Wage Advantage

Author: Barry T. Hirsch


Findings: The standard estimate of the average union premium (union vs. non-union wage gap) of 15% might be incorrect due to two forms of measurement that create an error bias in the data. One is match bias, which results from U.S. Census procedures that do not include union status as a match criterion. The second is misclassification of union status. These procedural errors lead to a downward bias, indicating that the average union premium could be as high as 24%.

Author: Daniel B. Klaff and Ronald G. Ehrenberg


Data Source: Survey conducted by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers 1997-1998

Findings: Investigates how union coverage affected staff salaries at 163 U.S. colleges and universities. The authors estimate a union salary premium of 9-11%, with variation from near zero for some of the 47 occupations in their sample to 13-16% for others, such as the skilled building trades. The union vs. non-union differential appears to be larger in two-year than in four-year institutions, but does not vary between the public and private sectors. Where faculty members are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, unionized staff members appear to enjoy an additional salary gain of 2-3%.
Author: David Blanchflower and Alex Bryson


Findings: This paper examines the impact of trade unions in the United States and the United Kingdom and elsewhere. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, despite declining membership numbers, unions are able to raise wages substantially over the equivalent non-union wage. Unions in other countries, such as Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and Spain, are also able to raise wages by significant amounts.

Author: Robert C. Johansson, Jay S. Coggins


Findings: The authors find a significant, positive effect of union density for both union and nonunion employees. This effect explains approximately one-third of the union vs. non-union wage differential.

Author: Barry T. Hirsch and Edward J. Schumacher


Findings: At the end of the century, the percentage of private wage and salary workers who were union members was less than 10%, not greatly different from union density prior to the passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. This paper examines the relationship between private sector union density and the wage premium.
Author: James Monks


Data Source: 1993 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty

Findings: Union representation significantly alters the returns to individual and institutional characteristics, and unionized faculty receive a premium of between 7% and 14%, an earnings differential that is substantially larger than those found in most earlier studies.

Author: C. Jeffrey Waddoups


Findings: A significant union presence in the Las Vegas hotel-casino industry juxtaposed to the near absence of union representation in the Reno area provides a unique setting to study union wage effects in the industry. Results of the analysis using state wage survey data indicate that after controlling for unobserved heterogeneity in the two locations, median wages in occupations in Las Vegas with substantial union coverage are 24% higher than wages in identical occupations in Reno.

Wages and Fringe Benefits

Author: John W. Budd and Karen Mumford


Data Source: 1998 British Workplace Employee Relations Survey

Findings: Unions have increased the availability of three policies designed to help workers balance the demands of work and family: parental leave, special paid leave, and job-sharing options. They did so both by negotiating for additional benefits and by providing workers with information about existing policies and assisting them in using those policies.
**Author:** Thomas C. Buchmueller, John Dinardo, and Robert G. Valletta


**Findings:** In general, union members are more likely to be offered and to be covered by employer-provided health insurance, more likely to receive retiree health benefits from their employer, more likely to be offered and to be covered by a pension plan, and more likely to receive dental insurance, long-term disability plans, paid sick leave, maternity leave, and paid vacation time.

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**Author:** Lawrence Mishel with Matthew Walters


**Findings:** Unions have a substantial impact on the compensation and work lives of both union and non-union workers. This report presents current data on unions' effect on wages, fringe benefits, total compensation, pay inequality, and workplace protections.

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**Author:** Gordon Cleveland, Morley Gunderson, and Douglas Hyatt


**Data Source:** Survey data for Canadian childcare workers in 1991

**Findings:** Although childcare labor was low-wage, the authors find that the union impact on wages (15%) and fringe benefits was in line with union effects found in other, better-compensated work, and they find substantial returns to education, occupational level, and firm-specific experience.
Authors: Vicky Lovell, Xue Song, and April Shaw


Data Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Findings: Workers in the retail food industry who are union members have significantly higher wages, higher rates of health insurance coverage, larger employment-based contributions to health insurance premiums, and higher rates of pension coverage than non-union workers. Full-time and part-time workers, women, and single mothers in the retail food industry all benefit from union membership.

Wage Distribution

Author: David Card, Thomas Lemieux, and W. Craig Riddell


Findings: This paper presents a comparative analysis of the link between unionization and wage inequality in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. The authors’ motivation is to see whether unionization can account for differences and trends in wage inequality in industrialized countries. Using comparable micro data for the last two decades, the authors found that unions have remarkably similar qualitative impacts in all three countries. In particular, unions tend to systematically reduce wage inequality among men. They also conclude that declines in union membership explains a substantial part of the growth in male wage inequality in the United States and the United Kingdom since the early 1980s.
Author: Dale L. Belman and Kristen A. Monaco


Findings: The earnings of truck drivers fell by 21% between 1973 and 1995. Union membership remains an important determinant of wages, with members earning 18% to 21% more than their non-union counterparts. The authors conclude that the primary sources of wage decline and increased wage inequality have been deregulation, a declining manufacturing wage and declining union membership.

