrial relations. The chapter examines both aggregate union membership and its distribution over industries, between male and female workers, and between the public and market sectors of the economy, concentrating on the question: how large, and how significant, are the changes in union representation over the past twenty years? Before the first results are presented, the next section discusses problems of data comparability and some specific institutional arrangements that influence the propensity of employees to become union members.

## B. ISSUES OF COMPARABILITY AND INTERPRETATION

### 1. Data collection and categories of membership

Details of the sources and methods used in compiling union membership statistics in each country are given in Annex 4.A. Two main methods are used. The first is to ask respondents about membership in a household or labour force survey. This method has clear advantages when the purpose is the calculation and comparison of detailed union density rates, broken down by industrial branch, occupational group, gender, enterprise size and other workforce characteristics. Only Australia (1976, 1982, 1986 and 1988), Canada (1984 and 1986), Sweden (since 1987) and the United States (from 1973 onwards) have time-series unionisation data of this kind. In the United Kingdom, the 1989 Labour Force Survey also contained a question about trade union membership.

In a number of countries, notably Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Great Britain, limited data on union membership at one or several points in time can be extracted from some smaller surveys designed for other purposes, for example social attitude surveys (see in Annex 4.B). An advantage of such surveys is that employees' personal characteristics and attitudes can be related to union membership, although usually the small sample size excludes breakdowns by industry. Yet another type of survey, available mainly in the United Kingdom, is an establishment survey where management is asked to estimate union membership among their workforce. This method facilitates the study of workplace characteristics and managerial attitudes related to unionisation; however, small and newly founded firms and workplaces are normally not part of the sample.

The second method is compilation of membership statistics from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions or trade union federations. In most countries the results are published by the official registrar, the national statistical office, the labour ministry or the respective trade union federation. This method has advantages when studying how membership relates to union type (craft- or industry-based), membership concentration and inter-union competition. Except for the United States, only this method gives long-term, annual time-series data on union membership. Its disadvantage is that the data are influenced by administrative practices.

Unions may have political or financial reasons to overstate or understate their membership figures in reports to peak federations, government agencies, employers or competitors. They may also apply different definitions as to who is a member "in good standing", and be slow to remove members who have left the industry or are in arrears with union dues (membership

fees), leading to inclusion in the data of persons who are not in the labour force or who do not (or do no longer) consider themselves as members. Another possible source of distortion concerns "double counting", especially between trade unions and professional associations. The comparison with survey data, for the countries and years where this is possible, suggests that these factors lead to some overstatement in membership statistics reported by unions, but the overstatement is in most cases slight, provided union membership is defined consistently.

Unions often maintain the membership of unemployed and retired workers, and may in some cases also include self-employed persons (professionals, salesmen, small farmers). Such groups would normally be excluded in survey data, which report union membership for wage- and salary-earners only. Care has been taken to present statistics in this chapter on a similar basis, excluding self-employed, retired and unemployed persons. This is necessary to ensure consistency in density rates, which are calculated by dividing union membership by the number of wage- and salary-earners in employment. Density rates after this adjustment are called "net" rates, though some "gross" rates will also be given to allow comparison with the data in their original form.

Annex 4.A details for each country the way in which the share of retired and unemployed members was calculated. In Italy, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, enough individual unions provide data on *retired* members to allow a reasonably accurate estimate of their share. For the main union federations in Denmark and Finland, the deflator applying to the comparable Swedish federation has been used (supplemented by information from recent surveys), and for Belgium and France deflators were taken from secondary studies. For Ireland, estimates used for the United Kingdom have been applied. The surveys undertaken in Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States exclude retired persons, as do the New Zealand statistics based on bargaining coverage. No information on the inclusion or exclusion of the self-employed and of persons outside the labour force in trade union membership statistics was available in Greece, Iceland, Portugal and Spain; this may cause an exaggerated union density value in comparison with other countries. Retired workers may also be included in the data for Japan, but the fact that union density declines substantially among employees aged 45 and over suggests that they are only a small proportion.

In Belgium, Denmark and Finland, the number of *unemployed* members included in the "gross" statistics is high enough to distort the density rates seriously. Together with Sweden, these are the only countries in which unions have retained a role in administering unemployment insurance benefits [for historical details, see Flora (1986)], creating a real or perceived

advantage for workers to join unions when they anticipate or experience unemployment. While Sweden has experienced low unemployment rates throughout the period considered, rates have soared in the other three countries. In Belgium, it was found that 80 per cent of all unemployed workers are union members, a proportion even higher than among employed workers. Using this information, and the corresponding figures for Sweden, when calculating the "net" membership figures for Belgium, Denmark and Finland, 80 per cent of the number of unemployed were subtracted from the "gross" membership figures.

In France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland the available data on union membership allow the exclusion of the unemployed (between 1 and 5 per cent of "gross" membership); in Italy the union federations organise unemployed workers separately and publish separate statistics on them. A small proportion of unemployed members (between 1 and 3 per cent in recent years) is included in the data for Austria, Canada and Germany. In New Zealand and Turkey, unemployed workers are not covered by the statistics; this is also true for the survey data in Australia and the United States. However, as in the case of the retired, it is impossible to determine whether membership in Greece, Iceland, Japan, Portugal and Spain includes unemployed persons. For the United Kingdom it has been estimated that on average 2 per cent of the reported members were unemployed in the 1980s [Bailey and Kelley (1990)]; the same estimate was applied for the Republic of Ireland.

Union membership statistics not only depend on who counts as a member, but also on the definition of a "trade union". The definition used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics seems sufficiently general: "an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members" [Australian Bureau of Statistics (1970-1989, explanatory notes)]. This definition does include employee organisations and professional associations, even when collective bargaining is not their main activity; however, it excludes associations who are dependent on employers, who reject collective in favour of individual representation, do not seek a role in negotiations, or consist mainly of self-employed persons.

Following this definition, the unions of small farmers and a few other categories in Italy, and the organisations, or part of the membership in organisations of pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, doctors, etc. in the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Germany have been excluded. In some cases, when statistics come from a central organisation and do not include independent or non-affiliated unions, there remains a danger of undercounting. This is probably most significant in Italy, where total membership may be understated by 10 to 20 per cent due, in particular, to under-

recording of membership in public transport and services from the late 1970s onwards. The data on unionisation trends in Italy in these sectors have to be read with this caveat in mind.

## 2. The interpretation of union membership statistics

The meaning of membership in a trade union differs across countries. For example, some students of French unions have argued that union members in France are comparable with unpaid union organisers and shop stewards in the United Kingdom. Conversely, union members in the United Kingdom might be better compared to workers who vote for the union in works-council elections in France [Adam (1983); Rosanvalon (1988); Caire (1990)]. The role of Belgian unions in administering unemployment insurance benefits, end-of-year premiums<sup>1</sup>, and additional benefits in industries such as textiles or construction, creates incentives for membership that are absent in France or Germany. In a way, the very concept of membership and of what it means to take a membership card does not translate across countries.

Unionisation rates reflect various degrees of incentives and social support. In Canada, New Zealand, parts of the United States, many industries in the United Kingdom, and some industries and firms in Australia and Japan, "union shop" or "closed shop" practices (restriction of employment to union members) are widespread, while they are unlawful in most countries on the European continent<sup>2</sup>. Trade unions' or works councils' influence on hiring, firing, access to training, and promotion may act as a functional equivalent to a union shop. Other effective instruments of membership retention include union influence over access to pension benefits (as in Italian agriculture) and over access to retraining packages for the unemployed (as in Denmark)<sup>3</sup>.

An important facility that management may provide to trade unions is a "dues check-off" arrangement (the deduction of membership fees from the monthly paycheck). According to the 1984 Workplace Industrial Relations Survey, for example, as many as 80 per cent of establishments with 25 and more employees in the United Kingdom which recognised trade unions operated such a system [Milward and Stevens (1986)]. In Finland and Italy, national agreements of this kind in the late 1960s were followed by surges in membership. In France, however, a dues check-off would be unlawful [Blanc-Jouvain (1989)]. Another measure to stabilise union membership is the collection of dues by automatic banking order. The effectiveness of this apparently simple administrative reform was shown in the German case by Streeck (1981).

Thus, membership involves a variable set of costs, commitments and benefits. Social pressure and public supports of various kinds play a role, and there are members in unions as in most other "voluntary associations" who would not be there but for a mix of public

pressure and the desire for material benefits. However, it is not necessary for membership to be completely voluntary or unselfish for it to involve a collective definition of interests and a collective capacity to act [Shorter and Tilly (1974); Korpi (1983)].

## C. TOTAL UNION MEMBERSHIP

### 1. Cross-national variation in unionisation levels

Levels of unionisation differ by wide margins between advanced market economies (Tables 4.1 and 4.2 and Chart 4.1). In three countries (the United States, France and Spain) union density is now in the range of 12-17 per cent. In the Nordic countries Sweden, Iceland, Finland and Denmark, union density has risen to the unprecedented level of 70 to 85 per cent. Adjacent countries with apparently similar economic structures and broadly similar political and industrial relations traditions seem quite different when it comes to union organisation. Among the Anglo-Saxon countries, whose industrial relations systems have often been classified as "adversarial" [Bamber and Lansbury (1987)], Canada has twice and Australia and New Zealand nearly three times the level of unionisation of the United States<sup>4</sup>. Within the contrasting "co-operative" group of Scandinavian countries, where extensive public welfare policies and the co-ordinating role of central union and employer organisations have fostered a unique pattern of industrial relations, Norway is an odd man out if judged by its degree of unionisation. Between Austria, Germany and Switzerland the differences in unionisation levels have narrowed but remain substantial.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 allow three generalisations. First, unionisation rates in Europe are generally above rates elsewhere, while rates in North America are generally lower. Exceptions are France, some of the countries in southern Europe, and the Netherlands and Switzerland during the 1980s. A second conclusion is that, on average, unionisation rates are much higher in small countries than in large ones [see also: Wallerstein (1989)]. This difference remains even if the United States is removed from the sample of large countries. Again, Switzerland and the Netherlands are exceptions<sup>5</sup>. High unionisation in Europe may be related to the role of welfare states there, while high unionisation in small countries may reflect diseconomies of scale in union organisation, export dependency of the economy, and the search for consensus among a small elite of government, business and union leaders. Finally, union density tends to be lower in so-called "adversarial" systems. However, in this case the weight of the United States explains much of the difference; in addition, the classification of countries is somewhat arbitrary since labour-management rela-

tions always involve both conflict and cooperation and the relative weight of these two basic elements within any given country may well shift over time (as seems to have occurred, for example, in Australia during the 1980s).

### 2. Main trends in the 1980s

During the 1970s, 14 million unionists – not counting workers in Greece, Spain and Portugal who gained or regained the right to join independent unions – were added to the already 78 million members in OECD countries at the beginning of the decade. By contrast, in the 1980s some 5 million members were lost. Though the sharp fall in membership levels in the United States, the United Kingdom and France accounts for a large part of this decline, virtually all OECD countries experienced reduced or negative membership growth.

In statistics of union density (employed members per civilian wage and salary employment), the decline emerges more sharply. The (weighted) average density rate for 18 OECD countries, as shown in Table 4.2, rose from 35 in 1970 to 37 in 1975, and then fell back to 35 in 1980, 30 in 1985 and 28 in 1988. Union density declined early in the United States, Japan, and France. In most other countries, trade unions continued their progress until 1979 or 1980, with some remarkable spurts in the early 1970s in Italy, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom. During the 1980s, union density fell in the majority of OECD countries. Only in Finland, Sweden and Iceland have unionisation levels clearly continued to rise.

In general, it seems that unions in already weakly unionised countries weakened further, whereas unions in initially highly unionised countries stood better against the tide. As a result, there were not many changes in the relative positions of countries, with the major exceptions of Austria and the Netherlands (Table 4.1)<sup>6</sup>.

Among the group of countries with particularly low unionisation levels (see Chart 4.1), the decline of union density in the United States has attracted attention, both due to its magnitude and as a possible scenario for other countries [Farber (1985); Lipset (1986a); Edwards *et al.* (1986); Kochan *et al.* (1986); Goldfield (1987); Kochan (1988); Freeman (1989); Troy (1990)]. From the 1945 peak when just over one-third of all (non-agricultural) wage-earners in the United States had joined a labour union, union density receded to the present level of around 16 per cent, comparable with the degree of unionisation that existed before the New Deal legislation which in the 1930s had laid the foundations of collective representation for large portions of the blue-collar workforce<sup>7</sup>.

Today, only in France and Spain are rates of unionisation lower than in the United States. From one social attitude survey, it appears that the French unionisation rate fell from 28 to 14 per cent between

Table 4.1. Union membership and union density in OECD countries, 1970-1989

Type of data <sup>a</sup>	Union membership (thousands)			Change in membership (%)		Union density (%)				Rank order		Change in density (%)		
	1970	1980	1989	1970-79	1980-89	1970	1975	1980	1985	1988	1970	1988	1970-80	1980-88
Canada	2 231.0 <sup>e</sup>	3 487.2	4 030.8	56.3	15.6	31.1 <sup>c</sup>	34.4	35.1	35.9	34.6	(16)	(14)	12.9	-1.4
United States	21 248.0	22 377.0	..	5.3	..	30.0	29.1	24.7	..	..	(18)	..	-17.7	..
Japan	19 335.0 <sup>a</sup>	20 095.0	16 960.0	3.9	-15.6	..	22.8	23.0	18.0	16.4 <sup>a</sup>	..	(22)	..	-28.7
	11 604.8	12 369.3	12 230.0	6.6	-1.1	35.1	34.4	31.1	28.9	26.8	(14)	(17)	-11.4	-13.8
Australia	2 331.0	2 955.9	3 410.3	26.8	15.4	50.2	56.0	56.4	56.5	53.4	(7)	..	12.3	-5.3
	2 512.7 <sup>f</sup>	2 567.6 <sup>g</sup>	2 535.9 <sup>h</sup>	..	-1.2 <sup>a</sup>	..	51.0 <sup>i</sup>	49.0 <sup>k</sup>	46.0 <sup>m</sup>	42.0	..	(11)	..	-14.3 <sup>a</sup>
New Zealand	..	678.0 <sup>j</sup>	611.3 <sup>k</sup>	..	-9.8 <sup>l</sup>	..	..	..	54.1	50.5 <sup>n</sup>	..	(8)	..	-6.7 <sup>o</sup>
	378.5	516.3	437.1 <sup>r</sup>	36.4	-15.3	46.2	50.1	55.0	47.3	42.1 <sup>r</sup>	(9)	..	19.0	-23.5
Austria	1 520.3	1 661.0	1 644.4	9.3	-1.0	70.4	67.0	65.3	60.8	58.2	..	..	-7.2	-10.9
	1 292.2	1 370.1	1 290.8	6.0	-5.8	59.8	56.1	53.8	48.6	45.7	(3)	(10)	-10.0	-15.1
Belgium	1 606.0	2 310.0	2 291.4 <sup>r</sup>	43.8	-0.8	54.9	69.0	75.7	80.9	77.5	..	..	37.9	2.4
	1 345.0	1 723.3	1 567.3 <sup>r</sup>	28.1	-9.1	46.0	55.3	56.5	54.3	53.0	(10)	(6)	22.8	-6.2
Denmark	1 143.4	1 795.8	2 033.6 <sup>r</sup>	57.1	13.2	62.2	74.2	91.4	90.8	86.0	..	..	46.9	-5.9
	1 101.8	1 584.8	1 730.9 <sup>r</sup>	43.4	9.2	60.0	67.4	76.5	78.3	73.2	(2)	(3)	27.5	-4.3
Finland	950.3	1 646.4	1 895.0	73.3	15.1	58.8	78.3	85.8	86.6	90.0 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	45.9	4.9
	830.5	1 339.6	1 587.5	61.3	18.5	51.4	67.4	69.8	68.6	71.3 <sup>a</sup>	(5)	(4)	35.8	2.1
France	3 549.0	3 374.0	1 970.0	-4.9	-41.6	22.3	22.8	19.0	16.3	12.0	(19)	(24)	-14.8	-36.8
Germany	8 251.2	9 645.5	9 637.0	16.9	0.0	37.9	41.7	42.9	44.0	40.1	..	..	13.2	-6.5
	7 167.6	8 327.6	8 081.5	16.2	-3.0	33.0	36.6	37.0	37.4	33.8	(15)	(15)	12.1	-8.6
Greece	..	556.6 <sup>a</sup>	650.0 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	35.8 <sup>a</sup>	..	36.7	(25.0)	..	(19)	..	..
Iceland	..	60.6 <sup>a</sup>	103.1	..	70.1	..	..	68.1 <sup>a</sup>	..	78.3 <sup>a</sup>	..	(2)	..	15.0
Ireland	422.9	544.5	474.0 <sup>b</sup>	28.7	-12.9	59.0	61.3	63.4	62.2	58.4 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	7.5	-8.2
	380.6	490.0	426.6 <sup>b</sup>	28.7	-12.9	53.1	55.2	57.0	56.0	52.4 <sup>a</sup>	(4)	(7)	7.3	-8.1
Italy	5 224.5	8 772.0	9 568.2	67.9	9.1	40.8	54.2	60.5	59.6	62.7	..	..	48.3	3.6
	4 646.1	7 142.3	5 816.7	53.7	-18.6	36.3	47.2	49.3	42.0	39.6	(13)	(13)	35.8	-19.7
Luxembourg	52.4	72.0 <sup>c</sup>	75.0 <sup>a</sup>	37.5	4.2	46.8	45.8	52.2 <sup>d</sup>	..	49.7 <sup>a</sup>	(8)	(9)	11.5	-4.8
Netherlands	1 585.4	1 740.8	1 635.9	9.8	-6.0	40.5	42.7	39.9	34.1	30.2	..	..	-1.5	-24.3
	1 450.6	1 538.7	1 351.4	6.1	-12.2	37.0	38.4	35.3	28.7	25.0	(12)	(19)	-4.5	-29.2
Norway	759.2	1 049.1	1 203.5	38.2	14.7	58.1	60.4	65.3	65.4	67.7 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	12.4	3.7
	660.1	913.6	1 013.9	38.4	11.0	50.6	52.7	56.9	55.7	57.1 <sup>a</sup>	(6)	(5)	12.5	0.4
Portugal	730.9 <sup>b</sup>	1 669.7 <sup>i</sup>	1 463.0 <sup>r</sup>	128.4	-12.4	59.0 <sup>b</sup>	52.4	58.8 <sup>i</sup>	51.6 <sup>a</sup>	(30.0)	(16)	(16)	0.3	-12.2
Spain	..	1 703.0 <sup>j</sup>	1 163.0 <sup>r</sup>	..	-31.7	..	30.4 <sup>a</sup>	22.0 <sup>j</sup>	16.0	..	..	(23)	..	-27.3
Sweden	2 546.4	3 486.4	3 855.1	36.9	10.6	74.2	82.1	89.5	94.2	96.1	..	..	20.6	7.4
	2 325.3	3 114.5	3 415.1	33.9	9.7	67.7	74.5	80.0	84.0	85.3	(1)	(1)	18.2	6.6
Switzerland	842.9	954.3	899.9 <sup>m</sup>	13.2	-5.7	34.2	36.6	34.5	32.6	30.0 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	0.9	-13.0
	758.1	849.1	781.7 <sup>m</sup>	12.0	-7.9	30.7	32.9	30.7	28.8	26.0 <sup>a</sup>	(17)	(18)	0.0	-15.3
Turkey	973.4 <sup>e</sup>	..	1 493.1	..	..	..	18.1	..	..	19.2 <sup>a</sup>	(20)	(21)	..	..
United Kingdom	11 178.0	12 947.0	10 238.0 <sup>p</sup>	15.8	-20.9	49.7	53.6	56.3	50.5	46.1	..	..	13.3	-18.1
	10 060.2	11 652.3	9 214.2 <sup>p</sup>	15.8	-20.9	44.8	48.3	50.7	45.5	41.5	(11)	(12)	13.2	-18.1

a) R = recorded membership; E = employed;

