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Volume Title: Distribution of Union Membership among the States, 1939 and 1953

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Volume Publisher: UMI

Volume ISBN: 0-87014-370-0

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/troy57-1>

Publication Date: 1957

Chapter Title: Extent of Union Organization, by State and Region, 1939 and 1953

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Chapter URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2690>

Chapter pages in book: (p. 17 - 27)

II

Extent of Union Organization, by State and Region, 1939 and 1953

Between 1939 and 1953 there was not only a great increase in the numbers of union members, but total membership grew faster than nonagricultural wage and salary employment. Consequently the percentage of this class of employees who were in unions rose in the whole country from 21.5 in 1939 to 32.6 in 1953.

It proved possible to compute the percentage organized in each of the 48 states and the District of Columbia, and thereby to determine the degree of unionization in various parts of the United States. As Table 4 shows, union membership increased at a faster rate than employment in all states between 1939 and 1953, lagging only in the District of Columbia.

Nineteen states exceeded the average increase for the country (11.1 per cent), twenty-eight fell below, and one, Arizona, equaled the average. Chart 2 shows the pattern of growth in union organization among the states, and Map 2 the broad pattern of differences in degree of organization in 1953.

The decline in mining employment, the status of industrial development, and geographic location appear to be the principal factors accounting for the lag in unionization among those states that fell behind the average increase. Thus, Montana, Wyoming, West Virginia, and Kentucky, for example, states in which mining bulked large in employment, lagged behind. States such as Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas are still important agricultural states and this probably accounts for the small rise in their unionization.

On the other hand, states "specializing" in those industries in which union membership grew so rapidly (Table 6) exceeded the

TABLE 4

Extent of Union Organization of Nonagricultural Employment
by State, 1939 and 1953

Rank		State	Per Cent Organized		Increase in Per Cent Organized, 1939-1953
1939	1953		1939	1953	
		United States ^a	21.5	32.6	11.1
2	1	Washington	41.3	53.3	12.0
3	2	Montana	36.7	47.0	10.3
1	3	West Virginia	41.7	44.1	2.4
17	4	Michigan	20.0	43.3	23.3
4	5	Oregon	30.1	43.1	13.0
15	6	Indiana	21.7	40.0	18.3
6	7	Pennsylvania	27.6	39.9	12.3
14	8	Missouri	21.9	39.7	17.8
8	9	Illinois	25.9	39.7	13.8
5	10	Wisconsin	29.1	38.3	9.2
9	11	Minnesota	24.8	38.1	13.3
10	12	Ohio	24.4	38.0	13.6
11	13	California	23.4	35.7	12.3
23	14	New Jersey	16.1	35.2	19.1
12	15	New York	23.0	34.4	11.4
19	16	Nevada	18.2	30.4	12.2
25	17	Massachusetts	15.5	30.1	14.6
7	18	Wyoming	26.7	28.6	1.9
20	19	Colorado	17.6	27.8	10.2
22	20	Arizona	16.6	27.7	11.1
40	21	Rhode Island	10.2	27.4	17.2
35	22	Connecticut	11.3	26.5	15.2
18	23	Utah	19.3	26.3	7.0
32	24	Maryland	12.0	25.2	13.2
21	25	Iowa	17.3	25.0	7.7
13	26	Kentucky	22.5	25.0	2.5
24	27	Alabama	16.1	24.9	8.8
43	28	New Hampshire	7.3	24.6	17.3
28	29	Kansas	13.4	23.9	10.5
26	30	Tennessee	15.3	22.6	7.3
27	31	Idaho	13.7	21.5	7.8
30	32	Arkansas	12.7	21.5	8.8
44	33	Maine	7.2	21.4	14.2
16	34	District of Columbia	21.7	21.2	-0.5
31	35	Nebraska	12.5	19.7	7.2
41	36	Louisiana	9.6	19.5	9.9

TABLE 4 (concluded)

