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# SHIFTING LABOR IDENTITIES:

# CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CLASS-BASED TRADE UNIONS IN POST-FRANCO SPAIN.

**by**

**Felipe Pimentel**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy, The City University of New York.**

**2003**

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**Abstract**

SHIFTING LABOR IDENTITIES: CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CLASS-BASED TRADE UNIONS IN POST-FRANCO SPAIN.

by

Felipe Pimentel

Advisor: Professor William Kornblum

This study focuses on the process of organizational consolidation of the two larger Spanish trade unions during the 1980s and early 1990s; a period of membership decline and crisis for the labor movement in most advanced capitalist societies. The core of the thesis is based on a survey of 269 workplace-level union representatives from the *Union General de Trabajadores* (General Workers' Confederation) and *Comisiones Obreras* (Workers' Commissions). In addition, I use a variety of data sources, including in-depth interviews with informants, union documents and fieldwork notes. Like other European wage earners' organizations Spain's trade unions have faced complex political, economic and cultural challenges. Questions such as the changing ties between political parties and unions, the restructuring of European industrial relations under increasing globalization, the management of political and economic uncertainties through neo-corporatist social pacts and the sociological transformation of wage earners' organizations are some of the issues that I analyze in the dissertation. This research links macro and micro levels of analysis by examining national socio-political processes from the perspective of the workplace. I contend that the process of institutionalization of politically subordinated trade unions has been linked to the ideological redefinition of class-based organizations, which are constructing a new identity that seems to reflect their ongoing adaptation *vis-à-vis* the kind of post-industrial society that Spain has become. Though the main focus of the research is on this country, I do analyze some macro processes from a comparative perspective framing this case study within its European context.

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Undoubtedly, I owe my greatest intellectual debt to the late Robert R. Alford who read most of the draft of this dissertation and who was my principal advisor until his death in February 2003. He wanted to be there the day of the defense but that was not possible. The truth is that Bob believed in me more than I did. He was tremendously patient and encouraging until the end. I want to dedicate this work to his memory and to the memory of Joseph Bensman, who taught me about the significance of Max Weber's political sociology.

After Bob's departure I was fortunate to receive the generous support of Bill Kornblum, who became the chair of the dissertation committee. Thanks to his kindness and friendship, along with the commitment of other committee members (Stanley Aronowitz, José Casanova and Juan Flores), I could proceed to defend the thesis as I had planned.

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## Preface

I visited Spain for the first time in the Spring of 1975, a few months before the ending of Franco's regime. I arrived in *Barcelona* in the middle of a wave of strikes that had erupted as part of popular democratic movements that challenged the authoritarian regime at its last hour. While walking through a street named at that time *La Via Layetana* I passed in front of the regional headquarter of the official *Sindicatos Verticales*. A relatively large crowd of workers had gathered there and they were waiting a signal from their leaders to start their strike protest. At that time, workers did not have that right and the *guardias civiles* charged against them. I was unaware of the seriousness of the situation and I did not run away. What happened next is something that I won't ever forget. A *guardia civil* grasped me from behind and began to beat me with his *porra*. After a while, surrounded by all the confusion, I was able to scream and tell this official that I was a tourist and that I was not part of the protest. Thus, he let me go.

After that episode I visited Spain several times and I became better acquainted with the political and cultural transformations that were taking place. At the end of the 1980s I went back to carry out my dissertation research on a subject somehow related to the episode I described above.

My study focuses on the two major trade unions, the *Union General de Trabajadores (UGT)* and the *Confederación de Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.). It covers a recent historical period during which these unions have sought to consolidate their respective organizational structures after a long dictatorship (1939-1975) that excluded the free representation of labor from civil society.

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This dissertation builds up on a previous research done by Robert Fishman in the early 1980s. His book *Working Class Organization and the Return to Democracy in Spain* states that the Spanish labor movement was successful in achieving its "political goals", the consolidation of Spain's new democracy, but it could not fully consolidate itself as an organized institutional actor. Interrelated (macro and micro) political and economic factors, according to Fishman, constrained strategies and choices for the emergent labor organizations in post-Franco Spain. During the period known as the "democratic transition" trade unions did not build enough organizational resources at the level of the workplace to become effective representatives of wage earners' interests. Fishman's study focused on what he defines as the workers' plant-leaders in firms located in Madrid and Barcelona. Workers had elected this group of workplace-level leaders as their representatives to the works councils *(comités de empresas)*. In a different political and economic context, I did carry out a similar survey in medium-sized and large workplaces in the Madrid region in 1990. In my questionnaire I included some of the same questions that Fishman had asked before. In chapter four, five and six of this work I discuss my findings, making comparisons between my data and Fishman's findings.

Given that I had completed my fieldwork over a decade ago, I decided to up-date a great deal of my original work. This dissertation goes beyond the original time period on which I was focusing (1982-1990) when I completed the collection of the data analyzed. Many things have changed in Spain since 1990 and I have tried to address some of those changes in the dissertation.

In chapter one I discuss specific political and socioeconomic dynamics that unfolded between 1996 and 2000, a period in which a center-right government

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has been in power. To understand trade unions' current dilemmas one need to examine this phase, in which unions have returned to a policy of social pacts and national agreements after refusing to sign them during the last years of the Socialist government. In addition, the economy improved significantly during the second part of the 1990s and the country, that is part of the Euro zone, achieved most of the convergence criteria expected by the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

In Chapter one I also examine the process of socioeconomic and cultural change that has transformed Spain since the 1960s. During the last decade of Franco's dictatorship the country experienced rapid and profound changes; industrial modernization, growth of the services sector and transformation of traditional agriculture all happened simultaneously. Regarding the class structure; a new middle class emerged as did a new working class largely made up of people of rural origins. As I show in the chapter, during the period 1960-90 the tendency was to identify less with the traditional working class and more with the new middle class. These sociological changes had a significant impact on trade unions' strategies and on their discourses. In a certain way, increasing problems of unions' representativeness are closely related to those structural transformations. At the end of the chapter I examine recent processes of Europeanization and economic restructuring and how Spain has become what Castells (1996) calls a "postmodern informational society." These are relevant questions that serve to frame further issues that I analyze in subsequent chapters.

Chapter two focuses on the role played by labor unions during the socioeconomic and cultural transformations of the 1990s. Though some of these questions had been mentioned previously, now I expand the scope of the discussion.

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The chapter addresses challenges that trade unions have confronted seeking to redefine their identities and strategies — in order to adapt to a fast changing postindustrial society— and how labor organizations have reacted regarding wage earners' new demands and expectations. In addition, I examine the system of workers' representation that exists in Spain and how this model based on works councils poses dilemmas for organized labor, whose social legitimacy depends on the election of works council delegates. Within that context, I also discuss the public status of labor unions and how workers perceive them. Moreover, this chapter analyzes shifting trends in union density and collective bargaining and the decline of strike activity during the 1990s.

In the following chapter, I frame the historical development of labor organizations and how Spanish class-based unions have evolved since Franco's departure. Focusing on the period 1976-1986, I examine how UGT and CC.OO. experienced serious inter-union rivalries and ideological disagreements that reflected the tensions and conflicts between the Communist and the Socialist parties during the transition and consolidation of the new political regime. The transition to democracy was a difficult period for the labor movement. The gap between workers' high social expectations and real possibilities under the new political order had an adverse effect upon the reorganization of labor unions in the post-Franco era. Though trade unions played a secondary role in this uncertain process, since the principal players of the transition were the political parties, unions contributed to the process of democratic change by standing for economic and political restraint.

Chapter three is key to understand the process of reorganization of trade unions during the late 1970s and early 1980s and what kind of union dynamic

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unfolded after the coming to power of the PSOE in 1982. At that juncture UGT and CC.OO. consolidated their current hegemonic role as Spain's major class-based labor organizations. Within that context, the chapter looks at the unions' rapprochement —that took place in the late 1980s— and the beginning of a new union strategy based on unity of action after the successful general strike of 1988.

This research links macro and micro levels of analysis by examining national processes from the perspective of the workplace. Therefore, the following three chapters (fourth, fifth and sixth) are based on a survey of 269 workplace-level leaders that I carried out in 1990. These chapters are the core of the dissertation and are empirically grounded on primary data. The survey was conducted in fifty large and medium-sized workplaces randomly selected from an universe of firms, industrial plants and other type of workplaces that had elected at least 2 representatives from each of the class-based unions (UGT and CC.OO.) to the works council in 1986.

Chapter four analyses data gathered in those fifty workplaces (mostly from services and industry) focusing on the peculiar forms of workers' representation that exist in Spain; on unions' dynamic at the workplace and on the institutional role that trade unionists play at that level of collective action. Within that context, I analyze the complex relationship between the works council and the local labor organizations at the level of the firm and why there are not strong incentives for workers to join unions.

Workplace-level leaders (elected works council's delegates and trade union delegates) are the ones involved in shop floor unionism. They are a fairly coherent group of union activists facing similar problems and challenges; are not the mechanical reflections of the workers that they represent and, sometimes,

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they disagree with the official policy of their own unions. In post-Franco Spain there has been a chronic shortage of those willing to assume the special costs and responsibilities of the workplace leadership role. According to Fishman (1990) the trade unions' organizational weakness is a reflection of their lack of human resources at the level of the workplace. In that sense, chapter four addresses sociological questions that are essential to understand current unions' dilemmas and possible courses of action.

