THE STATE of NEW YORK UNIONS 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report aims to provide the first detailed description of major characteristics of and trends in recent unionization in the New York metropolitan area. The empirical analysis was conducted on large microdata sets from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys

Among the key highlights of our findings are:

- Union membership has increased in both New York City and Long Island since the late 1990s, though at different rates that barely keep pace with overall employment. The number of New York City residents in labor unions rose by 65,455 – an 8.3 percent increase – between 1997-99 and 2004-06. Today, about 26.4 percent of New York wage and salary workers belong to a union. Long Island experienced a much smaller 0.7 percent increase in union membership; its 317,450 union members account for 23.5 percent of all employees (the "union density rate"). As a result, the broader New York-Northern New Jersey metropolitan area has the highest union density rate – 23.3 percent – of any major metro area – and far above the 12 percent rate nationwide.
- However, the city's membership gains have not fully kept up with overall employment growth, resulting in a slight drop (one-half percentage point) in the union density rate since the late 1990s. And it remains well below the late 1980s level, when 34.4 percent of employed New Yorkers were in unions. In contrast, over the same period on Long Island, the unionization rate has remained remarkably stable, thereby shrinking the gap between city and suburb.
- Underlying the trends in both union membership and in the slightly broader union coverage rate (including non-members covered by union contracts) are often marked variations in unions' fortunes among workers differentiated by gender, race and ethnicity, immigrant status, hours of work, public-private sector, and industry. New female union

workers accounted for 92 percent of the total rise in union coverage in New York City, and 100 percent of the coverage increase on Long Island. While the city's union coverage rate has fallen among men from 29.2 in the late 1990s to 26.2 percent today, the female rate has moved ahead from 28.3 to 29.2 percent over the same period. On Long Island, union contracts now cover 28.6 percent of men and 24.6 percent of women workers – and the gap between them has been cut in half since the late 1990s.

§ In fact, white men today account for only 18.6 per cent of New York City's unionized work force. On Long Island, the white male union share is over twice as large (43.1 per cent), but a growing majority of its union workers are now women and minority men.

§ African American women in New York City are more likely than any other demographic group, male or female, to hold jobs with union representation. The black female union density rate of nearly 44 per cent is followed by that of African American men (36.5 per cent), Latina women (29.4 per cent), Latino men (27.9 per cent), white non-Hispanic women (27.4 per cent), white non-Hispanic men (26.1 per cent), Asian women (20.8 per cent) and Asian men (27.9 per cent). Black women also have the highest rate of union coverage on Long Island (34.7 per cent).

§ Immigrant workers have also registered large gains in union coverage since the late 1990s. In New York City, our findings for 2004-2006 reveal that of an immigrant workforce of 1.49 million wage and salary employees, 390,469 (26.2 per cent) are in union jobs. That means that immigrants now account for 43.5 per cent of the city's entire union work force. Moreover, new foreign-born union members have been the main source of union growth since the late 1990s, accounting for 87.7 per cent of new unionization. Though immigrants on Long Island are a far smaller fraction of the work force, increased unionization among foreign-born citizens since the late 1990s has been large enough to more than outweigh the slight dip in the numbers of native-born and non-citizen immigrant union members.

§ Public sector jobs have been an important part of employment stability and, since the late 1990s, growth for unionized workers. Three out of four public sector workers have union coverage in both New York City and Long Island, a rate nearly twice the national average. But unions now represent only one-fifth of private sector workers in the city and 13.7 percent on Long Island.

§ Among major age groups in New York City, only older workers aged 45 and over have experienced any sizable growth in union membership since the late 1990s. The number of 25-to-34 year-olds in unions actually fell, but was more than offset by union gains among their elders. On Long Island, only those 55 and over recorded more union membership: their large 38.3 percent rise in membership barely offset the drop in the number of younger members. The decline in unionization among the young, though largely driven by shifting demographics, raises questions about unions' future growth prospects in the region.

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I. New York – Leading the Nation in Unionization

New York State has a higher share of its workforce represented by labor unions today than any other state in the continental US. In the latest 2006 government survey, 1.98 million of the state's 8.1 million wage and salary employees, or 24.4 per cent, said that they were union members. That means that New Yorkers have a union membership rate that is over twice the national average of 12 per cent. In fact, only three other states now have rates above 20 per cent: Hawaii (24.7), Alaska (22.2) and New Jersey (20.1).[1]

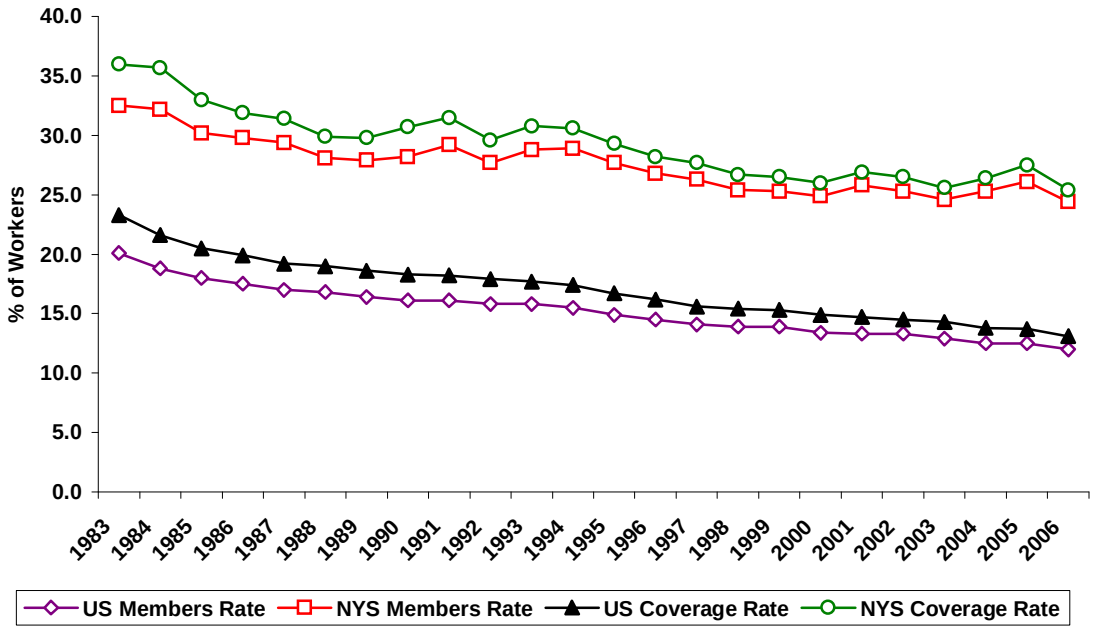
Some sense of how much the labor landscape has recently been reshaped is provided by the very different unionization rates and rankings in 1964, the first year for which time-consistent figures for each state are available. That year, across the country, 29.3 per cent of American workers were union members – a rate nearly two and one-half times higher than today. In 35 states, the union membership rates (or "membership density") was over 20 per cent and in 16 of those it exceeded 30 per cent. New York's rate of 35.5 per cent only put it in 13th place, far behind top-ranked Michigan where 44.8 per cent of the work force was unionized.[2]

Although New York, like nearly all other states, has experienced marked declines in union density since then, the pace of that erosion has generally been slower than elsewhere. In the 20 years after 1964, while the national union membership rate dropped over 10 percentage points to 19.1 per cent, New York's rate fell less than one-third as much, to 32.3 per cent. As Figure 1 shows, the state's membership density fell more rapidly from the early 1980s through the mid-1990s, but has changed little since then, even as the national rate continues to shrink.

The influence of unions is greater than suggested by their membership figures, not least because union contracts cover some employees who report in surveys that they are not union members. For example, in New York in 2006, 79,000 workers said their job was covered by a union contract, in addition to the 1.98 million union members. Hence, the state's broader union

coverage rate (or "coverage density") was 25.4 per cent. Nationwide, 16.9 million workers were covered by union contracts, accounting for 13.1 per cent of wage and salary employees. But using coverage rather than membership rates alters neither New York's state ranking, nor the trends plotted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Percent of Wage and Salary Workers who are Members of or are Covered by Unions, U.S. and New York State, 1993-2006



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) and Hirsch, Macpherson and Vroman (2001).

To better understand these patterns, we need to know far more than we now do about unionization in New York's component regions. This report focuses on the state's economic engine and population center, the New York City metropolitan area. Specifically we spotlight New York City and Long Island, home to the majority of the state's workers and of its union members.

We base our statistical analysis on large microdata sets from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys (CPS). This is a national survey conducted monthly on random samples of 50,000 to 65,000 households nationwide. The survey questionnaire asks about a rich variety of demographic, geographic and employment-related matters. Sampled households are interviewed once each month for four consecutive months. One year later, each of these "rotation

groups" is again for a final four consecutive months. We utilized the CPS Outgoing Rotation Group files (CPS-ORG) for all the years 1986 through 2006. The data set is not, of course, without limitations: in particular, it identifies only county of residence, which may differ from the county where the respondent works. We adopted the now-standard methodology employed in a series of state-level and metropolitan-level research papers by Barry Hirsch and David Macpherson.[3] See our technical appendix for more details.

