

Worker Needs and Voice in the US and the UK

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Abstract

Workers have responded differently in the US and UK to declining union density. US workers have unfilled demand for unions whereas many UK workers free-ride at unionized workplaces. To explain this difference, we create a scalar measure of worker needs for representation and relate desire for unionism to this measure and to the choices that the US and UK labor relations systems offer workers. Our measure of needs has similar properties across countries and is the single most important determinant of worker desire for unions and collective representation. Conditional on needs, workers are more likely to want unions when management is favourable to them but also where management strongly opposes unionism.

Membership in trade unions has fallen in the US and UK, creating a potential gap between what workers want in representation and participation and the collective voice they get at their workplace. Workers have responded to declining unionization in the two countries differently. In the US a large proportion of non-union workers want union representation, which they cannot readily obtain. In the UK a large proportion of workers free ride at sites where employers recognize unions.

What explains the difference in worker responses to the decline of unionism in the two countries? Is it because workers have different needs for representation between the two countries or is it because the two countries offer different menus of options to meet those needs?

We use data from the US's Workplace Representation and Participation Survey (Freeman and Rogers, 1999) and the comparable British Workplace Representation and Participation Survey (Diamond and Freeman, 2002), and from the UK's Workplace Employment Relations Survey (Cully et al., 1999) to examine these questions.¹ We generate a single scalar variable – needs for representation – to measure the likely factors that lead workers to seek collective voice in both countries and examine its determinants and relation to the desire for union representation. We find that worker perceived needs for representation are similar and generate similar though not identical desires for union representation in the US and UK. The differences between worker desires for different forms of voice result largely from differences in the institutional choices given to workers and firms regarding employee voice rather than from differences in workplace problems or attitudes toward collective or individual solutions to problems.

Unionisation and worker attitudes

To begin with, union density has fallen in both countries. Density in the US fell steadily from the mid-1950s through the mid-2000s to reach 12.5% overall and 7.9% in the private sector in 2005 despite the organization of public sector workers in the 1960s (BLS, 2006). Density in the UK

¹ These data sets are described in Appendix A.

rose in the 1970s and then fell in the 1980s and 1990s, largely in the private sector, before stabilizing at 29% of all employees and 17% of employees in the private sector in 2004 (Grainger and Holt, 2005). Diverse surveys have found high levels of unfilled demand for unionism in the US. The standard measure of unfilled demand is the proportion of non-union workers who say that they would vote for a union in an NLRB representation election. The WRPS estimated that 32% of non-union workers in private sector workplaces with over 25 employees sought union representation but did not have it in 1994-95. Lipset and Meltz's Angus Reid survey reported that 16% of US workers would definitely vote union and that 32% would probably vote union, giving 48% support for unionism, in 1996.²

The best data for assessing trends in union attitudes in the US comes from Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which has used the same questions to poll workers about how they would vote in an NLRB election from 1993 to 2005. Figure 1 shows the proportions of non union workers who said they would definitely or probably vote for or against forming a union at their workplace in the Hart polls, supplemented with the responses from the comparable question in a 1984 Harris poll. The proportion of non-union workers who say they would vote for a union rises over the period, to exceed 50% in 2003 and 2005³. The upward trend runs against explanations of declining union density in terms of falling worker interest in unions.⁴

There is some evidence that workers at non-union sites want unionization in the UK as well. In the 1998 British Social Attitudes Survey, 15 per cent of non-union workers in non-union

² The unfilled demand for unionism in the US exceeds the comparably defined level in Canada and estimates of the desire for unions in other English-speaking countries. See Lipset and Meltz (2004) for Canada and Boxall, Freeman and Haynes (2006) for other countries

³ A 2005 Zogby poll (ref) reported a much lower rate of workers seeking unionism than the Hart survey, 38% would vote union,. This percent is below the 45% that Zogby reported wanting to join a union in 2004, but still higher than the WRPS estimate for 1995.

⁴ Farber and Krueger (1992) argued that falling interest in unions contributed to the 1980s decline in density. If desire for unionisation is constant over time, declines in union density should raise the proportion of non-organized workers who want unionism. Since the percentage of non-union workers saying they would vote for a union remained roughly constant over the period they examined, they attributed some of the decline to loss of interest in unions. The increase in unfilled demand for unionisation in the 1990s/through 2005 runs against this story.

workplaces said they would be ‘very likely’ to join, with a further 24 per cent saying ‘quite likely’.⁵ Similarly, the BWRPS asked non-union workers in non-union workplaces: ‘If a group of workers at your workplace formed a union and asked you to join, how likely is it that you would join that union?’ Sixteen per cent said it was ‘very likely’ they would join, while 30 per cent said ‘quite likely’. But BWRPS also shows that only 22% of workers at workplaces without union recognition thought the workplace would be better with unions, compared to 13% who thought it would be worse, and 66% who thought it would not affect anything. If we define British workers wanting a union as those who report that they are ‘very likely’ to join *and* who believe a union would make their workplace better, just 10% of non-union employees in non-union UK workplaces would be classified as wanting unionisation.

The end of the closed shop in the early 1990s gave British workers in unionised establishments the choice to join or not *within* unionised workplaces. Figure 2 shows that the proportion who chose to free ride increased massively from the 1980s to the 1990s. The WERS establishment data shows a doubling in the rate of free riding between 1980 and 1998. The British Social Attitudes Survey shows a large rise in the free riders rate from 1983-85 to 1999-2001. Shift-share analysis suggests that around 10 percentage points of the 12–13 percentage point decline in mean union density in unionised workplaces between 1990 and 1998 “can be attributed to a reduced propensity among employees to join trade unions, even when encouraged to do so [by management]” (Millward *et al.* 2000: 149–151).⁶ British trades unions refer to the problem of enlisting workers in organized workplaces as the “in-fill problem” since it involves them filling membership at sites where the employer recognizes the union and may even encourage workers to join. The free rider behaviour of UK workers contrasts to that of US workers in right to work

⁵ The BSAS question is: ‘If there were a trade union at your workplace, how likely or unlikely do you think you would be to join it?’

⁶ Asked for the main reason for declining union membership in their workplace during the 1990s, management respondents cite “a decline in employee support for their union” (Millward *et al.*, 2000: 92).

states, where workers can choose to free ride as well. In those states, approximately 90% join the union, and there is no upward trend in free riding.⁷

There has also been an increase in the rate at which UK employees have left union membership. This is partly a function of the declining availability of unions to employees, but the increased rate of exit is found among employees in the unionized sector. Using BSAS data for 1983-2002, we find that, conditional on ever having been a union member, the probability of being an ex-member was roughly constant through to 1993 at 15-17 per cent of the 'ever-member' pool. Since 1995 the figure has averaged 21-22 per cent.⁸

Determinants of What Workers Want: Workplace Needs or Problems

To understand why American workers have huge unfilled demand for unionism while British workers increasingly free ride at workplaces where the firm recognizes unions, we analyze how workplace problems affect worker desires for collective voice. We assume at the outset that labor problems arise naturally at all workplaces. Management make errors, workers and management differ in information and perspectives and disagree about the division of rewards. Some of the problems are collective in nature and thus may impel workers to look to unions or other employee groups for resolution; while other problems are individual, which affect workers singly and which are less likely to lead them to look for collective solutions.

Each of the micro-data sets that we examine asked employees about particular problems at their workplace and about their workplace's general climate. The WRPS and BWRPS also asked about the influence workers had and wanted in different workplace decisions, and the grades workers give to management in dealing with workplace issues. To compare the reported needs across different questions and surveys, we developed a NEEDS scalar measure, using a scale from 0 to 1. We coded responses to questions relating to needs for representation as 0/1 variables, where 0 means no problem/need and 1 means a problem/need. We then summed these measures to obtain

⁷ Based on CPS tabulations. We will update Farber and Western 2000.

⁸This effect remains statistically significant having controlled for the business cycle, demographic, job, and workplace characteristics. Full results are available on request.

the total number of needs and divided the sum by the total number of questions, to obtain the fraction of needs reported, relative to the maximum possible in the survey. This approach makes it relatively easy to compare the reported needs across the different questions and surveys.