In chapter five I examine the complex web of relations between unions and political parties and how the political left "colonized" the labor organizations during the transition to democracy. Focusing on the historical relationship that unfolded between the UGT and the PSOE, and the links that CC.OO. had, first with the PCE and later with *Izquierda Unida* (IU), a leftist coalition led by this party but with a broader base of support, I analyze the evolution and change in party-union ties during several interconnected periods.

Workplaces' data examined in the chapter show how trade unionists became aware of the problems linked to the party control of labor organizations and why since the late 1980s both organizations moved in the direction of more independence, redefining previous political ties. Thus, from a subordinated position labor unions gradually moved toward greater institutional autonomy. At the end of the 1980s they began constructing a new identity that reflects their ongoing adaptation *vis-à-vis* the kind of post-industrial society that Spain has become. Yet, during the past decade UGT and CC.OO. have struggled to consolidate their autonomy *vis-à-vis* the political parties, a process that triggered a series of internal crises in both labor unions.

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Between 1979 and 1986 five national social pacts were agreed to by trade unions and employers' organizations, and in two occasions were endorsed by the government. This policy of social pacts (or *concertación social*) is the subject of chapter six. I start the analysis by examining the historical roots of Spanish corporatism and how neo-corporatism unfolded during the democratic transition. The pacts were part of the broad consensus politics that characterized this process and served as a policy for gradual adjustment to the economic crisis of the late seventies and early eighties. In chapter six, I argue that the relative failure to institutionalize the Spanish model of neo-corporatism was due to the fact that the conditions for effective forms of political exchange that existed between 1977 and 1986 changed after the split between UGT and the PSOE (Royo, 2000, 2002). In addition, I examine the link between the policy of social pacts of the period 1977-1986 and the so-called *dialogo social* (social dialogue) of the 1990s. Data collected in the firms indicate that at the level of the workplace the policy of social pacts had a relatively high degree of support among workers.

In the last chapter of the dissertation I focus on current trends of economic globalization, Europeanization of labor strategies, and adaptation of Spanish unions to the new transnational environment of an integrated Europe. This chapter reconnects with themes and questions discussed in previous chapters. I tackle the complex relationship between globalization and Europeanization stating that these are not identical processes. Proposing to conceptualize globalization as complex set of contradictory forces, I claim that the trade union movement represents its main challenger in Europe.

Chapter seven examines current transformations of the labor movement in advanced postindustrial societies, and specifically in Spain. Data on unionization

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trends indicate that things are changing rapidly. In this uncertain environment, I argue that trade unions are searching for new identities and strategies in tune with the times. A new form of trade unionism has been emerging, one that combines elements from both the service-oriented business type and social movement unionism.

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## Abbreviations

ABI: *Acuerdo Básico Interconfederal* (Inter-Confederal Basic Agreement)
AES: *Acuerdo Económico y Social* (Economic and Social Accord)
AI: *Acuerdo Interconfederal* (Inter-Confederal Accord)
AMI: *Acuerdo Marco Interconfederal* (Inter-Confederal Framework Accord)
ANE: *Acuerdo Nacional de Empleo* (National Employment Accord)
CCOO: *Comisiones Obreras,* (Workers' Commissions)
CEOE: *Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales* (Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations)
CEPYME: *Confederación Española de Pequeña y Mediana Empresa,* (Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium sized Enterprises)
CES: *Consejo Económico y Social,* (Economic and Social Council)
CIG: *Confederación Intersindical Gallega,* (Galician Interunion Confederation)
CiU: *Convergencia i Unio;* (Catalan Nationalist Party)
CIS: *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (Center for Sociological Research)
CNT: *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo,* (National Confederation of Labor)
CONC: *Comisiones Obreras Nacional de Cataluña,* (National Workers' Commissions of Catalonia)
COS: *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Sindicales,* (Coordination of Trade Union Organizations)
CGT: *Confederación General del Trabajo,* (General Confederation of Labor)
CSI-CSIF: *Confederación de Sindicatos Independientes; Confederación de Sindicatos Independientes de Funcionarios,* (Confederation of Independent Trade Unions; Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Public Servants)
CXTG: *Confederación General de Trabajadores Gallegos,* (General Confederation of Galician Workers)
EEC: European Economic Community
EC: European Community
EIRO: European Industrial Relations Online
ELA-STV: *Euzko Languillen Alkartasuna. Sindicato de Trabajadores Vascos,* (Trade Union of Basque Workers)

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EMU: European Economic and Monetary Union
EPA: *Enquesta de Población Activa,* (Active Population Survey)
ETUC: European Trade Union Congress
EU: European Union
ICFTU: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
INE: *Instituto Nacional de Estadistica.* (National Institute of Statistics)
INEM: *Instituto National del Empleo,* National Institute for Employment
INTG: *Intersindical Nacional de Trabajadores Gallegos,* (Nationalist Trade Union of Galician Workers )
ITSs: International Trade Secretariats
IU: *Izquierda Unida,* (United Left)
LAB: *Langille Abertzale Batzordeak,* (Basque Workers' Assembly)
LOLS: *Ley Organica de la Libertad Sindical;*(Organic Law of Union Freedom)
NGO's: Non Governmental Organizations
OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSE: *Organización Sindical Española,* (Spanish Syndicate Organization)
PASOC: *Partido de Acción Socialista* (Socialist Action Party)
PCE: *Partido Comunista Español* (Spanish Communist Party)
PDNI: *Partido Democrático de la Nueva Izquierda* (Democratic Party of the New Left)
PP: *Partido Popular,* (People's Party)
PNV: *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Party)
PSOE: *Partido Socialista Obrero Español,* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party)
PSUC: *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (Catalan Unified Socialist Party)
PTE: *Partido del Trabajo* (Workers' Party)
SU: *Sindicato Unitario,* (Unitarian Trade Union)
SUT: *Confederacion de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores (*Confederation of United Workers' Unions)
UCD: *Unión de Centro Democrático,* (Center Democratic Union)
UGT: *Unión General de Trabajadores,* (General Workers' Confederation)
USO: *Unión Sindical Obrera,* (Workers' Union Confederation)
WTO: World Trade Organization

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# Chapter One

## The Current Political and Socioeconomic Context: Spanish Society Today.

During the 1990s Spanish society experienced a series of political, economic and cultural changes. This chapter outlines those changes establishing the framework for the analysis developed in the following chapters. In the first section I examine the coming to power of the *Partido Popular* (People's Party) in 1996 and why it revalidated its mandate again in 2000. The recent victory of the People's Party (PP) has weakened the left-wing parties exacerbating internal difficulties for these organizations (Chari, 2000).

In the following section I suggest that the economic policies implemented by the PP in power did play a part in its political successes between 1996 and 2000. Spain's economy improved significantly during the second part of the 1990s and the country, that is part of the Euro zone, achieved most of the convergence criteria expected by the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). In section three I focus on the social and cultural modernization of Spain, a process that began during the last period of Franco's dictatorship. The last part of the chapter deals with the so-called "Europeanization" and how Spanish citizens understand it. The section explores how the process of Europeanization might shape Spain's domestic social, economic and political structures

### I. The Right in Power: from 1996 to the 2000 elections.

In March 1996, the center-right People's Party led by José María Aznar came to power and formed a minority government with the sup-

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port of the Catalan Convergence and Union (CiU) and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). During the next four years the PP minority government enjoyed a stable relationship with its political partners until 2000 when it called for new general elections. This time the PP won with an overwhelming electoral support and formed a new government without the participation of the nationalist parties (CiU and PNV). On the other hand, the PSOE and the United Left (IU) suffered their worst defeat since the 1980s (Chari, 2000).

Why the center-right People's Party did become the dominant force in Spain's politics? To answer this question one need to examine the political, economic and social dynamics that have reshaped Spanish society during the last decade. Evidence indicates that the policies implemented by the PP during its first four years in power have had a positive effect on the economy. For instance, unemployment fell from 22 percent in 1996 to less than 14 percent in 2000. Furthermore, between 1996 and 1999, Spain enjoyed annual GDP growth averaging close to 4 percent per year, while inflation came down from 5 percent in 1996 to around 2 percent in 1999. While the PP reached important social agreements with the main labor organizations (UGT and CC.OO.) succeeding where the PSOE failed before, it has been unable to solve Spain's main problem in the labor market. Around a third of existing jobs are based on short-term contracts that sustain precarious jobs rather than stable worthwhile employment (Hamann and Martinez-Lucio, 2003).