How does union density in downstate New York compare to that in other large metro areas? In Table 1, we present our estimates of union membership and broader union coverage figures in the city, Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk counties), and the wider New York Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA), as well as the rest of the country's 20 most populous metropolitan regions.

In 2006, an average of 1.859 million of the New York metro area's 7.969 million wage and salary workers were union members. With 23.3 per cent of its workforce in unions, New York ranked first among the largest metro areas. Of the others, only Detroit had membership density above 20 percent. It was followed in the top five by Seattle, San Francisco and Chicago. New York was nearly 10 percentage points higher than the group average. New York also ranked above the others by the broader coverage measure: 24.5 per cent of the metro area's workers were represented by a union at work, compared to the national metropolitan average of only 15 per cent.

In New York City, 840,463 of its 3.183 million employed residents in 2006 were union members: a membership density of 26.4 percent. Another 30,613 non-members told interviewers that their job was covered by a collective bargaining contract, so a total of 27.36 per cent were represented by a union. Among working Long Islanders, 321,087 had union coverage (24.5 per cent), of whom 307,443 (23.5 per cent) were union members. Insofar as some of the latter may well be commuters whose New York City jobs offer union coverage, these estimates may understate union density among the city's employers. But the same may be true to some extent for suburban areas, as reverse commuting of the city's residents to jobs on Long Island and elsewhere continues to grow rapidly.

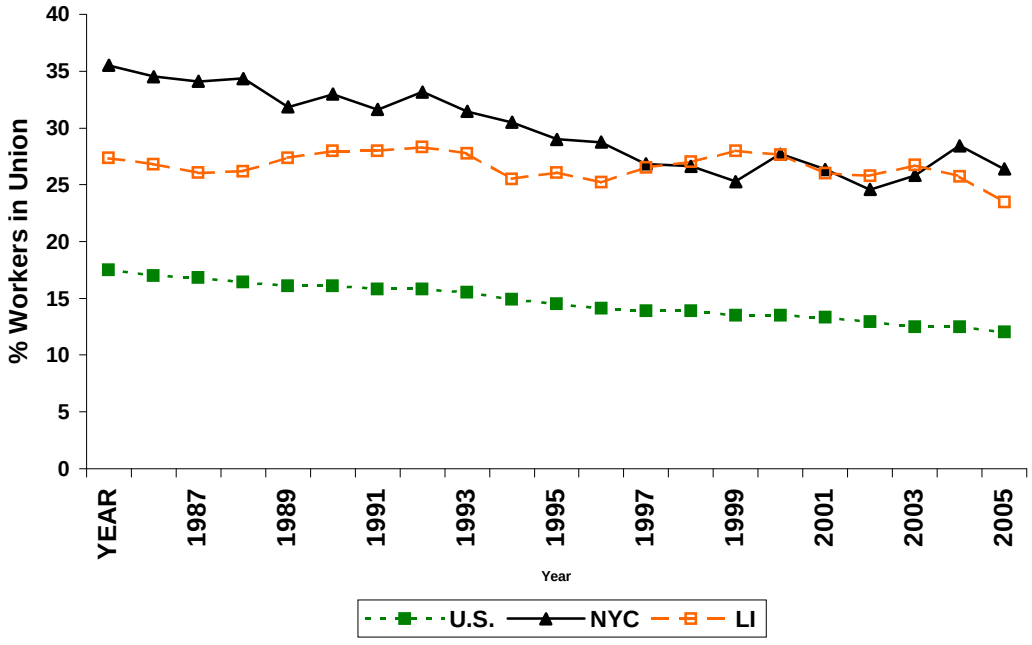
These findings reveal that New York City residents account for over 42 percent of the entire state's union members. Has this numeric importance been reflected in similar union density trends over time? For each year from 1986 through 2006, we used the CPS samples to estimate

union membership rates for New York City and Long Island residents. We plotted these annual estimates against the national rates in Figure 2 (and collected the numeric values in Appendix Table 1).

It appears that the overall state trends in unionization in Figure 1 have been markedly influenced by the roughly similar trend followed in the city. From a 1986 density of 35.5 per cent, the city's union membership fell to a 29 per cent share of the work force in 1995-96, then dropped further to a low of 25.3 per cent in 2000. But in most years since then, the rate has fluctuated in a range of 26 to 28 per cent.

In contrast, Long Island's union membership density has over the same period followed a generally more stable pattern than the state or the city. Union density actually rose slightly from about 26 to 27 per cent in the mid-1980s to 28 per cent in the early 1990s. After dipping in 1995 to 1997, the Long Island rate rose to 27 per cent in 1999 – the first year in the series that Long Islanders had a higher unionization rate than the city (26.6 per cent).

Figure 2 Trends in Union Membership for New York City, Long Island and the U.S. 1986 - 2006



Source: Authors' analysis of US Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS-ORG) microdata files, 1986 to 2006. Samples limited to wage and salary workers aged 16 and over. Union membership rates are percentages of workers each year who report union membership.

II. Accounting for Recent Trends

What accounts for the patterns in local union density traced above? A large body of social science research on union membership patterns has for years been exploring a variety of possible explanatory factors, mostly at the national level.[4] Economists tend to broadly categorize them as either "supply" or "demand" factors operating in labor markets.

Among the prominent labor supply factors are: the demographic composition of the work force (especially age groupings, gender, race and ethnicity); immigration; occupational and skill composition; worker attitudes toward adequate pay, benefits and working conditions, fairness at work, workplace autonomy and governance, and labor unions; local community standards and public support for unions and worker rights; and labor unions' supply of effective organizing and support services.

Labor demand factors highlighted in recent union research include: local growth rates of job vacancies and real earnings levels; the related "cost of potential job loss" from union activism (itself influenced by prevailing real wages and safety net programs, as well as local levels of joblessness); technological change in the workplace; the industrial/occupational composition of available job opportunities in the public and private sectors; economic globalization pressures (and related trading agreements and institutions); employer resistance (most intensely in the private sector) to union organizing and/or collective bargaining; legal obstacles to unions and employers; and pressures on employers from customers, competitors, suppliers, lenders, and shareholders.

A systematic study of the full set of such possible explanatory factors is well beyond the scope of this first paper. But we can take some exploratory steps by investigating in more detail recent changes in the main component parts of the New York area's unionized work force. To make this possible requires more data than the single-year survey samples we have looked at above.

Even with the large national sample size of our Current Population Survey data source, the CPS metro-level subsamples are generally not large enough for a single year to yield statistically significant estimates on many narrowly defined demographic or economic subgroups. Recognizing this, we only used single-year data so far for city-wide or metro-wide estimates of union membership and coverage densities (Figure 2). In order to have large enough data samples for reliable estimates of more detailed analysis of specific age, racial, or job groupings in the

New York metro area, we pooled the CPS data into three-year groupings: a) 1987, 1988, 1989; b) 1997, 1998, 1999; and c) 2004, 2005, 2006. These three time-periods have the advantage that they correspond to business cycle peaks. We are thereby able to make peak-to-peak comparisons that minimize possible confounding influences from cyclical variations. In most of this analysis, we focus on the proportion of workers covered by union contracts rather than the slightly narrower membership density measure.

The time trends found in these larger data sets appear to be quite comparable with those described above. Tables 2 and 3 report our estimates for each of the three-year periods of the total number of residents employed, as well as the numbers of these who are union members or otherwise covered by a union contract. Between 1997-99 and 2004-06, the number of New York City residents in labor unions rose from 790,879 to 856,334 – an increase of 65,455 (+8.3 percent). Long Island experienced a much smaller 0.7 percent increase in union membership; its 317,450 union members account for 23.5 percent of all employees ("union membership density"). As a result, the broader New York-Northern New Jersey metropolitan area has the highest union density – 23.3 percent – of any major metro area – and far above the 12 percent rate nationwide.

However, the city's membership gains have not fully kept up with overall employment growth, resulting in a slight drop (one-half percentage point) in the union density rate since the late 1990s. And it remains well below the late 1980s level, when 34.4 percent of employed New Yorkers were in unions. In contrast, over the same period on Long Island, the unionization rate has remained remarkably stable, thereby shrinking the gap between city and suburb.

1. Age Differences

Among major age groups in New York City, young working people aged 16 to 24 have the lowest rate of union coverage: 14.2 per cent in 2004-06 – less than half the rate of adults 35 and over (Table 2). Twenty years earlier, one in five of the city's youngest workers had union coverage. By the late 1990s, that rate had slipped to 13 per cent. Since then both the number of 16-to-24 year-old union workers and their coverage density has been largely unchanged.

While 25-to-34 year-old New Yorkers continue to be much more likely than those under 25 to have jobs with union contract coverage, the number in unions actually fell by 5,153 from the

late 1990s. But this was more than offset by union gains among their elders, of whom over one-third hold union jobs. Our findings reveal that only the city's older workers aged 45 and over have experienced any sizable growth in union membership since the late 1990s.

A similar age ranking is evident on Long Island (Table 3), where just under ten per cent of the youngest workers have union coverage today, compared to over 30 percent of workers aged 45 to 64. Since the late 1990s there have been small declines in the number of 25-to-44 year-olds employed in covered jobs. A larger job gain among those 55 and over was the sole reason for a small net increase of about 4,450 more union jobs overall.