Rank		State	Per Cent Organized		Increase in Per Cent Organized, 1939-1953
1939	1953		1939	1953	
33	37	Vermont	11.4	18.9	7.5
42	38	Delaware	7.8	18.4	10.6
29	39	Virginia	12.8	17.4	4.6
39	40	Texas	10.3	16.7	6.4
34	41	Florida	11.3	16.2	4.9
38	42	Oklahoma	10.4	16.1	5.7
37	43	North Dakota	10.9	15.6	4.7
46	44	Georgia	7.0	15.0	8.0
47	45	Mississippi	6.5	14.7	8.2
45	46	South Dakota	7.1	14.4	7.3
36	47	New Mexico	11.2	14.2	3.0
49	48	South Carolina	4.0	9.3	5.3
48	49	North Carolina	4.2	8.3	4.1

*Includes membership not distributed by state.

Source: Employment data from mimeographed releases of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The sum of the employment of the states is smaller by 151,000 than the total for the country in 1953, as revised and reported in *Employment and Earnings*, May 1955. The revision changes the extent of organization of the United States by 0.1 per cent.

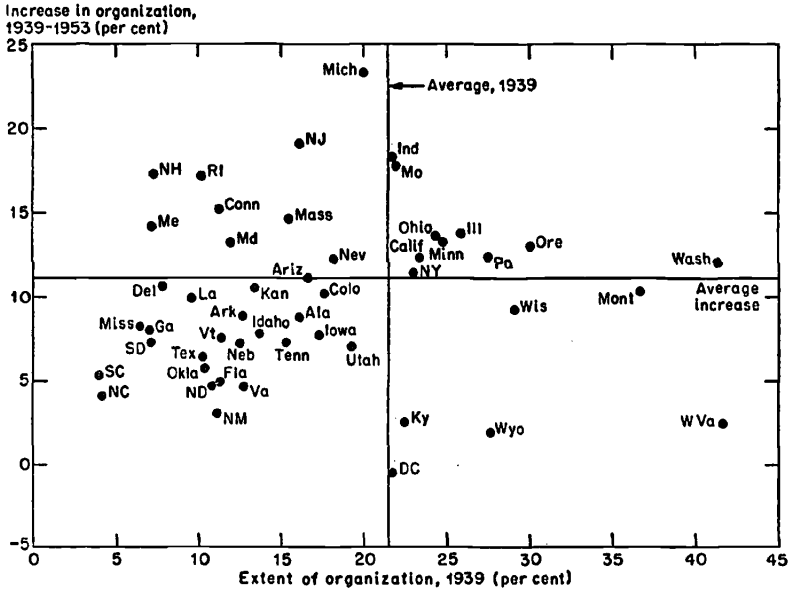
average increase in unionization. Notable examples were Michigan, New Jersey, and Indiana.

Locational differences seem to explain the divergent behavior of the New England states (except Vermont) as compared to southern states. In most of the New England states, textile manufacturing became well organized between 1939 and 1953, but in the South, where the industry is even larger, the incidence of unionization remained very low. Sectional differences in rates of industry unionization appear to exist in other industries as well.

The growth of union membership so far exceeded the increase in employment in a number of states that they rose in the scale of states ranked from high to low percentage organized in 1953. Among the states which ranked higher in 1953 than in 1939 were Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland. In contrast, the standing of West Virginia, Wisconsin, Ohio, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Kentucky declined. Altogether, 20 states moved up and 28 and the District of Columbia declined in the array.

CHART 2

Growth of Union Organization, by State, 1939-1953



The extent of organization ranged from 42 per cent in West Virginia to 4 per cent in South Carolina in 1939. By 1953, Washington ranked highest with 53 per cent and North Carolina last with 8 per cent. However, though the range widened, the dispersion in the extent of organization around the national average diminished between 1939 and 1953.⁶

Although all nine regions gained membership at a rate faster than employment, the six regions that were below the national percentage organization in 1939 remained below in 1953 (Table 5). The extent of organization increased most in the East North Central region and least in the South Atlantic. As a result of its large increase in unionization, the East North Central became the most highly organized region in 1953. The West South Central region was the least organized in both years. Extent of organization in 1939 ranged from 27 per cent in the Pacific region to 10 per cent in the West

⁶Measured by Pearson's index of relative dispersion, the variation in unionization of employment among the states declined from 37.8 in 1939 to 30.8 per cent in 1953.