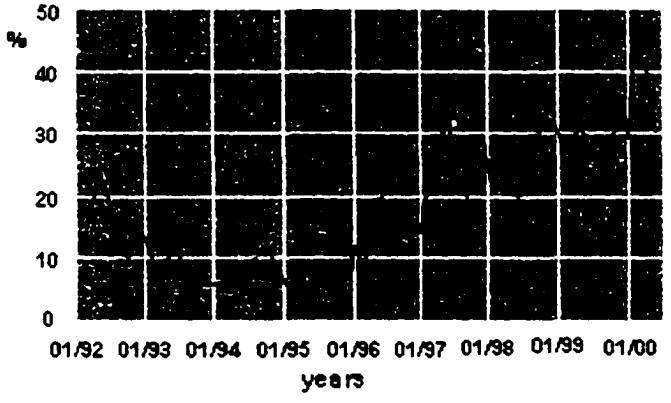
According to public opinion polls the political success of the PP in the past general election was largely due to the perceived accomplishment

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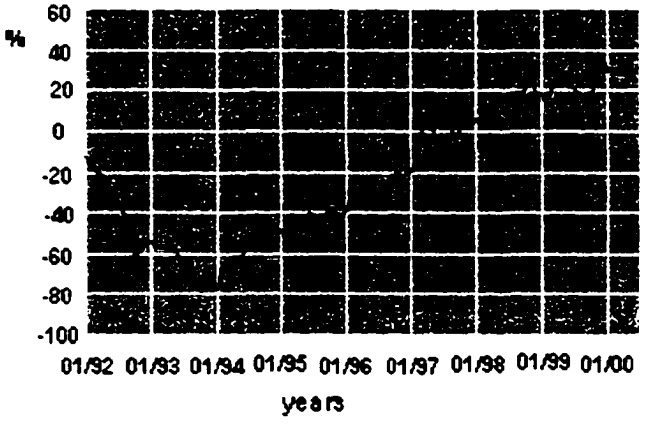
of its minority government's economic and social policies. At the economic level, Spain surprisingly qualified for full entry into the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1997, just a year after the PP came to power. At the social level, while the PP pursued initiatives to cut costs in public welfare spending it nevertheless approved legislation no one would have expected from a conservative party (Chari, 2000).

**Figures 1.1 & 1.2 Evolution of Public Opinion on the Political and the Economic Situation of Spain (1992-2000).**

Percent of respondents who said that the political situation was good/very good.




Difference between respondent who said that the economic situation was bad/very bad and those who responded that it was good/very good.




Source: Barometers of Public Opinion of the Center for Sociological Studies (CIS). Boletín 25, July-September 2000.

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In comparison to the general situation of early 1990s (when the PSOE was still in power), since 1996 the Spaniard citizens' assessment of their country's economic and political situation has been more positive as public opinion data on Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 show (see previous page).

On the other hand, the principal organizations of the Spanish left (PSOE and IU) underwent serious internal crises that cannot be underestimated when trying to explain the electoral victory of the PP in 2000.

Following the 1996 defeat of the PSOE, Felipe González [1] retired and the executive committee of the Socialist Party appointed Joaquín Almunia to replace him as the party's general secretary. Almunia, who was aligned with the moderate leadership [2] (*renovadores)* controlling the party's executive, lacked González 's political resources. As a politician he did not enjoy Gonzalez's popularity within nor outside the PSOE. In April 1998, the PSOE executive committee decided to call internal primaries to choose the next presidential candidate. Unexpectedly, the winner of this process was not Almunia (the party leader) but José Borrell, a former deputy secretary in the Ministry of Economy and Finance ideologically positioned to the left of the *renovadores* on most policy issues. However, in 1999 Borrell gave up his campaign for the presidency of the government after the Spanish press reported that he was associated with a group of former Socialist officials from the Ministry of Economy and Finance accused of dishonest dealings during the time he was the sub-secretary. Within this context, the PSOE executive committee decided that Almunia, as general secretary, should led the party into the 2000 election (Chari, 2000).

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Inside *Izquierda Unida* IU (United Left) [3] the situation was not much better. This coalition led by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) lost most of its parliament seats in 2000. After a significant improvement of its electoral results between 1993 and 1996 (see Table 1.1 in next page) this leftist coalition obtained only 8 seats while losing over a million votes. Even though no one has studied this phenomenon yet, I would suggest that the recent poor electoral performance of *Izquierda Unida* was the expected aftermath of what has happed inside this organization since 1997, when it held its Fifth National Congress. A year after the 1996 general election Julio Anguita, the PCE secretary general (who also was IU national coordinator), began a campaign to expel from the coalition those members who favored strategic changes regarding the leading role of the PCE in *Izquierda Unida*. Several dissident groups were separated from IU and later they formed a new organization that in 2001 merged with the PSOE. This group of former PCE and IU members organized a new party called the *Democratic Party of the New Left* (PDNI) in 1996. During the first period of the center-right government the PDNI moved closer to the Socialists finally joining forces with them after the recent electoral victory of the PP. [4]

Table 1.1 shows (next page) how the PP won the absolute majority of seats in parliament. The party gained almost 6 percent more votes than in 1996, taking 183 of the 350 seats that constitute the *Congreso de Diputados* (Congress of Deputies). [5] The PSOE, which lost over 1.5 million votes from the previous election, saw its representation fall from 141 to 125 seats, while IU lost over 5 percent of its vote and finished with only 8

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seats. The main regional and nationalist parties (PNV, CiU, PA, BNG, and CC) retained their relative support with some minor changes.

**TABLE 1.1 GENERAL ELECTIONS (1993-2000).**

| | 1993 | | 1996 | | 2000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % vote | seats | % vote | seats | % vote | seats |
| People's Party (PP) | 34.82 | 141 | 38.08 | 156 | 44.54 | 183 |
| Socialist Party (PSOE) | 38.68 | 159 | 37.48 | 141 | 34.08 | 125 |
| United Left (PCE-IU) | 9.57 | 18 | 10.58 | 21 | 5.46 | 8 |
| Convergence & Union (CiU) | 4.95 | 17 | 4.61 | 16 | 4.20 | 15 |
| Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) | 1.24 | 5 | 1.28 | 5 | 1.53 | 7 |
| Canary Islands Coalition (CC) | 0.88 | 4 | 0.89 | 4 | 1.06 | 4 |
| Galician Nationalists (BNG) | 0.54 | 0 | 0.88 | 2 | 1.32 | 3 |
| Herri Batasuna (HB) | 0.88 | 2 | 0.73 | 2 | — | — |
| Catalan Republican Left (ERC) | 0.80 | 1 | 0.67 | 1 | 0.84 | 1 |
| Eusko Alkartasuna (EA) | 0.55 | 1 | 0.46 | 1 | 0.44 | 1 |
| Valencian Union (UV) | 0.48 | 1 | 0.37 | 1 | 0.25 | 0 |
| Aragon Union (CHA) | 0.33 | 1* | 0.22 | 0 | 0.33 | 1 |
| Andalucian Party (PA) | — | — | 0.54 | 0 | 0.90 | 1 |
| Catalan left-Green (IC-V) | — | — | — | — | 0.52 | 1 |
| Others | 6.58 | — | 2.37 | — | 4.53 | — |

* In 1993 the Aragon's regional party had a different name (*Partido Aragonista* PAR).

Source: Ministry of interior

The magnitude of the PSOE's defeat surprised everyone. Probably one of the reasons for its electoral failure was the relatively low participation in the voting process. While the turnout in 1996 was over 77 percent in the March 2000 election it dropped to less than 70 percent. According to Chari: "the PP majority victory took place in large part because constituents that would have otherwise voted for the Socialists spent their Sunday at home (Ibid. 2000: 213)."

After its overwhelming victory in the 1982 election the PSOE had enjoyed an almost total control of Spanish public life at all its levels — national, regional and municipal— up to the early 1990s. The Socialists' de-

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cline in the 1990s has been slow, but from the beginning of the decade it accelerated rapidly. After the erosion of political support among the middle and new working classes, —and the major conflicts with the labor unions since the general strike of 1988 — the PSOE's legitimacy problems increased. In the early 1990s, the discovery of numerous political and financial scandals in which Socialist politicians had been involved became key factors to understand why the PSOE lost considerably electoral support between 1993 and 2000 (Chari, 2000; Perez-Díaz, 1996).

Widespread political clientelism, the illegal financing of the party, financial corruption at the government's highest level and of the so-called *guerra sucia* (dirty war) fought against ETA (Basque terrorist organization) by the state-sponsored GAL (Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups), generated a climate of growing political disenchantment that gradually eroded public support for the PSOE within Spanish civil society (Pérez-Díaz, 1996: 87-133).

On the other hand, the modern conservative forces in post-Franco Spain, —represented by the People's Party— had been moving from right to center. The conservative/moderate right did cut off its ideological ties with the Francoist [6] past, and has acquired a modern and politically attractive image.

In addition, when the PP won the 1996 election by little more than one percent Spain's macroeconomic indicators had deteriorated considerably. Though the PSOE was able to stay in power during fourteen years without interruption this time Spanish voters wanted a change. However, the Socialists lost the general election not just because of economic factors.

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Kertin Hamann (2000: 1043) indicates that between 1982 and 1996 the PSOE stayed in power regardless of whether the economy was growing or whether unemployment remained high. I agree with her analysis that states "that additional factors that link the state of the economy to voting behavior have to be considered" in order to understand the complexity of electoral and political processes. Within Spain's specific socio-economic context these others factors may had played also a part in the defeat of the PSOE in 1996. Even though the economic situation improved in some way during the last two years of Socialist rule,—for instance in 1995 the GDP increased by 3 percent, (but unemployment was over 22%) and inflation began to come down. In that context, the PSOE sought to portrait the PP as an ultra-conservative party linked to Franco's dictatorship, while the public perception of this party was quite different.[7]

In 1996 the PP promised to continue along the same path pursued since the early 1980s of making Spain a modern European nation. It offered more incentives for private capital and to accelerate the process of privatization of public enterprises and economic liberalization already initiated by the Socialists. Furthermore, it promised that it was going to continue the process of deregulating the labor market by promoting more labor flexibility and less state regulation. The PP's economic proposals sought to meet rapidly the *Maastricht* convergence criteria to allow Spain entry into the exclusive group of European Union top EMU countries (Germany, France, etc.) by the year 2000.