We illustrate how we measure needs with the BWRPS. The influence questions asked how much influence workers wanted in an area and how much influence they had. We coded workers as having a problem when they said they wanted a lot of influence in an area and did not have it. British workers had problems in determining pay raises and perks and bonuses – traditional trade union domains (Diamond and Freeman, 2002). The grade question on the BWRPS asked workers to grade management with a school grade scale from A to F. We coded D or F grades as a 1 for problem or need. Few British workers give management D or F on understanding and knowledge of the business but many graded management poorly in granting pay increases, sharing authority, and making work interesting. On the questions that asked workers to identify unfair practices, the most common unfair practice was preferential treatment by management or senior staff; the second most common was payment of unfair wages; followed by unfair dismissal or discipline and bullying, while discrimination was the least cited problem. Thirty-nine percent of workers cited at least one unfair practice as being a problem at their current workplace. We counted responses to questions about general workplace climate, such as trust in management, security of employment, pleasantness of jobs, and employee management relations as a problem only when workers reported it as particularly bad.

In sum, we used twenty-six different BWRPS items to measure problems at workplaces. Because the survey had a split sample design, however, some items were asked of only half of respondents, so that we have observations for each individual on only 23 items. We then divided the number of needs by 23, so that the NEEDS variable can vary from zero (no problems reported) through 1.0 (worker reports problems for every item on the survey).

Following a similar strategy, we examined the WERS questions that related to problems/needs at the workplace. We took responses on 13 different questions, and gave them a

code of 1 if workers reported a problem or were dissatisfied with their situation and a code of 0 otherwise. We then summed the responses and divided by 13 to form a single scale of workplace needs. The WERS scale takes the value 0 when workers report no problems and 1 when they report the maximum number of problems.

Turning to the US, the WRPS asked employees about employee needs for representation or participation in terms of the influence workers had in workplace decisions and the influence they wanted in those decisions. The difference between the influence workers had and the influence they wanted is Freeman and Rogers' (1999) *representation and participation gap*. When workers said that they wanted "a lot" of influence in an area and also said that they did not have "a lot" of influence, we counted this as 1, indicating a need or problem in the area. The survey also asked about general workplace climate, trust in management, security of employment, pleasantness of jobs, and employee management relations, etc. We coded responses to each relevant question as 1 if the worker had a need or problem and 0 otherwise. Given the split sample design of the survey, each worker on the WRPS answered 13 (sometimes different) questions about needs. From these data, we constructed a needs measure that varied from zero (no needs) to 1 (all 13 items coded as 1 in terms of needs).

In sum, for all of our data sets we computed a new variable Workplace Needs, which we treat as the primitive factor likely to create desire for collective voice.⁹

The distribution of needs¹⁰

Figure 3 graphs the distribution of the Workplace Needs variables from the surveys. All of the distributions have the same shape with a mode in which workers report no needs/problems and with the proportion of workers reporting different numbers of needs declining nearly monotonically

⁹ An alternative approach is to use the full information in the distribution of responses in each question so that the additive scale weights responses according to how much of a problem something was. We made such calculations, using a simple scale with 1 to reflect the lowest possible response to problems/needs, 2 to reflect the next level, and so on. We then formed a summated rating of these responses. The resultant analysis parallels that in the paper.

¹⁰The precise questions and decision rule used to construct the summary measures are given in an Appendix available on request.

toward the high values. Panel A of the figure gives the results from the BWRPS: 23% of workers reported no needs or problems; 54% reported problems on less than three of the items, while just 23% reported problems on three or more items. As a result of the concentration, 10% of workers accounted for 52% of all the reported problems. Panel B of the figure gives the results from the WERS survey. It shows a comparable bunching of responses at zero followed by a declining proportion reporting higher numbers. Finally, Panel C gives results from the US WRPS. Again, the distribution shows a substantial bunching of needs at 0 and a declining number of needs thereafter, tailing off with a small proportion of workers reporting many needs. Thirty-two percent of workers report no problems; 74% report problems on less than three items. Each of the panels gives the mean and variance for the scalar measure of needs. Expressed as fractions of total needs, the means and standard deviations of needs are similar across WRPS and BWRPS with needs a little higher in WERS (means and standard deviations are as follows: WRPS .134 and .15; BWRPS .156 and .17; WERS .211 and .24).

These distributions diverge from the distribution of needs/problems that would be generated by a binomial distribution, in which a worker had an independent random chance of reporting a problem on an item, at the average rate reported in the sample. If that were the case, there would only be a small mass at zero needs/problems, and the distribution would look more or less normal around the average rate. The variance of the distribution would be $(1-P)P$, where P is the fraction of responses that reported a workplace need. Instead, the distribution is shaped like a power law or exponential.¹¹ The reason the distribution takes on the non-normal shape is simple: the needs of workers on different items are not independent. Knowing that a worker reports needs on a particular item gives information about their likelihood of reporting needs on other items.

¹¹ We regressed \ln (the % reporting number of needs) on the number of needs to fit an exponential distribution and regressed \ln (the % reporting number of needs) on \ln (the number of needs) to fit a power law. The exponential fits the BWRPS and WRPS better than a power law, whereas the power law fits better for the WERS.

There are two possible reasons for the non-independence of the reports of needs. One possibility is that it reflects workers' personal characteristics. A given worker may see more problems or get into more problems than others. In this case, the individual nature of needs is unlikely to translate into a collective response. The other possibility is that the non-independence reflects attributes of the workplace, which most workers would report. A given workplace would generate lots of problems while another would not. In this case, when a worker reports many needs, they are reporting what others would also report, which is likely to translate into a general desire for representation at a workplace.

The BWRPS and WRPS surveys of individuals do not allow us to identify the individual component of needs, since they do not follow workers from one workplace to another, nor to identify the workplace component of needs, since they do not identify workers at the same workplace. But the sampling design of the 1998 WERS allows us to identify the workplace component, because it surveyed up to 25 employees at each of the covered workplaces. Where the workplace had 25 or fewer workers, all employees were selected. In larger workplaces 25 workers were drawn randomly for the employee survey. The result is a data file that contains reports by different workers on the same workplace – the information necessary to identify a fixed workplace effect in the needs variable.

Needs at the same workplace

To identify a workplace effect, we created a data file that gave the number of needs reported by 25,451 employees at 1759 workplaces – giving us an average of 14.5 worker reports on needs per workplace. We tabulated the average number of needs for each of 1759 workplaces and ranked the workplaces by average needs. This tabulation shows that workplaces in the upper ten percent of the distribution of needs averaged 6.23 needs on the WERS scale from 0 to 13 – giving it a needs scale measure of 0.48 ; whereas workplaces in the lower ten percent of the distribution of needs

averaged 0.74 needs for a scalar measure of 0.06.¹² Such wide variation by workplace makes a prima facie case that the differing labor situations at workplaces are a key factor for worker reports of problems or needs. We also examined the correlation of the measures of workplace needs between each individual and the average value for their workplace and obtained a highly significant 0.43. Finally, we compared variance in needs explained by individuals' demographic and job characteristics with the variance explained in models containing workplace fixed effects (Table 1). The R2 in models containing only workplace fixed effects is around 0.2, whereas the R2 in models containing individual and job characteristics only is around 0.1. When the two are combined the R2 rises to around 0.25 and the workplace fixed effects remain jointly highly significant.

These data thus show that workers at a given workplace report sufficiently similar numbers of needs to identify “good” and “bad” workplaces, which in turn suggests that workers who reports lots of needs are likely to seek some form of representation to redress workplace problems.

Determinants of needs

In addition to workplace factors, the demographic and economic characteristics of workers affect the number of needs that they report. To analyze these patterns, we estimated regression equations linking needs to characteristics, union membership, and selected management human resource policies in the US WRPS and UK BWRPS. Table 2 gives the regression coefficients and t-statistics for estimates of the effect of human resource management policies and management attitudes toward unions for all workers (columns 1-2), for non-union members (column 3-4) and for union members (column 5-6). The regression models include an extensive set of control variables as listed in the notes to the table.¹³

The coefficients on variables in table 2 for the two countries are qualitatively similar, suggesting that the same labor policies affect workers in the same manner, albeit with different

¹² Alternatively, needs averaged 1.25 at the 10th percentile and 5.09 at the 90th percentile.

¹³ The control variables show that the strongest relations are for workplace factors. The number of workers in an organization and workplace are positively correlated with needs. In addition, workers with greater job tenure have higher needs than newer employees, that white collar workers have fewer needs, while most other factors have modest effects on needs.

magnitudes. Consider first the coefficients on union members in columns 1 and 2 show that union members report more needs than non-members, potentially because unions seek out problems for resolution, through the voice mechanism (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). The next set of variables reflect human resource management policies measured as dichotomous variables: either the firm has them or it does not. Firms with policies reduce the number of needs substantially. Among the policies, an open door management system has a massive impact on needs, followed by the presence of worker committees – employee involvement committees in the US and joint consultative committees in the UK. Most of the other policy measures also reduce the number of needs, though the presence of grievance procedures in the UK raises the number of needs. The coefficients on these variables in columns 3-6 for non-union members and members show that the policies have generally similar effects for the two groups.¹⁴

The coefficients on the variables management opposed to unions and management favorable to unions show the impact of those attitudes, as reported by workers, compared to the reference group, where the worker judges management as indifferent or with policies the respondent does not know. Management opposition to unionism is associated with more needs, suggesting that this stance may reflect a harsh policy toward worker concerns. By contrast, management in favour of unions has a negative but non-significant effect on needs in the US and a substantial negative effect in the UK. The regressions for non-members and members in columns 3-6 show that the reduction in needs in UK firms where managements are favorable to unions occurs solely in organized workplaces.