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**Training**

Author: Alison L. Booth, Marco Francesconi, and Gylfi Zoega


Data Source: British Household Panel Survey 1991-96

Findings: Relative to non-covered workers, union-covered workers were more likely to receive training and also received more days of training. Among workers who received training, those with union coverage enjoyed greater returns to training and higher wage growth than did those without.

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**Labor Management Partnership**

Author: Eileen Appelbaum and Larry W. Hunter

Findings: This paper reviews workforce participation in strategic decisions - those that affect the basic direction of the company - when workforce interests are represented collectively through unions. The paper describes the prevalence of such partnerships in the United States, focusing on two institutions through which unions have engaged in discussion of strategic issues: negotiated union-management partnership agreements, and union representation on corporate boards. We offer detailed accounts of specific strategic partnerships and of union involvement on corporate boards, showing that unions face a range of challenges in constructing partnerships that extend possibilities for effective representations of workers' interests.

Author: Annette Bernhardt, Laura Dresser, and Joel Rogers


Findings: The WRTP is an association of 125 employers and unions dedicated to family-supporting jobs in a competitive business environment. WRTP members have stabilized manufacturing employment in the Milwaukee metro area, and contributed about 6,000 additional industrial jobs to it over the past five years. Among member firms, productivity is way up--exceeding productivity growth in nonmember firms. Once-stagnant wages are also up, and easily outpace wage growth outside the partnership. Individual firm commitment to training frontline workers is evident in direct training costs of some $20 million annually--an increase of almost that magnitude from prior levels. Direct training reaches some 6,000 workers (one-quarter of whom are people of color) each year. Because entry-level job requirements among member firms are known and broadly shared, moreover, the WRTP has been able to offer employment opportunities to those traditionally neglected in Milwaukee metro’s labor market.

Author: Susan L. Manring and Amanda Brailsford


Findings: The authors’ experience with a hospital food services group taught them the importance of going deeper into the hospital, beyond the experience of the internal customers, to affect the quality of working life and commitment to service excellence of hospital facilities personnel, through a strategic partnership
involving management, employees, and the union. Although building commitment to service excellence among nonmedical, unionized hospital facilities employees can be especially problematic, there is a growing need to do so.

Author: Saul A. Rubinstein


Data Source: Surveys, interviews, direct observation, and records of quality performance

Findings: The author examines the system of co-management created through the General Motors-United Auto Workers partnership at the Saturn Corporation. Under this partnership, each department, or module, is jointly managed by union-represented and non-represented advisors. The author credits the union with building a dense communications network throughout Saturn's management system. Compared to non-represented advisors, union advisors showed greater levels of lateral communication and coordination, which had a significant positive impact on quality performance. Also positively associated with quality outcomes at the module level were balanced time use, with each advisor engaging in both production and people management, and alignment between union-represented and non-represented advisors regarding their priorities, responsibilities, practices, and job definition.

Author: Gil Preuss


Findings: This report finds that union labor-management committees improve communication and ease the process of implementing new hospital practices in response to changing market demands.
The Benefits of Union Membership - Academic Literature Review with Non-Academic Source List

Author: Terry H. Wagar


Findings: This paper investigates the relationship between labor-management climate and perceptions of productivity, product/service quality, and customer/client satisfaction using a regional and national sample of Canadian organizations and a regional sample of local unions. Overall, the ordered probit results reveal a strong relationship between labor-management climate and measures of organizational performance with a more positive labor-management climate associated with more favorable scores on the performance variables.

Health Insurance

Author: Thomas C. Buchmueller, John Dinardo, and Robert G. Valletta


Data Source: Individual survey data spanning the years 1983-97 combined with employer survey data for 1993

Findings: The union effect on health insurance coverage rates has fallen somewhat but remains large, due to an increase over time in the union effect on employee "take-up" of offered insurance, and that declining rate of union membership explains 20-35% of the decline in employee health coverage. The increasing union take-up effect is linked to the effects of unions on employees' direct costs for health insurance and the availability of retiree coverage.

Author: Rudy Fichtenbaum and Paulette Olson


Findings: This study highlights the growing importance of including fringe benefits in estimating the impact of unions on the union vs. non-union total compensation differential.
Performance/ Service Quality

Author: John E. Baugher and J. Timmons Roberts


Findings: This study examines how workers cope with hazards at work and whether unions help workers cope more effectively with those hazards. Aside from supervisory or managerial authority, which is not available to most workers, we found that only one factor effectively moves workers who are in subordinate positions to actively cope with hazards; membership in an independent labor union. These findings suggest that union growth could indirectly reduce job stress by giving workers the voice to cope effectively with job hazards.