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## II. The Spanish Economy under the *Partido Popular*: 1996-2000.

During the first period of the PP in office (1996-2000) the improvement of Spain's economy was noticeable due in part to effective implementation of macroeconomic policies that moved Spain toward the core of the EU's economies (Salmon, 2000). A strong recovery between 1997 and 2000 created new jobs, and inflation stabilized until 2000 when it increased again. In 1998 the OCDE reported that Spain's labor market reforms represented important steps toward the successful implementation of the 1998-2000 convergence program within the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). [8] This favorable economic climate accelerated GDP growth (it was 3.4 percent in 1997 compared with 2.3 percent in 1996) improving business confidence and attracting foreign investment.

**Table 1.2 Spain's Unemployment Rate 1990-2000 (%).**

| | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 16.3 | 16.3 | 18.4 | 22.7 | 24.1 | 22.9 | 22.2 | 20.8 | 18.8 | 15.9 | 13.7 |
| Men | 11.9 | 12.2 | 14.3 | 18.9 | 19.8 | 18.1 | 17.6 | 16.0 | 13.8 | 11.2 | 9.3 |
| Women | 24.2 | 23.7 | 25.5 | 29.2 | 31.4 | 30.5 | 29.5 | 28.3 | 26.6 | 23.0 | 20.3 |

* figures for 2000 are from the third trimester of the year.

Source: EPA (Active Population Survey)

New capital investments created new jobs, — based on a combination of permanents and temporary contracts— bringing the unemployment rate down to less than 14 percent at the end of 2000 (as indicated on Table 1.2). Despite the high level of structural unemployment, that is still a feature of the Spanish economy, the PP-led government has been more effective than the previous government in the political managing of macroeconomic variables (Salmon, 2000: 37).

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Though joblessness fell down from a peak of more than 24 percent in the mid-1990s it's still the highest in the Euro zone (see Table 1.3). In conjunction with high unemployment, Spain's highest percentage of temporary jobs in the European Union (around a third of the total active population) is the main problem of the Spanish labor market. For the labor unions these have been major issues that they have brought to the table during the process of social bargaining that has taken place between social agents during the second part of the 1990s (Royo, 2002).

On the issue of temporary employment the PP has been more receptive to negotiations and public discussions with the unions and other interest groups than the previous government. It has been willing to reach agreements with organized labor and other public interest groups endorsing a series of accords signed with them after 1997 (Royo, 2002).

**Table 1.3 Unemployment & Temporary Work in Europe.**

| Country | 1996 (%) | 1997 (%) | 1998 (%) | 1999 (%) | Fixed-term contracts / total employment (%) (1997) * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 3.6 | 7.8 |
| Belgium | 9.7 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 8.8 | 6.3 |
| Denmark | 6.8 | 5.6 | 5.1 | 4.9 | 11.1 |
| Finland | 14.6 | 12.7 | 11.4 | 10.1 | 17.1 |
| France | 12.4 | 12.3 | 11.7 | 10.5 | 13.1 |
| Germany | 8.9 | 9.9 | 9.4 | 8.6 | 11.7 |
| Greece | 9.6 | 9.8 | 10.7 | – | 10.9 |
| Ireland | 11.6 | 9.8 | 7.8 | 5.1 | 9.4 |
| Italy | 12.0 | 12.1 | 12.2 | 11.2 | 8.2 |
| Luxembourg | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| Netherlands | 6.3 | 5.2 | 4.0 | 2.8 | 11.4 |
| Portugal | 7.3 | 6.8 | 5.1 | 4.2 | 12.2 |
| Spain | 22.2 | 20.8 | 18.7 | 15.9 | 33.6 |
| Sweden | 9.6 | 9.9 | 8.3 | 6.8 | 12.1 |
| UK | 8.2 | 7.0 | 6.3 | 6.0 | 7.4 |

*Source: EUROSTAT*

** "Employment in Europe 1998", European Commission (1999).*

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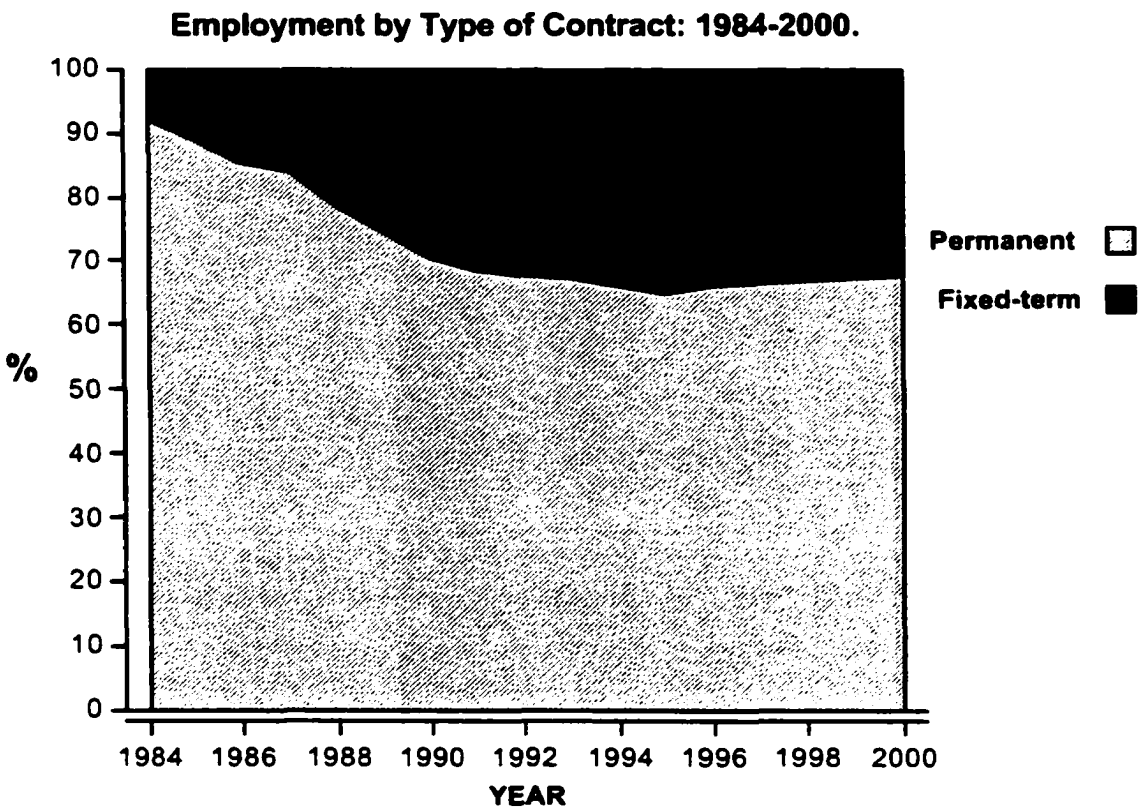
Since the early 1980s Spain's legislation on temporary work has undergone significant changes. In 1980 the Workers' Statute was passed and 1984 saw the first important labor reform of the PSOE's government aimed at promoting temporary employment. At that time new types of temporary contracts were introduced and financial incentives were offered to make it easier to hire new employees in a more "flexible" way. Although most incentives were removed in 1992, a new reform of the labor market undertook by the PSOE in 1994 introduced a new regulation of temporary contracts for training. Later, under the new PP's government, another series of labor market reforms regulated training contracts again, introducing certain guarantees and social protection for workers and fiscal incentives to promote the conversion of temporary contracts into permanent ones. Finally, in 1999 the PP government increased the employer's contribution for unemployment based on temporary contracts seeking to discourage its overextended use and expecting that change in the regulations would promote more permanent jobs (Royo, 2002: 68-9).

Under the PP's conservative government a broad public concern has emerged on the need to do something against the widespread practice of temporary employment. The social agents engaged in social bargaining have discussed its negative consequences on the quality of life of workers without job security. For organized labor the stated objective of what has been called the new "social dialogue" [9] should be the gradual reduction of temporary contracts and the creation of stable employment. By doing so the unions want to prevent systematic abuses by employers that have used flexible temporary work to lower labor costs replacing stable jobs with precarious ones.

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In the *Interconfederal Accord for Employment Stability* of 1997 the employers' organizations and trade unions agreed on a series of policies establishing mechanisms for greater control over temporary hiring, seeking to encourage permanent employment. Later this social initiative was converted into a law with the government's support (Royo, 2002; Fraile, 1999). After its approval, permanent employment increased slightly, but temporary work remains a deep-rooted practice in Spain's business culture. Data charted on Figure 1.3 on types of labor contracts since 1984 indicate that close to a third of current employment is short-term work, a situation that has remained unchanged since the mid 1990s.