Because the regressions are sufficiently similar in the two countries, we ran a regression for the pooled country data. In this pooled regression the dummy variable on the US is negative and significant for all workers, and for non-members and members. The implication is that conditional on all other factors, the major difference between the US and UK is that American workers have lower needs.

¹⁴ The exceptions are profit-related pay, which has a negative effect on non-members but a positive effect on members, and grievance procedures for the US which is negative for nonmembers but positive for members.

Determinants of What Workers Want: Institutions On Offer

The second part of our analysis links worker desire for unions/other forms of collective voice to the voice options available to workers. Firms affect what is available by offering non union channels of voice and by responding positively or negatively to worker efforts to form unions or other independent organizations. Unions affect what is available by delivering services to members at organized workplaces and by organizing campaigns. The state affects what is available by legal enactment and enforcement of labor laws. Our analysis takes the institutions on offer from employers, unions, and the state as exogenous, though a complete model of a labor relations system would treat the decisions of employers, unions, and the state to offer those choices as endogenous. We begin by considering the attributes of institutions that workers want to deal with their problems and then turn to their preferences among the institutions on offer.

Workplace institutions to solve problems

WRPS and BWRPS asked workers several questions about the types of workplace organizations they wanted to deal with problems. They asked if workers wanted groups of workers for support on workplace issues or if they preferred to deal with problems on their own; and each asked about the relation they wanted any worker-based organization to have with management. The surveys came up with similar findings. Most workers wanted some form of organization that dealt with collective goods problems at workplaces; and most wanted worker-based organizations that work cooperatively with management as opposed to those involved in continual conflict with management

Table 3 presents the evidence for these conclusions. Panel A shows that a majority of both US and UK workers prefer collective solutions for problems likely to affect the entire work force: benefits and health and safety issues in the US case; and salary and workplace conditions in the UK case. By contrast, a majority of workers in both countries prefer to deal with career development issues by themselves: training in the US case and training and promotion in the UK case. Where

the US and UK workers differ is in how they want to deal with problems of protection against bad treatment at the workplace. US workers prefer to deal with unfair treatment or harassment by themselves, possibly because US employment law provides considerable legal rights to workers who face discrimination at the workplace, while UK workers prefer to have the help of fellow employees with these sorts of problems.

Panel B shows that workers in both countries want any worker organization to receive management cooperation. The majority of US employees would choose a workplace organization with no power but with which management cooperates to an organization with power but which management opposes. The reason is that the majority believe that an employee organization cannot be effective without cooperation. Similarly, UK workers prefer an organization that “work(s) with management to improve the workplace and working conditions” to an organization that declares its main function as “defend(ing) workers against unfair treatment by management.” They prefer this even though most union members regard defending workers against unfair treatment to be one of the principal goals of their union (Bryson, 2005).¹⁵

Given that workers in the US and UK report similar needs/problems at their workplaces and have similar preferences for dealing with workplace needs with the help of employees and through worker organizations that have cooperative relations with management, why have US workers such a large unfilled demand for unions while UK workers increasingly free ride at workplaces with recognized unions?

We consider next three factors likely to affect the differential response of US and UK workers to falling unionization and then examine how these factors affect worker choices in our data sets.

Difference in Management Policies toward Unions and Voice

¹⁵One reason for the desire for cooperative relations is that the number of workplace problems falls when management and unions work cooperatively (Bryson and Freeman, 2006).

Since union premiums shift profits from shareholders to workers, it is natural for firms to seek to oppose unionism and to offer voice solutions that may substitute for unions.

Management opposition to unionisation is stronger in the US than in the UK. For the US, the WRPS finds that 53% of managers in non-union firms say they would oppose efforts by employees to unionise, 27% said they wouldn't care, and 15% said they would welcome the effort (Freeman and Rogers, 1999). Many labor-management consulting firms specialize in helping business maintain a "union-free environment" (Logan, 2002). By contrast, in the UK, most employers are neutral towards unions: 65% of non-unionised private sector employers in WERS 1998 expressed neutrality about union membership among its employees, 30% expressed opposition and 5% were favourable (Bryson, et al., 2004).¹⁶ An obvious reason for this difference in management attitudes is that the US union wage premium is among the highest in the world, whereas the UK premium is modest (see below).

At the same time management in both countries have developed positive labor relations in the form of modern human resource programs that arguably could substitute for unionism. A priori, it would seem that Section 8(a)(2) of the US 's National Labor Relations Act, which outlaws company sponsored systems of collective voice in the belief that such organizations are company unions designed to undermine workers setting up their own organization, would limit management ability to develop such substitutes (LeRoy, 2006), while the UK's historically voluntaristic labour-management system would make it easier to develop alternatives to unionism.

Differences in the Legal Choice Set

The UK and the US offer workers and management different choice sets for worker representation and participation. The UK offers a range of workplace institutions to which it has added works councils under the EU Social Charter. Lay representatives deliver union services at workplaces; and managerial employees as well as those without supervisory roles often join

¹⁶Managers were asked: 'How would you describe management's general attitude towards trade union membership among employees at this establishment? Is management...in favour of trade union membership, not in favour of it, or neutral about it?'

unions.¹⁷ At the end of the 1980s the Conservative government removed legal protections from the closed shop, which as noted allowed for the large increase in free riding. At the end of the 1990s, the Labour government introduced elections for union status when firms refused to recognize employees seeking union status, but this has been used infrequently.

The US's National Labor Relations Act offers a narrower range of choices for workers in the private sector. In principle US law protects minority unionism, but the de facto choice has been a dichotomy between a collective bargaining majority union and no worker organization. By posing the choice of workplace labor institutions as 0/1 union/no union, the US system stokes employer opposition to unionism and encourages firms to develop policies for individual voice, but not for collective voice.

Differences in Union Effectiveness

Another potential reason for the differing attitude of US and UK workers is that union effectiveness differs. The higher union wage premium in the US than in the UK (Blanchflower and Bryson, 2003, 2004) suggests that unions are more effective in delivering “monopoly” gains to members in the US. Whereas the US union wage differential remains one of the highest in the world, WERS data suggests that UK unions' efficacy has declined over the past two decades or so. Even where unions are recognised by employers for negotiation purposes, collective bargaining coverage has declined (Millward et al., 2000: 159-167), leading some commentators to the ‘inescapable conclusion that workplace trade unions no longer negotiate to any significant extent on behalf of their members’ (Terry, 2004: 205).¹⁸ The workers in our surveys give results consistent with these findings. In the WRPS data, 31% of US union members report that they are very satisfied with union bargaining over wages and benefits, while in the BWRPS, just 11% of union

¹⁷ In 2004 17% of managers and senior officials were unionised. See www.dti.gov.uk/er/emar/tradeunion_membership2004.pdf

¹⁸ On the other hand, time-series data show that a fairly constant two-thirds of unionised employees believe that ‘unions do their job well’ over the period 1983-2001 (Bryson and Gomez, 2002).

members give their union a high grade for ‘winning fair pay increases and bonuses’.¹⁹ But delivering on wages and benefits is not the sole purpose of unions. The WRPS shows that while 90% of union workers said that they would vote for the union in an NLRB election (Freeman and Rogers, 1999), only 30% of members thought unions were ‘very effective’ in resolving group problems or concerns, while a further 53% thought they were ‘somewhat effective’. Thirty-five percent of union members rated their union high in choosing local leaders democratically compared to 17% who rated their union low. Still, these figures compare favourably for unions to those in the UK. In the BWRPS UK workers gave unions a mixed rating, giving them lower grades than management in making workplaces better in some areas (Diamond and Freeman, 2002). Only 17% rated their union high in being open and accountable to its members and only 15% rated their union high in sharing information. The structural features of unions (high density, on-site union representatives etc.) that are associated with perceptions of high union effectiveness are not widespread throughout the union sector (Bryson, 2005).²⁰ In short, the evidence and responses of workers to questions about union effectiveness suggest that US unions are more effective than UK unions in delivering benefits to members and in accountability to them.²¹ Because workers in non-unionized workplaces will have limited or no knowledge of union effectiveness in unionized sites neither the WRPS nor the BWRPS ask workers in non-union workplaces about their assessment of the effectiveness unions, so we cannot analyze the desires of workers for unions in non-union workplaces. We are only able to examine the relation between perceived effectiveness of unions and preferences for union representation among workers in unionised workplaces.