TABLE 5

Extent of Union Organization of Nonagricultural Employment
by Geographic Region, 1939 and 1953

Region	Per Cent Organized 1939	Per Cent Organized 1953	Increase in Per Cent Organized, 1939-1953
New England	12.8	27.7	14.9
Middle Atlantic	23.5	36.4	12.9
East North Central	24.2	39.9	15.7
West North Central	19.1	31.5	12.4
South Atlantic	13.2	18.3	5.1
East South Central	16.2	22.8	6.6
West South Central	10.4	17.5	7.1
Mountain	19.9	27.5	7.6
Pacific	27.1	39.0	11.9
United States ^a	21.5	32.6	11.1

^aIncludes membership not distributed by state.

South Central region. In 1953, the range extended from 40 per cent organization of employment in the East North Central region to 18 per cent in the West South Central.

Industrial Composition of Membership and Employment

Historically, trade union membership in the United States had been largely centered in mining, building construction, and transportation.⁷ From 1900 to 1933, union membership in these industries, in good years and bad, made up half or more of the total. Within manufacturing industries, membership had been consistently strong only in printing and at times in clothing. Except for a few years during World War I and the years immediately following, union membership in other manufacturing industries had constituted only a small proportion of aggregate membership. The share of the service and public service industries in total membership has always been and remains small.

In 1933 unions entered a period of growth unprecedented in their history, and one of the results of this record expansion was a change in the industrial dispersion of union membership. Most of the new

⁷Leo Wolman, *Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism*, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1936, p. 87.

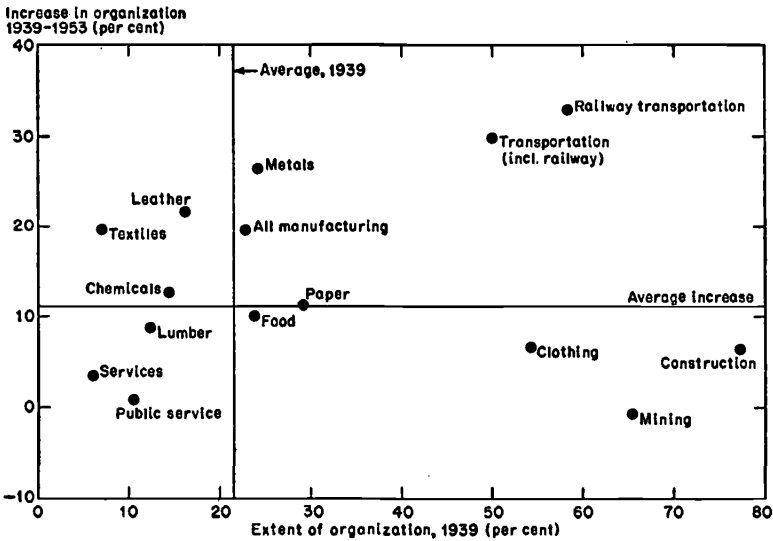
unionization was in the major manufacturing industries. It is estimated that more than 5 million of the total increase of 9.7 million members from 1939 to 1953 were in manufacturing, and of this number, over 3.4 million were in the metal-working industries: transportation equipment, primary and fabricated metal products, machinery, and ordnance (Table 6). The share of manufacturing as a whole in union membership rose from about one-third in 1939 to nearly one-half in 1953.