T = total membership; M = membership in

market sector.

b) 1969.

c) 1971.

d) Average 1974-79.

e) 1975.

f) 1976.

g) 1977.

h) 1979.

i) Average 1979-84.

j) 1981.

k) 1982.

l) 1985.

m) 1986.

n) Average 1985-86.

o) 1987.

p) 1988.

q) 1989.

r) March 1990.

s) 1982-88.

t) 1985-90.

u) Density rate for 1989 calculated on the basis of extrapolated employment data.

Sources : See Annex 4.A.

Table 4.2. A stylized overview of unionisation trends

Country grouping	Union density rates (weighted averages) <sup>a</sup>				
	1970	1975	1980	1985	1988
All countries <sup>b</sup>	35	37	35	30	28
Europe <sup>c</sup>	38	43	44	40	38
North America <sup>d</sup>	30	30	26	19	18
Other OECD <sup>e</sup>	37	38	35	33	30
7 large countries <sup>f</sup>	33	34	32	27	25
11 small countries <sup>g</sup>	50	55	57	55	52
7 "adversarial" systems <sup>h</sup>	33	34	32	26	25
11 "cooperative" systems <sup>i</sup>	39	41	40	38	36
All countries <sup>b</sup> (unweighted averages)	44	47	48	45	43

a) Averages include interpolated estimates for countries where data for some years were not available.

b) Countries listed in notes c), d) and e).

c) Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

d) Canada and United States.

e) Australia, Japan and New Zealand.

f) Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

g) Austria, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

h) Australia, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

i) Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Sources: See Annex 4.A.

1981 and 1989 [SOFRES (1990)]. By their own admission, in 1988 all French unions together had lost half the membership of 1975 [Noblecourt (1989); Mouriaux and Subileau (1990)]. Except for a few peak years (1936, 1945) union representation was never very extended in France, but the unarrested fall in membership since the mid-1970s is, even in the French context, quite remarkable and has led to a discussion on the viability of "unionism without members" and possible new non-union avenues for worker representation [Rosanvallon (1988); Caire (1990)].

The malaise in Spain is somewhat similar. While the Spanish data are not very reliable, there is "no doubt that when the unions were made legal in 1977, membership grew on an enormous scale and then went down, with the exception of some regions such as the Basque Country and Asturias where union density is more stable. In 1980 it was estimated that 27 per cent of the labour force belonged to a union, a level which has fallen in the meantime" [European Trade Union Institute (1986)]. The sources used here indicate that union density stood at 22 per cent in 1981 and 16 per cent in 1985, and it has probably fallen since [Aguilar and Roca (1990); Estivill and de la Hoz (1990)]<sup>8</sup>.

Declining unionisation rates are also reported for Portugal: from a high level following the 1974 revolution<sup>9</sup> to around 30 per cent according to recent estimates by the central organisation UGT [see Pinto (1990); Pires de Lima and Oliveira (1990)]; and for Greece: from an average level of 35 per cent between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, to an estimated 25 per cent at present, according to Greek union repre-

sentatives. However, in Turkey unions have considerably increased their membership compared to the early 1970s, although the interruption of union activities by military rule in the early 1980s makes comparison difficult. Nevertheless, it seems that currently less than one in five Turkish wage- and salary-earners is member of a trade union.

Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland are three more countries in which unionisation levels are comparatively low, now at around one quarter, and where the fall started relatively early. In Japan the decline in the 1980s, down to 25.9 per cent in 1989, deepened a downward trend in union density that has existed since 1949 [Shirai (1982); Shimada (1988)]. Union density in the Netherlands fell from 38 per cent in the mid-1970s to 25 per cent in 1988, the largest fall in unionisation since the 1920s (breaks in series resulting from a redefinition of the labour force notwithstanding). In recent years the downward trend seems to have stopped. A similar, though somewhat milder decline occurred in Switzerland.

Turning to a middle group of countries with levels of unionisation at between 30 and 50 per cent (see Chart 4.1), the United Kingdom represents a well-documented example of a dramatic reversal in unionisation trends between the two decades under consideration. From 1968 to 1979, trade unions in the United Kingdom gained 3 million members; subsequently, they seem to have lost an equal number, and although the process of decline slowed in the late 1980s, it has not come to a standstill yet. The current unionisation level – 41.5 per cent, based on union reporting – is as



high as in 1968, but over 10 points below the 1979 peak. This pattern of growth and decline is confirmed by data from the 1980 and 1984 Workplace Industrial Relations surveys and from the British Social Attitudes surveys. A reversal of trends occurred also in Ireland, undoing most or all of the gains unions made in the 1970s. In Italy union density remains considerably higher than in the 1950s and 1960s, but is almost ten points down on its 1980 peak. The decline may be overstated since it has not been possible to include membership outside the three main confederations in the statistics (see Annex 4.A).

Surveys conducted by the Bureau of Statistics in Australia report that union density has fallen from 51 per cent in 1976 to 42 per cent in 1988 [see also: Peetz (1990)]. The statistics compiled by the unions themselves (which are between 5 and 11 percentage points higher) suggest stagnation after 1975 and a lesser decline in the late 1980s. In New Zealand, unionisation trends are less easily documented, as public sector unionism was only recently covered by the statistics. Moreover, between 1983 and 1985 the law was twice changed. The available data on private sector unionisation suggest, however, a clear-cut reversal in unionisation trends in the latter half of the 1980s.

Germany and Canada, at the lower end of this middle group, represent two cases where union decline was only mild, with density nearly stagnant. In terms of absolute membership, German unions remained more or less where they were by the late 1970s, following a decade of quiet growth. Measured in relative terms, German unions stabilised in the first half of 1980s, but had to concede small losses in the second part. In 1988 one in three German wage- and salary-earners belonged to a union, about the same proportion as in 1970. Canadian unions progressed in the 1960s and 1970s, diverging from the trend in the United States. They maintained their position in the early 1980s but slid back in recent years.

In eight comparatively small European countries (Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Belgium, Ireland and Luxembourg), half or more of all wage- and salary-earners join a union (see Chart 4.1). In Sweden unions have continued to grow, though membership growth has been less rapid than in the past, and in 1987 and 1988 there was a small decline in union density after seventy years of continuous growth. Perhaps Swedish unions, at 85 per cent of the employed wage- and salary-earner workforce, are approaching their saturation point, though the financial service sector (discussed in Section E) has room for further expansion. Unionisation in Finland rose from just over 50 per cent in 1970 to above 70 per cent since 1987. The available data for Iceland show a continuous increase during the 1980s, with a current level of close to 80 per cent. In Denmark, unionisation soared throughout the 1970s and rose to nearly 80 per cent by 1984, but has fallen by 6 points since. Within the Nordic countries, Norway (with Finland before

1968) has always had a comparatively low unionisation rate. However, an increase in the 1970s from 50 to 57 per cent was consolidated in the 1980s.

Although there is a margin of error around the "net" union membership figures for Belgium (see Annex 4.A), there is little doubt that there was considerable union growth in the 1970s, leading to a density level of about 60 per cent by the early 1980s. Since then, union density decreased to about 53 per cent in 1988. In Luxembourg there was a small but steady increase from 1970 to 1985, with a slight decline in recent years. In Austria, finally, which once belonged to the "high unionisation" group, density levels have continued to fall ever since 1953 [Traxler (1982); Visser (1989)], starting with 70 per cent at the time, through 60 per cent in 1970 and just over 50 in 1980 to 45 per cent today.

#### D. EXPLANATORY FACTORS

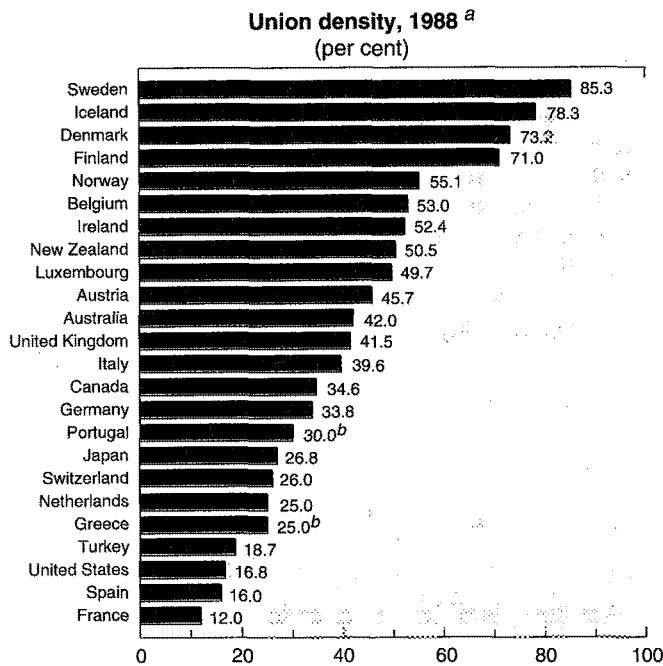
Among possible explanations for differences in unionisation levels across countries are:

- Structural economic characteristics such as the size of the agricultural or manufacturing sector, unemployment or other characteristics of labour markets, employment concentration and the role of the small firm sector, foreign ownership of domestic firms and international competition;
- Institutional and political factors such as a government's antagonism towards or support for unions, development of the public sector, social and labour legislation, deregulation policies and union access to parties and governments;
- Employer organisation and policies;
- The value system of a society, and in particular the values held by workers concerning collective organisation and action; and
- Union organisation skills.

For example, attempts to explain the exceptionally low (and declining) rate of unionisation in the United States have focused on structural factors such as the decline of manufacturing and the emergence of a service economy [from Bell (1953) to Farber (1985) and AFL-CIO (1985)], insufficient support from the law [among many others, Weiler (1990)], an exceptional degree of employer hostility [Freeman (1989)], a value system which exalts individualism and competition [Lipset (1986a)], and insufficient resources for organising given an exceptionally difficult environment [McDonald (1990)]. Each of these attempts has been criticised in the light of international comparisons, which cast doubt on whether the United States is unique in these respects.

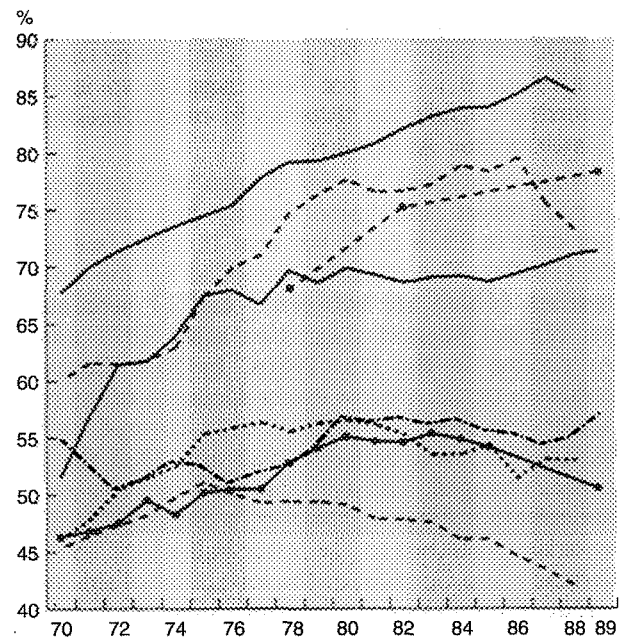
Chart 4.1

# Evolution of union density, 1970-1989

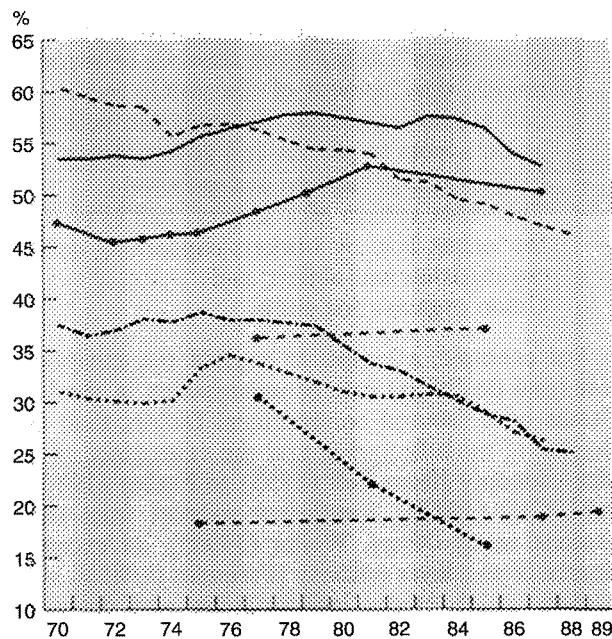


a) Except for Iceland: 1989; Ireland: 1987; Luxembourg: 1989; New Zealand: 1990; Spain: 1985; Switzerland: 1987; Turkey: 1987.

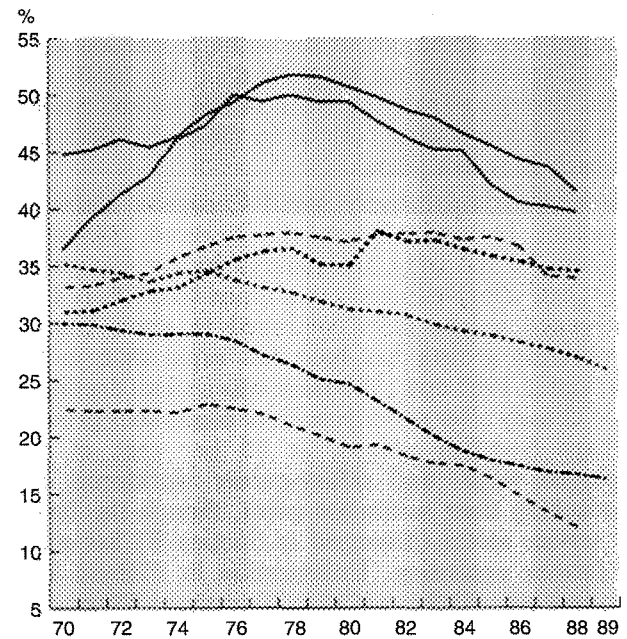
b) Rates for Portugal and Greece are estimates.