Low youth unionization rates are common across the country. Nationwide, the latest 2006 government report shows that a mere 4.4 percent of young workers ages 16 to 24 were union members, the lowest rate of any age group.[5] The youth rate has dropped by over half from 9.1 percent in 1983, the first year in which the BLS began collecting annual membership rates by age group. Today, the 857,000 young union members under 25 (over 900,000 fewer than in 1983) account for just over 6 percent of all union members. With the population aged 16 to 24 projected to increase its share of the population and work force this decade, these figures could signal serious problems for unions' future growth prospects.

Does the low rate of current union membership among young workers reflect weaker pro-union and/or stronger anti-union sentiments among youth? If most youth fit the common stereotype of immature, high-turnover, low-commitment temporary workers briefly sampling a large number of jobs, then disinterest or even hostility to unions might be expected of them. On the other hand, for millions of low-income households and for increasing numbers of middle-income ones as well since the 1970s, young peoples' jobs have become an important component of total income. That may be more difficult for adults to appreciate today because the jobs that *they* held as young workers 25 or more years ago generally paid far higher real wages per hour than youth can expect today. Young workers have been the hardest hit by the general wage declines of the past two decades. In fact, while the wage gap between youth and adult workers has widened in many advanced countries, it has grown far more in the U.S. than in others.[6] And the declining affordability of higher education and health insurance over this same period has left more and more college-bound students little choice but to hold down jobs, both before and during college.

In fact, a number of public opinion surveys have found generally positive youth attitudes toward unions. Nationwide, a growing majority of Americans, especially youth, tell pollsters that they side with labor unions against employers. Of the respondents of all ages to a national Associated Press poll in 2001, 50 percent said that their sympathies were on the side of unions, while just 27 percent sided with companies. This represents a marked rise in pro-union sentiment from just a few years earlier. When the same question was asked in a nationwide Gallup poll in 1999, just 45 percent responded that they sided with unions. But an especially large gap is evident between young and old: nearly three out of every five young people aged 18 to 34 sided with unions, compared to less than two out of five elderly over 65.

This is consistent with the findings of another national survey that focused intensively on youth. In the Spring of 1999, pollsters Peter Hart Research Associates surveyed 752 nonsupervisory workers aged 18 to 34. When asked what they would do if given the chance to vote in a union election at work, 54 percent said they would "definitely" or "probably" vote for a union and only 38 percent said they would not vote for a union. Rising pro-union sentiment is evident from comparison with the responses to a similar question in a 1996 Hart Associates poll, in which the pro-union/anti-union split (47 percent yes, to 45 percent no) was much narrower.

In the summer of 2001, public attitudes on unions were the focus of a poll of Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties, conducted jointly by *Newsday* and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. The results indicated that 24 percent of Long Islanders were current union members, and another nearly 20 percent had been in unions in the past, though not currently. Regardless of union status, the majority expressed generally positive attitudes about unions. Only 1 in 4 said that unions were no longer necessary in today's global economy. Nine out of ten union members and 2 out of 3 nonmembers said that unions mostly help their members, and similar proportions agreed that unions are needed to protect job security. Young people under 30, though less likely to have been in unions than workers 30 and over, but were even more positive about them. Among nonunion workers, young people were twice as likely as those over age 30 to say that they would be better off in a union.[7]

In a small 2002 survey of first- and second-year students in a variety of introductory courses at a large private university on Long Island, we asked how they would vote: "If given the chance to vote to have your job covered by a union contract." Overall, nearly 1 in 3 answered that they would "definitely" or "probably" vote for a union at work, compared to just one-fourth

who would definitely/probably not vote for a union. Of the full sample, 43.1 percent didn't know or checked no answer. Breakdowns of voting preferences by various characteristics are shown in Appendix Table 2. In general, those with jobs now, particularly those working over 20 hours weekly, tended to have larger fractions of respondents pro-union. Among the 9 percent now union members, nearly 2 out of 3 would still vote for a union, compared to 32.5 percent of nonunion workers. And youth with parents of grandparents who are or were union members also appear more pro-union.

When students were asked their views on various statements about the impacts and value of unions, the results were much more clearly favorable to unions. Nearly 80 percent agreed that "Unions usually improve the pay & jobs of union members." The much broader statement that "Unions are mostly good for the economy" drew the approval of 2 out of 3 students. A smaller proportion, though still a majority disagreed with the statement that: "Unions have too much power relative to business." And nearly 3 of 4 students questioned disagreed with the claim that: "Unions are no longer needed in today's global economy."

What then explains the disconnect between the fact that youth generally express stronger pro-union attitudes than adults and the seemingly contradictory low unionization rates of young people? The nature of the jobs that most youth find and of the firms that hire them appear to account for a large share of the explanation. First, their jobs are more likely to be entry-level, low-skill and often part-time or temporary positions in small businesses – all characteristics long associated with low union density. Secondly, as Richard Freeman and James Medoff have argued, job creation in growing new firms tends to disproportionately favor youthful hires. Since job growth has increasingly been dominated by firms in the traditionally nonunion service sector, youth have more and more only found entry jobs in such nonunion industries.[8] Also, large numbers of youth jobs today have little choice but to work for wealthy and notoriously anti-union employers like Wal-Mart and McDonalds, with long histories of spending freely on legal talent and management consultants to punish or fend off any union organizing.

Finally, many unions have long neglected organizing young workers, failed to give them leadership roles, and sacrificed their interests in favor of protecting senior employees pay, benefits and job security.[9] In the past few years, some unions have tried to address this problem. A growing number in New York and elsewhere have intensified their organizing efforts among young immigrants and among graduate teaching assistants at a number of major universities.

Figure 3 Composition of Union Work Force, by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, 2004-06, NYC

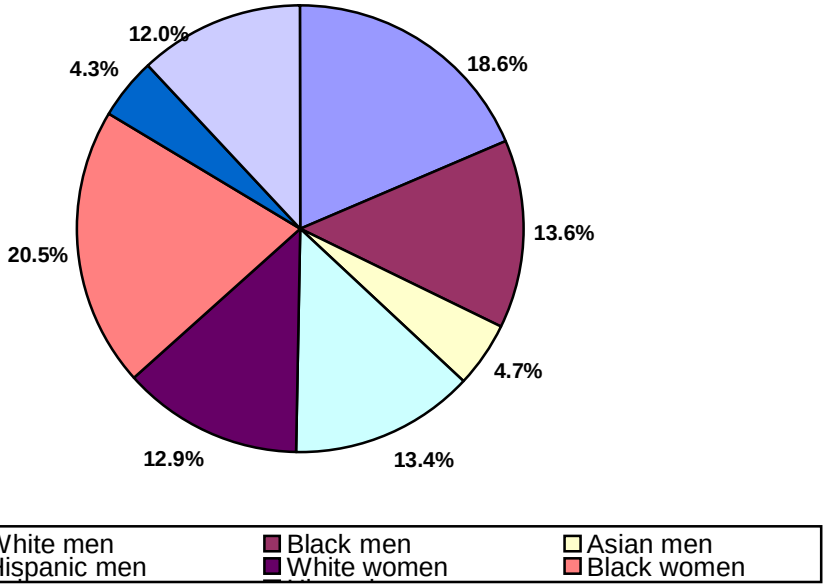
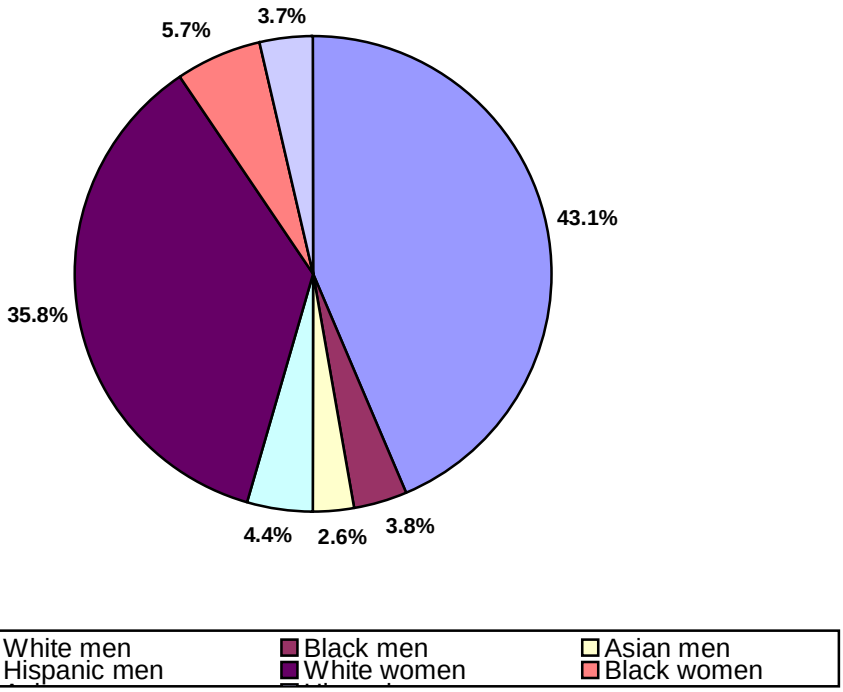


Figure 4 Composition of Union Work Force, by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, 2004-06, Long Island



2. Gender, Race & Ethnicity

White working men long dominated popular film and television images of the New York working class. But our findings reveal that white non-Hispanic men are only 18.6 per cent of New York City's unionized work force today. Demographic changes, suburbanization, immigration, and changing patterns of labor market participation have reshaped the population and the economy, resulting in a majority-minority work force. And, contrary to stubborn stereotypes, working women questioned in opinion surveys often express stronger pro-union positions than men.[10]

As Table 4 shows, between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, the number of white non-Hispanic male wage and salary employees living in the city fell from 704,375 to 589,254. But the number of such workers with union representation dropped much more sharply to 161,768, driving down their union density rate from 40.3 per cent in the late 1980s to 27.5 per cent one decade later. Thereafter, white male employment increased and with it union membership rose enough to brake the steep slide in the union coverage rate: by 2004-06 the rate was only about one percentage point lower.