Author: Michael Ash and Jean Ann Seago


Findings: This study examines the relationship of a unionized nursing staff and the mortality rate for acute myocardial infarction (AMI), or heart attack, in acute-care hospitals in California. After controlling for patient and hospital characteristics, the authors find that hospitals with union nurses have 5.5% lower heart-attack mortality than do non-union hospitals.

Author: Jody Hoffer Gittell, Andrew Von Nordenflycht, and Thomas A. Kochan


Findings: The authors examine competing theoretical arguments regarding whether union representation, shared governance, wage levels, and two features of the quality of labor relations--workplace culture and conflict in negotiations--lead to better or worse outcomes for airlines. The authors conclude that efforts to recover from the current crisis in the airline industry that depend primarily on reductions in wages or union power will at best bring only short-term relief from immediate financial pressures. Sustained improvement in service quality and
financial performance will require more fundamental improvements in the quality of labor relations.

Author: Alan B. Krueger and Alexandre Mas


Findings: Labor strife in the Decatur, Illinois plant coincided closely with lower product quality, but the story is not simply that replacement workers made bad tires. Instead, defects peaked when strikers returned to the plant, and just before they went out on strike. Thus the paper provides new evidence on the impact of labor strife on the quality of production at the plant level, and suggests that workers provide more effort and due diligence if they feel that they are being treated better.

Unions and Discrimination

Author: Phanindra V. Wunnava and Noga O. Peled


Findings: The overall union wage premium is relatively stable, but there seems to be a convergence of union wage premiums across different demographic groups between 1980 and 1992. Nonwhite men show the largest gain, followed by white women, white men, and nonwhite women. One explanation for this convergence of union wage premiums might be the "equalization hypothesis" associated with unions. If union membership can explain a portion of the gender/racial wage gap, and women/nonwhites can obtain increased female/nonwhite union participation in highly unionized sectors that offer high union wage gains could, in time, greatly decrease the gender/racial wage differential.
**Author:** Martin Milkman


**Findings:** This paper estimates the union vs. non-union productivity differential for minority students attending public high schools. Education production functions are estimated for minority students attending schools where teachers are unions and for minority students attending nonunion schools using achievement scores as the measure of output and the individual student as the unit of observation. The union vs. non-union productivity differential is positive for minority students attending schools where the majority of students are minorities.

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**Safety Standards**

**Author:** Joan Greenbaum and David Kotelchuck


**Findings:** For more than a century the industrial sector was center stage for safety and health struggles. While industrial issues are still vital, the scope of conflict has broadened to include white-collar and service occupations, which now constitute the overwhelming majority of American workers. In many workplaces, the air quality may be as poor as—or worse than—it is outdoors. Unions are becoming increasingly aware of such issues, and the Health and Safety Committee of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York is taking an innovative approach to the problem with its "Got Air?" campaign.

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**Author:** David Weil


**Findings:** A comparison of OSHA enforcement in union and nonunion construction sites demonstrates that union sites face higher probabilities of inspection and receive greater scrutiny during inspections than do comparable nonunion sites.
**Unemployment Insurance**

**Author:** John W. Budd and Brian P. McCall


**Data Source:** January 1996 Current Population Survey's Displaced Worker Supplement, U.S. Census Bureau

**Findings:** Eligible blue-collar workers laid off from union jobs are approximately 23% more likely than comparable nonunion workers to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

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**Pension**

**Author:** Daniel Beland


**Findings:** Beland challenges Paul Pierson's account on the (supposedly declining) role of labor unions in the "new politics of the welfare state." More specifically, the text compares labor's influence on the French and the American politics of pension reform since the 1980s.
**Economic Development**

**Author:** Philip Mattera and Greg LeRoy


**Findings:** This study finds that, contrary to common belief, smart growth policies are good for construction jobs. The report provides evidence that smart growth can create more employment opportunities than sprawl for workers who build residential and commercial structures and transportation infrastructure.

**Author:** Greg LeRoy


**Data Source:** Interviews with 39 central labor council leaders and 11 state labor federation leaders

**Findings:** Labor federations have advocated for urban reinvestment or “smart growth” policies, including improving existing schools, expanding mass transit, rebuilding aging infrastructure, cleaning up brownfields, stopping factory shutdowns, and fighting “big box” retail projects.