— Sweden	- - - - - Iceland
..... Belgium	- - - - - New Zealand
— Finland	- - - - - Denmark
- - - - - Norway	- - - - - Australia



— Ireland	- - - - - Greece
..... Switzerland	..... Spain
— Luxembourg	- - - - - Austria
- - - - - Netherlands	- - - - - Turkey



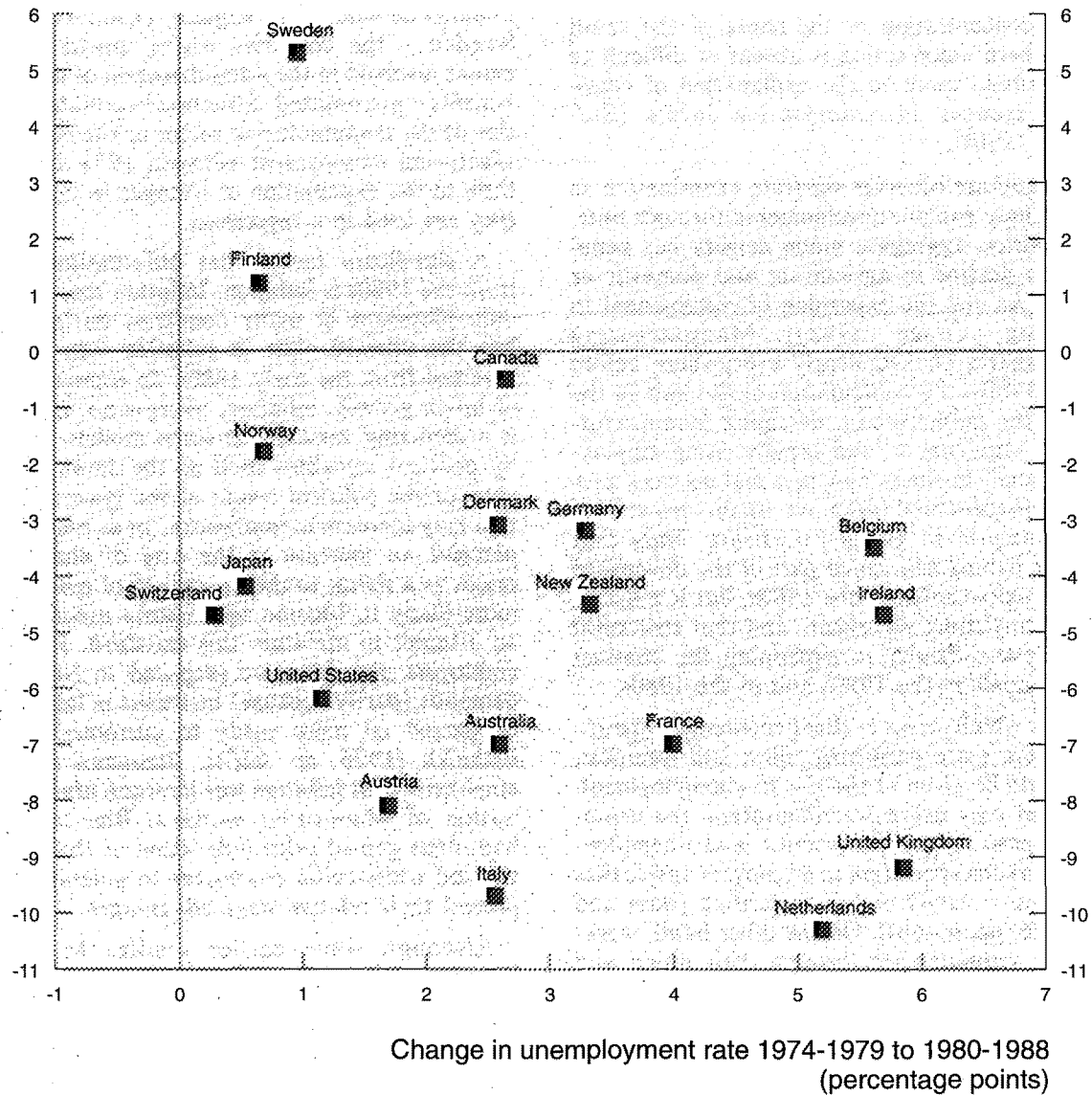
— United Kingdom	- - - - - Germany
..... Japan	..... Canada
— Italy	- - - - - France
- - - - - United States	

Source:  
See Table 4.1 and Annex 4.A.

Chart 4.2

# Changes in unemployment and union density

Change in union density rate, 1980-1988<sup>a</sup>  
(percentage points)



a) 1982-1988 for Australia; 1979-1988 for Denmark; 1980-1987 for Ireland.

Sources:  
Table 4.1; and OECD Economic Outlook: Historical Statistics, 1960-1988, Table 2.15  
(based on OECD Labour Force Statistics).

It is easily seen that cross-national differences in unionisation levels are much greater than could be accounted for by such structural characteristics as the industrial, occupational and gender composition of the labour force. Correlations between the 1988 density level on the one hand, and either the share of manufacturing employment, the expansion of financial services, or the share of female employment all yield insignificant results [similarly negative results for the United States and Canada are reported by Lipset (1986b); see also Neumann *et al.* (1989); Pedersen (1989)]. It has been argued that within-industry differences in social and economic structure, in particular the degree of employment concentration or the share of the small firm sector where unionisation is absent or difficult to sustain, contribute more to the explanation of cross-national differences in unionisation levels [Stephens (1979, 1990)].

Industry structure deserves separate examination as a factor that may explain developments through time. In most countries, aggregate union density has benefited from the decline in agriculture and domestic or personal services and the expansion of employment in manufacturing [Visser (1988)]. Manufacturing employment shares peaked nearly everywhere before 1975. In the 1980s, the combination of the halt to the expansion of the public sector, declining manufacturing shares in employment, and rapidly rising employment in financial, business and personal services produced an unprecedented drag on union growth. A shift-share analysis in Section E below finds that sectoral shifts can explain some part of the downward movement in unionisation in the 1980s, but it must be stressed that this effect was small, and that structural approaches have difficulty in explaining the contrast between the trends in the 1970s and in the 1980s.

Approaches which stress cyclical economic or political factors seem more promising. First and foremost, attention should be given to the rise in unemployment. Unemployment may decrease unionisation: the unemployed may cease to pay union dues, and unemployment often weakens opposition to employers and makes union action more costly or less rewarding [Bain and Elsheim (1976, pp. 65-66)]. On the other hand, workers may fight redundancies through their union and may seek union protection during lay-off periods or help during unemployment [Pedersen (1982)]. As mentioned before, in some countries trade unions have retained an administrative role in unemployment insurance, so the relationship should differ across countries.

A study by Visser (1990) of ten European countries found a correlation between the stagnation or decline of union membership and the rise in unemployment levels in the 1980s. The correlation coefficient between the rise in unemployment (measured as the difference between the averages for 1983-1985 and 1977-1979) and average annual membership growth between 1980 and 1985 was  $-0.71$  (significant at the 5 per cent

level). However, there was no similar correlation in the 1970s. When unemployment levels in Europe began to rise after 1973, union growth continued unabated.

Chart 4.2 shows the correlation between changes in union density and unemployment in the 1980s for 18 countries [this updates a study by Armingeon (1989), who however used "gross" rather than "net" density rates]. Rising unemployment explains only part of the decline in unionisation. In several countries, for example, union density levels fell sharply although unemployment only rose modestly. Across countries, the rise in unemployment explains 44 per cent of the variance in union decline when Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Sweden – the countries where unions are to some extent involved in the administration of unemployment benefits – are omitted. Structural variables, such as the size of the manufacturing sector or the decline of manufacturing employment between 1973 and 1985, add little to the explanation of changes in union density if they are used in a regression.

A significant factor that differentiates the 1970s from the 1980s is inflation. Inflation rose together with unemployment in many countries during the 1970s, but the upward shift in inflation was contained or reversed from the early 1980s. In econometric models of union growth, inflation, along with unemployment, is a recurring variable (in some models supplemented by political variables such as the share of left party vote, or the political colour of the government). Inflation may increase unionisation: "in as much as workers perceive an increase in the rate of change of retail prices as a threat to their standard of living ... they are more likely to become and remain union members in an attempt to maintain this standard. In addition, ... employers may be more prepared to concede worker demands (partly because) increases in labour costs can be passed on more easily to customers" [Bain and Elsheim (1976, pp. 62f.)]. Flanagan *et al.* (1983) emphasize that inflation was instrumental in the unionisation of white-collar workers. Blue-collar workers had often gained price indexation of their wages, and this led white-collar employees to unionise in order to protect their relative wage advantages.

Although some earlier studies in the United Kingdom found that inflation has a strong impact, Carruth and Disney (1988) showed that the model used by Bain and Elsheim could not explain the sharp downturn in unionisation during the 1980s. Their own model incorporated a dummy variable for the years of a Labour or Labour-Liberal government, which improved the overall power of the model. Similar regression studies have been carried out in the United States, Australia, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. While these studies all estimate some impact from cyclical factors, no one model is consistently successful [see also Neumann *et al.* (1989)], which gives some support to the view that political and institutional factors are important.

## E. SECTORAL VARIATIONS IN UNION MEMBERSHIP

### 1. Unionisation trends by industry

The presence of trade unions varies throughout the economy. Workers are more likely to be union members in manufacturing, transport or public administration than in agriculture, trade, or financial services. Unionisation is lower for workers in small firms than for workers in large firms, lower in the private sector than in the public sector, lower for white-collar employees than for manuals, and lower for women than for men. This section and the next focus on these differences.

The aggregation and disaggregation of membership data of individual unions into industrial groups is no easy task. Where large general or conglomerate unions have come to dominate, as in Ireland, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Denmark, disaggregating their membership may only be possible with the additional help of labour force or social attitude surveys (as in the United States from 1973 onwards; in Australia for 1976, 1982, 1986 and 1988; Canada for 1984 and 1986; the United Kingdom for 1984 and 1989; or in Denmark for 1976, 1982 and 1986) or through a detailed study of internal union files and collective bargaining representation [Harbridge (1991) for New Zealand in 1989; Bain and Price (1980, 1983) for Great Britain up to 1979].

Unions with a presence in two or more industries (typical examples are agriculture and food, wood and construction, metal and mining, mining and energy, and trade and finance) are now also common in countries where industrial unions are predominant. For Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, the breakdowns for recent years given here are based on study of the internal files of the major unions<sup>10</sup>. Data for Japan are published. The figures for Turkey are based on data provided by the Turkish Confederation of Trade Unions. Data for Finland allow a distinction only by broad economic sector (primary, secondary, tertiary private sector and public sector). Adequate breakdowns by industry were not available for France and Luxembourg (except the private/public distinction), and Greece, Iceland, Ireland and Spain. All data, with the exception of a small proportion of unemployed members in Austria and Germany, were adjusted to exclude retired and unemployed persons.

Table 4.3 combines level and trend data. The table categorises industry sectors into four groups of average density between 1980 and 1988, and into three groups according to whether between 1980 and 1988 unionisation levels were rising, stable or declining. A small upward or downward trend (less than  $\pm 5$  per cent) has been deemed stable.

Considering first the levels of unionisation, in Sweden in all sectors but one (wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels) unions have organised more than half of the workforce. In some sectors – manufacturing, construction, and transport – there are few non-unionised workers left, though no formal closed shop or union shop exists. A fully opposite situation arises in the United States. In the 1980s there was no longer any sector in which unions organised even half of all employed wage- and salary-earners (they used to do so in mining, construction and transport in the 1950s and 1960s). In most countries there is greater variation in sectoral unionisation levels with, typically, mining, manufacturing, utilities (electricity, gas and water) and transport and communication on the left hand side of the table, agriculture, trade and finance (ISIC activities financing, insurance, real estate and business services) to the right, and construction and public and miscellaneous services in the middle.

The 14 countries covered in the Table 4.3, each with 9 sectors, give a total of 126 cases. As regards trends in unionisation, this overview shows several things. First, cases of sectoral union decline are more than twice as frequent as cases of stability and more than three times as frequent as cases of growth. There are 21 cases of growth, 30 cases of stability, and 75 of decline.

Second, decline is the most frequent occurrence in all sectors but one (gas, water, and electricity). Only in three countries (Belgium, Norway and Sweden) did unions increase their representation in manufacturing. In two countries (Belgium and Norway) unions advanced in construction, in two (Belgium and Sweden) unions progressed in agriculture, and in no country did unionisation levels rise in transport. More surprising, probably, there was only one country (the United Kingdom) in which unions increased their representation in banking, insurance and business services, while in eleven countries the position of unions declined. In four countries (Canada, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom) unions increased their presence in trade, against losses in nine countries. Only in the three Scandinavian countries and Canada did unions strengthen their position in community, social, and personal services, while in eight countries unions here weakened.

Third, there are interesting disparities within countries. In the United States, Japan, Australia, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland, union decline has affected nearly all sectors of the economy<sup>11</sup>. In Sweden, unions grew or maintained their position in most sectors, though even here unions had to concede losses in finance as well as mining. The pattern in other countries is more varied. In the United Kingdom, there was a sharp decline in manufacturing, transport and public services, but unions made small gains in trade and financial services. In Canada too, there was a decline in mining, manufacturing and transport, and growth or stability in services. But in Belgium,

Table 4.3. A stylized overview of levels<sup>a</sup> and changes<sup>b</sup> in union density by industry, 1980-88

Country <sup>c</sup>	High to very high (above 50 per cent)			Medium (30-49 per cent)			Low (10-29 per cent)			Very low (below 10 per cent)		
	Growth	Stability	Decline	Growth	Stability	Decline	Growth	Stability	Decline	Growth	Stability	Decline
	ISIC Industry <sup>d</sup>											
Sweden	1,3,9	5,7	2,4,8	6	1,6	8						
Denmark	9	2-3-4*,7	5		6	9			8			
Belgium	1,5,2-3*	4,7							1,6			
Norway	3-4*,9	7	2	5	6	8			1,6			
Australia		2,4	3,7,9			5,8			6			
Austria		1,4	2-3*,7			5,8,9			1			
United Kingdom	2		3,4,7,9	2		5	6,8		6,8			
Italy			1,3-4*,7			5,9			8,9			
Germany	2	7	4		3	2,3,5	6	1,5	1			8
Canada	4	9	7		2	3,9		6	1			
Japan			4,7,8		2-3*	7		5	1,4,6,8,9		6	
Switzerland			5,7			1,2-3*,4,5,7,9			2,3,5,4-9*	1	8	
Netherlands						7					6,8	
United States												

a) Levels are an average for 1980-88.

b) Changes are average 1986-88 less average 1978-80. "Growth" indicates an increase of more than 5 per cent, and "decline" indicates a fall of more than 5 per cent.

c) Countries ordered from high and increasing density to low and declining density.

d) Numbers refer to ISIC Major Divisions as shown below:

1. Agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing
2. Mining and quarrying
3. Manufacturing
4. Electricity, gas and water
5. Construction
6. Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels
7. Transport, storage and communication
8. Finance, insurance, real estate and business services
9. Community, social and personal services.

e) Two or more industries grouped in the data.

Sources : See Annex 4.A.

Denmark, Germany and to some extent Norway, unions tended to maintain their position in the traditional union strongholds of mining, manufacturing, utilities, construction and transport, yet lose out in other service sectors.

## 2. Manufacturing industry

How unions do in manufacturing is still of crucial importance for their overall policies and social influence. The density rates shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 indicate that unionisation rates in manufacturing are consistently above the national average, and considerably higher than in market services. Only transport, public utilities, mining (with the notable exception of North America) and public administration (not shown here) tend to have similar or higher unionisation rates. In many countries, density rates in construction – the other traditional “blue collar” domain – trail rates in manufacturing by 10 to 20 percentage points. This may reflect seasonal employment patterns and labour turnover, and the greater proportion of short-lived small enterprises in this sector.

Despite declining employment levels in manufacturing following the 1973 oil crisis, there was an impressive rise in union density in manufacturing between 1970 and 1980 in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. If anything, recessions may increase unionisation rates: in Germany it was found that “in 1967 as well as in 1974-1975 the share of those who lost their jobs was less among union members than among non-members” [Streeck (1981, p. 90)]. A similar phenomenon was observed for Italy [Guigni *et al.* (1976)]. This may indicate that within manufacturing, low-unionisation sectors (textiles, clothing, leather) were especially hard-hit (as was indeed the case in the first two German recessions); that the presence of unions improves the economic performance of firms, allowing them to “weather” the recession better than others; that unions help sectors or firms in crisis to attract public subsidies through political exchange with governments; or that unions can influence hiring and firing in firms in favour of (prospective) members<sup>12</sup>.

The absolute number of union members in manufacturing fell at some time after 1974 in all but the Nordic countries. The countries with the steepest declines were Italy (–30 per cent since 1980), the Netherlands (–42 per cent since 1973), the United States (with a loss of 2.3 million or one-third of all members in manufacturing since 1980) and the United Kingdom (a loss of 2.5 million, or 50 per cent, since 1979). In other countries falls were smaller or less prolonged. When the six countries that started off in the middle range in the early 1970s (with a density rate of around 40 per cent) are considered, disparate patterns of growth and decline over the past two decades are apparent in

Table 4.4. While density rates in Germany and Italy have increased to around 50 per cent, the United States, the Netherlands, Japan and Canada have experienced falls to density levels of 22, 25, 32 and 38 per cent, respectively. This is a very mixed group of countries in terms of the overall political, economic or industrial relations system, as can be illustrated by describing a few characteristic national features.

In Italy, the progress that unions made after 1968 in nearly all sectors, but particularly in manufacturing, was connected with the greater unity between the three main trade union federations, which helped to make worker representation and collective bargaining more effective. The dense regional organisation of Italian unions, and their increased political role, facilitated the unionisation of the small firm sector in North and Central Italy [Treu (1985), Regini (1987)]. In Germany the “increased institutionalisation of the unions at the workplace, mainly through the legal extension of co-determination” [Streeck (1987, p. 155)] favoured union representation and stability, especially in larger manufacturing firms. Another factor was that German industry remained relatively strong.

By contrast, in the Netherlands, the greater loss of employment share in manufacturing may have been a factor behind the comparatively severe decline of unionisation. In addition, divisions between unions increased rather than decreased. As in France, unions remain as far removed from the daily operation of firms as they were twenty years ago. Employee representation through other channels (in particular, through works councils and *comités d'entreprise*) has clearly increased in both countries. However, this type of representation may have increased the “free rider” problem with which both Dutch and French trade unions are confronted. In both countries, rather than signing up as members, employees tend to vote in large majorities for union representatives in works council elections.