¹⁹ The BWRPS asked British workers to grade their union on various dimensions; we coded A as high and D/F as low. The US survey asked if workers were very satisfied, satisfied, not too satisfied or not at all satisfied in an area; we coded very satisfied as high and not too or not satisfied as low.

²⁰ Supporting the notion that some of the problems faced by UK unions are associated with their lack of efficacy, Bryson and Freeman (2006) find that perceived union effectiveness is associated with fewer expressed needs and that workers are more likely to choose unions when they believe unions “make a difference to what it is like to work here” and “take notice of members’ problems and complaints”.

²¹ Consistent with this, the positive coefficient of unionism on number of needs reported in columns 1 and 2 of table 2 is larger in the UK than in the US.

Where US unions have been ineffective is in allocating resources to organizing and the effectiveness of organizing activities. One problem facing unionism is that organizing in the US has become extremely expensive, as unions and management pour resources into NLRB election campaigns. Farber and Western (2001) and Freeman and Rogers (1999) estimate that unions would have to devote the bulk of their budgets just to organize enough workers to maintain their present density with current organizing techniques and effectiveness. It is only outside the standard collective bargaining framework that unions have managed to enlist members at low cost. In summer 2005 the AFL-CIO initiated an organizing drive that tested whether what people were saying on surveys truly meant they would join a union. The AFL-CIO sent organizers into ten cities to ask people to join a non-collective bargaining AFL-CIO affiliate, WorkingAmerica (www.workingamerica.org). The organizers signed up 1,200,000 members by early 2006. And where US unions have had some success in organizing collective bargaining units, it has occurred outside of the NLRB process.²²

But UK unions do not seem to be any more effective in organizing workers. Unions face serious financial difficulties, partly due to declining density, but also to other factors (Willman and Bryson, 2005). The weakness in organizing is illustrated by BWRPS evidence that over hfficons63t over hed2.5(ba)

private excludable goods to workers to induce them to join (Bryson, 2006).

Workers' Choice of Workplace Institution

We examine workers' choice of institutions in the US and UK using questions about their preferences for unions and for electing representatives to committees/works councils to meet with management

The WRPS asked US workers whether they would vote for a union in a representation election; and whether they favored electing representatives to a joint committee that would meet with management to discuss workplace issues. We combined the responses to these questions to obtain the proportion of non-union workers who favored both options, one of the options, or neither. Panel A of table 4 shows that 35% of workers chose elected representatives only; 22% chose representatives and a union; 9% chose a union only, while the remaining 34% choose neither. Summing the proportion who chose either union only or an elected representative and a union gives us 31% reporting that they would vote union.

The BWRPS asked non union workers if they would join a union at their workplace, if the workplace would be better off with a union, and it asked union members if unions were worth the dues they charged. Sixteen percent of non-union workers said they would be very likely to join a union at their workplace if one was formed, and an additional 30% said they were quite likely to join. But just 19% of non union workers said the workplace would be a lot or a little better with a union.²³ To obtain a composite estimate of the proportion of non union workers who wanted a union comparable to the US figures, we took those who said they were very or quite likely to join **and** who also said the union would make a difference at their work place. This gives a proportion wanting to unionize of 9%. The BWRPS also asked workers if they wanted a works council and if they preferred to elect representatives to the council. We combined the responses to these questions

²³ And just 29% of members said their membership represented 'good value for money'.

to obtain the proportion of non-union workers who favored both options (union and elected representatives to a council), one of the options only, or neither option. Using this categorization, panel A shows that 8% of UK non-union workers wanted an elected works council representative and a union – a substantially smaller proportion than that choosing the similar option in the US - and that just 1% wanted a union only compared to 9% of US non-union workers. Instead, UK workers were more likely than US workers to choose the ‘elected representative only’ option or neither option.

Panel B displays the proportion of workers in unionized settings in the US and UK who prefer non union status. For the UK this is the proportion of workers who report that there is a union at their workplace that they could join but that they have not joined – free riders. The 35% in the BWRPS is slightly below the estimates from the BSAS and WERS given in Figure 2. For the US the proportion is defined as the proportion of union members who said they would vote to remove the union.

In short, while there are some similarities between the preferences of US and UK non union workers in preferences among voice institutions, there are also noticeable differences. Three times as many US non-union workers are favorably inclined to unions than is the case among non-union workers in the UK: UK workers are more inclined than US workers to settle for a works councils. The proportion of workers in unionized workplaces who free ride in the UK exceeds the proportion of unionized workers who would get rid of their local union if they could.

Determinants of Choices

We posit that workers’ preferences among the voice options depend on worker needs and the options that management, unions, and the legal system offer. We examine the factors that determine worker desire for unions in three stages. First, we estimate non-union worker preference for unions in a linear regression model. Second, we estimate a multinomial logit model for the choice among the tripartite option of a stronger worker organization, a weaker organization, or the

weakest form of collective voice, as described in table 4. Third, we estimate a linear model for the choice of workers to reject unions in an organized workplace.

Table 5 gives the regression coefficients and t-statistics for the estimated effects of specified factors on the desire for union representation among non union workers in the WRPS and BWRPS data sets. Columns 1-3 record the coefficients and t statistics for the effect of our scale measure of worker needs, management opposition or support for unions, individual HRM policies in the upper panel and a count of HRM policies in the lower panel. Columns 4-6 give the coefficients on the management attitudes and HRM policies with the scalar measure of needs removed from the regression. The column 1-3 regressions show that the dominant factor underlying worker desires for unionism is the need for representation, as reflected in our scalar measure. The coefficient on needs is similar in the UK and US. In addition, in both countries, management opposition to unions is positively related to the desire for unions, as is management favoring unions, relative to the reference group of neutral management. This implies a surprising U-shaped curve between management opposition and worker desire for unions.

The most plausible interpretation of the U-shaped relation between preference for a union and management opposition is that strong management opposition to unionism is correlated with a tough policy toward workers. If this interpretation is correct, we would expect to find a substantial interaction between the measure of worker needs and management opposition: workers with many needs and facing management opposition ought to be driving the statistical result. To test this, we divided the sample between workers with a high, medium and low needs and estimated separate equations for the three groups. We split the sample roughly into thirds of the needs distribution (low needs being fraction needs $<.05$; medium needs $=.05 <.15$ and high needs $=>=.15$). Management opposition raised the desire for unionism among workers with many needs (though the effect is imprecisely estimated for the USA) but had no effect among those with fewer needs. (See Appendix B).

The regressions also show that positive management labor relations policies reduce worker desire for unionism and are thus can be viewed as substitutes for unionism. The coefficients on the various measures of positive labor relations are almost uniformly negative in the US and of similar modest statistical significance, but are much weaker in the UK. As a succinct way to summarize their effects, we have added the measures of HRM policies together into a count variable, which varies from 0 to 6. The results given at the bottom of table 5 show that there is a substantial substitution between these policies and desire for unionism in the US but not in the UK. When we examined workers with high, medium and low needs separately, the number of HRM policies had a substantial negative effect on the desire for unionism among workers with high needs but no effect on those with medium or low needs (Appendix B).

Finally, the regressions in columns 4-6, which exclude our measure of needs, shows larger and more statistically significant coefficients on management opposition and HRM policies than in the column 1-3 regressions. This reflects the fact that, as shown in table 2, opposition is associated with higher needs while HRM policies reduce needs. From this perspective, needs are a critical intervening variable through which government policies operate.

We also estimated our model on the WERS data file, using a different dependent variable (Appendix C). The WERS asked whether workers wanted unions to represent them for pay, grievance procedures, and making a complaint. We measured the desire for union representation on a 0 to 3 scale, depending on how many times a worker said they wanted representation.²⁴ As in table 5, we found that the needs variable had a great impact on workers wanting union representation, even in a fixed effects analysis that controlled for the workplace. The WERS regressions show a positive relation between management communication policies and the desire for unions, while management support or opposition to unions gives the same U shaped relation that we found in the WRPS and BWRPS.

²⁴ WERS asks workers to identify who they thought best represented them in relation to getting pay increases, making a complaint about working here, and if management wanted to discipline the worker, with 'trade union' being one of four pre-coded options.