At 36.5 per cent, black non-Hispanic men have the highest proportion of male New York workers covered by a union contract, followed by Spanish origin men (27.9), white non-Hispanics (26.1) and Asian and other races (16.9). The black union density rate nationwide also tends to exceed that of any major racial or ethnic group. But the higher Hispanic rate compared to white non-Hispanic New Yorkers differs from the national pattern.

As Table 4 shows, the 446,125 women currently employed in union jobs are more than two and one-half times as numerous as their 166,528 white male counterparts. In fact the female share of the union work force (depicted in Figure 3) has now reached parity with the male share. And female workers have been almost the sole source of union growth: from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s, they accounted for 92 percent of the total rise in union coverage in New York City.

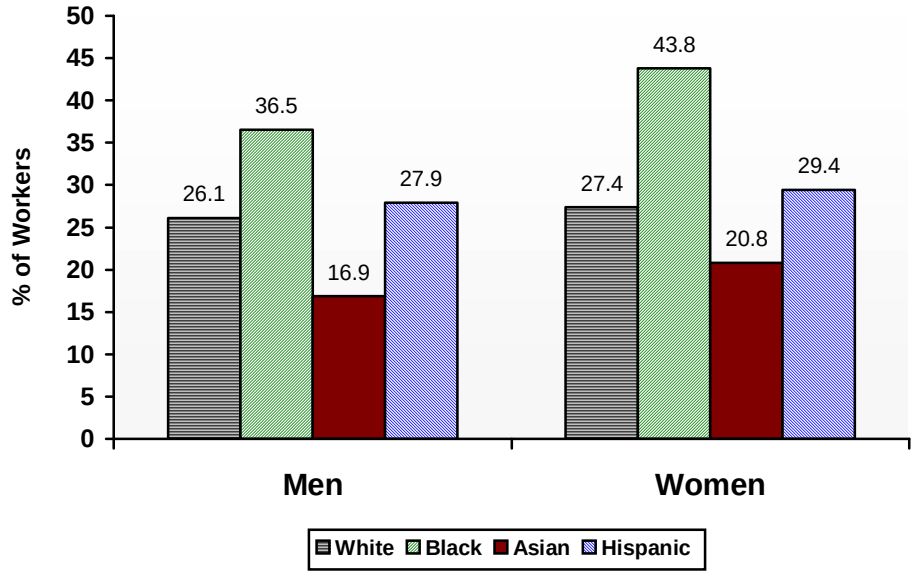
While the city's union coverage rate has fallen among men from 29.2 in the late 1990s to 26.2 percent today, the female rate has moved ahead from 28.3 to 29.2 percent over the same period. African American women are more likely than any other demographic group, male or female, to hold jobs with union representation: 43.8 per cent of black non-Hispanic women are

now covered by unions. The black female union density rate of nearly 44 per cent is followed by that of African American men (36.5 per cent), Latina women (29.4 per cent), Latino men (27.9 per cent), white non-Hispanic women (27.4 per cent), white non-Hispanic men (26.1 per cent), Asian women (20.8 per cent) and Asian men (27.9 per cent). As Figure 5 shows, the union density rate of Hispanic working women not only exceeds that of white non-Hispanic women, Asian and other women, but is also higher than the rates of white, Asian, and Hispanic men.

Among the major Spanish origin ethnic groups in New York, union coverage is lowest for the mostly recent immigrants from Mexico (6.4 per cent) and highest for Puerto Rican workers (39 per cent). The Puerto Rican numbers have been relatively stable over the past 10 to 20 years. Their pattern is in marked contrast to the rapid growth among Dominicans, Central and South Americans shown in Table 5. Between the late 1990s and 2004-06, the number with union jobs more than doubled to over 122,000. Thanks to the faster pace of their unionization than their employment growth, this group's union density rose from 23 per cent then to over 27 per cent in the mid-2000s.

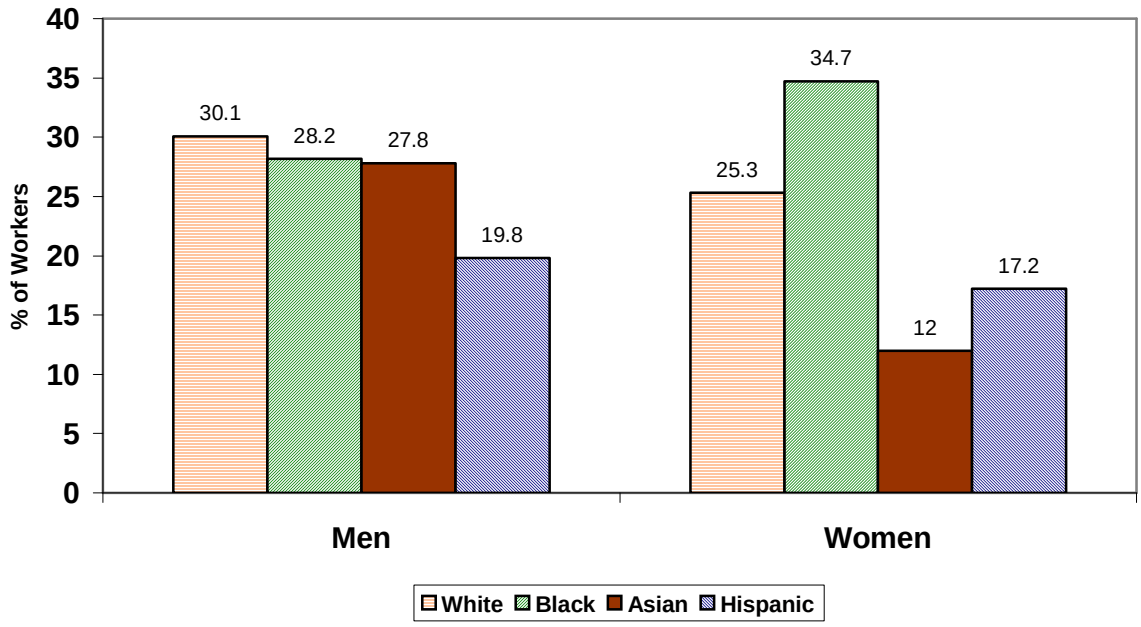
Of all currently unionized workers on Long Island, the white male union share is over twice as large (43.1 per cent) as in the city, but a growing majority of its union workers are also now women and minority men (Figure 4). New female union workers accounted for 100 percent of

Figure 5 Union Coverage Rates by Gender, Race and Ethnicity, 2004-06, New York City



the total rise in Long Island's union coverage since the late 1990s. Union contracts now cover 28.6 percent of men and 24.6 percent of women workers – and the gap between them has been cut in half since the late 1990s. As in the city, black women have the highest rate of union coverage on Long Island (34.7 per cent). One-fifth of Latino men and 17 percent of Latina workers hold union jobs. Among the still-small Asian work force, 1 in 4 men has union coverage, compared to just 1 in 10 women.

Figure 6 Union Coverage Rates by Gender, Race and Ethnicity, 2004-06, Long Island



3. Immigration

After more than two decades of near-record immigration, a majority of New York City residents and a growing minority of its suburban neighbors are foreign born or the children of recent immigrants. While there is widespread recognition of the many economic, social and cultural benefits of multinational immigration, the rapid influxes of late have, as in the early twentieth century, ignited controversies over possible job and wage competition with the native born. A once-common stereotype held that most recent immigrants were so desperate and docile that they would accept the most derisory pay and working conditions without complaint. This

was said to be even more the case with the undocumented, eager to avoid detection and deportation. Regardless of their legal status at entry, recent migrants often seemed largely "unorganizable" to many unions.

There is mounting evidence that many immigrants – far from being a uniformly docile, antiunion workforce ripe for endless employer abuse – are at least as willing as the native born to take collective action for better wages and working conditions. Nationwide, between 1996 and 2003, the number of foreign-born union members increased by 48 percent, to 1.8 million.[11] In sharp contrast, native-born union membership declined by 5.7 percent in this same period. It is indicative of their rapid labor force growth (as well as the stiff obstacles to union organizing) that immigrants' union density still fell, from 12.1 percent unionized in 1996 to 10.2 percent 7 years later. Many immigrants, including the undocumented, have played leading roles in a number of major recent organizing drives, including the successful campaigns to unionize office building cleaners ("Justice for Janitors"), health care aides, limousine drivers and food service workers.[12]

In New York City, our findings for 2004-2006 reveal that of an immigrant workforce of 1.49 million wage and salary employees, 390,469 (26.2 per cent) are in union jobs (Table 8). That means that immigrants now account for 43.5 per cent of the city's entire union work force.