In the United States, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) supervises ballots in which employees vote on whether to have, or to retain, union representation. According to the unions’ own calculations, they won only 1 816 such elections in 1989 (just over 90 000 employees), compared to 4 653 (nearly 290 000 employees) in 1972, reflecting their much lower participation in elections as well as a slightly lower success rate. Decertification (where the workforce votes not to retain union representation) affected twice the number of employees that it did in 1972 [AFL-CIO (1991)].<sup>13</sup> Compared to Canada, American employers face less legal or social constraints and seem more willing to create a “union-free environment” by eliminating union representation, or to shift location to a non-union environment elsewhere.

Freeman and Rebeck (1989) show that in Japan, as in the United States, by the mid-1980s the rate at which unions were being introduced into previously non-union companies was only a quarter of the rate of



Table 4.4. Union density rates in manufacturing, financial and business services, and community, social and personal services, 1970-1988

	Manufacturing				Finance, insurance, real estate and business services				Community, social and personal services			
	1970	1980	1985	1988	1970	1980	1985	1988	1970	1980	1985	1988
Canada <sup>a</sup>	45	43	45 <sup>o</sup>	38 <sup>a</sup>	..	3	7 <sup>o</sup>	6 <sup>a</sup>	..	..	55 <sup>o</sup>	53 <sup>a</sup>
United States <sup>b</sup>	41 <sup>j</sup>	35	25	22 <sup>r</sup>	5 <sup>j</sup>	4	2 <sup>r</sup>	2 <sup>r</sup>	18 <sup>j</sup>	25	23	19 <sup>r</sup>
Australia	..	54 <sup>n</sup>	51 <sup>p</sup>	48	..	42 <sup>n</sup>	34 <sup>p</sup>	28	..	54 <sup>n</sup>	51 <sup>p</sup>	46
Japan <sup>b</sup>	..	35	33	32	..	52	..	50	..	37	33	31
New Zealand <sup>c</sup>	..	..	..	58 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	42 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	57 <sup>r</sup>
Austria <sup>d</sup>	68	63	56	53	37	36	31	28	54	51	48	44
Belgium <sup>d</sup>	60	88	90	95	20	28	26	23	33	33	28	27
Denmark <sup>d,e</sup>	80 <sup>f</sup>	98 <sup>m</sup>	100	100	37 <sup>i</sup>	50 <sup>m</sup>	46	36	60 <sup>f</sup>	73 <sup>m</sup>	80	77
Finland <sup>d,e,f</sup>	..	..	..	80 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	86 <sup>r</sup>
France	above 15	..	..	below 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Germany	36	48	50	48 <sup>p</sup>	15	9	18	17 <sup>p</sup>	36	30	28	28 <sup>p</sup>
Italy <sup>e</sup>	40 <sup>h</sup>	57	49	47	..	33	23	22	..	38	33	31
Netherlands <sup>d</sup>	41	42	34	25 <sup>r</sup>	8	8	6	9 <sup>r</sup>	44	44	37	32 <sup>r</sup>
Norway <sup>e</sup>	67	81	85	87 <sup>r</sup>	51	39	36	33 <sup>r</sup>	64	64	65	68 <sup>r</sup>
Sweden	84	95	100	100	70	78	72	72	59	79	86	87
Switzerland <sup>d</sup>	27 <sup>h</sup>	34	33 <sup>o</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>	26 <sup>h</sup>	19	18 <sup>o</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>	32 <sup>h</sup>	28	28 <sup>o</sup>	24 <sup>a</sup>
Turkey <sup>d,e</sup>	..	..	..	48 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	12 <sup>r</sup>	..	..	..	6 <sup>r</sup>
United Kingdom	52	64 <sup>j</sup>	58 <sup>o</sup>	41 <sup>r</sup>	21	22 <sup>j</sup>	21 <sup>o</sup>	25 <sup>r</sup>	46	59 <sup>j</sup>	52 <sup>o</sup>	52 <sup>r</sup>
Averages <sup>g</sup>	53	57	58	55	29	30	26	26	45	47	46	44

a) Membership in business services before 1980 is contained in community, social and personal services.

b) Restaurants, hotels and business services are contained in community, social and personal services.

c) Percentage of workers covered by collective bargaining (awards).

d) Mining is contained in manufacturing.

e) Electricity, gas and water is contained in manufacturing.

f) Construction is contained in manufacturing.

g) Unweighted average density rate (excluding New Zealand, France, Finland and Turkey).

h) 1971.

i) 1972.

j) 1973.

k) 1977.

l) 1979.

m) 1981.

n) 1982.

o) 1984.

p) 1986.

q) 1987.

r) 1989.

Sources: See Annex 4.A.



Table 4.5. Union density rates in construction, trade, and transport and communication, 1970-1988

Percentage

	Construction				Trade <sup>a</sup>				Transport and communication			
	1970	1980	1985	1988	1970	1980	1985	1988	1970	1980	1985	1988
Canada	68	58	39 <sup>i</sup>	51 <sup>m</sup>	..	9	11 <sup>i</sup>	10 <sup>m</sup>	69	53	57 <sup>i</sup>	51 <sup>m</sup>
United States <sup>b,c</sup>	42 <sup>h</sup>	38	22	22 <sup>n</sup>	15 <sup>h</sup>	12	8	6 <sup>n</sup>	53 <sup>h</sup>	48	37	32 <sup>n</sup>
Australia	..	50 <sup>k</sup>	48	47	..	22 <sup>k</sup>	21	19	..	72 <sup>k</sup>	67	62
Japan <sup>b</sup>	..	17	19	18	..	10	9	9	..	62	60	50
New Zealand <sup>d</sup>	..	..	..	39 <sup>n</sup>	..	..	..	53 <sup>n</sup>	..	..	..	67 <sup>n</sup>
Austria	58	51	48	46	29	25	23	22	97	99	91	88
Belgium	40	50	66	65	25	35	37	36	55	62	60	60
Denmark	72 <sup>g</sup>	89 <sup>j</sup>	91	84	29 <sup>g</sup>	53 <sup>j</sup>	47	47	65 <sup>g</sup>	60 <sup>j</sup>	55	..
Finland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	49 <sup>n</sup>	..	..	..	..
Germany	20	22	24	23	9	13	14	15	65	73	72	72
Italy	..	36	33	34	..	21	18	19	..	77	79	70
Netherlands	48	44	37	40 <sup>n</sup>	..	10	8	6 <sup>n</sup>	52	49	41	33 <sup>n</sup>
Norway	43	46	45	49 <sup>n</sup>	15	15	13	12 <sup>n</sup>	68	70	68	69 <sup>n</sup>
Sweden	91	100	100	100	38	46	50	49	83	86	89	89
Switzerland	47 <sup>j</sup>	65	67 <sup>i</sup>	52 <sup>m</sup>	12 <sup>j</sup>	11	11 <sup>i</sup>	9 <sup>m</sup>	64 <sup>j</sup>	62	61 <sup>i</sup>	56 <sup>m</sup>
Turkey	..	..	..	12	..	..	..	15	..	..	..	25
United Kingdom	30	38 <sup>i</sup>	30 <sup>i</sup>	30 <sup>n</sup>	8	10 <sup>i</sup>	10 <sup>i</sup>	14 <sup>n</sup>	74	80 <sup>i</sup>	67 <sup>i</sup>	62 <sup>n</sup>
Average <sup>e</sup>	51	50	48	47	19	21	21	20	69	68	65	61

a) Trade is wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels.

b) Trade excludes restaurants and hotels.

c) Transport and communication contains electricity, gas and water.

d) Percentage of workers covered by collective bargaining (awards).

e) Unweighted average density rate (excluding New Zealand, Finland and Turkey).

f) 1971.

g) 1972.

h) 1973.

i) 1979.

j) 1981.

k) 1982.

l) 1984.

m) 1987.

n) 1989.

Sources: See Annex 4.A.

the early 1970s. Japanese management's opposition to unions stiffened following the 1973 oil shock and some legal decisions that strengthened its position, and was implemented by tactics such as transferring potential union organisers to establishments that already have a union, creating non-union labour-management consultation committees, and giving older workers titular management posts. From 1985 to 1988 only one in four Japanese enterprise unions increased its membership, while two out of four experienced a decline<sup>14</sup>.

Outside Scandinavia and large firms in Japan, unions have not been very successful in organising the white-collar labour force, either in manufacturing or in the private segment of the service sector. In the United Kingdom the advance of unions in this area (especially in manufacturing) during the 1970s seems to have been reversed. The strong position of German unions in manufacturing, particularly in the metal industry, suggests that they have been able to draw an important portion of skilled and young workers into their ranks, but there remains a large difference in unionisation between *Arbeiter* and the white-collar *Angestellte*. Finally, a great challenge to trade unions in manufacturing is the changing nature of production processes, with the move away from rigid divisions of labour towards flexible manpower policies which emphasize a highly skilled and increasingly autonomous workforce.

### 3. The service industries

The "service sector" is an aggregation. Service activities, carried out by truckers and computer consultants, retail clerks and postmasters, hairdressers and teachers, differ widely in how they are produced, organised, financed, and marketed. It is important to distinguish subsectors and to differentiate market from public services. During the past two decades, the two growing service sectors were financial and business services (ISIC 8), and community, social and personal services (ISIC 9).

In 1988 a slightly lower proportion of employees worked in transport and communication than in 1970, whereas in most countries trade had grown by one or two percentage points. Within transport and communication, telecommunications and air and road transport have expanded, whereas postal services, railways, sea transport and ports, which are usually in the public sector, declined or were reorganised. As Tables 4.3 and 4.5 show, unionisation rates in transport and communication are high but generally declining. In some countries, these changes may be related to the decline in government regulation and the resulting growth in internal competition.

Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels have the lowest density rates of the sectors shown here, often lower even than in agriculture. On average one out of five workers in this sector joins a union, but rates

are much lower in the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. While this sector's employment share has not changed very much, its size still varies greatly between countries, ranging from around 25 per cent in the United States, Canada and Australia, to less than 12 per cent in Turkey, Portugal, Greece and Belgium. The figures in Table 4.5 indicate that on average the level of unionisation has changed little. But as in manufacturing, this average hides a divergent pattern, ranging from above-average unionisation levels in Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, to low but increasing unionisation in Germany and the United Kingdom, stagnation in Canada and Japan, and decline in Austria, Norway, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United States (although changes in definition exaggerate the decline in the last two cases).

Of critical importance for the future of organised labour will be the unions' presence in the expanding financial and business services. Again there are large differences in the employment share of the sector, from over 10 per cent in the United Kingdom and most non-European OECD countries to 4 or 5 per cent in Greece, Portugal and Turkey. Unions usually have their strongest position in the insurance industry, and in publicly regulated banking activities, where firms tend to be large. Table 4.4 shows that unionisation levels in this sector tend to be higher than in trade, with one out of every four workers joining a trade union. However, in this case the cross-national differences are even larger, with extremes such as the United States (2 out of 100), Canada (6 out of 100) and the Netherlands (9 out of 100) on the one hand, and Sweden (72 out of 100) on the other. In contrast to trade, in this sector unionisation trends are clearly downward – the United Kingdom appears to be the one exception. Employees in the fastest growing segments of this sector (stock exchange, business services, consultancies) tend not to organise in unions at all.

Community, social and personal services are today the largest employment sector, usually larger than manufacturing. Apart from public administration, this sector comprises expanding educational and health services, as well as a heterogeneous array of social, recreational and personal services, both commercial and public. Union organisation in this sector is much higher than in commercial or financial services. On average, almost one out of every two employees is member of a union. In half the countries shown in Table 4.4, density rates are close to or above 50 per cent, and they are around a third in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Japan.

The low rate in Turkey is partly the result of the ban on unionisation of teachers, policemen and parts of the public administration (see Annex 4.A). Elsewhere, there are many indications that unionisation is much higher in the public than in the market part of the sector. In Germany, the level of unionisation in 1985

Table 4.6. Union membership and density in public and private sectors

	Membership (thousands)		Share in total membership (%)		Union density (%)				
	1970	1988	1970	1988	1970	1975	1980	1985	1988
Public sector									
Canada									
Membership records	503.9	..	23.2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	1 550.4 <sup>g</sup>	..	44.6	..	..	..	63.0 <sup>g</sup>	..
United States									
Membership records	4 080.0	..	18.1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	6 422.0	..	37.9	..	29.4 <sup>b</sup>	36.7	35.8	36.7
Japan <sup>f</sup>	3 278.8	2 743.2	28.6	22.6	..	77.5	74.5	61.7	55.8
Australia									
Household survey	..	1 146.6	..	45.2	..	..	73.0 <sup>f</sup>	71.0 <sup>h</sup>	68.0
New Zealand									
Membership	..	174.2 <sup>k</sup>	..	28.4	..	..	..	..	..
Bargaining coverage	..	205.7 <sup>k</sup>	..	29.8	..	..	..	..	94.0 <sup>k</sup>
Austria	379.5	462.6	29.4	35.9	77.7	72.5	68.1	60.5	56.9
Denmark	300.1	622.6	27.2	35.7	67.5	64.4	69.2	74.9	70.0
Finland	..	627.0 <sup>f</sup>	..	39.9	..	..	..	..	85.7 <sup>f</sup>
France	2 043.0 <sup>c</sup>	1 300.0	52.6	61.9	..	..	44.0 <sup>e</sup>	..	26.0
Germany	2 414.5	2 728.0	33.6	33.4	61.0	56.6	52.6	50.4	44.9
Italy	1 170.0 <sup>a</sup>	1 928.7	23.2	33.2	46.8 <sup>a</sup>	56.3	59.6	55.6	54.1
Luxembourg	..	23.0 <sup>f</sup>	..	30.7	..	..	..	..	74.3 <sup>f</sup>
Netherlands	550.5	638.3 <sup>f</sup>	38.0	50.3	64.4	63.7	59.7	49.0	..
Norway	235.1	522.8	35.9	53.0	67.5	69.2	74.3	76.6	75.1
Sweden	631.3	1 438.7	26.9	41.9	..	..	81.1	87.5	81.3
Switzerland	211.2	244.0 <sup>f</sup>	27.9	31.2	74.8	..	70.7	70.6 <sup>g</sup>	..
Turkey	148.0 <sup>c</sup>	317.6 <sup>f</sup>	15.6	21.3	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	3 236.4 <sup>a</sup>	3 386.0 <sup>f</sup>	33.7	39.4	60.2 <sup>a</sup>	64.2 <sup>b</sup>	68.8 <sup>d</sup>	69.3 <sup>g</sup>	55.4 <sup>f</sup>
Average <sup>m</sup>	..	..	29.6	38.1	65.0	61.5	65.7	63.6	61.1
Market sector									
Canada									
Membership records	1 669.2	..	76.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	1 922.9 <sup>g</sup>	..	55.4	..	..	..	27.9 <sup>g</sup>	..
United States									
Membership records	18 402.0	..	81.9	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	9 658.0	..	62.1	..	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	16.8	14.6	12.9
Japan	8 202.4	9 413.9	71.4	77.4	..	28.4	24.7	24.4	23.3
Australia									
Household survey	..	1 389.3	..	54.8	..	..	39.0 <sup>f</sup>	34.0 <sup>h</sup>	32.0
New Zealand									
Membership	378.5	437.4 <sup>k</sup>	..	71.6	46.2	50.1	55.0	47.3	42.1 <sup>k</sup>
Bargaining coverage	..	485.6 <sup>k</sup>	..	70.2	..	..	..	..	51.4 <sup>k</sup>
Austria	912.7	827.6	70.6	64.1	54.6	50.9	48.9	43.9	41.2
Denmark	790.0	1 062.7	72.8	64.3	56.7	67.4	69.3	77.1	72.0
Finland	..	944.0 <sup>f</sup>	..	60.1	..	..	..	..	64.6 <sup>f</sup>
France	1 839.0 <sup>c</sup>	800.0	47.4	38.1	..	..	18.0	..	8.0
Germany	4 780.7	5 433.8	66.4	66.6	26.9	31.2	32.5	33.9	29.9
Italy	3 873.0 <sup>a</sup>	3 879.0	76.8	66.8	33.7 <sup>a</sup>	43.3	42.8	34.6	32.2
Luxembourg	..	52.0 <sup>f</sup>	..	69.3	..	..	..	..	43.3 <sup>f</sup>
Netherlands	897.2	630.7 <sup>f</sup>	62.0	49.7	29.4	29.9	26.2	20.3	..
Norway	419.1	464.3	64.1	47.0	43.2	44.8	46.8	43.3	41.3
Sweden	1 713.6	1 996.8	73.1	58.1	..	..	79.7	82.1	81.3
Switzerland	525.0	535.9 <sup>f</sup>	72.1	68.8	24.0	..	23.8	22.4 <sup>g</sup>	..
Turkey	786.3 <sup>c</sup>	1 171.8 <sup>f</sup>	84.4	78.7	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	6 380.0 <sup>a</sup>	5 082.0 <sup>f</sup>	66.3	60.6	40.1 <sup>a</sup>	40.1 <sup>b</sup>	44.7 <sup>d</sup>	39.3 <sup>g</sup>	37.8 <sup>f</sup>
Average <sup>m</sup>	..	..	70.4	61.9	39.4	40.0	41.3	39.2	40.7

a) 1971. b) 1974. c) 1975. d) 1979. e) 1981. f) 1982. g) 1984. h) 1986. i) 1987. j) 1989. k) March 1990. l) Public sector based on Ministry of Labour, Basic Survey of Trade Unions, in which teachers are contained in market services. m) Unweighted average (excluding Canada, New Zealand, Finland and France).