Turning to the wider set of options in the WRPS and BWRPS shown in table 4, we used a multinomial logit model to examine the factors that determine preferences among three options: a union (the first two rows of table 4), a committee or council with elected representatives but no union, and a relatively weak organization or none at all. The results for this analysis are given in table 6. The base group for the analysis is the option of rejecting both works councils/joint committees with elected representatives and unions so that the coefficients give the impact of factors on the other groups compared to no collective voice. Thus, if having a union is the strongest form of representation for workers, followed by having a works council/committee with elected representatives then factors that are associated with the desire for strong representation should have coefficients that increase in value as we move from the neither option toward greater representation. The results show that the measure of needs raises the desire for stronger worker organization, that management attitudes have a U-shaped effect on the desire for a stronger organization, and that HRM policies (measured again by the count variable of the number of policies) move workers against stronger organizations toward organizations with moderate independence.

What about the choice of workers in organized work places to free ride or otherwise reject unions? Table 7 estimates the desire for unions in the USA for workers in unionized workplaces. Column 1 presents results for all workers, column 2 is confined to non-members and columns 3 and 4 relate to members only. Needs are not significant in any of the estimates, perhaps reflecting offsetting effects that unions have in meeting needs, on the one hand, and in generating needs through voice, on the other. Members and non-members were asked to rate the union's effectiveness on an ordinal scale. Desire for the union is greater among those perceiving the union as 'very effective', particularly among non-members, indicating that unions' performance can influence non-members' preparedness to join. However, the effects are not strong. For members only WRPS collected information on satisfaction with the union. We constructed a seven point scale, with workers scoring '1' each time they said they were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied with

the union.²⁵ Desire for the union rose with satisfaction, the effects being much stronger than those for union effectiveness. Finally, perceived attitudes of management to the union had different effects on members' and non-members' desire for unions. Management being in favour of unions increased non-members' desire for unions whereas management opposition increased members' desire. HR substitutes for unions were not significant, with the exception of performance-related pay which lowered non-member desire for unions and increased members' desire.

On the basis of the preceding findings, we would expect that in unionised workplaces workers with greater needs would be less likely to free ride in the UK. Table 8 estimates the factors that lead British workers to free ride on a union at their workplace. It shows that the needs/problems that workers feel is the key determinant of their desire to free ride: workers with more needs are less likely to free ride. Communication/involvement policies at the workplace have no effect on the likelihood of free riding. Since this sample is limited to workers at unionised workplaces, we have information about worker perceptions of the effectiveness of unions that was not available in analyses of workers in non-union workplaces.²⁶ The regression shows that workers are less likely to free ride when they see the union as relatively effective. Finally, they are sensitive to management attitudes towards unionization, being more inclined to unionize where management is perceived as favourable. Because of the small number (28) of US union workers in the WRPS who said they would vote against their union, the comparable regression for the US (not reported in the table) gave insignificant results on all factors save for the effectiveness of the union, which reduced the probability of voting against the union.

Conclusions

²⁵ The items related to choosing local leaders, choosing national leaders, bargaining about wages and benefits, endorsements of candidates in political campaigns, union positions on national political issues and personal experience with the union (the last one being a 'very good' to 'very bad' scale).

²⁶ The variable is an additive scale running from zero to eight with a point scored every time the worker rates the union A or B on eight dimensions, namely: winning fair pay increases, understanding and knowledge of the employers' business, being open and accountable to members, sharing information they have about the employer, promoting equal opportunities, working with management to increase quality or productivity, making work interesting and enjoyable, protecting workers against unfair treatment.

This paper has compared the preferences of workers in the US and UK for unions and other forms of employee voice in a period of declining union density. It shows that US workers have a high and seemingly increasing unfilled demand for unionism while a growing proportion of UK workers have chosen to free ride at unionized work places. The key factor determining worker desire for unions or other forms of collective voice in both countries is the number of needs or problems that workers report. Using the responses of multiple workers at the same workplace, we show that needs has a significant workplace component, but that even within the same workplace, workers who report greater needs/problems are more likely to favor unions. The different choices on offer in the two countries appear to affect the different responses of UK and US workers to fairly similar workplace needs/problems. The dichotomous choice between collective bargaining and no representation in the US produces greater unfilled demand for unions than does the wider choice of voice institutions in the UK, which allows many to take the free rider option.

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Table 1: Tests of the impact of workplace on worker needs

	Workplace dummies + constant	Demographic and job characteristics + constant	Demographic and job characteristics + workplace dummies + constant
<i>r-sq, weighted model</i>	.203	.107	.256
<i>r-sq unweighted model</i>	.194	.089	.241
<i>F-test for workplace dummies in unweighted model</i>	f(1758,23692)=3.24 P>f=0.0000	NA	f(1758,23647)=2.68 p>f=0.0000

Notes:

N=25,451, 1,759 workplaces.

Regressors in columns 2 and 3: female, union member, age (6 dummies), ethnicity, health problem, married or living as married, academic qualifications (6 dummies), vocational qualifications, occupation (9 dummies), tenure (4 dummies), hours (5 dummies), gender segregation on the job (5 dummies), banded gross weekly wages (11 dummies), permanent contract.

Table 2: Regression estimates of determinants of needs (measured as scalar variable from 0 to 1) in the USA and UK, by membership status

	<i>All workers</i>		<i>Non-members</i>		<i>Members</i>	
	<i>USA</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>UK</i>
Member	0.025	0.061	-	-	-	-
	(2.33)*	(5.49)**	-	-	-	-
Management attitudes to union (ref.: neutral)						
Opposed	0.045	0.094	0.043	0.088	0.050	0.122
	(6.63)**	(7.66)**	(6.10)**	(6.60)**	(2.00)*	(4.37)**
In favour	-0.014	-0.040	-0.009	0.018	-0.012	-0.079
	(0.92)	(3.49)**	(0.50)	(1.13)	(0.31)	(4.52)**
Substitutes:						
Open door	-0.103	-0.059	-0.102	-0.060	-0.119	-0.048
	(12.34)**	(6.45)**	(11.35)**	(5.47)**	(4.67)**	(2.76)**
Committee	-0.038	-0.033	-0.041	-0.019	-0.023	-0.058
	(5.81)**	(3.51)**	(5.89)**	(1.77)	(1.09)	(3.16)**
Profit-related pay	-0.010	-0.017	-0.017	-0.021	0.029	0.002
	(1.33)	(1.56)	(2.23)*	(1.67)	(1.03)	(0.09)
ESOP	-0.018	-0.008	-0.016	-0.019	-0.033	-0.024
	(2.22)*	(0.52)	(1.82)	(0.94)	(1.29)	(0.82)
Performance pay	-0.016	-0.018	-0.013	-0.023	-0.047	-0.010
	(2.18)*	(1.64)	(1.64)	(1.86)	(1.74)	(0.45)
HR department	0.006	-0.000	0.003	-0.004	0.018	-0.001
	(0.81)	(0.01)	(0.37)	(0.29)	(0.67)	(0.06)
Grievance Procedure	-0.011	0.021	-0.016	0.019	0.024	0.020
	(1.50)	(2.17)*	(2.00)*	(1.52)	(0.89)	(1.12)
Constant	0.220	0.218	0.227	0.204	0.121	0.260
	(9.47)**	(6.26)**	(9.08)**	(4.92)**	(1.41)	(3.89)**
Observations	2049	1355	1767	889	282	466
R-squared	0.20	0.24	0.20	0.18	0.31	0.36

Notes: all models contain the following controls – male, age (5 dummies), ethnicity, marital status, any children, education (4 dummies), hours worked (3 dummies), tenure with employer (4 dummies), occupation (8 dummies), if supervisor, banded earnings (12 dummies), organization with 1000+ employees, workplace size (5 dummies), industry (9 dummies)

Table 3: Worker Preferences for Dealing With Workplace Problems

Panel A: Percent who prefer to solve problems:		
	with help of fellow employees	by self
<i>Terms and conditions</i>		
US: Benefits	66	33
Health and safety	53	36
UK: Negotiating salary	57	43
Negotiating conditions	60	40
<i>Career progression & development</i>		
US: Training	44	54
UK: Training/skill development	47	53
Promotion issues	35	65
<i>Protection</i>		
US: Unfair treatment	39	59
Harassment	34	65
UK: Sex/racial discrimination	67	33
Bullying	62	38
Panel B: % who:		
US:		
Want organization with no power but management cooperation		63
Want more power but management opposes		22
Do not prefer either/don't know		15
US:		
Believes organization effective only if management cooperates		73
Can be effective without management cooperation		17
Don't know		9
UK:		
Want organization to work with management to improve the workplace and working conditions		74
Want organization to defend workers against unfair treatment by management		23
Don't know		3

Sources: US - WRPS; UK - BWRPS

Table 4: Percent of Non-members Favouring Different Voice Options in the US and the UK

	USA	UK
Panel A: Preferences of Non union workers inferred from separate questions on unionism and elected representatives:		
Elected rep + Union	22	8
Union only	9	1
Elected Rep Only	35	48
Neither/Don't know	34	43
Panel B: Preferences of Union Workers		
Free rider in organized workplaces/would vote against union	9	35

Notes: column percentages. Sources: WRPS and BWRPS. See text for construction of variables. Unweighted Ns for non-union workers: USA=1,715; UK=692. Panel B base for USA is members in unionized workplaces, unweighted N=276. Panel B base for UK is all workers in a workplace with a union they are eligible to join, unweighted N=663.