**Figure 1.3 Temporary Employment in Spain.**




Source: EPA

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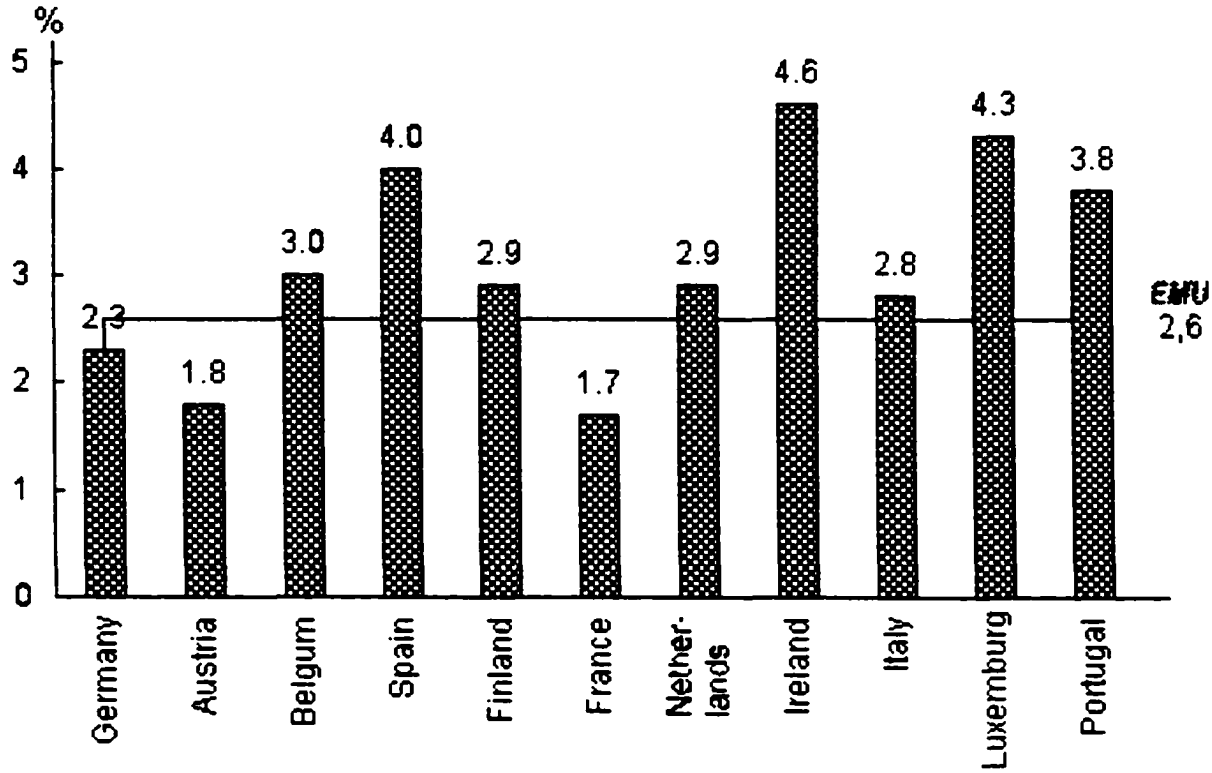
When they were introduced in 1984 temporary work contracts represented less than 8 percent of total employment, they went up to 35 percent in 1995, and since then they have been slowly decreasing to 32 percent of the wage earner population in 2001 (Royo, 2002: 76). For the labor organizations this is today main question since younger workers (those in the 20 to 35 years cohort) hold most of the temporary contracts. The severe dualization of the labor market has increased problems of representativeness for the unions (Richards and Garcia de Polavieja, 1997).

Labor unions are well aware of the problem and they have challenged employers on this issue. Oddly enough, on the question of temporary work the PP has been more receptive than the PSOE to the unions' demands. As part of their involvement in the negotiation of recent labor market reforms carried out by the PP's government Spanish unions have gained new prerogatives to conduct collective bargaining at the sector and enterprise levels. As I examine in other parts of this work, through new forms of bargaining unions have sought to negotiate labor flexibility issues in a novel way. According to the analysis developed by Lydia Fraile (1999) unions have agreed to greater flexibility in the deployment of labor within the firm in exchange for employment stability and better training of workers to upgrade their job qualifications and skills.

As I have pointed out, organized labor's preoccupation with the increase of temporary jobs led to the intersectoral agreement for employment security signed in April 1997. For the trade unions the development of this agreement into labor legislation has framed the context for collective bargaining since 1998. [10]

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**Figure 1.4 EMU (Euro Zone) Inflation Rate 2000.**




*Source: EUROSTAT*

I have indicated that Spain's economic situation improved since the coming to power of the PP. After mid-1997 economic growth averaged four percent annually driven by high domestic demand. A major force behind Spain's improved economic performance has come from implementing certain macroeconomic policies and achieving fiscal consolidation. The fall in inflation since 1997 facilitated for the Bank of Spain to gradually relax a relatively tight monetary policy contributing to strengthen private consumption and capital investment. Within this context, the government has been reluctant to tighten fiscal policy as the PSOE did in the late 1980s, fearing a negative effect that could impair the economy to perform successfully within the European Economic and Monetary

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Union (EMU). Finally, Spain's inflation rate of 4 percent in 2000 was somehow higher than the targeted 2.6 percent for EMU countries (see Figure 1.4).

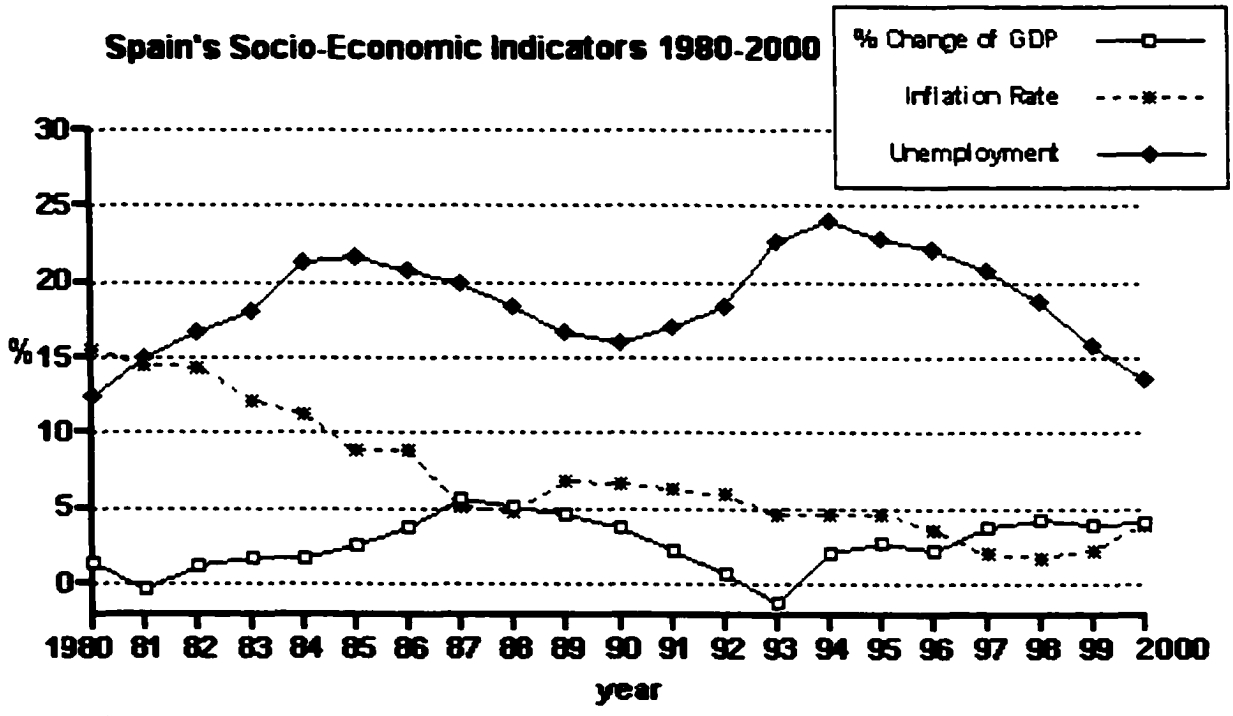
Historically, Spain's economy has been characterized by an embedded tendency toward high inflation. Though it came down during the 1990s, uncontrolled price increases are still a major issue for the social agents and the government. While employers have blamed labor costs for the inflationary proclivity of Spain's economy the trade unions hold a different interpretation. For CC.OO. the dynamic behind the increase of consumer prices after 1999 needs to be explained by taking into consideration structural socioeconomic and cultural factors. This organization argues (CC.OO., 2000), that "the behavior of prices in Spain shows a clear lack of sensibility and commitment by the entrepreneurs and the absence of an effective response by the government to handle the problem. (my translation)." According to this perspective, the entrepreneurs (business) have increased prices to assure rapid profits rather than seeking the consolidation of economic growth for the long term. For the unions, the government has not intervened politically to correct the unfettered logic of the market. While wages had increased below 3 percent during the period (1994-2000), enterprise profits puffed-up near 20 percent in 1999. After the decline of the purchasing power of wages, a result of the incomes policies of the early 1980s, the unions don't want to accept expected inflation as a formula to negotiate wage increases.[11] In addition, CC.OO. and UGT have demanded the extension of guarantee clauses as the best instrument for the preservation of wage earners' purchasing power. [12]

Summarizing the way Spain's economy has evolved since the PP came to power, the general picture shows strong economic performance and relatively

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high company profits with a GDP growth of nearly 4 percent per year since 1997. The public deficit, at some 982 billion Spanish *pesetas* in 1999, represented a little more than one percent of the GDP (compared with 0.9% in 1998) and it was within the acceptable range of convergence criteria set up by the EMU for countries that are part of the Euro zone.