Sources: See Annex 4.A

was 68 per cent among civil servants with a lifelong employment guarantee (*Beamte*); for regular white-collar employees, it was 57 per cent in public service and 16 per cent in the private sector. Similarly, in the Netherlands the union density rate was a mere 11 per cent among white-collar employees, against 51 per cent among public servants [Visser (1990, p. 54)]. Public administration is the most unionised sector in the United States, Canada and Japan. In the United States, 37 per cent of the employees in the public segment of community, social and personal services had joined a union in 1988, against 6 per cent in the private segment. In Japan the figures for 1988 were 72 per cent for the public and 23 per cent for the market segment. In Canada 76 per cent of the employees in public administration belonged to a union in 1986-1987, and 67 per cent of those in education, 55 per cent in health services, but only 10 per cent in recreation, and 8 per cent in personal services.

Clearly, the public or semi-public character of large parts of this sector has facilitated union growth. Despite legal restrictions on collective bargaining in public administration which exist in many countries, public officials often seem more ready than their private sector counterparts to sit down and negotiate with trade unions, and less inclined to engage in anti-union activities. In addition, unions of, for instance, teachers, policemen or nurses have built upon long traditions of professional association.

#### **4. Public and private sector unionisation: a widening gap?**

To allow further study of unionisation in the public sector, union membership data have been analysed by allocating to the "public sector" public administration; police; education, health, welfare and related community services; public transport and transport-related services; energy distribution; and the Post Office. Members in nationalised industries and energy production were not included. Deviations from this definition are documented in the country notes in Annex 4.A. This activity-based approach has been applied to achieve cross-country consistency: in some of the detailed activities included here in the "public sector", not all employees are directly employed by government, but even in countries where this is the case, the activities involved tend to be government-regulated.

The average share of union members in the public sector has risen over the last two decades by almost ten percentage points (see Table 4.6). However, union density rates themselves did not increase; the rising share, therefore, resulted rather from the expansion of public sector employment and the fall in private sector density rates during the 1980s. Most of the public sector membership increase was in education, health and social care activities, and in public administration. In addition to the increase in the number of civil servants

and other traditionally unionised categories such as teachers, tax-inspectors and policemen, the expanding role of the state in the traditionally less-unionised branches of health care and social welfare has opened new recruitment opportunities. Today, almost two out of five union members are employed in the public sector. In France, owing to the near collapse of private sector unionism (covering only 8 out of 100 employees), of every five union members three work in the public sector. In the Netherlands and Norway, half of all union members are in the public sector (without counting unemployed or retired members). In New Zealand, Japan, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Turkey, partly because of smaller public sectors, partly because of restrictions on union membership, the public sector's share of unionists is below average.

Table 4.9 shows the ratio of union density in the public sector to density in the private sector. In Sweden and Denmark, where overall density rates are high, the private/public gap is more or less non-existent. The ratio is generally largest in countries with the lowest aggregate level of unionisation: the United States, France, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The increase in the gap between public and market sector unionisation in the United States over the last twenty years is particularly striking. Other countries show smaller changes, not all in the same direction: Germany is the main case of a narrowing differential.

Following a decade or more of decline, union representation in the private sector in the United States and France is only half, or even less, of what it was before. For the United States in 1988, Table 4.6 shows a union density rate in the private sector of only 12.9 per cent. With 8 per cent, the French density rate for 1989 was even lower. Other examples of drastic decline, albeit at higher levels, are found in Australia, New Zealand, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (in the latter case, especially between 1979 and 1984). Together with Denmark (and possibly Finland and Sweden), Germany is the only country in which the level of unionisation in the market sector is higher in 1988 than it was in 1970. This is remarkable, because unlike the other countries mentioned, in Germany there has been no relation whatsoever between unemployment insurance and union membership. The main factor behind the solidity of private sector unionism in Germany is the strong position of German unions in the comparatively large manufacturing sector. In recent years, however, unionisation levels in the market sector have been declining in Germany, as in all other countries for which data are available, even including Sweden and Finland.

#### **5. The impact of structural shifts**

The decline of employment in manufacturing, like the sharp increase in unemployment in many countries, has often been cited as a cause of the current union

Table 4.7. Structural employment shifts and unionisation trends

		Union density	
		Observed change	Structural drag <sup>a</sup>
		Percentage points	
Canada	1975-88	1.3	-2.2
United States	1980-88	-8.6	-1.5
Japan	1979-88	-4.9	0.6
Australia	1976-88	-9.0	-1.6
Austria	1970-88	-12.2	-3.4
Italy	1977-88	-9.7	-3.5
Germany	1970-86	3.6	-0.1
Netherlands	1975-88	-10.0	-1.8
	1980-88	-6.8	-1.7
Norway	1972-88	4.5	-2.8
Sweden	1970-88	17.6	-2.5
United Kingdom <sup>b</sup>	1970-89	-5.7	-3.9
	1970-79	6.9	-1.9
	1980-89	-12.6	-2.5

a) "Structural drag" is the change in the aggregate union density rate that would have occurred as a result of actual shifts in employment structure if industry unionisation rates had remained unchanged. This calculation has been made at the 1-digit ISIC level.

b) Without Northern Ireland.

Sources: See Annex 4.A.

decline. To examine how far falling density rates can be explained by employment shifts "between sectors" (as defined here, at the 1-digit level), Table 4.7 applies a conventional shift-share analysis.

The analysis clearly shows that the change in aggregate unionisation rates resulting from changes in the structure of employment, called "structural drag" in the table, only accounts for a small part of the decline. Great Britain is an exception, where "structural drag" amounts to 69 per cent of the decline in union density calculated over the full 1970-1988 period, but here the explanation breaks down when the two decades are considered separately. Structural shifts continued with little change between the two periods, yet unionisation trends contrasted sharply. When comparing across countries, there is little correlation between employment shifts and changes in the aggregate unionisation rate. In Canada, Sweden and Norway, employment shifts from manufacturing to services were stronger than in Australia, the United States or the Netherlands, and yet union density rates increased. Japan and Germany stand out as the two countries with a relatively stable manufacturing sector, where consequently the structural drag of employment change on union density is small. Yet unionisation trends in these two countries have developed in quite opposite directions.

All of this seems to indicate that changes in aggregate unionisation rates generally result mainly from

movements within individual industries, with several, or even most, of the individual industries often moving together. This analysis does not, however, exclude the possibility that other structural changes, relating to occupation, status, sex and firm size, played an important role in union decline. Two of these factors are discussed below.

## F. SEX AND FIRM-SIZE DIFFERENCES IN UNIONISATION RATES

### 1. Female employees

Female unionisation rates are well below those of males (Table 4.8). Women are catching up, however. The share of women in unions rose from 25 to over 31 per cent on average between 1970 and 1988. Countries where the share is below average include Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Turkey. In the Nordic countries, there is little difference left between male and female density rates, and in Finland and Sweden women have become the majority. Because women's share in union membership has risen faster than their share in employment, differences between male and female unionisation rates have narrowed in most countries covered (the sample is less than complete due to a lack of data) (Table 4.9).

Historically female labour used to be biased towards "low density" sectors: agriculture and domestic services in the early days, retail trade, finance and miscellaneous services later. The expansion of the public sector has clearly favoured both the employment and unionisation of females. Women continue to have a low share of management positions, which tend to have relatively low density. As female activity rates have increased, employment interruptions due to child-rearing have become shorter or less frequent: an increase in female job tenure may help explain why the disparity between male and female unionisation rates is smallest in the countries with the highest female activity rates.

A number of studies have tried to determine whether gender differentials in unionisation are caused by the differing positions of male and female workers in the labour force. Bain and Elsheim (1979) found that the proportion of female employees had no separate impact on the differences in unionisation between sectors, a finding which was repeated by Richardson and Catlin (1979) and, in a further study of inter-establishment unionisation rates, by Elsheim and Bain (1980). The authors suggest that the relation is probably the other way round: the location of female jobs in less unionised sectors has an impact on the lower unionisation levels of females. With respect to the United States, it was shown that "over 80 per cent of the male-female differential in unionisation appears to be

Table 4.8. Union membership and union density by sex

	Membership <sup>a</sup> (thousands)		Share (%) in total membership <sup>a</sup>		Union density (%)				
	1970	1989	1970	1989	1970	1975	1980	1985	1989
Females									
Canada	524.3 <sup>d</sup>	1 429.5 <sup>k</sup>	22.6	37.2	21.3 <sup>d</sup>	24.1	..	30.4	30.2 <sup>k</sup>
United States									
Membership records	5 078.0	..	23.9	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	6 141.0	..	36.2	..	..	15.9	13.2	12.6
Japan	3 201.2	3 364.6 <sup>k</sup>	27.9	27.7	..	29.0	24.6	22.0	18.9
Australia									
Membership records	570.9	1 219.3	24.5	35.3	36.5	46.2	47.9	45.4	48.0 <sup>i</sup>
Household survey	..	..	..	..	..	43.0 <sup>e</sup>	43.0 <sup>h</sup>	39.0 <sup>j</sup>	35.0 <sup>j</sup>
Austria <sup>b</sup>	418.7	510.9	27.5	30.9	44.6	..	40.1	36.7	..
Denmark <sup>b</sup>	262.4 <sup>d</sup>	940.6	23.0	46.2	36.2 <sup>i</sup>	..	..	71.6 <sup>j</sup>	..
Germany	1 327.0	2 364.4	16.1	24.8	15.3	17.9	20.3	21.7	21.6 <sup>j</sup>
Finland	..	964.0	..	50.9	..	..	..	..	74.9
France <sup>c</sup>	..	550.0	..	29.7	..	..	15.0 <sup>g</sup>	..	7.0
Ireland	116.5 <sup>d</sup>	157.3 <sup>k</sup>	27.5	31.6	43.4 <sup>d</sup>	..	47.3 <sup>g</sup>	..	..
Netherlands	162.6	296.3	10.3	18.1	13.9	16.2	18.0	13.2	13.0 <sup>k</sup>
Sweden	825.1	1 991.7 <sup>i</sup>	32.4	50.1	53.7	68.2	78.9	85.9	88.3 <sup>j</sup>
Switzerland	106.4	167.8 <sup>k</sup>	12.6	18.6	11.1	12.3	13.6	13.1	12.7 <sup>j</sup>
Turkey	..	200.0	..	13.4	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	2 740.8	3 890.4	24.5	38.0	29.1	34.0	36.8 <sup>j</sup>	37.2 <sup>j</sup>	33.3
Average <sup>m</sup>	..	..	24.9	31.3	28.2	31.0	32.9	31.9	31.0
Males									
Canada	1 606.7 <sup>d</sup>	2 412.2 <sup>k</sup>	77.4	62.8	36.3 <sup>d</sup>	40.6	..	39.0	39.4 <sup>k</sup>
United States									
Membership records	16 170.0	..	76.1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Household survey	..	10 819.0	..	63.8	..	..	28.4	22.1	19.7 <sup>k</sup>
Japan	8 280.2	8 802.6	72.4	72.4	..	37.0	33.6	32.4	29.9
Australia									
Membership records	1 760.5	2 191.0	75.5	64.7	57.1	61.6	61.3	62.6	60.51
Household survey	..	..	..	..	..	56.0 <sup>e</sup>	53.0 <sup>h</sup>	50.0 <sup>j</sup>	46.0 <sup>j</sup>
Austria <sup>b</sup>	1 101.6	1 133.5	72.3	68.9	72.8	..	63.0	56.8	..
Denmark <sup>b</sup>	880.9 <sup>d</sup>	1 096.9	77.0	53.8	74.7 <sup>d</sup>	..	..	78.0 <sup>j</sup>	..
Germany	6 924.2	7 182.6	83.9	75.2	42.4	47.3	47.0	47.4	46.7 <sup>j</sup>
Finland	..	930.5	..	49.1	..	..	..	..	68.6
France <sup>c</sup>	..	1 300.0	..	70.3	..	..	29.0 <sup>g</sup>	..	13.0
Ireland	306.5 <sup>d</sup>	341.3 <sup>k</sup>	72.5	68.4	56.1 <sup>d</sup>	..	59.9 <sup>g</sup>	..	..
Netherlands	1 422.8	1 339.7	89.7	81.9	43.7	46.0	44.2	37.0	35.2 <sup>k</sup>
Sweden	1 721.3	1 982.5 <sup>i</sup>	67.6	49.9	77.4	79.3	80.9	83.3	82.4 <sup>j</sup>
Switzerland	736.6	732.1 <sup>k</sup>	87.4	81.4	41.8	44.8	41.4	39.0	34.2 <sup>j</sup>
Turkey	..	1 293.1	..	86.6	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	8 437.2	6 347.6	75.5	62.0	54.2	57.9	60.6 <sup>j</sup>	55.1 <sup>j</sup>	44.0
Average <sup>m</sup>	..	..	75.1	68.7	53.2	51.8	51.2	47.5	43.6

a) Membership figures generally include retired and unemployed workers while densities are standardized.

b) Density rates calculated on the basis of ILO labour force data.

c) Manual workers only.

d) 1971.

e) 1976.

f) 1979.

g) 1981.

h) 1982.

i) 1984.

j) 1986.

k) 1987.

l) 1988.

m) Unweighted average (excluding Denmark, Finland, France and Ireland).

Table 4.9. Disparities in union density rates, by sex and public versus market sector  
Ratios of average density rates

	Male/Female				Public sector/Market sector			
	1970	1980	1985	1988	1970	1980	1985	1988
Canada	1.7 <sup>b</sup>	..	1.3	1.3 <sup>i</sup>	..	..	2.3 <sup>g</sup>	..
United States	..	1.8	1.7	1.6 <sup>j</sup>	1.2	2.2	2.5	2.8
Australia	1.5	1.2 <sup>f</sup>	1.3 <sup>h</sup>	1.3	..	1.9 <sup>f</sup>	2.1 <sup>h</sup>	2.1
Japan	..	1.4	1.5	1.6	..	3.0	2.5	2.4
New Zealand <sup>a</sup>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1.8 <sup>k</sup>
Austria	1.6	1.6	1.5	..	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4
Denmark	2.1 <sup>c</sup>	..	1.1	..	1.2 <sup>c</sup>	1.0 <sup>e</sup>	1.0	1.0
Finland	..	..	..	0.9 <sup>j</sup>	..	..	..	1.3 <sup>j</sup>
France	..	1.9	..	1.9	..	2.4	..	3.2
Germany	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3	1.6	1.5	1.5
Italy	..	..	..	..	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.7
Luxembourg	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1.7 <sup>j</sup>
Netherlands	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.7 <sup>i</sup>	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4
Norway	..	..	..	..	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.8
Sweden	1.4	1.0	1.0	0.9	..	1.0	1.1	1.0
Switzerland	3.8 <sup>b</sup>	3.0	3.0 <sup>g</sup>	2.7	3.1 <sup>b</sup>	3.0	3.1 <sup>g</sup>	..
United Kingdom	1.9	1.6 <sup>d</sup>	1.5 <sup>e</sup>	1.3 <sup>j</sup>	1.5	1.5 <sup>d</sup>	1.8 <sup>g</sup>	1.5 <sup>j</sup>

a) Based on employees covered by collective bargaining (awards).

b) 1971.

c) 1972.

d) 1979.

e) 1981.

f) 1982.

g) 1984.

h) 1986.

i) 1987.

j) 1988.

k) 1990.

Sources : See Annex 4.A.

related to differences in the characteristics of the jobs held by men and by women and in the economic interests of each group, rather than to any innately lower desire for union membership by females" [Freeman and Medoff (1984, p. 28)]. Another study with United States data found that occupation, industry and other employment characteristics accounted for approximately 65 per cent of the difference in union membership between males and females. Altering the occupational and industrial distribution of female workers to the male pattern would raise the unionisation rate for females by 7.2 percentage points, which would be an increase of nearly 50 per cent [Antos *et al.* (1980)].

Part-time employment (held primarily by females) is often quoted as another obstacle to unionisation. Surveys in Germany and in the Netherlands show very large differences in unionisation between part-time and full-time workers [Bertl *et al.* (1988); Schippers (1986)]. In one study based on data from public employee unions in the Netherlands, it was found that controlling for part-time work, the density rate among females was higher than among males [Kaspers *et al.* (1990)]<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. Firm size

One important structural feature which returns in nearly all national studies of the determinants of union density is firm or establishment size [see Goetschy and Rojot (1987) for France; Lawlor and Rigby (1986) for Spain; Shirai (1982) and Kuwahara (1987) for Japan; Wrong (1987) for Switzerland]. Where employment is concentrated in larger units, the possibilities of initiating and retaining collective organisation appear to be better. Survey results consistently show a large positive effect of firm size on union organisation in all sectors and occupational groups. According to one survey, held in 1977-78, union density in Germany rose from 7 per cent in units with less than 10 employees to 56 per cent in those with 2 000 and more employees [Bosch (1985, p. 192)]. In a representative survey in 1985, size effects were even larger, with union density rates varying from 4 per cent in the smallest units to 58 per cent in the largest [Bertl *et al.* (1988)]. In Norway the 1980 density rate varied between 18 per cent for establishments with less than 5 workers to 67 per cent for establishments with 200 and more

employees. The Japanese Basic Survey on Trade Unions in 1983 shows that, in Japan, the density rate in firms with 100 and more employees was almost five times as high as in firms with less than 100 workers (47.5 against 9.9 per cent). In very large firms (with over 50 000 employees), union density often reached close to 100 per cent [Shirai (1982); Kuwahara (1987)]. Similar findings were obtained for the United Kingdom in the 1980 and 1984 Workplace Industrial Relations Surveys.