**Author:** David Reynolds


**Findings:** As unions organize around new and higher public standards, as they break into the nation's workforce-development programs, as they join with efforts to promote smart growth, they not only gain access to important levers of power, they also link up with a wide range of grassroots allies. Indeed, economic development policy provides a natural arena within which labor, community, faith-based, environmental, low-income, and other groups can forge a new and bold vision of a better economy built around economic justice and sustainable practices. By attaching wage and other standards to employers that receive public funds, living-wage activism links two central dimensions of public policy: the use of public funds to promote business investment and the setting of public standards.
Author: Julian Gross, Greg LeRoy, and Madeline Janis-Aparicio


Findings: Unions are part of the coalitions being organized in major cities around the country to achieve baseline community benefits from publicly funded redevelopment projects.
Non-Academic Literature Review Source List

Wages and Benefits

“Local 226, the Culinary, Makes Las Vegas the Land of the Living Wage”
By Steven Greenhouse
The New York Times
June 3, 2004

“Las Vegas as a Workers’ Paradise”
By Harold Meyerson
The American Prospect
Vol. 15, Issue 1 – January 2004

“Unions a Powerful Force Lifting All Workers, Study Finds”
By Cynthia Green
Labor Research Association
October, 7 2003

“Working Systematically to Improve the Conditions of Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty; A Case Study of the Washington Federation of Teachers’ Public and Legislative Campaign”
By Craig Smith
Working USA
Vol. 6, Issue 4 – April 30, 2003

“Securing Pensions II”
By Damon Silvers
The American Prospect
Vol. 13, Issue 6 – March 2002

“Collective Bargaining May Be Losing Ground, but the Latest Research Shows that Unionized Workplaces Do Reduce Pay Injustices”
By David Walker
The Guardian
June 5, 2000
“The Battle over Workers' Compensation: For a Decade, Employers and Insurers Won Drastic Cuts in Coverage and Benefits. In Ohio, Labor Fought Back”
By James Ellenberger
*Working USA*
Vol. 3, Issue 3 – October 1999

“Yes, Union”
By Beth Shulman
*The American Prospect*

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**Productivity/Quality**

“Everyone Wins”
By Sandra Feldman
*The American Prospect*
Vol. 12, Issue 7 – April 2001

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**Training**

“Labor Rallies around Retraining; More Local Workers are Taking Advantage of Union Programs to Upgrade Skills”
By Ellen Ullman
*Crain's New York Business*
August 4, 2003

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**Unions, Racial Equality and Civil Rights**

“A Dream Deferred”
By Michael Honey
*The Nation*
Vol. 278, Issue 17 – May 3, 2004
“Let Freedom Roll”  
By Julie Quiroz-Martinez  
*The Nation*  

“The Indispensable Advocate”  
By Harold Meyerson  
*The American Prospect*  
Vol. 14, Issue 7 – July/August 2003

**Fair Trade/Union Label**

“They Make Sure You Can Reach for the Union Label”  
By Joyce Gannon  
*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*  
June 27, 2004

“As American as Apple Pie”  
By Jim Hightower  
*The Nation*  
Vol. 275, Issue 10 – September 30, 2002

**International Human and Economic Rights**

“The Coca-Cola Killings”  
By David Bacon  
*The American Prospect*  

“It’s the Real Thing: Murder”  
By Aram Roston  
*The Nation*  
September 3, 2001

“Labor and Protest in DC”  
Anonymous  
*The Nation*  
Vol. 270, Issue 17 – May 1, 2000
“Bringing Down Niketown”  
By David Moberg  
The Nation  
Vol. 268, Issue 21 – June 7, 1999

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**Environmentalism**

“Labor-Environmental Coalitions”  
By Fred Rose  
Working USA  
Vol. 6, Issue 4 – April 2003

“Teamsters and Turtles in (Temporary?) Tiff”  
The American Prospect  
Vol. 13, Issue 7 – April 8, 2002

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**Labor – Management Partnership**

“Labor-Management Partnerships Common Response to Industry’s Unique Circumstances”  
Daily Labor Reporter  
June 7, 2004

“Catholic Healthcare West, SEIU Agree on Statewide, Master Contract for 14,000”  
Daily Labor Reporter  
June 3, 2004

“Investment Seen Saving 600 Workers’ Jobs”  
Daily Labor Reporter  
May 25, 2004
“In Defense of Public Service; Union Strategy in Transition”
By Richard W. Hurd
*Working USA*

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**Economic Development**

“Economic Development for Whom? Labor Gets Involved in Massachusetts’ Economic Development”
By Mary Jo Connelly, Peter Knowlton, Pete Capano, and Harneen Chernow
*Working USA*

“Development for the People”
By Howard Padwa
*Labor Research Association*
June 15, 2001