In the nonmanufacturing industries, membership rose nearly 2 million in transportation (of which over one-fourth were in railways), about 1.3 million in building, 1 million in services, and over 300,000 in public service. Membership in mining declined about 2,000, chiefly because of the decline in coal mining employment. Membership gains in other mining industries were not sufficient to offset the decline in coal.

The percentage of wage and salaried employees organized increased in all industries except mining between 1939 and 1953 (Chart 3). By 1953, not only were construction, transportation, mining, and manufacturing highest in the scale of unionization but

CHART 3

Growth of Union Organization, by Industry, 1939-1953



Source: Table 6.

TABLE 6

Extent of Union Organization, by Nonagricultural Industry,
1939 and 1953

Industry ^a	1939			1953		
	Membership	Employment, Wage and salaried (thousands)	Per cent organized	Membership	Employment, Wage and salaried (thousands)	Per cent organized
Manufacturing	2,299.1	10,078.0 ^b	22.8	7,312.8	17,238.0 ^b	42.4
Metals	847.2	3,509.0	24.1	4,256.0	8,419.9	50.5
Clothing	486.1	897.0	54.2	748.4	1,231.7	60.8
Food, liquor, and tobacco	309.0	1,298.0	23.8	561.5	1,661.5	33.8
Paper, printing and publishing	256.1	881.0	29.1	533.4	1,322.3	40.3
Leather and leather products	61.8	383.0	16.1	145.8	386.2	37.8
Chemicals, rubber, clay, glass, and stone	151.2	1,053.0	14.4	509.6	1,888.6	27.0
Textiles	86.4	1,232.0	7.0	317.1	1,185.8	26.7
Lumber and lumber products	101.3	824.0	12.3	241.0	1,142.2	21.1
Transportation, communica- tions, and public utilities	1,455.1	2,912.0	50.0	3,373.7	4,221.0	79.9
Railway transportation	603.7	1,035.0	58.3	1,162.3	1,274.0	91.2
Building and construction	889.0	1,150.0	77.3	2,197.8	2,622.0	83.8
Mining, quarrying, and oil	552.9	845.0	65.4	551.1	852.0	64.7
Public service	418.7	3,995.0	10.5	749.6	6,645.0	11.3
Services	683.1	11,332.0	6.0	1,728.4	18,103.0	9.5
Not classified	215.4	.....	.....	295.6	.....	.....
All nonagricultural industries	6,513.3	30,311.0 ^b	21.5	16,209.0	49,681.0	32.6
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	4.4	.....	.....	8.3	.....	.....
Total membership, United States	6,517.7	.....	.....	16,217.3	.....	.....

^aThe industry classes match the Standard Industrial Classification as is shown below. The right-hand column lists the S.I.C. items included:

Metals	Ordnance and accessories Primary metal industries Fabricated metal products Machinery, except electrical Electrical machinery Transportation equipment Instruments and related products Miscellaneous manufacturing industries
Clothing	Apparel and other finished textile products
Food, liquor, and tobacco	Food and kindred products Tobacco manufactures
Paper, printing, and publishing	Paper and allied products Printing, publishing and allied products
Chemicals, rubber, clay, glass and stone	Chemicals and allied products Products of petroleum and coal Rubber products Stone, clay and glass products
Textiles	Textile mill products
Lumber and wood products	Lumber and wood products, except furniture Furniture and fixtures
Transportation, communication, and public utilities	Transportation and public utilities
Building and construction	Contract construction
Mining, quarrying and oil	Mining
Public service	Government
Services	Wholesale and retail trade Finance, insurance and real estate Services and miscellaneous

^bBecause of rounding, details do not add to total.

From *Employment and Earnings*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 1955.

Classification of membership figures was adapted from Leo Wolman, *Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism*, Appendix Table VII, pp. 224-228.

also they accounted for more than 80 per cent of total membership; public service and services were lowest in unionization and accounted for less than 20 per cent of the total. Among the manufacturing industries, clothing and metals were highly organized in 1953, while chemicals, textiles, and lumber were poorly unionized.