Moreover, new foreign-born union members were the main source of union growth since the late 1990s. Of the 66,492 increase in total union coverage citywide, 58,297 were immigrants – accounting for 87.7 per cent of union growth.

As Table 8 indicates, the increase in unionized immigrants came entirely from naturalized foreign-born workers. The addition of 85,345 immigrants with US citizenship to union ranks more than made up for a loss of 27,048 non-citizen immigrants with union coverage since the 1990s. The latter are mostly recent arrivals, and their union density (17.75 per cent) is half that of foreign-born US citizens.

Likewise, on Long Island the far smaller immigrant population has followed a similar pattern since at least the late 1990s: increasing unionization among settled immigrants with US citizenship, declining union representation of more recent, non-citizen migrants. Native-born workers have the highest rate of union coverage (28.3 per cent), but foreign-born citizens are close behind (24.5 percent). The native-born and non-citizen union workforces actually fell slightly in this period, but increases among the foreign-born citizens were large enough for a net increase of 6,163 new immigrants in unions. Since immigrant workers were the sole source of

the net increase of 5,550 new unionized workers since the late 1990s.

More labor unions in New York and elsewhere appear to be increasingly aware of the importance to their future of overcoming past practices of indifference, and often hostility toward migrant workers. In the fall of 2000, the AFL-CIO formally shifted its support to a new federal amnesty program for qualified undocumented immigrants and demanded that they be guaranteed "full workplace rights." At the same time, it supported more effective border enforcement and new policies of skill upgrading for native-born workers. Those unions committed to active organizing and member mobilization are reaching out as seldom before to the foreign-born worker. For example, while the building trades have historically been among the least receptive to the undocumented, they have increasingly sought Spanish-speaking organizers to improve their outreach efforts. According to Tony Martinez, a Salvadoran organizer hired by a New York local of the Carpenters Union: "A lot of these concrete contractors were hiring undocumented workers. We don't have anything against undocumented workers; I'm an immigrant myself. Neither does our council nor the international. Our mission is to organize all the carpenters, to elevate the standard of living for all carpenters."[13]

Racial, ethnic and gender divisions persist in unions as in society at large, and few immigrants have as yet moved into union leadership positions. For some undocumented workers, an increasingly important complement to (or substitute for) traditional labor unions have been community-based "worker centers." Over one hundred workers centers are now in operation across the country. Among the more established in the New York City metropolitan area are the Chinese Staff and Workers Association and Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York, and Long Island's Workplace Project.[14] These and others typically combine job placement, legal assistance and language training with activism over worker rights, fair hiring practices and labor law violations. They have been especially active among lightly unionized workers like landscaping day laborers, taxi drivers and household cleaners. In August 2006, the AFL-CIO clearly recognized the importance of such organizations by signing a partnership agreement with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON).[15]

4. Public and Private Industry Sectors

There has long been a sharp national divergence between union membership trends in different sectors of the economy. In the private sector, nearly 1 in 4 workers nationwide still held

a job with union contract coverage in 1973. Since then, private sector coverage has dropped to just 8.1 per cent. But in the public sector, over five times as large a share of the work force (43 per cent in 2006) have union coverage, a density rate that has eroded little for many years.

How does the New York Metropolitan Area compare with these national patterns? Our findings in Tables 9 and 10 reveal a similarly enormous public-private density gap, but substantially higher union coverage locally in both sectors. New York City in the late 1980s averaged 486,530 public sector jobs representing about 18.4 percent of all wage and salary positions. Over 78 percent of them had union coverage, nearly twice the national average. The early 1990s brought a recession, a new Republican mayor, and a decline in the public sector by over 8,000 jobs. The number of unionized jobs in that sector fell much more sharply, lowering the density rate to 72.7 per cent. Total private sector employment rose by some quarter of a million new jobs by the end of the 1990s, but none of them were in the steadily shrinking unionized manufacturing industries (Tables 11–14). The result was a decline in private sector union density from 27.7 to 20 per cent by the late 1990s.

Since then, both the private and the public sector have rebounded from the 2001 recession, though with much less new job growth in the latter than in the former. This trend brought the public share of total city jobs down to 15.3 per cent in 2004-2006, 3 percentage points lower than two decades earlier. The number of union jobs rebounded as well, and slightly increased the union coverage rate in the public sector while stopping its further erosion in the private sector. In fact, the creation of 16,677 net additional public sector unionized jobs accounted for a disproportionate 25 per cent share of all the city's additional union jobs (+66,492) in this period.

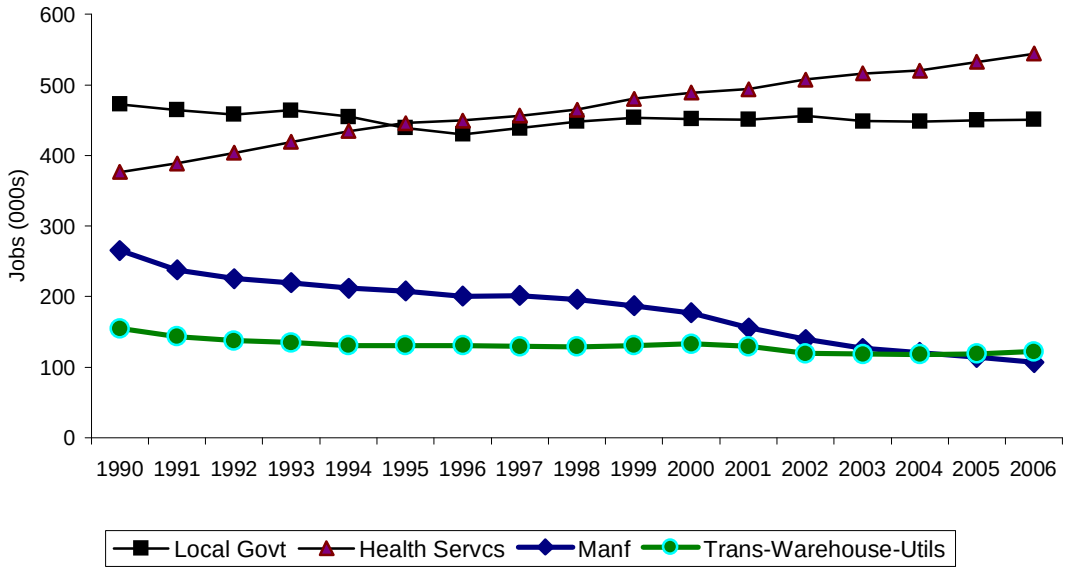
Which parts of the public sector have gained new jobs and which have lost since the 1990s? Table 10 shows that the less unionized (56.2 per cent in the mid-2000s) federal government subsector in the city shrank (by –3,355), but both state (+8785) and local (+2,475) government positions increased, thereby pushing the union coverage rate higher.

Local government jobs are the most highly unionized in the country. As Figure 7 shows, despite the steady decline of unionized manufacturing since 1990, local government employment has remained high, as have two other heavily unionized industries: health care services and transportation, warehousing and utilities. Health care alone now has nearly ten times as many unionized employees as manufacturing and over twice as high a union density (39 per cent in

health care, 17.2 per cent in manufacturing). Job growth, or at least stability in these important industries have been a stabilizing force for local union membership.

The unionization gap between public and private sector jobs is even wider on Long Island: public sector union coverage has risen from 67 per cent in the late 1980s to 73 percent in 2004-2006, while over the same period the union share of the private sector has dropped from 18 to 13.7 per cent. The public sector represents a larger proportion (21.7 per cent) of the overall job count on Long Island than in the city. And it accounts for 60 per cent of all of Long Island residents with union coverage. In contrast, in New York City, that sector's share of all union workers is 40.7 per cent. But in both parts of the region, job growth in local government and other highly unionized service industries appear to have been crucial to continued union strength.

Figure 7 Payroll Jobs in Selected Industry Sectors, 1990-2006, New York City



III. Summary and Concluding Remarks

This study attempts to use statistical analysis of large Census Bureau microdata sets to explore some of the principal characteristics of union coverage in the New York Metropolitan Area at mid-decade, and to trace recent changes in unionization locally. Our estimates suggest that union membership has increased in both New York City and Long Island since the late 1990s, though at different rates that barely keep pace with overall employment. The number of New York City residents in labor unions rose by 65,455 – an 8.3 percent increase – between 1997-99 and 2004-06. Today, about 26.4 percent of New York wage and salary workers belong to a union. Long Island experienced a much smaller 0.7 percent increase in union membership; its 317,450 union members account for 23.5 percent of all employees (the "union density rate"). As a result, the broader New York-Northern New Jersey metropolitan area has the highest union density rate – 23.3 percent – of any major metro area – and far above the 12 percent rate nationwide.

However, the city's membership gains have not fully kept up with overall employment growth, resulting in a slight drop (one-half percentage point) in the union density rate since the late 1990s. And it remains well below the late 1980s level, when 34.4 percent of employed New Yorkers were in unions. In contrast, over the same period on Long Island, the unionization rate has remained remarkably stable, thereby shrinking the gap between city and suburb.