Table 5: Regression Estimates of Preference for Unions among Non-Members

	With Needs:			Excluding Needs:		
	Pooled	USA	UK	Pooled	USA	UK
USA	0.249			0.238		
	(10.34)**			(9.64)**		
Scalar Measure of Needs	0.660	0.677	0.529			
	(11.10)**	(8.59)**	(7.03)**			
Management attitudes to union (ref.: neutral)						
Opposed	0.060	0.057	0.103	0.096	0.084	0.156
	(3.20)**	(2.41)*	(3.59)**	(5.02)**	(3.51)**	(5.45)**
In favour	0.256	0.344	0.062	0.255	0.336	0.073
	(6.04)**	(5.91)**	(1.24)	(5.86)**	(5.65)**	(1.41)
Substitutes:						
Open door	-0.031	-0.043	-0.006	-0.090	-0.117	-0.032
	(1.44)	(1.39)	(0.24)	(4.13)**	(3.85)**	(1.26)
Committee	-0.004	-0.011	0.004	-0.026	-0.039	-0.003
	(0.25)	(0.49)	(0.18)	(1.44)	(1.66)	(0.13)
Profit-related pay	-0.020	-0.018	-0.024	-0.029	-0.030	-0.031
	(1.02)	(0.72)	(0.87)	(1.46)	(1.15)	(1.09)
ESOPs	-0.050	-0.041	-0.025	-0.061	-0.052	-0.036
	(2.12)*	(1.48)	(0.52)	(2.52)*	(1.83)	(0.70)
Performance-related pay	-0.003	-0.022	0.045	-0.016	-0.032	0.026
	(0.17)	(0.87)	(1.70)	(0.81)	(1.23)	(0.94)
HR department	-0.053	-0.056	-0.018	-0.050	-0.052	-0.011
	(2.55)*	(2.15)*	(0.58)	(2.33)*	(1.98)*	(0.35)
Grievance procedure	0.005	-0.006	-0.029	0.001	-0.017	-0.024
	(0.27)	(0.23)	(1.06)	(0.05)	(0.63)	(0.82)
Constant	-0.078	0.198	-0.105	0.072	0.359	-0.007
	(1.18)	(2.34)*	(1.13)	(1.08)	(4.25)**	(0.07)
Observations	2365	1715	650	2365	1715	650
R-squared	0.20	0.18	0.22	0.16	0.15	0.16
	With Needs:			Excluding Needs:		
	Pooled	USA	Pooled	USA	Pooled	USA
USA	0.234			0.222		
	(10.22)**			(9.46)**		
Fraction Needs	0.658	0.675	0.521			
	(11.31)**	(8.82)**	(7.03)**			
Management attitudes to union (ref.: neutral)						
Opposed	0.059	0.056	0.102	0.096	0.084	0.157
	(3.15)**	(2.37)*	(3.59)**	(5.03)**	(3.50)**	(5.52)**
In favour	0.260	0.349	0.064	0.259	0.340	0.075
	(6.14)**	(6.02)**	(1.29)	(5.96)**	(5.73)**	(1.44)
Count of substitutes	-0.024	-0.028	-0.014	-0.040	-0.049	-0.021
	(3.29)**	(3.09)**	(1.39)	(5.60)**	(5.50)**	(1.94)
Constant	-0.078	0.183	-0.111	0.052	0.314	-0.019
	(1.20)	(2.24)*	(1.21)	(0.79)	(3.83)**	(0.20)
Observations	2365	1715	650	2365	1715	650
R-squared	0.20	0.18	0.22	0.16	0.15	0.16

Note: the bottom half of the table replaces the separate union substitutes with a count of substitutes (0,6) with a score of '1' given every time the employee says one of the substitutes is present at the workplace. Performance-related pay is not added to the count but is contained in the controls. See notes to Table 2 for controls.

Table 6: Multinomial logit estimates of the references of non-members for different forms of collective voice in US and UK

	Pooled		USA		UK	
	union	WC with elec reps	union	WC with elec reps	union	WC with elec reps
Fraction needs	4.605	1.376	4.163	1.332	6.686	1.602
	(10.27)**	(3.40)**	(7.88)**	(2.56)*	(6.07)**	(2.30)*
Management attitudes to unions (ref.: neutral/dk)						
Opposed	0.586	0.256	0.548	0.405	1.420	-0.105
	(4.13)**	(2.27)*	(3.54)**	(3.01)**	(3.25)**	(0.43)
In favour	1.704	0.262	2.027	0.559	0.798	-0.286
	(5.62)**	(0.90)	(5.00)**	(1.26)	(0.98)	(0.68)
Count of HRM substitutes	-0.142	0.023	-0.175	-0.018	-0.197	0.113
	(2.64)**	(0.53)	(2.94)**	(0.34)	(1.11)	(1.29)
USA	1.707	-0.300				
	(8.40)**	(2.23)*				
Constant	-3.368	-0.527	-1.311	-0.856	-25.287	-0.546
	(6.47)**	(1.37)	(2.41)*	(1.82)	(.)	(0.71)
Observations	2365	2365	1715	1715	650	650

Notes: see Table 2 for list of controls. Reference category for dependent variable: weak/no collective voice

Table 7: Regression Estimates of Desire for Union Among Workers in Unionized Workplaces, USA

	(1) All	(2) Non-members	(3) Members	(4) Members
member	0.483			
	(10.48)**			
Needs	0.147	0.171	-0.007	0.121
	(1.10)	(0.50)	(0.05)	(1.03)
Union effectiveness (ref.: don't know)				
Very effective	0.205	0.314	0.207	
	(2.48)*	(2.40)*	(1.29)	
Somewhat effective	0.085	0.157	0.143	
	(1.11)	(1.43)	(0.91)	
Not too effective	0.029	0.115	0.006	
	(0.33)	(0.85)	(0.04)	
Not effective at all	0.054	0.258	0.030	
	(0.49)	(1.36)	(0.15)	
Count of membership satisfaction with union (ref.: zero)				
1				0.199
				(2.04)*
2				0.333
				(3.56)**
3				0.529
				(6.09)**
4				0.462
				(5.52)**
5				0.578
				(6.83)**
6				0.583
				(7.36)**
Management attitudes to union (ref.: neutral)				
Opposed	0.092	0.070	0.074	0.093
	(2.00)*	(0.74)	(1.46)	(2.11)*
In favour	0.207	0.262	0.061	0.073
	(3.20)**	(2.19)*	(0.79)	(1.08)
Count of HRM substitutes	-0.013	-0.058	0.011	-0.006
	(0.80)	(1.65)	(0.65)	(0.37)
perfpay	-0.028	-0.215	0.068	0.092
	(0.58)	(2.26)*	(1.32)	(1.99)*
Constant	0.345	0.581	0.630	0.364
	(2.13)*	(1.50)	(2.74)**	(2.26)*
Observations	445	163	282	282
R-squared	0.46	0.54	0.26	0.42