**Figure 1.5 Annual Change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Consumer Prices Index, and Unemployment 1980-2000.**




Source: EPA, INE.

Although unemployment fell more than 5 percent between 1997 and 2000, for the unions the data must be interpreted with caution, as there have been methodological changes in the EPA/INE surveys [13], which may have overestimated positive statistical changes in unemployment trends. However, —as figure 1.5 indicates— in comparison to the situation of the early 1990s the general economic situation of Spain has improved during the tenure of the PP in government.

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One must remember that when the PSOE came to power at the end of 1982, the Spanish economy was in worse shape than when the PP did so in 1996 (Salmon, 2000). In the early 1980s capital investment was decreasing, the GDP was in negative terrain and inflation was around 14 percent. The unemployment rate rose to more than 20 percent in the mid-1980s and there were important deficits both in the government budget and in the balance of payments. Within that context, Spain joined the European Union in 1986 and after that point a new set of structural constraints framed its economic policies

During the first period of the Socialist government (1982-86), the industrial restructuring of old firms *(reconversión industrial),* impacted negatively upon economic growth (it was low while the loss of jobs was high). A period of relative expansion set off around 1986, which placed the Spanish economy among those countries with the highest economic growth in Europe. However, economic growth and a timid reduction of employment between 1988 and 1992 did not last. At the end of the 1980s the trade balance deficit increased undermining the low competitiveness of Spanish companies *vis-à-vis* European ones. Evidence indicates that the PSOE in government decided to deal with Spain's economic problems in an orthodox liberal way (Recio and Roca, 1998). Focusing on the liberalization of financial markets and applying a restrictive monetary policy the Socialist policy-makers followed the policies designed in *Maastricht* that the PSOE government defended against the opposition of the main labor organizations.

Perhaps the most negative element of the economic policies implemented by the PSOE during its time in government (1982-1996) was the reform of the labor market that eroded the trade unions' social base while strengthening the

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power of employers (Recio and Roca, 1998). Although the conservative government led by the PP after 1996 continued the same course already set up by the Socialist government, it implemented a series of reforms of the labor market that initially triggered new labor protests but were to a certain extend open to negotiation through new forms of social and political bargaining (Royo, 2002).

## III. Modernization of Spain: toward a postmodern informational society?

Historically, there have been diverse paths toward European modernity. Göran Therborn (1995) points out that modernization processes have diverged between the advanced European societies (UK, France, Germany) and those located in the less developed region of Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Greece).

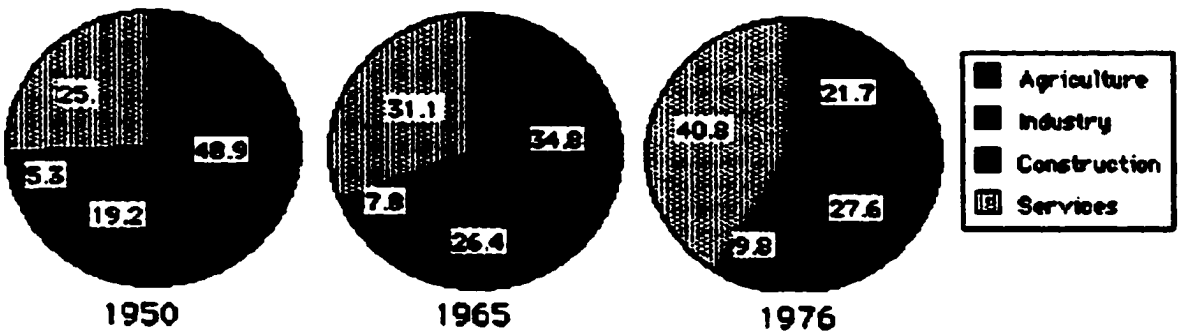
Spain belongs to the so-called late-bloomers where social, cultural and political modernization only took placed recently. Spain's weak industrialization was late in the 20th century, while agriculture remained strong until the 1950s when Franco's regime changed its traditionalist autarchic course. The Francoist regime 's economic policy after 1959 was in hands of the *Opus Dei* technocratic elite, that took over the state's policymaking structure displacing the traditionalist Falangista [14] ruling group associated with the dictatorship since the end of the civil war (1939). After that point, for José Casanova (1982, 1983), Franco's regime might be characterized as a "modernizing dictatorship" that pushed ahead a process of economic liberalization and fast industrialization. Regarding Spain's social structure, the effects of these developmentalist policies were drastic. A society which in 1950 still had half of its active population employed in agriculture (see figure 1.6, next page) and only an advanced but very concentrated industry

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in the Basque and Catalan provinces, became, within a 30 years period, a fully modern, advanced capitalist society. Changes in the ratio between rural and urban populations reflect these transformations. While in 1960 the urban population represented only 36 percent of the total population, in the early 1980s it had increased to more than 80 percent.

During the last decade of Franco's dictatorship the country experienced rapid and profound changes; industrial modernization, growth of the services sector and transformation of traditional agriculture all happened simultaneously. All this resulted in social changes that gradually transformed Spain's social and economic structure.

**Figure 1.6 Spain's Employed Population by Economic Sectors.**




Source: INE

During the 1960s and early 1970s Spain's urbanization expanded and new public services developed fast. A new urban, better-educated middle class emerged as did a new working class largely made up of people of rural origins (Logan, 1978). Traditional family arrangements were renegotiated and women entered the labor market in increasing numbers. Despite the ideology of pro-natalism of the Catholic Church —that is still culturally relevant—, fertility and

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marriage rates have fell since the early sixties. The lowest fertility rates in Europe today are to be found in Spain and Italy (Crouch, 1999).

According to Victor Pérez Díaz (1993), beginning in the late 1950s, Franco's regime lost the support of a large sector of the Church. This institution, which had provided Franco with part of the ideological justification for the overthrowing of the republican government in 1939, underwent a "silent revolution" along with the rest of the country. Spaniards relationship with the Catholic Church changed with the new epoch. It appears that both the intensity of belief and the frequency of practice have diminished, while the Church still maintains the diffuse support of the majority of the people.

Furthermore, the process of modernization eroded the structural bases of social and political identities grounded on traditional cleavages of class, religion, and territory-region. Yet they have retained symbolic resonance in varying degrees. Spaniards are now less religious and proportionately fewer of them think of themselves as belonging to the working class (McDonough, Barnes, López Pina, 1988).

Spain's peaceful transition to democracy was framed by these processes of modernization that unfolded rapidly during the last fifteen years of Franco's dictatorship. Determined not to replicate the frightening polarization that culminated in the bloody Spanish civil war of 1936-1939, following Franco's death in 1975 the political elite and the citizens in civil society chose not to settle old scores, preferring instead to negotiate political change through a politics of consensus and national reconciliation (Perez-Díaz, 1993).

Spain's economic and social change continued after the transition period from Franco's dictatorship to democracy (1977-82), even if until the mid 1980s

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there was high political uncertainty complicated by a profound economic crisis and growing structural unemployment. From the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, both the labor force and employment had increased consistently and in practically the same manner. However, after the end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975 the situation changed. The labor force remained more or less constant, while employment fell very rapidly, showing in the mid-1980s a gap of over 20 percent with respect to the workforce.

Although Spain's overall economic growth was high during the 1960s, from 1974 to 1985 it deteriorated substantially. Spain's integration into the European Community in 1986 was accompanied by a new economic boost that lasted until the early 1990s, when another recession started (Salmon, 2000: 18-9).

Focusing on its social structure, I must stress on the impact of socioeconomic changes experienced by this country. In Spain, — as in all OECD countries since the sixties— one of the main structural changes has been a shift in employment toward services and the relative decline of traditional industrial occupations. The growth of the services sector has generated diverse interpretations about the so-called "postindustrial society" (Bell, 1973), according to which services would gradually take the place of industry as the new engine for economic growth.

**Table 1.4 Spain's Employed Population by Economic Sectors. 1990-1999 (%).**

| | *1990* | *1991* | *1992* | *1993* | *1994* | *1995* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | 11.8 | 10.7 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 9.8 | 9.2 | 8.7 | 8.4 | 8.0 | 7.1 |
| Industry | 23.7 | 22.9 | 22.7 | 21.5 | 21.0 | 20.6 | 20.1 | 20.2 | 20.5 | 20.1 |
| Building | 9.7 | 10.1 | 9.7 | 9.2 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 9.7 | 9.9 | 10.8 |
| Services | 54.8 | 56.3 | 57.5 | 59.2 | 60.0 | 60.8 | 61.7 | 61.7 | 61.6 | 62.1 |

Source: EPA

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Within this context, Spain's occupational structure has undergone substantial change that represents, by any standard, a major structural transformation, moving Spain's path toward modernity closer to the one followed by more advanced European societies. While the share of industry (building and manufacturing) in overall employment remained more or less constant until the mid-1980s —then, it started to come down slowly— that of agriculture has fallen dramatically, the decline having being absorbed mostly by services. In 1960, agricultural employment represented 39 percent of total employment, while employment in services totaled 31 percent. By 1990, their respective shares were less than 12 percent and approximately 55 percent as Table 1.4 shows.