To dig deeper into detailed components of these trends, we relied on three multiyear samples – 1987-89, 1997-99 and 2004-2006 – with adequate numbers of observations for reliable statistical estimates of specific worker groups, industries, etc. We found that, first, youth aged 16 to 24 had the lowest union coverage on their jobs of any age group, despite indications that the majority express generally pro-union attitudes. Only older workers aged 45 and over have experienced any sizable growth in union membership since the late 1990s.

New female union workers accounted for 92 percent of the total rise in union coverage in New York City. While the city's union coverage rate has fallen among men from 29.2 in the late 1990s to 26.2 percent today, the female rate has moved ahead from 28.3 to 29.2 percent over the same period. African American women in New York City are more likely than any other demographic group, male or female, to hold jobs with union representation. The black female union density rate of nearly 44 per cent is followed by that of African American men (36.5 per cent), Latina women (29.4 per cent), Latino men (27.9 per cent), white non-Hispanic women

(27.4 per cent), white non-Hispanic men (26.1 per cent), Asian women (20.8 per cent) and Asian men (27.9 per cent).

New female union workers accounted for 100 percent of the coverage increase on Long Island. On Long Island, union contracts now cover 28.6 percent of men and 24.6 percent of women workers – and the gap between them has been cut in half since the late 1990s. White non-Hispanic men account for 43.1 per cent of it's unionized work force, but a growing majority of its union workers are now women and minority men. Black women also have the highest rate of union coverage on Long Island (34.7 per cent).

Immigrant workers have also registered large gains in union coverage since the late 1990s. In New York City, as of 2004-2006, 390,469 (26.2 per cent) immigrants are in union jobs. They now account for 43.5 per cent of the city's entire union work force. In fact, new foreign-born members have been the main source of union growth since the late 1990s, accounting for 87.7 per cent of new unionization. Though immigrants on Long Island are a far smaller fraction of the work force, increased unionization among foreign-born citizens since the late 1990s has been large enough to more than outweigh the slight dip in the numbers of native-born and non-citizen immigrant union members.

Public sector jobs have been an important part of employment stability and, since the late 1990s, growth for unionized workers. Three out of four public sector workers have union coverage in both New York City and Long Island, a rate nearly twice the national average. But unions now represent only one-fifth of private sector workers in the city and 13.7 percent on Long Island.

Public opinion surveys in New York and across the country have increasingly found pro-union sentiments among large and growing fractions of the population. The enormous disconnect between such sentiments and a stark pattern of low and declining private sector unionization has been the subject of a growing body of academic research. While this is outside the scope of this paper, we hope to investigate more deeply the roles played by a variety of possible explanatory forces in a later phase of this research project.

These new findings may attest to some of the serious difficulties facing future organizing efforts as well as to a surprising resilience in many New York unions that have succeeded recently in growing their membership just enough to avoid the national trend of declining unionization rates. But, even in the country's most highly unionized metro area, unions'

organizing efforts and wage gains have not been enough so far to close the enormous gap between the average worker's rising productivity and stagnating real wages. And the recent declines in coverage of youth and non-citizen immigrants raise doubts about unions' prospects for future growth.

At the same time, the new findings here of impressive local gains in coverage of fast-growing segments of the work force like female and naturalized immigrant workers suggest that, even among groups posing special challenges to workplace organizing, the current state of New York unions remains hopeful.

Table 1 Union Membership and Coverage of Residents in New York City, Long Island and 20 Largest US Metropolitan Areas, 2006

Population Rank	Area of Residence	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
	New York City	3,183,825	840,463	871,076	**26.40**	**27.36**
	Long Island	1,310,273	307,443	321,087	**23.46**	**24.51**
	Metropolitan Area:					
1	New York-Long Island-Northern NJ, NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA	7,968,820	1,858,761	1,954,367	23.33	24.53
8	Detroit-Ann Arbor-Flint, MI CMSA	1,891,941	413,049	429,566	21.83	22.71
13	Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA CMSA	1,547,587	277,466	291,980	17.93	18.87
5	San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA	1,829,610	302,467	324,667	16.53	17.75
3	Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, IL-IN-WI CMSA	3,998,365	653,883	682,916	16.35	17.08
16	Cleveland-Akron, OH CMSA	927,838	141,207	151,532	15.22	16.33
15	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI MSA	1,525,965	235,932	248,482	15.46	16.28
20	Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA CMSA	5,363,159	780,248	841,719	14.55	15.69
2	Pittsburgh, PA MSA	1,041,931	152,518	161,331	14.64	15.48
18	St. Louis, MO-IL MSA	1,390,567	198,932	212,034	14.31	15.25
6	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD CMSA	2,450,759	343,160	368,350	14.00	15.03
7	Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, MA-NH-ME-CT CMSA	2,050,415	281,273	297,643	13.72	14.52
17	San Diego, CA MSA	1,142,688	141,812	158,547	12.41	13.87
19	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ MSA	1,853,726	144,506	184,520	7.80	9.95
4	Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA	2,723,984	214,701	257,242	7.88	9.44
14	Denver-Boulder-Greeley, CO CMSA	1,101,820	88,695	99,576	8.05	9.04
10	Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL CMSA	2,281,472	134,537	157,606	5.90	6.91
12	Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX CMSA	2,270,613	134,734	150,946	5.93	6.65
9	Atlanta, GA MSA	2,327,570	119,552	149,657	5.14	6.43
11	Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA	2,758,710	143,274	165,682	5.19	6.01
	Total of 20 Largest Metropolitan Areas	48,447,540	6,760,707	7,288,364	13.95	15.04

Notes: :Based on CLD estimates from 2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files. Estimates are based on wage and salary workers, ages 16 and above. Membership rates reflect the percentage of employed workers who are union members.
Coverage rates reflect the percentage of employed workers that are covered by union or employee association contract.

Table 2 Union Membership and Coverage Rates by Age Group, New York City

1987-1989

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	369,480	63,055	73,121	17.07	19.79
25-34	819,598	251,941	281,796	30.74	34.38
35-44	620,985	228,697	245,362	36.83	39.51
45-54	450,677	200,409	208,698	44.47	46.31
55-64	301,428	139,354	145,523	46.23	48.28
65+	78,516	23,667	25,620	30.14	32.63
Total	2,640,684	907,123	980,120	34.35	37.12

1997-1999

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	369,744	43,276	48,587	11.70	13.14
25-34	842,469	193,606	206,517	22.98	24.51
35-44	775,867	230,212	239,105	29.67	30.82
45-54	561,891	199,012	208,635	35.42	37.13
55-64	277,338	106,377	108,482	38.36	39.12
65+	59,801	18,396	19,463	30.76	32.55
Total	2,887,110	790,879	830,790	27.39	28.78

2004-2006

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	347,483	45,159	49,304	13.00	14.19
25-34	871,297	182,697	193,266	20.97	22.18
35-44	804,232	222,705	230,252	27.69	28.63
45-54	674,950	219,019	229,891	32.45	34.06
55-64	384,483	157,877	164,155	41.06	42.70
65+	103,059	28,877	30,413	28.02	29.51
Total	3,185,504	856,334	897,282	26.88	28.17

Notes: :CLD estimations from CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files.

Averages of 3-year pooled samples in economic peak periods are used to improve reliability of estimates.

Membership rates are the percentage of employed workers (aged 16 and over) who are union members.

Coverage rates are the percentage of workers (members and non-members) who are represented by a union or employee association contract.

Table 3 Union Membership and Coverage Rates by Age Group, Long Island

1987-1989

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	241,831	32,114	33,286	13.28	13.76
25-34	296,970	72,640	75,449	24.46	25.41
35-44	270,387	92,078	95,896	34.05	35.47
45-54	199,067	66,378	69,869	33.34	35.10
55-64	142,535	40,400	42,435	28.34	29.77
65+	31,674	8,562	8,869	27.03	28.00
Total	1,182,465	312,172	325,805	26.40	27.55

1997-1999

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	165,910	19,316	21,340	11.64	12.86
25-34	275,979	67,965	70,562	24.63	25.57
35-44	344,945	97,890	101,172	28.38	29.33
45-54	253,870	85,429	89,299	33.65	35.17
55-64	122,714	39,042	39,601	31.82	32.27
65+	38,003	5,742	6,485	15.11	17.06
Total	1,201,421	315,384	328,458	26.25	27.34

2004-2006

AGE	Employment	Membership	Coverage	Membership Rate (%)	Coverage Rate (%)
16-24	157,906	14,237	14,963	9.02	9.48
25-34	230,428	64,088	66,935	27.81	29.05
35-44	340,900	93,833	99,646	27.53	29.23
45-54	291,311	83,346	87,101	28.61	29.90
55-64	172,254	53,776	56,695	31.22	32.91
65+	63,320	8,170	8,669	12.90	13.69
Total	1,256,119	317,450	334,008	25.27	26.59

Notes: See notes in previous table.