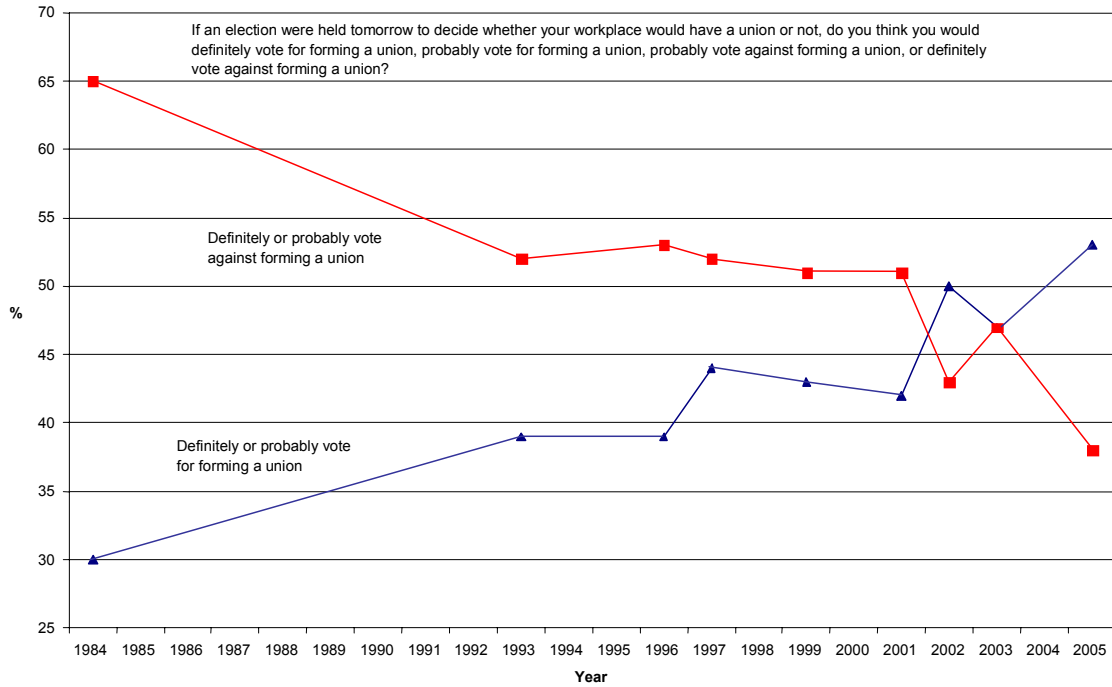
Note: WRPS, controls as per Table 2.

Table 8: Regression estimates of the propensity to free-ride among UK workers

Needs	-0.533 (4.87)**
Count for union effectiveness	-0.040 (5.99)**
Management attitudes to union (ref.: neutral/dk)	
Opposed	0.008 (0.13)
In favour	-0.104 (2.77)**
Count of union substitutes	-0.014 (0.97)
Constant	0.861 (5.86)**
Observations	663
R-squared	0.30

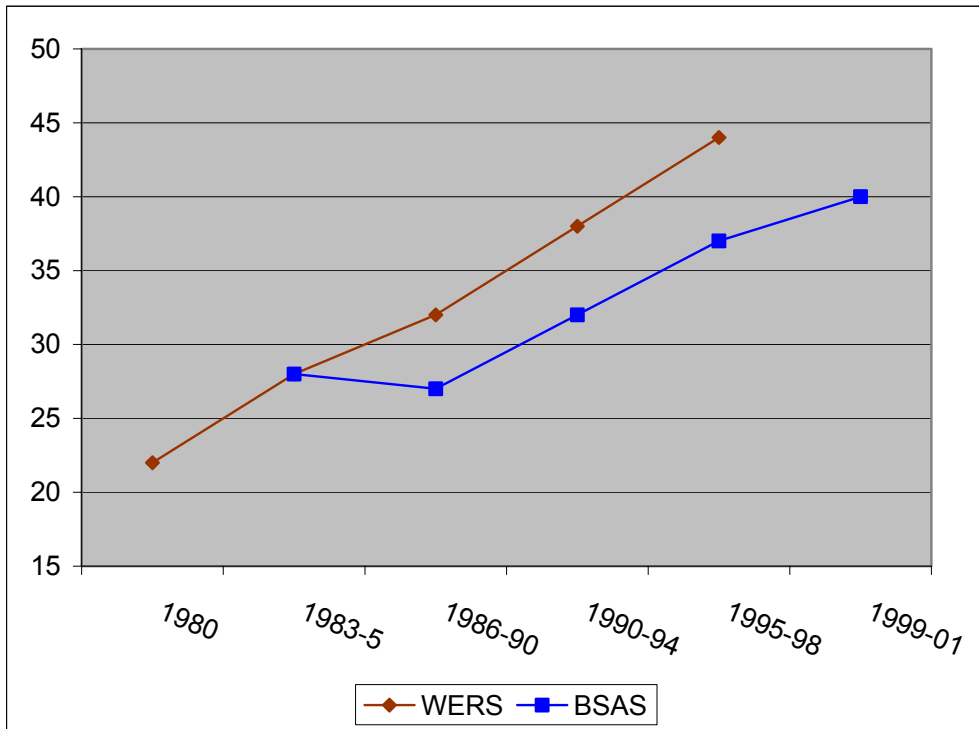
Note: Dependent variable is union non-membership among workers eligible to join the trade union at their workplace. Controls as per Table 2

Figure 1
Non-union Worker Likely Vote in Union Representation Election,
Peter Hart Surveys, 1984-2005



Source: Hart Research Associates, various polls, except 1984. Those year's data are from Harris, on a slightly differently worded question: "If an election were held tomorrow to decide whether your workplace would be unionized or not, do you think you would definitely vote for a union, probably vote for a union, probably vote against a union, or definitely vote against a union?"

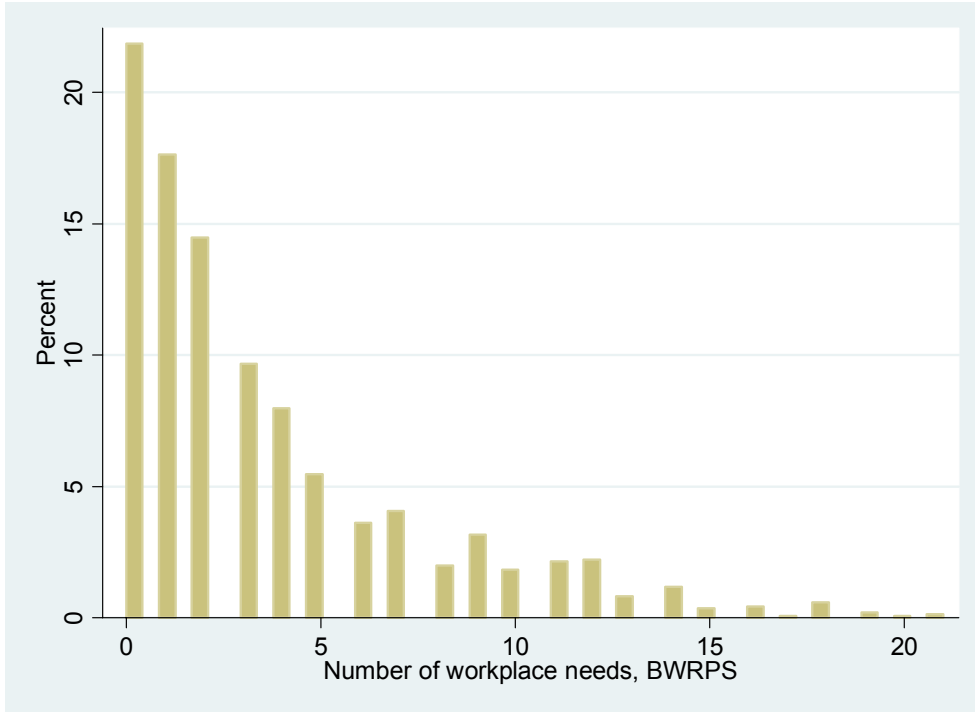
Figure 2
% Non-members in Unionized Workplaces in Britain, 1980-2001



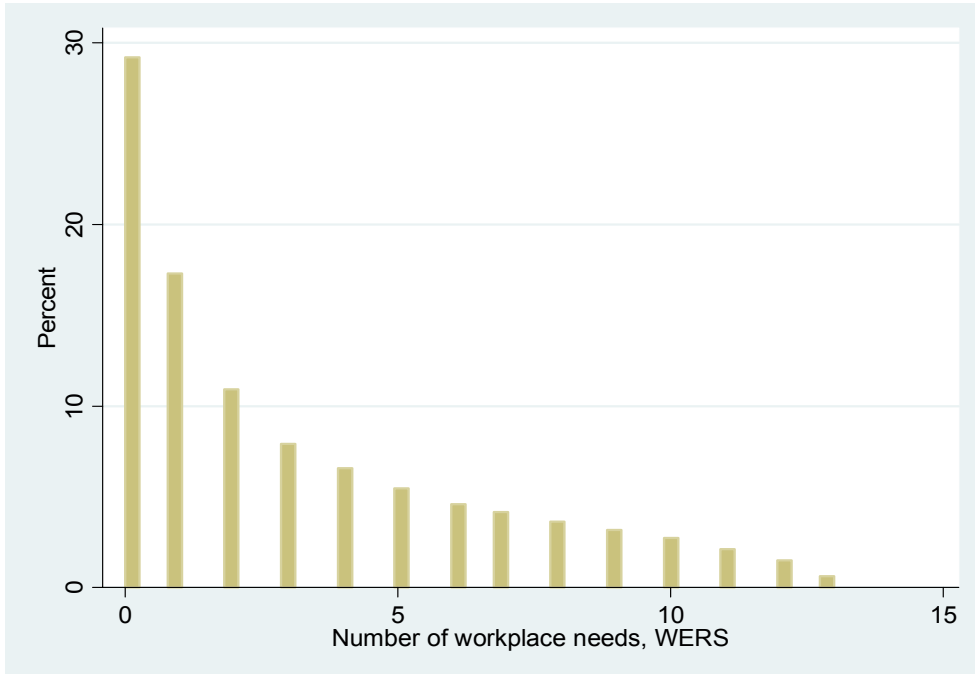
Notes: WERS data adapted from Millward et al. (2000: 142). Establishments with 25+ employees where one or more unions recognized for pay bargaining and where number of members reported. Figures based on surveys in 1980 (full-time employees only), 1984, 1990 and 1998 with linear extrapolation between those points. BSAS adapted from Bryson and Gomez (2005, Table 8). Employees working 10+ hours per week. Figures based on surveys in all years between 1983 and 2001 except 1988 and 1992.