**Table 1.5 Percent of Civilian Employment in Services Sector in 10 OCDE Countries.**

| *Country* | *1970* | *1990* | *1998* | *Change 1970-1998* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 57 | 71 | 74 | +17 |
| Canada | 63 | 72 | 74 | +11 |
| France | 48 | 65 | 69 | +21 |
| Germany | 43 | 58 | 63 | +20 |
| Italy | 40 | 59 | 61 | + 21 |
| Japan | 47 | 59 | 63 | +16 |
| Spain | 37 | 55 | 62 | +25 |
| Sweden | 54 | 68 | 72 | +18 |
| UK | 54 | 68 | 71 | +17 |
| United States | 62 | 72 | 75 | +13 |

Source: Spain's figures EPA. The rest are from: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1999: Comparative Civilian Labor Force Statistics.

During the 1990s the "tertiarization" process continued, and at the end of the 20th century Spain's services sector accounted for more than 60 percent of pri-

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vate and public employment. Comparatively speaking it still less extended than those of the United States, Canada or Australia, countries in which services have reached more than 70 percent of current employment. What is amazing regarding Spain's services sector, (as Table 1.5 shows) is the magnitude of the change in less than a thirty years period. From 1970 to 1998 the size of the services sector increased 25 points in Spain. During the last decade (1990s) it increased seven percent, placing Spain's services sector at the same level of those of Italy or Japan. According to Díaz Fuentes (1999) growth in services employment in Spain can only be explained by taking into consideration the increasing integration between services and industry in a new complex economy of scale. This integration is the result of the growing division of labor among sectors, which requires a complex network of services such as transportation, telecommunications, banking and insurance services that link the different sub-systems in the economy. After the integration of Spain into the European Community in 1986 the expansion of services gained new strength.

In sociology the growing predominance of the tertiary (services) is accompanied by increasing emphasis on the role of knowledge and the expected decrease of class conflicts. Following the logic of economic rationalization stated in Max Weber and Parsons' theories, Daniel Bell (1973) stresses on how the emergence of the postindustrial society is the result of a new form of rationality. From that perspective a postindustrial society is one in which more workers are not longer involved in the production of tangible goods but of information and diverse forms of services that create innovation and growth. Increasingly in postindustrial societies, technical skill becomes an overriding condition of competence for place and position in the social structure. In postindustrial capitalism the

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manual and unskilled working class gets smaller and the group of knowledge workers and highly skilled employees becomes more relevant. From Fordism and rigid capitalism —based on assembly line work and mass production— we reach a new regime of capitalist production named post-Fordism that is based on "lean production", increasing labor flexibility and the extended use of computer and information technology.

Reconceptualizing some themes of postindustrial theory Manuel Castells (1996) has introduced the concept of the "network society". In his work Castells identifies the new economy that has emerged during the last two decades as "informational", as opposed to an information economy. Accordingly, it is informational since economic productivity and competitiveness depends on the capacity to generate and to process knowledge based information. This sociologist argues that we are in the process of entering a global information society standing on a "borderless" but unevenly developed world economy. According to Castells, this new global economy represents a new stage of development of postindustrial capitalism. One in which class relations have been transformed and in which new cultural practices are being formed. In the new network society the time and space factors are being reshaped into *timeless-time* that is distinguished by the continuous flow of information and the increasing flexibility of social, economic and cultural life.

Spain is part of that global network informational society and its economy has been rapidly globalized during the past two decades. A country that was classified as a "late Fordist economy" became part of the advanced postindustrial world in a relatively short period of time. Regarding is social and class structure the changes has been profound (see Table 1.6).

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**Table 1.6 Spain's Class Structure; 1970, 1983 & 1993.**

| *Class Position* | *Social Strata/ Categories* | *1970* | *1983* | *1993* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bloc of "capitalist and neo-capitalist" classes, landowners (new and old petite bourgeoisie) and independent professionals. | Agricultural employers | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| | Businessmen-employers industry & services | 2.6 | 2.5 | 4.5 |
| | Managers/ enterprise directors | 0.2 | 1.9 | 1.2 |
| | Liberal professionals | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| | Entrepreneurs without employees | 11.2 | 12.0 | 12.5 |
| | Landowners/farmers without employees | 22.0 | 12.3 | 5.8 |
| Bloc of salaried classes/white and blue collars wage earners, industrial and agricultural workers. | Office & commerce technical administrative personnel | 17.6 | 22.3 | 29.7 |
| | Supervisors/foremen | 6.1 | 0.8 | 1.3 |
| | Service employees | | 10.7 | 11.3 |
| | Skilled workers | 24.6 | 25.5 | 22.1 |
| | Unskilled workers | 8.7 | 4.6 | 4.2 |
| | Agricultural workers | 8.5 | 4.9 | 3.0 |
| | Others/unclassifiable | 0.6 | 1.1 | 2.5 |

Source: Tezanos (1994)

Regarding the concept of "class" —as a sociological category of analysis — I am using the concept here in a "soft" way rather than as a strong explanatory concept in the way Marxists do. [15]

Data on the table above indicate how the social and occupational structure of Spain has changed since 1970. It is worth mentioning the increase of the new salaried middle class (white collar technical and administrative employees) from less than 18 percent in 1970 to almost 30 percent in 1993; simultaneously there was a decline of unskilled blue collars (from 9% to 4%) and agricultural workers (from almost 9% to 3%) during the same period. The percentage of skilled blue-

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collar workers did not change much remaining around 22-25 percent of the salaried strata.

According to Tezanos (1984) Spain's social structure in the early 1990s was comparable to other Southern European societies. While Zaldívar and Castells (1992) argue that changes in Spain's occupational structure reflected "trends" that were taking place in other advanced capitalist countries specifically, "the increase of qualified and technical occupations in the services sector (Ibid. 51)."

Nonetheless, the wage earners (white and blue collars) are still the largest strata in Spain's class structure. The white-collar employees represented 42 percent of the active population in 1993 (from a total of 11,723,500) while the traditional blue-collar working class accounted for 30 percent. The independent workers and self-employed were 20 percent while the "capitalist class" (including enterprise managers and directors) —according to Eric Olin Wright's class model— made up 6 percent of the active population. [16]

Regarding class identification and class consciousness survey data show that during the period 1960-90, the tendency was to identify less with the *clase obrera* (proletarian or working class) and more with the middle class. While in 1966 near 60 percent of the Spaniards interviewed identified themselves as "working class" in 1990, only 38 percent did identify the same way. On the other hand, while in 1966 around 22 percent said that they were "middle class" the percentage had increased to 49 percent in 1990. [17]

The formation and development of the Spanish working class is a complex under-researched subject. During the last years of Francoism, John Logan (1977) studied the skilled working class in Barcelona's textile industry finding that it possessed a strong class consciousness and an autonomous capacity for political

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action. This research found out that its "political radicalism" was a reaction to the authoritarian political structure that did not provide institutional mechanisms to channel industrial conflicts. During the democratic transition, Victor Pérez Díaz (1993, 1979) completed a series of studies on the subject. The picture that emerges from this research is one of a moderate working class opposed to the radical transformation of capitalism. According to Perez-Díaz's analysis strong class identities have been weakened by social and cultural changes and the new Spanish working class is sociologically diverse and culturally heterogeneous. More recently other sociological studies have stressed on the processes of fragmentation of the working class and the decline of strong class values built on shared cultural understandings of solidarity and equality (Miguélez, 1990).

Against Marx's predictions, historical changes in the class structure of industrial capitalist societies have not increased the proportion of workers *vis-à-vis* other classes, and the sociological importance of the middle strata has increased. In Spain the so-called "service class" or "white-collar middle class" has expanded as part of the socioeconomic processes that I described above.

Spain is no longer a bipolar, much less a homogeneous society. Although it is still divided by multiple social cleavages, region, religion, class, these ones are not reducible to one another. It is a society in which primary ties and social identities have been transformed, where modern urban life has substituted old traditional parochialism and where, in spite of the persistence of the Basque nationalist radicalism, levels of political polarization are relatively low (Perez Díaz, 1996, 1993).

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## IV. The Europeanization of Spanish society.

Spain attempted to enter the European Community (EC) for the first time in the 1960s but its admission was delayed for another two decades. One of the main obstacles to admission at that time was the dictatorial regime under Franco whose legitimacy was contested by people inside and outside Spain. Following the death of Franco in 1975, the country faced another obstacle to membership, specially the deterioration of Spanish economy during the democratic transition. At that juncture Spain's economic conditions and the structural gap between the country and the EC members, kept back Spain from obtaining membership in the European Community.

In 1982, the PSOE came to power and played a crucial role leading the country down the road to EC membership that for the Socialists was associated with the full socioeconomic modernization of Spain (Kennedy, 2001). On a symbolic level, EC membership for Spain did represent a decisive break from the country's dictatorial experience. Spain entered the EC simultaneously with Portugal in 1986. Since its incorporation the gap between Spain's standard of living and that of the other Western European societies has narrowed. However, there are still significant disparities that have not been overcome yet.

Since joining the European Community Spain has benefited from the European structural funds (Salmon, 2000: 28), which have been used in those regions that were in need of economic development. The funds have been employed mostly on the modernization of the country's infrastructure. Between 1989-1994, Spain received almost a quarter of all the Community's structural aid

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funds in order to reduced economic disparities between this country and the advanced European societies.