Table 4 Union Coverage Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 1987-2006, New York City

	Female Workers			Male Workers		
	Employment	Coverage	Coverage Rate(%)	Employment	Coverage	Coverage Rate(%)
1987-1989						
White, non-Hispanic	611,067	158,569	25.95	704,375	270,026	38.34
Black, non-Hispanic	332,934	153,218	46.02	290,158	139,792	48.18
Asian, Other	76,506	25,389	33.18	91,926	27,565	29.99
Hispanic	232,084	79,239	34.14	302,662	126,322	41.74
Total	1,252,592	416,415	33.04	1,389,120	563,704	40.26
1997-1999						
White, non-Hispanic	521,399	118,660	22.76	589,254	161,768	27.45
Black, non-Hispanic	385,869	151,419	39.24	331,760	140,138	42.24
Asian/Pacific Islander	133,477	33,466	25.07	173,313	29,087	16.78
Other	2,706	1,489	55.03	4,868	1,476	30.33
Hispanic	315,730	79,556	25.20	428,732	113,730	26.53
Total	1,359,182	384,590	28.30	1,527,928	446,200	29.20
2004-2006						
White, non-Hispanic	556,713	115,841	20.81	637,072	166,528	26.14
Black, non-Hispanic	420,547	184,201	43.80	335,236	122,287	36.48
Asian	174,071	32,004	18.39	239,233	40,262	16.83
Other	14,405	6,382	44.30	12,466	2,205	17.68
Hispanic	363,928	107,697	29.43	499,833	119,876	27.89
Total	1,529,664	446,125	29.16	1,723,841	451,158	26.17

Notes:CLD estimates from 2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files.

Estimates are based on wage and salary workers, ages 16 and over. Hispanics may be of any race.

Coverage rate is the percentage of workers (members or non-members) who are covered by union or employee association representation.

Estimates are averages of the respective three-year period.

Table 5 Union Coverage Rates by Spanish Origin Group, 1987-2006, New York City

	Employment	Coverage	Coverage Rate(%)
1987-1989			
Mexican	23,101	2,242	**9.70**
Puerto Rican	208,790	92,640	**44.37**
Cuban	22,545	11,466	**50.86**
Central/South American	180,590	61,403	**34.00**
Other	99,720	37,811	**37.92**
Total: All Hispanics	534,746	205,562	**38.44**
1997-1999			
Mexican	101,030	6,849	**6.78**
Puerto Rican	236,482	89,001	**37.64**
Cuban	18,098	4,802	**26.53**
Central/South American	233,579	53,515	**22.91**
Other	155,273	39,119	**25.19**
Total: All Hispanics	744,462	193,286	**25.96**
2004-2006			
Mexican	91,676	5,899	**6.43**
Puerto Rican	227,886	89,613	**39.32**
Cuban	12,756	3,516	**27.56**
Central/South American	446,697	122,482	**27.42**
Other	16,746	6,062	**36.20**
Total: All Hispanics	795,761	227,573	**28.60**

Notes:CLD estimates from 2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files.
Estimates are for wage and salary workers, ages 16 and over. Hispanics may be of any race.
Coverage rate is the percentage of workers (members or non-members) who are covered by union or employee association representation.
Estimates are averages of the respective three-year period.

Table 6 Union Coverage Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 1987-2006, Long Island

	Female Workers			Male Workers		
	Employment	Coverage	Coverage	Employment	Coverage	Coverage
1987-1989			Rate (%)			Rate (%)
White, non-Hispanic	468,327	98,543	21.04	561,639	173,579	30.91
Black, non-Hispanic	45,313	14,920	32.93	38,501	18,297	47.52
Asian, Other	9,101	3,058	33.60	9,869	3,409	34.54
Hispanic	20,973	4,791	22.85	30,658	9,208	30.03
Total	543,714	121,313	22.31	640,667	204,492	31.92
1997-1999						
White, non-Hispanic	490,842	114,902	23.41	490,646	155,086	31.61
Black, non-Hispanic	38,734	12,561	32.43	37,460	14,127	37.71
Asian/Pacific Islander	11,117	1,116	10.04	18,804	1,426	7.58
Other	323	0	0.00	286	0	0.00
Hispanic	51,659	9,693	18.76	61,550	19,548	31.76
Total	592,675	138,272	23.33	608,746	190,187	31.24
2004-2006						
White, non-Hispanic	472,916	119,626	25.30	478,955	143,979	30.06
Black, non-Hispanic	54,555	18,919	34.68	44,712	12,612	28.21
Asian	28,072	2,928	10.43	28,182	7,603	26.98
Other	2,556	738	28.86	3,193	1,120	35.06
Hispanic	68,997	11,868	17.20	73,982	14,615	19.76
Total	627,095	154,079	24.57	629,023	179,928	28.60

Notes:CLD estimates from 2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files.

Estimates are based on wage and salary workers, ages 16 and over. Hispanics may be of any race.

Coverage rate is the percentage of workers (members or non-members) who are covered by union or employee association representation. Estimates are averages of the respective three-year period.

Table 7 Union Coverage Rates by Spanish Origin Group, 1987 - 2006, Long Island

	Employment	Coverage	Coverage Rate (%)
1987-1989			
Mexican	na	na	na
Puerto Rican	20,487	5,034	24.57
Cuban	na	na	na
Central/South American	19,547	5,024	25.70
Other	na	na	na
Total: All Hispanics	51,631	13,999	27.11
1997-1999			
Mexican	na	na	na
Puerto Rican	25,412	7,273	28.62
Cuban	na	na	na
Central/South American	67,310	17,743	26.36
Other	na	na	na
Total: All Hispanics	113,209	29,241	25.83
2004-2006			
Mexican	na	na	na
Puerto Rican	34,122	8,215	24.07
Cuban	na	na	na
Central/South American	94,967	14,717	15.50
Other	na	na	na
Total: All Hispanics	142,979	26,483	18.52

Notes: na = statistically significant estimate not available;inadequate subsample size.
CLD estimates from 2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files.
Estimates are for wage and salary workers, 16 and over. Hispanics may be of any race.
Coverage rate is the percentage of workers (members or non-members) who are covered by union or employee association representation.
Estimates are averages of the respective three-year period.

Table 8 Union Coverage Rates by Immigation and Citizenship Status, New York City and Long Island, 1997 to 2006

	1997-1999			2004-2006		
NEW YORK CITY	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate (%)**	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate (%)**
Native Born, Citizen	1,571,497	498,637	31.73	1,695,998	506,812	29.88
Foreign Born, Non-Citizen	806,264	156,966	19.47	732,117	129,938	17.75
Foreign Born, Citizen	509,348	175,186	34.39	757,389	260,531	34.40
Total	2,887,109	830,790	28.78	3,185,504	897,282	28.17

	1997-1999			2004-2006		
LONG ISLAND	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate (%)**	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate (%)**
Native Born, Citizen	1,038,884	291,609	28.07	1,027,754	290,995	28.31
Foreign Born, Non-Citizen	78,340	15,077	19.25	95,549	10,434	10.92
Foreign Born, Citizen	84,197	21,772	25.86	132,816	32,578	24.53
Total	1,201,421	328,458	27.34	1,880,692	561,961	29.88

Table 9 Union Coverage by Public and Private Employment Sectors, New York City and Long Island, 1987 to 2006

	Public Sector			Private Sector		
NEW YORK CITY	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**
1987-1989	486,530	382,174	78.55	2,155,182	597,946	27.74
1997-1999	478,695	348,280	72.76	2,408,414	482,510	20.03
2004-2006	486,582	364,947	75.00	2,698,921	532,335	19.72

	Public Sector			Private Sector		
LONG ISLAND	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**
1987-1989	225,916	152,045	67.30	958,465	173,760	18.13
1997-1999	236,862	178,813	75.49	964,559	149,645	15.51
2004-2006	272,652	199,303	73.10	983,467	134,705	13.70

Table 10 Public Sector Union Coverage, by Government Level, New York City and Long Island, 1987 to 2006

	NEW YORK CITY			LONG ISLAND		
	Employment	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**	**Employment**	**Coverage**	**Coverage Rate(%)**
1997-1999						
Federal	62,877	35,760	56.87	26,794	15,646	58.40
State	64,000	41,451	64.77	43,686	29,159	66.75
Local	351,819	271,069	77.05	166,382	134,008	80.54
Total	478,696	348,280	72.76	236,862	178,813	75.49
2004-2006						
Federal	59,522	33,444	56.19	31,222	19,964	63.94
State	72,785	51,596	70.89	47,198	33,480	70.94
Local	354,276	279,907	79.01	194,233	145,858	75.09
Total	486,582	364,947	75.00	272,652	199,303	73.10

Table 11 Union Coverage Rates in Major Industries, 1987-2006, New York City

Ranked by Size of Unionized Work Force in 2004-2006

	1987-1989			1997-1999			2004-2006		
INDUSTRY	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**
HEALTH	261,426	141,386	54.08	355,799	151,188	**42.49**	547,611	214,319	**39.14**
EDUCATION	190,586	123,743	64.93	248,245	146,764	**59.12**	278,531	155,889	**55.97**
TRANSPORT	183,466	111,503	60.78	184,436	90,953	**49.31**	201,046	102,890	**51.18**
PUBLIC ADMIN	136,955	100,444	73.34	129,726	87,691	**67.60**	145,827	96,205	**65.97**
FINANCE	366,091	69,501	18.98	351,661	57,872	**16.46**	344,012	68,102	**19.80**
CONSTRUCTION	115,236	52,437	45.50	114,056	40,480	**35.49**	171,943	47,299	**27.51**
RETAIL TRADE	313,963	48,723	15.52	419,265	38,115	**9.09**	306,055	37,916	**12.39**
MANF	344,544	112,537	32.66	275,002	57,812	**21.02**	156,674	26,957	**17.21**
WHOLESALE	76,299	19,883	26.06	89,434	11,472	**12.83**	62,617	8,508	**13.59**
UTILITIES	29,424	21,999	74.77	23,477	16,417	**69.93**	14,035	7,727	**55.05**