Figure 3
Distribution of Workplace Needs

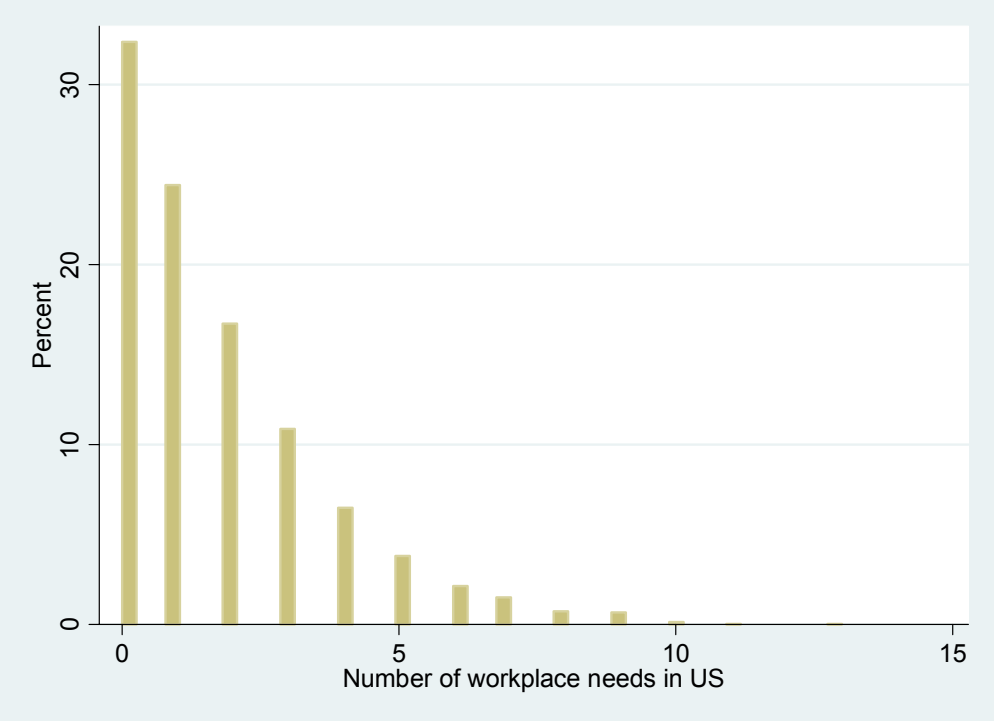
Panel A: BWRPS needs (mean = 3.58; variance = 15.72)



Panel B: WERS needs (mean = 3.08; variance = 11.39)



Panel C: WRPS needs (mean = 1.74; variance = 3.69)



Appendix A: The Data sets

UK: The Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998

The Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998 (WERS98) is a nationally representative survey of workplaces with 10 or more employees covering all sectors of the economy except agriculture. The analyses use two elements of the survey. The first is the management interview, conducted face-to-face with the most senior workplace manager responsible for employee relations. Interviews were conducted in 2191 workplaces with a response rate of 80 per cent. The second element is the survey of employees within workplaces where a management interview was obtained. Self-completion questionnaires were distributed to a simple random sample of 25 employees (or all employees in workplaces with 10-24) in the 1880 cases where management permitted it.²⁷ Of the 44,283 questionnaires distributed, 28,237 (64 per cent) usable ones were returned.²⁸

UK: British Worker Representation and Participation Survey (BWRPS) 2001

The BWRPS was conducted as part of the monthly BMRB Access Omnibus survey. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) techniques. In total, some 3614 interviews were conducted as part of the Omnibus survey. Of these 1,355 people were eligible to take part in the BWRPS. The weighting schema used in this analysis ensures that demographic profiles match those for all employees in Great Britain aged 15 or over.

US: Worker Representation and Participation Survey (WRPS) 1994-1995

The WRPS was based on telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 2,408 adults, 18 and over, who were employed in private companies or nonprofit organizations in the continental US with 25 or more employees.

US: Peter Hart Opinion Poll Data

Peter D. Hart Research Associates has conducted random telephone calls for the AFL-CIO on worker attitudes toward unions and economic issues. It has used the same question about voting for a union in all of its surveys, which gives it the best time series of worker preferences available.

²⁷ The probability of worker selection is the product of the probability of the workplace being selected and the probability of an employee being selected from within that workplace.

²⁸ The weighting scheme compensates for sample non-response bias detected in the employee survey (Airey *et al.*, 1999: 91-92).

Appendix B: desire for unionization among non-members with high, medium and low needs

	High needs			Mid needs			Low needs		
	pool	USA	UK	pool	USA	UK	pool	USA	UK
Count of substitutes	-0.050	-0.062	-0.039	-0.020	-0.020	-0.040	-0.010	-0.010	0.004
	(3.72)**	(4.04)**	(1.29)	(1.33)	(1.01)	(1.91)	(1.03)	(0.74)	(0.31)
Management attitudes to union (ref: neutral/DK)									
manopposed	0.120	0.068	0.307	0.033	0.045	-0.002	0.020	0.040	-0.020
	(3.33)**	(1.60)	(3.98)**	(0.90)	(0.92)	(0.03)	(0.78)	(1.17)	(0.54)
manfav	0.293	0.318	0.182	0.172	0.282	0.026	0.238	0.301	0.083
	(3.10)**	(2.71)**	(1.06)	(1.83)	(2.07)*	(0.25)	(4.87)**	(4.12)**	(1.68)
USA	0.251			0.197			0.175		
	(5.45)**			(4.49)**			(5.63)**		
Constant	0.068	0.407	-0.048	0.108	0.336	0.082	0.020	0.199	-0.071
	(0.57)	(2.92)**	(0.18)	(0.79)	(1.95)	(0.42)	(0.22)	(1.59)	(0.70)
Observations	922	734	188	578	413	165	865	568	297
R-squared	0.16	0.16	0.30	0.19	0.19	0.40	0.21	0.22	0.15

Appendix C: desire for union representation (0,3) among non-members in non-unionised workplaces, WERS, linear estimation

	(1)	(2) Fixed effects
Needs	0.245	0.193
	(3.08)**	(2.24)*
Count of HR policies	0.052	
	(3.32)**	
Count of variable pay schemes	-0.028	
	(1.40)	
Management attitudes to union (ref: neutral)		
manfav	0.242	0.120
	(4.61)**	(2.25)*
manopp	0.047	0.078
	(0.92)	(1.43)
Man DK	-0.194	0.014
	(0.57)	(0.05)
Constant	0.417	0.941
	(3.23)**	(8.17)**
Observations	5482	5708
R-squared	0.09	0.28

Notes: (1) controls common to both models: female, age (6 dummies), ethnicity, health problems, marital status, qualifications (7 dummies), occupation (9 dummies), workplace tenure (4 dummies), hours (5 dummies), gender segregation in the job at the workplace (5 dummies), banded wages (11 dummies), permanent contract. Additional controls in model (1) which excludes fixed effects: region (11 dummies), local area unemployment, establishment size, independent single establishment, industry (12 dummies), workplace age, foreign owned, % female no part-timers, no ethnic minorities. (2) The count of HR policies runs from 0 to 6 with a point scored every time the following are present: regular meetings between senior management and the whole workforce; team briefings involving two-way communication; quality circles; grievance procedure; joint consultative committee; HR specialist. The count of variable pay schemes runs from 0 to 4 with a point scored every time the following are present: profit-related pay, ESOPs, performance-related pay, cash bonuses.