Bain and Elias (1985), however, on the basis of their re-analysis of a manpower survey from 1977, argue that in the United Kingdom the relation is not linear: in very large firms unionisation tends to decrease. A similar finding was obtained for the United States by Hirsch and Berger (1984), who argued that very large firms may have more resources to compete with unions over the allegiance of their workforce – an argument that is also made by Cornfield (1986).

Studies in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, using multivariate techniques, showed that the average size of establishment or, in the Dutch case, the share of employment in small firms with less than 10 employees, explains over 40 per cent of the variation in unionisation across sectors [Bain and Elsheikh (1979); Visser (1985)]. However, it is not clear that firm size can contribute so much to the explanation of cross-national differences in the aggregate rate of unionisation. Given the countries' shares of employment in large firms, especially in manufacturing [see OECD (1985)], the United States should have a much higher degree of unionisation, while Denmark, Belgium or Italy should have a much lower one. In fact, unions in Denmark, Belgium and Italy have been exceptionally successful in the small firm sector. It also seems unlikely that growth in the employment share of small firms could account for much of the declines in union density rates. In manufacturing in the decade through to the early 1980s, "the general impression is one of stability... In those countries where the share of small firms has risen .. the change can best be described as marginal..." [OECD (1985, p. 71)].

## G. HYPOTHESES FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter has reviewed the main patterns of the decline in unionisation in the 1980s, especially in contrast to rising trends in the 1970s. Higher unemployment and lower rates of price inflation explain only part of this contrast. There were pronounced shifts in the sectoral structure of employment, but these did not vary enough between the two decades to explain the contrasting unionisation trends. The impacts of other changes in the nature of employment, such as the

growth of the small firm sector, part-time jobs or changes in the occupational structure, could not be tested directly. They deserve further research, although there are some indications that these structural changes were in general not rapid enough to account for the larger changes in union density.

The analysis has emphasized the divergence of unionisation rates across countries. Again, this could only partly be accounted for in terms of economic structure or economic experiences. This leaves room for explanations in terms of government policies, employer and employee attitudes, and institutional and organisational factors. In this concluding section, a few hypotheses for further study will be mentioned.

The first hypothesis develops an observation by Kas-salow (1987, p. 5): where unions have participated in developing an industry-wide bargaining system, and have maintained multi-employer bargaining despite decentralisation pressures coming from the rank-and-file (United Kingdom and Italy in the 1970s) or from employers (the general case in the 1980s), rates of unionisation have tended to hold up. This hypothesis applies especially cross-nationally, but can also be useful in explaining differing trends between sectors. It helps to explain the stable unionisation rates in Germany and Sweden compared to, for example, the United Kingdom or Italy, but it has nothing to offer for the cases of union decline such as Austria, Australia or the Netherlands. A more general explanation requires an interaction effect, which leads to the second hypothesis.

To maintain high density levels overall, trade unions, in addition to sectoral bargaining, need a secure, non-contested (by employers or other unions) and institutionalised presence in the workplace. This hypothesis is used by Kjellberg (1983) to explain the difference in unionisation levels and long-term trends between Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France. Swedish unions are both centralised and decentralised, highly visible in workplaces and, at the same time, engaging in economy-wide bargaining. Dutch unions are very centralised and have done much to promote central bargaining, but they were never present in the enterprise. The United Kingdom is the reverse case, with strong but volatile presence in the workplace and rarely with a capacity for multi-employer bargaining above the level of firms. In France unions meet neither condition, or only very partially. French legislation in 1968 and 1982 that required bipartite *comités d'entreprise* in larger companies did not lead to increased institutionalisation of the unions at the workplace, as was the case, for example, with the 1972 Works Constitution Act that strengthened the role played by employee-only works councils in Germany.

A third hypothesis may appear paradoxical at first: where unions are inclusive, in that they negotiate terms of employment for members and non-members alike, employer opposition is less likely to develop and union-



isation rates will be more stable. This hypothesis is suggested by studies of the "exclusive" unionism in the United States showing how the comparatively large union mark-up on wages has led to strong employer opposition.

In a recent study, Blanchflower and Freeman (1990) surveyed a number of possible effects of unions (on wages, wage dispersion, employment, the provision of fringe benefits, job tenure and turnover, productivity, technical change, and profits), using a six-country data set based on social attitude surveys. Their conclusion was that the United States had a markedly higher union/non-union wage differential than other countries. The 15-points differential which they found was in the range of the values found by Lewis (1986) in his very elaborate study of the subject, and was "nearly three times as great as the unweighted average differential for the other five countries". On the other items there were few cross-national differences. The authors concluded that increases in the union/non-union wage differential raise employer opposition more than they increase the monetary benefits of unionism to workers. They added that deciding union membership through an adversarial electoral process at plant level, as is the case in the United States (and Canada), has evolved into a system where, in practice, management has a greater influence on unionisation than in other countries.

Union organisation is a very different game in a country where multi-employer bargaining exists and non-union employers have to pay the rates negotiated by their unionised competitors. A first effect is that employers organise in branch organisations. Second, the possible emergence of a union/non-union wage gap, and therefore the incentive to create a "union-free environment", is much reduced. There can still be some mark-up effect on account of wage drift in firms, or due to incomplete extension arrangements, but it will be smaller. Third, workers have little reason to join unions for monetary reasons, or wage increases which they would get anyway. For this reason, business cycle models, which assume that workers "credit" unions for wage increases and then develop this as a reason for joining, are void of theoretical and practical meaning in European countries such as Germany, Sweden or the Netherlands. Rather, unions use sentiments of solidarity and develop other activities, possibly combined with selective benefits of some sort.

The fourth and last hypothesis is that high unionisation rates can only be obtained where unions have overcome the "free rider" problem (whereby some employees choose to benefit from union actions without being union members), either through a type of "coercion" (such as the closed shop), but more likely through managing what is in many other countries a public service. Stable unionisation rates of over 60 per cent may only be possible where unions have a stake in the social insurance and, in particular, the unemployment protection system.

Table 4.10. Composition of union membership: share of persons not in employment

	Retired, unemployed and students (as a percentage of all members)	
	1970	1988/89
Canada	2.3	1.5
Australia	..	12.4 <sup>b</sup>
Austria <sup>a</sup>	15.0	21.5
Belgium	16.2	31.7
Denmark	3.6	14.9
Finland	12.6	20.9
Germany	13.1	15.3
Italy	11.1	39.2
Netherlands	8.5	17.4
Norway	13.0	15.8
Sweden	8.7	11.4
Switzerland	10.1	13.1
United Kingdom <sup>c</sup>	10.0	10.0
Average <sup>d</sup>	10.4	17.3

a) Without unemployed.

b) Non-paying membership.

c) Rates for the United Kingdom are estimates.

d) Unweighted average.

Sources : See Annex 4.A.

This chapter has concentrated on union growth. However, there is no doubt that the internal structure of unionism has also changed substantially in all countries. The number of women has increased. The available data on age (not considered here) indicate falling unionisation rates among the young, while the average unionist – like the labour force – has become older. The industrial profile of unions has changed. The majority of (employed) trade unionists now work in services: in Canada, the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, this is true for two-thirds of all members, a large proportion of them in the public sector. Only in Turkey and Germany (and possibly Belgium) does the majority of members still work in the secondary sector. Finally, as can be seen from Table 4.10, retired persons and unemployed workers are an increasingly significant group within most European unions.

These changes have influenced union organisation and union policies. Public sector unions are now the largest unions in many countries. Blue-collar workers and members in manufacturing establishments and sectors exposed to international competition are becoming a minority in the very labour movements of which they were the founders. Inevitably, their voice will carry less weight in national confederations and bargaining fora. In 1985 metalworkers unions had retained their traditional first place only in Germany, Switzerland and one of the two Belgian federations. In Austria they were outnumbered by a general white-

collar union, in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom by large general unions straddling all industries, in France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden by public employee unions, and in Italy by pensioners.

These shifts in the social and industrial profile of unions will only accelerate if unions succeed in organis-

ing more women workers, more service employees and more white-collar staffs. The increasing heterogeneity of union members has posed new challenges for union leadership and union strategies; not the least, it has made the search for coherent wage policies in many OECD countries more difficult.

## NOTES

- \* This chapter was written by Dr. Jelle Visser, University of Amsterdam, with editorial assistance from the Secretariat, taking into account comments from delegates to OECD Working Parties.
- 1. End-of-year premiums in Belgium, determined in collective agreements, are payments by employers covering some or all union dues at the end of the year.
- 2. In the printing industry, and in many ports, union shops have a long history and still exist even in France, Germany or the Netherlands.
- 3. A useful overview of "union security" arrangements is presented in Cordova and Ozaki (1980).
- 4. In contrast to the current situation, up to the early 1960s density rates in Canada and the United States were at similar levels.
- 5. The negative correlation between size of a country's labour force and its union density is quite strong; for 1988, the correlation coefficient between (the logarithm of) the size of wage and salary employment and union density levels was -0.63 for the 18 countries shown in Table 4.2 (significant at the 5 per cent level).
- 6. For the 18 countries listed in Table 4.2, the rank-order coefficient between the 1980 and 1988 density rates is 0.97, whereas the coefficient of variation increased from 0.39 in 1980 to 0.45 in 1988.
- 7. Despite the attention given to the United States case, during the 1980s declines in union density were even larger in France and Spain.
- 8. The case of Spain shows that low union density does not necessarily imply low union political power or social impact. That unions still have considerable influence over the Spanish labour force is shown, *inter alia*, by the relative success of the December 1989 general strike.
- 9. Density figures before 1974 appear to be even higher, but are not comparable, due to a strong element of coercion.
- 10. The examination of internal union files which allowed the sectoral breakdown of membership was carried out under a project on *Development of Unions in European Societies after 1945* (DUES), located at the Zentrum für Sozialwissenschaften (Mannheim, Germany) and funded by the Volkswagen research foundation. Dr. Jelle Visser is one of the co-ordinators of this project which will publish a data handbook on trade union structure in 12 Western European countries in 1992 [Ebbinghaus *et al.* (forthcoming)].
- 11. In Italy, union density in some service industries is likely to be understated (see Annex 4.A).
- 12. In contrast to Germany and Italy, union membership may have been positively associated with job loss in Great Britain between 1980 and 1984. A re-analysis of the Workplace Industrial Relations survey data showed that union recognition had dropped from 84 to 65 per cent for manual workers, and from 62 to 29 per cent for non-manuals. This decline could in large part be attributed to a high plant closure rate and an above-average employment reduction in the unionised sector, combined with strong employment growth in the non-unionised sector [Beaumont and Harris (1989, pp. 96-97)].
- 13. Even where they won representation elections, AFL-CIO labour unions on average secure an agreement in only 75 per cent of cases.
- 14. The most important reasons cited for the decline in membership experienced by many Japanese unions were reduced hiring, termination of membership due to retirement, and curtailment of business [Ministry of Labour (1988)].
- 15. Calculations based on the 1989 Labour Force Survey show that if (proportionally) as many females in the United Kingdom worked full-time jobs as males do, the union density rate of females in 1989 would have been 42 instead of 33 per cent, nearly eliminating the gap between the male and female rates. Full-time working females unionise almost as readily as full-time working males, while female part-timers appear to join unions more often than their (still rare) male counterparts.

#### Annex 4.A.

### SOURCES AND METHODS FOR UNION MEMBERSHIP AND UNIONISATION STATISTICS

#### A. GENERAL

##### 1. Employment statistics

Union reporting is the main source of membership statistics in most countries. To calculate unionisation rates (also referred to as union density rates) from these membership statistics, separate data on employee employment (total and by industry, market and public sector, and sex) were used. These were in most cases taken from OECD *Labour Force Statistics*. A major exception is Switzerland where for some years, data on wage and salary employment were estimated on the basis of workplace surveys and population census data [see Flora *et al.* (1987, pp. 601-607); Visser (1989, pp. 230f)]. Where membership statistics are taken from household surveys (such as in Australia and the United States), the corresponding employment data, reported in these surveys, are used.

Employment in the public sector has been calculated in most cases on the basis of OECD *National Accounts*. The calculation of salaried employment by sex is based on OECD *Labour Force Statistics*; in addition, for Austria, Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands, labour force survey data published by the International Labour Office [ILO (1990a, 1990b)] and in Flora *et al.* (1987, Chapter 7) have been used.

##### 2. Industry breakdowns

In a number of countries, membership by industry has been estimated by distributing the membership of individual unions across industries. A detailed list indicating what proportion of the membership of each union was allocated to each industry in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland is available on request to Mr. Jelle Visser, University of Amsterdam, Department of Sociology, Oude Hoogstraat 24, NL 1012 CE Amsterdam.

In general, where only a single multiplicative deflator is available to correct for retired and unemployed membership in estimating standardized (or "net") membership levels from reported (or "gross") membership, standardized membership is probably overestimated in sectors with relatively high unemployment rates – manufacturing and mining, construction and transport – and underestimated in other sectors. This bias may be present particularly in Belgium and Denmark.

##### 3. The coverage of public sector membership data

To a considerable extent, it has been necessary to use national definitions of the public sector. In general, public sector membership reported here includes public administration; police; education, health, welfare and related community services; public transport (notably railways) and transport-related services; and the Post Office. However in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand, the postal services and rail or other public transport are not included. In Japan, Italy and Turkey, police are not included.

One marginal group is the professional military, included in the public sector in the Nordic countries, Germany and the Netherlands, but excluded in most other OECD countries. Conscripts often retain membership, but proportions are generally very low (less than one per cent of total membership) and have been declining with shorter drafts. Where separate unions of conscripts exist, as in the Netherlands, they have been excluded from the statistics. In some countries (including Japan and Turkey), various groups including military personnel are not allowed to join unions at all, so that inclusion or exclusion of this occupation in union membership totals is irrelevant.

Another marginal area is public utilities (electricity, gas and water), which have been included in the public sector totals for most countries, with the exception of Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States. The public utilities covered do not include energy (e.g. coal and oil) extraction, but normally include electricity generation and the electricity, gas and oil distribution networks. Employees in other nationalised industries and in public corporations are never included in the public sector.

#### B. SOURCES AND METHODS BY COUNTRY

##### *Australia*

Annual statistics on union membership are compiled from questionnaires completed by unions, reported in Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (1970-1989). The initially-published series for the years 1968 through 1978 were later revised [see Plowman (1981)], and in 1985 the reporting date was changed from 31 December to 30 June. Though not all unions are able to state the exact numbers, the statistics

give a subdivision into female and male membership. Subdivisions by industry or occupation are not given. They would be imprecise, due to the presence of large general or occupational unions [see Bain and Price (1980, Chapter 4)]. The ABS observes that the statistics "may include persons who do not consider themselves as members (e.g. unfinancial, suspended) or are not in the labour force (retired, students) or unemployed" and that "persons who are members of more than one union are counted more than once", but the extent of this duplication is not known. From 1985 onwards, the reports show "financial membership", which refers to members no more than six months in arrears in payment of dues. "Unfinancial" membership (11.1 per cent of the total in 1985 and 12.4 per cent in 1989) is retained in statistics of reported membership used in this chapter.

Household surveys in November 1976, March-May 1982, August 1986 and August 1988, published in ABS, *Trade Union Members, Australia*, give breakdowns by industry, occupation, sex and, except in 1976, between the market and public sectors.

Survey data show membership considerably lower than reported by unions: the discrepancy has been growing, reaching 754 600 (22.9 per cent of the total reported by unions) in 1988. Apart from a small difference in reporting date, the ABS mentions the following as factors in this disparity:

- The household survey reports membership in the first job (the 1982 survey found 61 600 "second job" members, who were not included in the totals);
- The survey counts only once persons who are members of two unions, change between jobs (and unions), or belong to a union and a professional association;
- The survey excludes unemployed and retired workers and those in arrears with dues payment.

For comparing the level of unionisation in Australia to other countries, the survey figures provide the better estimate, though only the union reports provide data annually.

## Austria

Membership statistics are compiled from union returns to the Austrian Confederation of Trade Unions (ÖGB: *Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund*), the only recognised union organisation. The ÖGB *Annual Report (Tätigkeitsbericht)* reports membership statistics by affiliate, sex, status groups (blue- and white-collar workers, and civil servants) and for young people. The reporting date is 31 December.

Union membership statistics include retired members [Traxler (1982); Visser (1989, Chapter 1)]. Only certain unions report retired membership separately: the proportion retired is high in some public sector unions (post office, railways, municipal employees). Only the Private Sector Employees Union (GPA: *Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten*), which is now the largest single union, gives continuous data on retired and unemployed members. The proportion in the GPA seems likely to be fairly representative for other unions, given the GPA's membership domain and in the light of studies of similar unions in western Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. This proportion was applied to ÖGB membership as a whole.

Unemployed members are included, but constitute only a small proportion of total membership. (For example, only around one per cent of the membership of the GPA was unemployed between 1985 and 1988.) Internal union reports were used for the industrial classification of ÖGB members.

## Belgium

Membership statistics cover the socialist FGTB (Fédération Générale du Travail de la Belgique), the Christian ACV (*Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond*) and the Liberal confederation, which has a secondary affiliate in the public sector. Membership data were supplied directly by the confederations; data for 1972 to 1981 are also reported in Arq and Neuville (1989). The 1988 figures for the FGTB unions used in this chapter are extrapolations of earlier figures. The reporting date is 31 December.