Table 12 Union Coverage Rates in Major Industries, 1987-2006, Long Island

Ranked by Size of Unionized Work Force in 2004-2006

	1987-1989			1997-1999			2004-2006		
INDUSTRY	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**
HEALTH	121,657	75,525	**62.08**	126,709	86,691	**68.42**	168,196	111,414	**66.24**
EDUCATION	64,392	40,456	**62.83**	73,721	54,387	**73.77**	69,211	48,453	**70.01**
TRANSPORT	76,557	46,773	**61.10**	76,914	37,451	**48.69**	75,396	38,813	**51.48**
PUBLIC ADMIN	93,542	31,227	**33.38**	140,463	34,155	**24.32**	170,425	38,328	**22.49**
FINANCE	68,730	30,314	**44.11**	58,862	24,300	**41.28**	77,326	23,627	**30.56**
CONSTRUCTION	179,419	24,990	**13.93**	176,348	20,612	**11.69**	142,778	14,168	**9.92**
RETAIL TRADE	187,017	27,995	**14.97**	133,354	19,443	**14.58**	111,783	11,406	**10.20**
MANF	13,707	6,965	**50.81**	18,725	11,782	**62.92**	8,754	5,738	**65.55**
WHOLESALE	130,857	5,405	**4.13**	113,053	5,144	**4.55**	105,697	5,468	**5.17**
UTILITIES	42,468	8,110	**19.10**	52,656	4,610	**8.75**	42,049	4,732	**11.25**

Table 13 Private Sector Union Coverage, by Industry, New York City

	1987-1989			1997-1999		
INDUSTRY	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate(%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate(%)**
EDUCATION	64,921	14,118	21.75	99,474	27,680	27.83
FINANCE	345,372	56,417	16.34	325,604	39,815	12.23
HEALTH	199,949	93,714	46.87	302,801	116,476	38.47
MANF	343,812	112,309	32.67	273,707	57,812	21.12
RETAIL TRADE	313,567	48,723	15.54	418,520	38,115	9.11
TRANSPORT	106,248	43,591	41.03	122,107	37,509	30.72
UTILITIES	18,496	12,320	66.61	12,957	8,989	69.37
WHOLESALE	76,299	19,883	26.06	89,119	11,472	12.87
CONSTRUCTION	109,891	48,987	44.58	109,587	36,224	33.06

Table 14 Private Sector Union Coverage, by Industry, Long Island

	1987-1989			1997-1999		
INDUSTRY	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**	**Employ.**	**Coverage**	**Rate (%)**
EDUCATION	19,329	3,821	19.77	27,160	7,440	27.39
FINANCE	127,838	3,996	3.13	112,025	4,888	4.36
HEALTH	72,211	18,670	25.85	119,309	20,295	17.01
MANF	187,017	27,995	14.97	133,070	19,443	14.61
RETAIL TRADE	179,070	24,990	13.96	176,048	20,312	11.54
TRANSPORT	54,705	28,148	51.45	60,310	23,061	38.24
UTILITIES	11,161	5,406	48.43	14,018	7,853	56.03
WHOLESALE	42,468	8,110	19.10	52,414	4,610	8.80
CONSTRUCTION	64,949	27,531	42.39	50,987	17,694	34.70

Appendix Table 1

Annual Union Membership Rates, US, New York City and Long Island, 1986-2006

	US	NYC	Long Island
1986	17.5	35.5	27.3
1987	17.0	34.5	26.8
1988	16.8	34.1	26.1
1989	16.4	34.4	26.2
1990	16.1	31.9	27.4
1991	16.1	33.0	28.0
1992	15.8	31.6	28.0
1993	15.8	33.2	28.3
1994	15.5	31.5	27.8
1995	14.9	30.5	25.5
1996	14.5	29.0	26.1
1997	14.1	28.7	25.2
1998	13.9	26.8	26.5
1999	13.9	26.6	27.0
2000	13.5	25.3	28.0
2001	13.5	27.7	27.7
2002	13.3	26.4	26.0
2003	12.9	24.6	25.8
2004	12.5	25.8	26.7
2005	12.5	28.4	25.7
2006	12.0	26.4	23.5

Source: CLD estimates from data in1986-2006 CPS Outgoing Rotation Group (ORG) Earnings Files (plotted in Figure 2 above).

Appendix Table 2

Survey of New York College Students, 2002: Attitudes Towards Unions

[**Question: "Do you mostly agree or disagree with each of the following statements?"]**

	Agree	Disagree
1. Unions usually improve the pay & jobs of union members	79.0%	21.0%
2. Unions are mostly good for the economy	67.9	32.1
3. Unions have too much power relative to business	44.2	55.8
4. Unions are no longer needed in today's global economy	26.4	73.2

Source: Survey of large first- and second-year introductory classes at a large private university conducted by Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy, 2002.See DeFreitas and Duffy (2004).

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

This study's empirical analysis was conducted on large microdata sets from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys. The CPS is a national survey conducted monthly on random samples of 50,000 to 65,000 households nationwide. Sampled households are interviewed once each month for four consecutive months. One year later, each of these "rotation groups" is again interviewed monthly for a final four consecutive months, before being released forever from the project. We adopted the now standard approach in the economic literature on unionization trends of exploiting the Outgoing Rotation Group files (CPS-ORG).[16]

Since 1983, the Census Bureau has asked the outgoing rotation group two questions about union representation. First, all wage and salary workers are asked:
"On this job is _____ a member of a labor union or employee association similar to a union?"

If the respondent answers "no" to this questions, he or she is then asked a follow-up question:
"On this job is _____ covered by a union or employee association contract?"

Consistent data files on all variables of interest are available for all the years 1986 through 2006. Even with its large national sample size (50,000 to 65,000 households interviewed each month, depending on the survey year), the CPS-ORG metro-level subsamples are not large enough for a single year to provide reliable statistical estimates on most narrowly defined demographic or economic subgroups. We followed the cautious approach of using single-year data sparingly for city-wide or metro-wide estimates of union membership and coverage densities (Figure 2). In order to produce statistically significant estimates for the rest of our tabulations, we pooled the CPS data into three-year groupings: a) 1987, 1988, 1989; b) 1997, 1998, 1999; and c) 2004, 2005, 2006. These specific year groupings were chosen to correspond to business cycle peaks. We are thereby able to make peak-to-peak comparisons that minimize possible confounding influences from cyclical variations.

The union question is only supposed to be asked of wage and salary employees; the self-employed and unpaid family workers are excluded. Agricultural workers are excluded from some research samples (see Hirsch 2001), but not from most BLS and academic work (including our own here) that focuses on recent decades. Small reporting errors about union status by respondents has been detected in past work by Farber (2001, p. 463).

For more details of the CPS sample selection, questionnaires, estimation procedures, and occupational and industrial classification changes, see US Bureau of the Census (2002, 2003) and Bowler, et al. (2003).

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NOTES

[1] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007b. Nearly half of all the country's union members are concentrated in just six states: New York, California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
[2] Hirsch, Macpherson and Vroman (2001). The 12 states with higher union density than New York in 1964 were: Michigan (44.8%), Washington (44.5%), Indiana (40.9%), Alaska (39.7%), New Jersey (39.4%), Oregon (38.9%), Pennsylvania (37.7%), Ohio (37.6%), Montana (37.4%), Minnesota (37%), West Virginia (36.5%), Illinois (35.6%).
[3] See, for example, Hirsch and Macpherson, 2002, 2003.
[4] Among recent studies, see for example: Bennett and Kaufman, 2001; Bronfenbrenner, *et al*., 2002; DeFreitas, 1993; Farber and Weston, 2001; Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Freeman and Rogers, 2006; Hirsch and Western, 2001; Kaufman, 2001; Kleiner, 1997; Lalonde and Meltzer, 1991; Schmidt and Zipperer, 2007.
[5] US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007a.
[6] See the international comparisons in DeFreitas, forthcoming.
[7] Hetter, 2001. Telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of 1511 persons, ages 18 and over, generated by Random Digit Dialing (to cover all possible phone numbers, listed and unlisted). Sample sizes were 600 in Queens and 911 in Long Island.
[8] Freeman and Medoff, 1984.
[9] See the case studies of youth in unionized low-wage jobs in Tannock, 2001.
[10] For example, in the 2001 nationwide AP poll cited above, women were actually more likely than men to express pro-union sympathies: 51 percent to 48 percent.
[11] Migration Policy Institute, 2004. For economic research of a national longitudinal survey that found similar unionization propensities among immigrant and native youth, see DeFreitas, 1993.
[12] See, for example, the accounts in DeFreitas, 2001; Delgado, 2000; and Milkman, 2001.
[13] Antonio Martinez, quoted in DeFreitas, 2006.
[14] On the Workplace Project, see Gordon, 2005.
[15] Greenhouse, 2006.
[16] See Hirsch and Macpherson, 2003.