As the following tabulation for 1953 indicates, highly unionized states were those with a large proportion of total employment in building, transportation, and manufacturing, while, as a rule, states low in organization had a smaller proportion of employment in those three industries.

Per Cent of Nonagricultural Employment:

	In building, transportation and manufacturing	Organized
Michigan	60.1	43.3
Indiana	59.2	40.0
New Jersey	59.2	35.2
Ohio	58.8	38.0
Pennsylvania	55.6	39.9
Illinois	52.6	39.7
Nebraska	35.8	19.7
Florida	32.9	16.2
Oklahoma	31.7	16.1
New Mexico	28.2	14.2
South Dakota	26.0	14.4
North Dakota	25.4	15.6
Average, United States	48.5	32.6

The distribution of manufacturing employment between highly unionized industries and less unionized industries also affects the extent of organization. Where metals represent a large proportion of total employment, as in the first six states of Table 7, extent of organization is high; where textiles or chemicals are important, the state usually ranks lower in degree of union organization. Some states however, including Massachusetts and Connecticut, depart from this pattern.

As has been indicated, regional differences in the growth of unionism by industry also govern the extent of organization. This is apparent when, for example, Massachusetts and Rhode Island are compared to the Carolinas and Georgia. In all these states, textile manufacturing is an important source of employment; in the northern states textile organization advanced rapidly from 1939 to 1953, but it failed to grow much in the Carolinas and Georgia. Judging by the membership of the principal textile unions, the Textile Workers of the AF of L and the CIO, the estimated extent of organization in textiles was about 60 per cent in Massachusetts in 1953 as against 3 per cent in Georgia and 6 and 7 per cent respectively in North and South Carolina.

The lag in union organization in the textile and clothing industries of the South appears to be the continuation of a long historical trend in industries in which it has been possible, if not easy, to move plants from established union into new, non-union areas. Business mobility

TABLE 7

Employment in Selected Manufacturing Industries and
Per Cent Organized, in Specified States, 1953

State	Per Cent of All Manufacturing Employees in:				Per Cent of All Nonagricultural Employees Organized
	Metals	Clothing	Chemicals	Textiles	
Michigan	76.4 ^a	0.9	5.7	1.1 ^b	43.3
Indiana	66.6 ^a	2.3 ^c	12.4	0.5	40.0
Ohio	64.4	2.3	14.1	1.0	38.0
Illinois	59.4	4.0	0.8	0.9 ^c	39.7
Pennsylvania	52.2	9.7	10.5	7.5	39.9
New Jersey	49.0	9.7	17.4	6.2	35.2
Texas	27.4 ^a	7.0	21.8	1.9 ^c	16.7
Virginia	13.2	8.9	18.9	15.3	17.4
Louisiana	11.1	4.7 ^b	22.4	1.5	19.5
Georgia	6.1	6.8 ^c	11.1	35.0	15.0
North Carolina	2.6 ^b	4.2 ^c	2.5	51.7	8.3
South Carolina	1.0	9.2	3.7	61.4	9.3
Average					
United States	48.8	7.1	11.0	6.9	32.6

^aEstimated in part from figures for 1952.

^bRefers to 1947, the latest available data.

^cRefers to 1952.

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Annual Survey of Manufactures, 1953, 1955*, and *Census of Manufactures: 1947, Statistics by States*, Vol. III, 1950; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, May 1955.

helped to explain characteristically low levels of unionism in industries of this type:

American trade unions have long faced great difficulties in establishing themselves in competitive industries in which business can shift quickly from one part of the country to another. Many times in the history of labor organization, unionization of a plant or industrial area has been speedily followed by marked shifts in the localization of industry, by the rise thereafter of unorganized localities and by the eventual decline of unionized ones. . . . The extent and variety of the continental area of the United States, has afforded employers innumerable opportunities to achieve flexibility in costs and operating conditions by moving to new locations and there utilizing hitherto unused supplies of labor.⁸

⁸Wolman, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.