Among organisations not covered here are the National Confederation of Managerial Staff (CNC: *Confédération Nationale des Cadres*) which gained legal recognition with 10 003 members in 1986, and some small independent unions (e.g. for police officers, or finance ministry personnel) [European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) (1987a, p. 19)].

Pasture and Mampuy (1990) show that the ACV figures are inflated by 15 to 20 per cent. The corresponding figure for the FGTB is unknown, but at least 20 per cent, according to the same authors. To make figures for Belgium more comparable, the "correction factor" applied by the ACV has been used as a deflator for total reported membership. The deflator varies from 0.83 to 0.87 between 1970 and 1987 [Pasture and Mampuy (1990, pp. 204-209, annex 21 and 22)].

Standardization of the membership figures to exclude retired and unemployed members is essential. According to Martens (1985), during the early 1980s, when unemployment soared, 30 to 40 per cent of all union members were in one way or another without jobs, retired or on leave. The close involvement of Belgian unions in the administration of unemployment insurance and extra benefits attached to union membership in some sectors (e.g. textiles or construction) encourage unemployed workers to retain membership. Vilroxx and Senden (1986) and Hancké (1989) have calculated that 75-80 per cent of the unemployed are unionised. To correct for unemployed members, 80 per cent of the annual average number of unemployed workers was subtracted from reported membership. ETUI (1987a, p. 20) reported that 175 000 or around 7 per cent of the membership of the three confederations were retired. Pasture and Mampuy (1990, annex 40-42) report much higher numbers for the ACV unions (18 per cent in 1987) which, however, also include recipients of disability benefits and students. To correct for retired members and other persons outside the labour force, all reported membership figures were further deflated by the proportion found for the ACV unions.

Membership statistics are not available by sex, nor is it possible to arrive at a meaningful subdivision between the market and public sectors. Separate public employee unions or cartels of unions exist, but a number of other unions also have members in the public sector.

Since no internal union statistics were available, the memberships of the general employee unions were allocated to industry groups on a proportional basis, and the memberships of other unions were allocated to the industry of their main activity. The private sector membership of the Liberal confederation was not disaggregated, so that a high proportion of members remained not classified to industry.

## Canada

Labour Canada publishes compilations of union returns annually in the *Directory of Labour Organisations in Canada* (before 1980, *Labour Organisations in Canada*) (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services). The reporting date was

31 December until 1978, but was changed to 1 January in 1980, which this chapter equates with the end of the previous year. Very small unions with less than 50 members are not covered. Coverage was extended in 1971 by approximately 55 000 members or 2.5 per cent of the 1971 total.

A second source also based on returns from unions is the *Annual Report under the Companies and Labour Unions Returns Act* (Calura) which is published each year (with a two-year lag) by Statistics Canada. Calura data tend to understate union membership when compared to Labour Canada data (by up to 10 per cent in the 1970s, falling to 4.7 per cent in 1987), due to the exclusion of unions with less than 100 members and of some smaller professional and public employee associations. Coverage was extended in 1981 so as to include more fully unions of teachers and nurses, but such groups as police and firemen are still outside its scope. For a full discussion of the alternative sources on union membership and a comparison with 1984 survey data, see Kumar (1988).

Here, Labour Canada data were used for the annual series on aggregate membership, despite the fact that they may slightly exaggerate the true extent of unionisation. Bain and Price (1980, p. 104) observe that the majority of Canadian (and United States) unions include unemployed members, members on strike and apprentices, but exclude retired workers in their membership returns. Approximately equal numbers of unions include and exclude members who are temporarily in the armed forces. Hence, the series may overstate the degree of unionisation of wage- and salary-earners in employment, although the degree of overstatement due to these factors is probably small. The 1989 *Annual Report of Calura* states that 1.5 per cent of the total membership in 1987 were unemployed, retired, drafted in the armed forces or otherwise not in the labour force.

Additional statistics of union membership are available from the 1981 Survey of Work History, the 1984 Survey of Union Membership, and the 1986 Labour Market Activity Survey, all conducted as supplements to the Labour Force Survey. The 1981 survey suffered from sample and definitional problems and gave the overall union density rate as 31.2 per cent (compared to 36.7 per cent in this chapter). Later surveys confirmed that Labour Canada statistics tend to overstate union density by 1 to 2 percentage points, while Calura data understate density. Survey data show a sharper fall in density between 1984 and 1986 than the other sources [Kumar (1988); Canadian Labour Market and Productivity Centre (1989)].

Labour Canada provides no data by industry; however, it reported union membership by sex through a special survey until 1977. Calura gives breakdowns by industry and sex as well as by type of union and congress affiliation, but the data by industry refer only to broad industrial categories. The 1984 and 1986 household surveys give a more detailed subdivision, in 1986 reporting union density much above average in education (66.7 per cent) and in health and welfare services (55.2 per cent), but much below average in business services (9.3 per cent), accommodation and food (7.2 per cent), and recreational services (10.4 per cent). For this chapter, union membership by industry was estimated on the basis of Calura data with additional information from Bain and Price (1980, pp. 116-117 and Table 4.6) and the 1984 and 1986 surveys.

Totals reported here for the public sector do not include postal services, rail or other public transport for reasons of comparability with later years. Membership by sex was

taken from Labour Canada data before 1978, and Calura and survey data for 1984-1987. A discontinuity leading to understatement of female union membership in recent years may be present, although comparison with survey data shows that this factor is small (1-2 per cent).

## Denmark

Statistics on union membership, collected by the union confederations and reported in the *Statistisk Årbog* include blue- and white-collar unions, professional and technical employee associations, and some independent and smaller unions. Coverage was widened in 1972 by inclusion of a newly-founded central organisation of professional employee associations (AC: *Akademikernes Centralorganisation*), and in 1975 when a number of independent staff and white-collar associations were added. In most cases membership data for these unions could be included from 1970 on the basis of other sources [see Visser (1989, p. 32)]. The membership reported here excludes self-employed members in the AC. Until 1972, blue-collar unions reported at 31 December and white-collar federations at 31 March. From 1973, membership was reported at 1 January, which this chapter equates with the end of the previous year.

Retired members are not included in membership reported by the white-collar organisations. They are, however, included by the largest confederation, the *Landsorganisationen i Danmark* (LO). In the absence of direct data, the deflator for its sister organisation in Sweden, where the share of retired members rose from 3 per cent in 1970 to just over 8 per cent in 1988, was applied to its figures. In addition, reported membership was deflated to correct for unemployed members. Given the similarities in union involvement in the administration of unemployment insurance, 80 per cent of the annual average number of unemployed workers was subtracted from reported membership, as for Belgium.

A number of white-collar unions did not in the past report membership by sex, and female membership was seriously underestimated in compilations at the aggregate level in the 1970s. Reporting has improved, and since 1984 coverage has been near complete. Survey data reported by Scheuer (1987, Bilag A, pp. 217ff.) show higher female membership shares than the union-reported data used here: 37.7 per cent compared to the 26.2 per cent for 1976, and 45.4 per cent compared to the 42.6 per cent for 1982.

The allocation of Danish union membership to industries and between a market and public segment is difficult. Union structure is complex, with a significant presence of craft and occupational unions, and very large general unions which straddle the boundaries of many industries. Nor is there a neat distinction between private and public sector unions: the proportions found in the two surveys reported by Scheuer were applied to the standardized membership figures.

## Finland

Statistics on union membership are collected by the union confederations and reported in the *Statistical Yearbook of Finland*. The figures include blue- and white-collar unions, professional and technical employee associations, as well as a number of independent and small unions (especially artists and similar professions). It is not clear whether coverage has widened over the years. The reporting date is 31 December of each year.

A recent survey of trade unions in 1989 [Kauppinen and Köykkä (1991)] indicates that reported membership includes

a significant proportion of retired and self-employed persons, students and other persons outside the labour force. For example, of the 1 895 000 reported union members in 1989, 17.1 per cent were retired, students or self-employed, 0.4 per cent worked abroad and 3.4 per cent were unemployed (pp. 8f., Tables 7-10). It was also found that the proportion of unemployed members joining unions (72 per cent) was not significantly different from that of employed workers. Having no annual data on retired, self-employed or student members, we assumed the development over time to be similar to that found in Sweden. According to this estimate, the share of all groups outside the labour force rose from 9 to 17.5 per cent between 1970 and 1989. Reported membership was also deflated to correct for unemployed members as in Belgium and Denmark.

Membership statistics by sex are incomplete. Female membership in the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) rose from 32.3 per cent in 1970 to 43.9 per cent in 1987 [Yli-Pietilä *et al.* (1990)]. Female membership of the second-largest confederation, the Confederation of Salaried Employees in Finland (TVK), which has its strength in education, health and welfare services, is only known for recent years and appears to have risen to 80 per cent in 1987 [ETUI (1989a, p. 37)]. Complete figures for all unions are only known for 1989, through the survey of Kauppinen and Köykkä. The subdivision of membership by market and public sector and by broad industry groups (only possible for 1989) is also based on Kauppinen and Köykkä.

### France

All French unionisation statistics are estimates. For this chapter, the series reported in Visser (1989, pp. 67-68), covering the five officially recognised union confederations as well as the *Fédération de l'Education Nationale* (FEN), which exclude retired members and correct for non-paying members, were revised and extended. The series was revised for 1983-1985 on the basis of confederal reports studied by Mouriaux and Subileau (1990). Figures for 1987-1989 are reported by Rosanvallon (1988), Noblecourt (1989), and in the case of the FEN by Garin (1991), and all indicate a severe decline in unionisation.

Two recent surveys confirm these estimates of low and declining unionisation. In 1989 the *Centre de recherche pour l'étude des conditions de vie* conducted a survey which included a question on union membership [see Noblecourt (1989, p. 23)]. It reported a decline in "union density" from 14 per cent in 1978-1980 to 10 per cent in 1984-1986. However, it was unclear how this result was obtained, and comparability is further impaired by the fact that self-employed and even retired workers were included in the survey. The social survey organisation SOFRES conducted two surveys which asked about 3 000 respondents "Are you a trade union member?". They indicated a decline in union density between April 1981 and October 1989 from 28 to 14 per cent for wage- and salary-earners (from 20 to 11 per cent for everybody in the sample, including farmers and self-employed). In absolute numbers membership had halved. Union density in the group "*cadre et profession intellectuelle*" went down from 38 to 31 per cent, in the group "*profession intermédiaire*" from 36 to 23 per cent, among white-collar employees from 22 to 7 per cent, and among blue-collar workers from 25 to 12 per cent [Espace Social Européen, 16 and 23 February 1990]. Figures reported here for membership by sex and market or public sector are taken from these surveys and for 1975 from Visser (1989, p. 76).

### Western Germany

Statistics for membership reported by unions, by confederation, individual union, sex, and status (worker, employee, civil servant) are published in the *Statistisches Jahrbuch*. These statistics do not cover the membership of small independent unions (mainly in the public sector), and only recently started to cover the membership in the small Christian Confederation of Trade Unions (CGB: *Christlicher Gewerkschaftsbund*). Coverage has been extended on the basis of the data reported in Armingeon (1988), Niedenhoff and Pege (1987), and Visser (1989). Most unions report at 31 December, though some have maintained 30 September as reporting date. This series, from 1970 to 1989, covers the 11 *Länder* (including West Berlin) of western Germany only.

Retired members are included in the reported membership of nearly all unions and confederations. On the basis of a study of annual reports, it has been possible to make a fairly accurate estimate for the unions affiliated with the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB: *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*), the by far largest central organisation [see Visser (1989, pp.82-83); also Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (1990)]. There are separate unions for retired civil servants in the German Civil Servants' Organisation (DBB: *Deutscher Beamtenbund*). The share of retired workers in the general white-collar employee union (DAG: *Deutsche Angestellten-Gewerkschaft*) was estimated on the basis of DGB data [Visser (1989, p. 82)]. These resulting standardized figures include members who are unemployed, though the proportion is rather small. For example, in 1987 3 per cent of the membership of *IG Metall*, the large metalworkers union, was registered as unemployed. Armingeon (1988) reports figures for industrial unions affiliated to the DGB varying from 1 to 6 per cent in 1985.

Female membership is reported for all years by the DGB and DAG, from 1971 onwards by the DBB and from 1980 by the CGB. The female shares in membership of the unions affiliated with the latter two organisations were extrapolated backwards. The remaining independent unions (only 1.3 per cent of reported membership in 1985) do not report membership by sex.

The German union system is characterised by industrial unionism, and demarcation of union membership by industry is not a major problem. However, some larger unions, notably the DAG, but also some DGB affiliates such as its major public employee and transport union or its small foodstuff and restaurant union, have members in several industries. As in Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, these unions keep statistics of their membership by industry for bargaining purposes, and these have been used to estimate membership by industry.

Most unions in western Germany operate either in the market sector or in the public sector. Some unions, notably the DAG and the aforementioned public employee and transport union, cross this boundary, but they specify public sector membership in annual reports.

### Greece

Union membership for 1977 is from Kaikis (1980, pp. 178-179). This figure includes the membership of market and public sector unions affiliated with the General Confederation of Greek Trade Unions (GSEE: *Geniki Symnosphendia Ergaton Ellados*) and four smaller federations. The 1983 membership figure is from ETUI (1984) and comprises GSEE and public sector unions. It is not clear whether the



two figures are fully comparable, nor whether they include retired or unemployed members. Recent estimates suggest a decline of unionisation to around 25 per cent.

A subdivision of total union membership by industry is not available. ETUI (1984) reported membership by industry for unions that represent about 65 per cent of the members affiliated with the GSEE. In 1983, 18.5 per cent of all Greek union members had civil servant status, but it is not possible to distinguish all public sector union membership.

### Iceland

Data for 1989 were supplied directly by the Labour Ministry. Data for 1979, 1983 and 1985 were added on the basis of data obtained from the European Trade Union Institute. The reported figures have not been standardized, since no data on the coverage of retired, self-employed or unemployed members were available. Hence, the density rates shown for Iceland are likely to be overstated.

One large general union federation is present in nearly all industries and accounts for over 60 per cent of total membership. The existence of a separate cartel of state employees, to which two teachers' associations must be added, makes it relatively easy to distinguish market from public sector membership. However, no information on female membership or on membership by industry was available.

### Ireland

Membership data of Irish unions are collected through the *Registrar of Friendly Societies* in Dublin. A series that both adds Irish members of United Kingdom-based unions, whose percentage in total membership has stabilised at 13-14 per cent, and excludes the 2.5 to 3 per cent of the members of Irish unions (18 000 in 1987) who work in Northern Ireland, was supplied by Mr. Bill Roche and Mr. Joe Larragy of University College Dublin [see also Roche and Larragy (1986) and Black (1989)] and updated for this chapter. These adjustments are based on data from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers Associations and the Industrial Relations Research Unit, both in the United Kingdom. The reporting date is 31 December.

There are no data available on retired and unemployed members. Given the high level of unemployment, it would be surprising if they were not included, but no studies are available on this matter. Total membership is almost certainly overstated in comparison to other countries, by at least 10 per cent (considering proportions found in other European countries) but perhaps more in recent years (considering soaring unemployment levels). In view of the similarities in union structure, membership in Ireland was deflated in a similar way as in the United Kingdom (see entry in this annex), i.e. 10 per cent was subtracted from the reported membership.

Unions do not separately report membership for males and females. Nor was it possible to disaggregate membership by industry, or by market and public sector. Ireland has a mixture of craft, industrial and general unions, with the latter in an ever more dominating role (since the latest merger involving the two main general unions, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Federation of Workers in Ireland, the new combined union alone represents 40 per cent of aggregate Irish membership). A special survey would be needed to document the occupational and industrial distribution of trade union membership.

### Italy

Since 1977, for each of the three major union confederations and their affiliates, statistics of membership by labour market status (self-employed, students, unemployed, retired workers) have been published in the annual report of the Centro di Studi Sociali e Sindacali (CESOS), *Le relazioni industriali in Italia* (Rome: Edizione Lavoro). Mr. Squarzon of CESOS provided general help with these data, and with additional data for 1989 to be published in Squarzon (forthcoming). For 1970-1976, memberships in the two largest confederations, the predominantly communist *Confederazione Generale Italiana di Lavoro* (CGIL) and the originally catholic *Confederazione Italiana dei Sindacati Lavoratori* (CISL) were published in the second volume of Romagnoli *et al.* (1980), and data for the unions belonging to the *Unione Italiana di Lavoro* (UIL) have been estimated [see Visser (1989, pp. 105-106)]. Data here exclude students, small farmers and other self-employed categories (for instance newspaper vendors). The standardized figures exclude, moreover, the membership of the pensioners unions, now the largest single union in each confederation, and the unemployed. The reporting date is 31 December each year.

It should be stressed that a number of so-called "autonomous", independent or non-affiliated unions, found mainly in the public sector but also in financial services, are not covered since no reliable data for them appear to exist. Also not included are the organisations of managerial staff which have gained in importance in the 1980s [see the CESOS report for 1988/89 and Visser (1989, pp.112-114)]. A calculation for 1986 indicates that membership of the five main "autonomous" union groups was about 1.3 million, 15 per cent of the membership in the three main confederations (8.6 million). According to recent estimates of CESOS, this may have increased to 20 or even 25 per cent in 1990. As a result, despite some overlapping membership, the standardized series is likely to underestimate the level of unionisation in the 1980s, compared to the 1970s and relative to other countries. The difference lies probably somewhere between 10 and 20 per cent of the membership and 4 to 8 percentage points in density, with higher percentages in miscellaneous and public services, while the impact in agriculture and manufacturing is much smaller.

There are no separate statistics for male and female membership. The statistics on membership by industry and by market or public sector are based on the CESOS reports and on Visser (1989, p. 123).

### Japan

Membership data compiled from union returns are published in the *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*. The data are as of June each year. A subdivision of union membership by industry and sex is reported but a distinction between the market and public sectors (except for public administration) is not given.

Public sector membership was calculated on the basis of Japan Institute of Labour (1979, p. 13; 1989, p. 28)]. Persons employed in the police force, self-defence corps, fire-brigade, prison administration, and immigration control are not entitled to unionise, strike, or engage in collective bargaining.

Given the age composition of Japanese unions, it is unlikely that they include many retired members. Also, given low unemployment, and given the enterprise-based character of most Japanese unions, recorded membership is not likely to include many unemployed members.

## Luxembourg

Union membership statistics cover the two main union confederations as well as a number of independent organisations, some of which are recognised in particular industries only [see ETUI (1989b)]. Figures here are based on Mielke (1981) for the 1970s, and on ETUI data for the 1980s. The reporting date is 31 December.

The *Onofhaengege Gewerkschafts-Bond Letzebuerg* (OGB-L), the largest union confederation, is open to "apprentices, students, schoolchildren, and unwaged spouses, widows or widowers of members", and "membership is retained through retirement" [ETUI (1989b, p. 17)]. Similarly, membership of the Federation of Christian Trade Unions is not restricted to wage and salary earners in employment. As a result, estimated density rates of over 60 per cent [ETUI (1989b, p. 16)] appear exaggerated. Calculations for this chapter indicated a rate of around 50 per cent.

No statistics are available on union membership by sex or industry. However, each confederation specifies its membership in the public sector, to which membership in the federation of local authority workers has been added.

## Netherlands

Statistics given here relate to 31 December each year (except for membership by industry after 1985, which relate to 31 March 1987 and 31 March 1989). They were taken from quarterly statistics of membership in unions affiliated with the three major confederations (general, christian, white-collar staffs) reported in the *Sociaal-Economische Maandstatistiek* (rather than from the main two-yearly survey *Statistiek van de Vakbeweging*, published since 1989 as a supplement to *Sociaal-Economische Maandstatistiek*, which relates to 31 March), supplemented by statistics supplied directly from independent federations and unions [for a full list, see Visser (1989, p. 143f)].

The Central Bureau of Statistics asks each union to specify the number of retired members, members on sick leave and unemployed members. Additional data from all major unions allow precise standardization to the basis of employee members in employment. Membership of the two unions of military conscripts has also been excluded. At around 25 per cent, the standardized estimate of aggregate union density is around 5 percentage points below that based on recorded membership, but close to the findings from two social attitude surveys undertaken in 1987 and 1988 (see Table 4.B.1).

The Bureau asks unions to specify male and female membership, membership by major industrial sector, and by market or public sector. Some smaller unions do not report female membership, but at the aggregate level underreporting of female membership is only small. Statistics here are based in addition on internal files and reports of the larger unions, leading to fairly precise subdivisions by sex and industry [see also Visser (1989, Chapter 6), where a full list of unions by industry is reported].

## New Zealand

Data for registered union membership, covering the private sector for 1970-1987, were taken from the *Annual Reports* of the Department of Labour. For 1985 and 1986, a figure for both public and private sector union membership was published in the *New Zealand Statistical Yearbook*. The reporting date is 31 December. The 1990 figure used here, also including both private and public sector union membership, but referring to 31 March, was obtained directly from

the Office of the Registrar of Unions by Dr. Raymond Harbridge of the Industrial Relations Centre, Victoria University.

There is no subdivision available for female and male membership. The subdivision by industry, which was prepared by Dr. Harbridge, is based on detailed study of the bargaining settlements registered with the Arbitration Commission for the 1989-1990 bargaining round. For only three in four covered workers could the settlement be considered industry-specific: workers covered by other settlements were distributed over industries on a case-by-case basis with the help of union sources. The resulting statistics by industry refer to collective bargaining coverage, which typically exceeds union membership by 10 to 20 per cent.

## Norway

Statistics on union membership are collected by the union confederations and reported in the *Statistisk Årbok*. The figures include blue- and white-collar unions and professional employee associations as well as independent and small unions. Statistical coverage is extensive and has not changed between 1970 and 1989. The reporting date is 31 December.

The statistics for reported membership given here differ from the figures published in the statistical yearbook through subtraction of self-employed members in the professional employee associations, who are combined in the *Akademikernes Fellesorganisasjon* (AF), whose numbers were estimated as in Visser (1989, p. 166). These reported membership statistics, in particular for the blue-collar unions affiliated with the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions (LO: *Landsorganisasjonen i Norge*), include retired workers, unemployed members and members on sick leave. Studies by Olav Korsnes, of the Sociology Department of the University of Bergen, show that this affected between 12 and 21 per cent of the LO membership.

The statistical yearbook does not report female membership. The only available figures refer to the LO and show an increase in the share of female members from 23 per cent in 1970 to 38 per cent in 1989.

The subdivision of membership by industry is relatively simple, since unions follow predominantly an industrial demarcation pattern with the exception of some occupational unions affiliated with the second peak association, the *Yrkesorganisasjonenes Sentralforbund* (YS), and the professional associations in the AF. These unions are mainly found in the public sector, and in social and personal services.

More than half of all unions affiliated with the LO have members in both the market and public sectors of the economy. However, these unions co-operate through a secondary affiliation, the Norwegian Civil Servants Federation, which is their common negotiating and representation instrument in the public sector [ETUI (1987b, p. 18)]. Its membership is reported separately in the yearbook, and is the basis for the public sector membership figures used in this chapter.

## Portugal

The source for union membership statistics is a recent study of "unionisation and union behaviour" of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security [Cerdeira and Padilha (1990)]. In this study, three indicators of union representation are considered:

- The number of delegates (each representing a certain number of dues-paying members) at union conventions;



- The membership claims irregularly reported to the Ministry of Employment and Social Security; and
- The number of workers certified on electoral lists for internal union elections and works council elections.

The study points out that it is only possible to evaluate trends in union membership by combining the three indicators at approximately similar dates. The two periods considered are 1974-78 and 1978-84. In addition, the authors report a figure of union membership for 1969, based on a study by Pinto and Moura (1973) and additional figures for 1985-86. It is not clear whether membership includes retired, self-employed and unemployed members. There are no data available on female membership.

### Spain

ETUI (1986, p. 17) observed that there are "no very reliable data concerning union density". Statistics reported here, for 1981 and 1985, refer to the two major confederations and do not include union membership in the Basque Country and in Asturias. They are taken from a well-documented paper by Lawlor and Rigby (1986). The pattern of membership decline following an initial surge after 1976, especially in the case of the once-dominant *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO) which lost two-thirds of its membership between 1977 and 1985, is confirmed by data for the 1978, 1980 and 1982 works council elections [Lawlor and Rigby (1986, p. 236); ETUI (1986, p. 18)].

It is not known whether reported membership includes retired or unemployed workers. There are no data available on female membership, membership by industry or in the public sector.

### Sweden

The *Statistisk Årsbok för Sverige* reports union membership based on returns from trade unions, for all blue- and white-collar unions, professional employee associations, and a small syndicalist federation. On the basis of a careful and detailed study by Anders Kjellberg of the University of Lund, the membership of a few independent unions, and unions that disaffiliated during some years and fell outside the coverage of the yearbook, was added. Reported membership figures here therefore differ slightly from the figures published in the *Statistisk Årsbok*. The reporting date is 31 December.

The statistical yearbook also reports self-employed members, students, unemployed and retired members in the Central Organisation of Salaried and Government Employees (TCO: *Tjänstemannens Centralorganisation*) and the Swedish Organisation of Professional Associations (SACO-SR: *Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation*). Retired and unemployed workers are included but not separately reported in the membership statistics of the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO: *Landsorganisationen i Sverige*) and the syndicalist federation. Based on a study of the internal statistics of each affiliate by Kjellberg, it was possible to estimate the membership for employed workers only.

Female membership is reported by all unions, and had risen to over 50 per cent by 1988. The subdivision of members by industry is relatively simple. A few unions straddle the boundaries of industrial sectors [see Bain and Price (1980, p. 144)], and for these Kjellberg's study has provided additional data on the membership in each major sector of the economy. The breakdown between market and public sectors is made similarly.

### Switzerland

Membership statistics are based on reports by trade unions and published in the *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Schweiz*, until 1987. These statistics did not cover the membership of small independent occupational unions. Coverage did not change between 1970 and 1987. Coverage was extended on the basis of a survey of unions and employee associations by Robert Fluder and his colleagues at the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich. The reporting date is 31 December.

Retired and unemployed members are included in the reported membership, though they are excluded in the membership of the cartel of public employee unions and associations. Nevertheless, it was possible to standardize Swiss union membership on the basis of the Fluder study.

The main union confederation, the Swiss Confederation of Trade Unions (SGB: *Schweizerischer Gewerkschaftsbund*) reports membership by sex in its monthly review (SGB, *Gewerkschaftliche Rundschau*, Bern): for the other unions, information was obtained through the Fluder survey. Female membership is somewhat underreported, since not all unions replied. Disaggregation by industry and by market or public sector was carried out similarly. With few exceptions (such as the commercial employee union which organises also in industry, the combined construction and wood and furniture unions, or the transport, commerce and foodstuffs unions), most unions recruit members within one major sector of economic activity, and the distinction between market and public sector is relatively clear-cut.

### Turkey

Membership, by sex and industry, for 1987 and 1989 was supplied directly by the General Confederation of Turkish Unions (*Türk-İs*). Comparison with earlier years is difficult, given the various legal and political changes. Figures for 1975 also cover DISK, an organisation that had split from *Türk-İs* [see Gürbaça (1980, pp. 216-217); Yenal (1981)]. In 1980 DISK had to suspend its activities, and only in recent years has it again been allowed to function.

Reported union membership does not include self-employed, retired or unemployed workers. Turkish unions are demarcated by industry. Public sector unionism is rather low because some categories are legally barred from joining trade unions, in particular police and military personnel, teachers, and higher-grade civil servants.

### United Kingdom

There are now four different sources for membership statistics in the United Kingdom. The Department of Employment publishes with a two-year lag union membership statistics based on data for those unions, branches and sections registered with the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers Associations at 31 December, supplemented by information obtained from the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development and from some individual unions. These figures include staff and professional associations and are usually revised a year after first publication [Department of Employment (1970-90)].

A second series is based on social survey data included in the British Social Attitude Survey and extends from 1983 to 1989 (with the exception of 1988). The data cover both trade unions and staff associations [Milward (1990)]. In 1989, for the first time, the Labour Force Survey surveyed the membership of trade unions and staff associations in the United

Kingdom [Stevens and Wareing (1990)]. Finally, the Workplace Industrial Relations Surveys of 1984 [Milward and Stevens (1986)] and, to a limited extent, of 1980 [Daniel and Milward (1983)], also contain data on union membership, based on an establishment survey.

Reported union membership statistics in this chapter are based on the data published by the Department of Employment. Since 1975 the statistics relate to unions and associations that fall within the definition of a trade union in section 28 of the 1974 Trade Union and Labour Relations Act. As the Department of Employment (1990, p. 360) points out, the statistics "include home and overseas membership of contributory and non-contributory members, under the rules of those trade unions whose head offices are situated in the UK, but do not include any members whose head offices are elsewhere". The first category refers mainly to members in UK-based unions working in the Irish Republic, the second category to members of unions based in Ireland, but working in Northern Ireland or Great Britain. Adjustments for these categories (see the entry for Ireland in this annex) reduce estimated United Kingdom membership by about 0.5 per cent.

The figures based on union reports "may include some people who are self-employed, unemployed or retired". There may also be "an element of duplication in the aggregates; however, this is believed to be relatively insignificant" [Department of Employment (1990, p. 360)]. The 1989 Labour Force Survey indicated that U.K. unions included some 300 000 (3.3 per cent) self-employed members [calculated from Stevens and Wareing (1990, Table 1)]. A number of unions include retired members, and Baily and Kelley (1990) estimated the proportion of retired members at 5.75 per cent and of unemployed members at just over 2 per cent. On these bases, an overall deflator of  $0.995 \times 0.97 \times 0.9425 \times 0.98 = 0.891$  (for membership in the Irish Republic, self-employed workers, retired workers, and unemployed workers respectively), rounded to 0.90 for convenience, was applied to obtain standardized membership estimates. Applying this deflator, estimated union density was 41.5 per cent in 1988 (two points higher than the rate of 39.3 per cent found in the 1989 Labour Force Survey and two points lower than the 43.6 per cent found in the 1989 Social Attitude Survey). The deflator was applied for all years, and given the lower levels of unemployment before the 1980s, the earlier union density rates may be slightly underestimated [Maksymiw (1990, Introduction)].

The 1989 Labour Force Survey provided data on union density by sex and by industry. With respect to membership by sex, comparison with earlier years is possible through the Social Attitude Survey and, before 1983, through the data reported by Bain and Price (1980, 1983) and based on the Industrial Relations Research Unit (IRRU) files. The 1984 Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (plus annual reports by the Trades Union Congress) has been used for estimating

union density rates by industry, assuming that employment shares and union density rates of establishments with less than 25 employees in each sector in 1984 were the same as reported by the 1989 Labour Force Survey. Data for 1970, 1974 and 1979 are based on the IRRU files at the University of Warwick reported by Bain and Price, deflated as for the aggregate series. Their comparability with the 1980s data is limited.

### United States

There are three main series on union membership. From 1930 to 1980, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published the annual average number of dues-paying members in the United States (without members in Canada), as reported by labour unions. A second series, also an annual average of reported dues-paying members in the United States, but including professional and public employee associations participating in collective bargaining, is available from 1968 to 1980 and has been used in this chapter. A third series, based on the Current Population Survey, reports membership in unions and employee associations among employed wage- and salary-earners. This series is only available for 1977 through 1980 referring to May, and from 1983 onwards as an annual average. In addition, CPS data for labour unions only are available for 1966, 1970 and 1973-1976. A data series from 1983 to 1988, detailing membership and contract coverage by gender, age, industry, private and public sector, full-time or part-time status and other indicators has been published in Curme *et al.* (1990).

The third series is the narrower one as it does not include unemployed or retired members, or double counts (described in the entry for Australia in this annex). Direct comparison of the second and third series for 1977 to 1980 shows that survey membership was lower than union-reported dues-paying membership by between 7 and 15 per cent. The cessation of the union-reported membership series in 1980 is particularly unfortunate, since unions suffered their largest losses in 1981 and 1982 (over two million members).

The BLS series of membership in labour unions and employee associations provides subdivisions by sex and by manufacturing, non-manufacturing market sector, and government sector. The Current Population Survey series provides subdivisions by sex, industry and market or public sector. However, there have been a number of changes in industry classification which impair comparability, and before 1977 employee associations were not included. The omission of employee associations almost halves union membership in the government sector; it also lowers membership in the non-manufacturing part of the private sector (albeit to a small degree), and reduces the share of females in total membership by between 3 and 5 percentage points [U.S. Department of Labor (1979, Tables 6, 8 and 15)].

#### Annex 4.B.

### A COMPARISON WITH SOCIAL ATTITUDE SURVEY DATA

In a number of countries, social attitude surveys, or surveys of a similar kind, contain a question concerning trade union membership. A number of these surveys are collected in the International Social Survey Programme, archived with the *Zentralarchiv* at the University of Cologne (Germany). Data concerning union membership and related issues in Australia, Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland and the United States are reported by Blanchflower and Oswald (1989). Similar data from Denmark, France and the Netherlands have been added (see Annex 4.A for details).

Table 4.B.1 compares density rates estimated from these surveys with density rates estimated from union-reported membership totals, standardized as for this chapter. Averages of two or more years have been given where possible. Estimates from these two types of source are generally similar, at least for the purposes of international comparison. The rank order of the countries by degree of unionisation is the same in the two data sets, except for the case of Switzerland. The Swiss survey was very small (sample of 512), and did not include part-time and seasonal workers and personal services; it is not clear whether rural and foreign workers were sampled. The next-largest difference is found in Denmark, but

here too there may be a difference in the definition of wage- and salary-earners.

As was noted in Annex 4.A, in Australia household-survey-based unionisation rates are much lower (by 22.9 per cent in 1988) than rates estimated from union-reported membership. This discrepancy suggests that both the union-reported density rates and the social attitude survey shown in Table 4.B.1 may be unreliable, despite the agreement between them.

A comparison between the density rates by industry in the social attitude surveys and those estimated from union-reported statistics (not reported in Table 4.B.1) showed a broadly similar pattern for the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, but quite large differences for Germany.

The overall impression from these comparisons is that in most cases standardized union-reported membership figures and survey-reported personal perceptions of union membership status correspond fairly well with each other, and can give reasonably accurate international comparisons of unionisation rates. However, in a few cases statistical discrepancies whose causes are not well known remain significant.

Table 4.B.1. A comparison of aggregate unionisation rates estimated from social attitude surveys and from standardized union-reported memberships

		Unionisation rate (%) estimated from	
		Social attitude surveys	Standardized union-reported memberships
Australia	Average 1984-1987	54	55.5
Austria	Average 1984-1987	49	48
Denmark	1982	86	78
France	1988-1989	14	12.5
Germany	Average 1984-1987	33	36
Netherlands	Average 1984-1987	26.5	25.5
Switzerland	1987	36	26
United Kingdom <sup>a</sup>	Average 1984-1987	47	45
United States	Average 1984-1987	18	18

a) Without Northern Ireland.

Sources: Annex 4.A; Blanchflower and Oswald (1989).



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