**Europeanization process after Spain joined the European Community in 1986.**

January 1, 1987: Single European Act (SEA) became effective.
June 29, 1989: Spain joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM).
July 1, 1990: Stage I of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) began.
November 1, 1993: Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty).
January 1, 1994: Stage II of EMU began.
January 1, 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden joined the EU.
March 26, 1995: Schengen Agreement comes into force (European countries with no border controls, including Spain).
October 1997: Treaty of Amsterdam signed.
January 1, 1999: Stage III of EMU began. Euro launched in eleven EU Member States, including Spain.
May 1, 1999: Treaty of Amsterdam entered into force
January 2002: EURO-Single European currency (Last Stage of EMU)

The process of supranational building of European institutions accelerated since Spain's entrance in the EC back in 1986. This is an ongoing process that frames the socioeconomic and political dynamics of an increasing number of nation-states. With the future expansion of the EU towards Eastern Europe the process of Europeanization might integrate more than twenty countries in the next decade.

How this multidimensional process is affecting the EU's countries domestic social, economic and political structures? What have been the impact of EU regulations and the development of norms, rules, and decision-making procedures emanating from the European level on national systems of regulations, rule-making, and administrative practices?

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These are questions that attract increasing scholarly attention. According to Risse, Cowles and Caporaso (2001) in some countries EU rules and regulations might be easily incorporated and complied within the respective national settings while in others, European norms and practices might run counter to national rules and institutional practices. Whatever the ultimate results may be, at this point in time there is not a complete picture yet on how Europeanization is changing the social and political life of the people living within the confines of the European Union.

In her comparison of how Germany and Spain have adapted their domestic regional institutions to the supranational pressures emanating from the process of European integration Tanja Börsel (1998) did find that not clear-cut convergence had been achieved yet. This researcher stresses on how domestic institutions tend to "mediate" the effect of Europeanization creating a complex web of articulations between the European, the national and the regional institutions that do not produce the same type of institutional arrangements at all times. Albeit both countries have been adapting their own ways to the structural constraints set in Europeanization processes the results are not identical for both societies.

How one conceptualize "Europeanization" might vary according to the theoretical perspective used to make sense of this complex set of social, economic and political phenomena. In the perspective inspired on sociological institutionalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), the emphasis is on structural convergence, and the theoretical assumption is that European structures and national structures can be expected to develop similar organizational structures over time. The so-called "isomorphism hypothesis" suggests that some national institutions

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may undergo deeper changes than others, but that there is an overall trend toward structural convergence with the European ones.

At the level of the European political economy, evidence supports the convergence thesis given that the impact of market pressures and globalization has affected the way national macro-economic policies are designed and implemented (Salmon 2000). However, on other organizational, political and socio-cultural arenas — both formal and informal — the general picture is more complex and difficult to grasp. In the academic literature on the subject Europeanization has been defined as:

> "the emergence and development at the European level of a distinct structures of governance, that is of political, legal and social institutions associated with political problem solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules (Risse, Cowles and Caporaso, 2001: 3)."

While the initial focus of the scholarly research has been on the process of institution-building at the European level —largely divorced from the political process at the national level— other works conceptualize the interactions among several levels of governance (supranational, national, and subnational) and stress on the complexity of the Europeanization process itself (Börsel and Risse, 2000).

At the national-societal level the focus has shifted to the way social actors acquire new collective understandings through their socialization into new meaning structures. From this perspective, Europeanization is understood "as the emergence of new rules, norms, practices, and structures of meaning to which member states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic structures (Börsel and Risse, 2000:17)." There is another agency-

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centered version of sociological institutionalism that theorizes the differences in the degree to which domestic norms and institutions change in response to new European institutional arrangements. This approach focuses on socialization processes by which actors learn to internalize new norms and rules in order to become members of the supra-national European society.

Within this framework, Börsel and Risse (2000) have developed a typology on "Europeanization" based on the intensity or degree of the change produced by the process. They distinguish between three levels of change conceptualized as: *absorption, accommodation,* and *transformation.* National societies that incorporate European policies or ideas and readjust their institutions, respectively, without substantially modifying existing processes, policies, and institutions are said to have *absorbed* the changes in a low degree. Others societies have only *accommodated* to Europeanization pressures by adapting existing processes, policies and institutions without changing their essential features and the underlying collective understandings attached to them. In this case the degree of change is considered "modest". Finally national societies that replace existing policies, processes, and institutions by new, substantially different ones are *transforming* their domestic structures and according to the authors' model of Europeanization their degree of domestic change should be considered "high".

Regarding Spain the scarce evidence suggests that the degree of change due to the so-called Europeanization has varied depending of the specific institutional sphere. For instance, Spain has "tailored" its economy in accordance to the "adaptational pressures" and structural requirements of the EU political economy (Salmon, 2000). However, the same "pressures" (Köhler, 1999: 422), have affected the country's industrial relation system much less.

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No one denies that Europeanization "pressures" increased after Spain joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) in June 1989. Then, the PSOE government announced that it economic priority was to put Spain at the core of the EU and it designed its monetary policy in accordance to the project for monetary union. Between 1991 and 1994 Spain's economic situation turned bad, the Spanish currency was devalued and the Socialist government implemented a new series of market-oriented reforms in order to meet the *Maastricht* convergence criteria (Kennedy, 2001). From 1994 to 1997 the public deficit came down while the inflation rate decreased. By 1999, Spain's inflation rate had stabilized and the budget deficit as a percentage of the GDP had decreased to less than 2 percent. The Socialist government's tight fiscal policies of the late 1980s and early 1990s, designed to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria, triggered labor unrest and continuous industrial conflict. Later in the decade, under the PP-led conservative government, Spain emerged as one of the eleven members' states to launch the Euro in 1999.

As I said, the "adaptational pressures" have not produced the same results on other areas. For instance, regarding the establishment of new labor rights and the development of a more advanced system of industrial relations Spain has only *accommodated* its domestic institutions to the dynamic of Europeanization. Whereas labor unions have used the process of European integration as a convenient "political opportunity structure" to advance their social and organizational objectives (Magone, 2001).

Finally, on the question of cultural and social change associated with the process of European integration Spain's citizens are still somehow ambivalent. While in the early years of European integration (1986-1990) more than 60 per-

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cent of the public surveyed declared EC membership as being good for the country by the mid-1990s favorable opinion had decreased to 50 percent, with some fluctuations between polls. Considering the many difficulties that Spain has encountered in catching up to its European partners, public support for the European Union has remained higher than the average of EU countries. Survey data on Table 1.7 indicate that, in the late 1990s, almost 40 percent of Spaniard citizens favored Spain's membership in the EU while 25 to 30 percent seemed less enthusiastic but indicated a modest positive support for it. Around 11 percent of the interviewees did not agree with the idea of the United Europe.

**Table 1.7 Spanish public opinion regarding the European Union.**

| *What is your attitude regarding the European Union?* | *1997 %* | *1998 %* | *1999 %* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly in favor of it | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| In favor of it | 31 | 33 | 32 |
| Moderately in favor... | 26 | 26 | 30 |
| Neutral (not read) | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Moderately against it | 8 | 8 | 6 |
| Against it | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strongly against it | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| No Answer | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| (N) | 2485 | 2495 | 2490 |

Source: CIS, Studies 2246, 2288 & 2339

Some observers say that Europeanization would over time lead to changing national loyalties and the formation of new collective supranational identities (Cowles et al. 2001). After all, processes of social and cultural change take longer to transform the ways people understand who they are and how they construct their identities. Sociologists say (Cerulo, 1997), that social identities contain ideas

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describing and categorizing an individual's membership in a social group including emotional and normative components. A group of individuals perceive that they have something in common and upon that basis they construct a symbolic or imagined community that represents in their minds both a sense of commonness and of difference with regard to other collectivities.

According to survey data Spaniards face a series of emotional dilemmas when the have to chose between supra-national forms of identification and shared understandings embedded in their national identities. When asked about their social identity, more than 65 percent of the interviewees indicated that they were Spaniards in the first place. As Table 1.8 shows a smaller percentage (22%) felt that they were both, European and Spaniard citizens simultaneously, while only 5-6 percent considered themselves to be European in the first place.

**Table 1.8 Spaniard or European Identity?**

| *Regarding Europe and Spain: how do you feel?* | *1998* % | *1999* % |
|---|---|---|
| Mostly an European citizen | 6 | 5 |
| Mostly a Spaniard citizen | 66 | 65 |
| Both European and Spaniard citizen at the same time | 22 | 22 |
| None of the above answers | 6 | 7 |
| No answer | 1 | 1 |
| (N) | 2495 | 2491 |

Source: CIS, Studies 2288 & 2339.

Data on the second column (see Table 1.8) come from a large survey on public opinion regarding the European Union that the *Center for Sociological Research* (CIS) completed in May 1999. The survey asked a battery of questions seeking to assess public sentiments on the subject. According to this study Span-

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iards, in general, hold a positive opinion on the European Union. For example, the study found that 52 percent of the surveyed citizens acknowledged that Spain had benefited from its membership in the EU while only 14 percent believed that it had harmed the country. Furthermore, those who indicated that the country benefited were aware of how the EU structural funds granted to Spain had been used to improve infrastructures (66%) and other economic areas such as technological development (65%).

Regarding two important items: 1) national/supranational identity and; 2) attitude regarding the European Union, analysis of the data at first sight indicates that the two most important variables that explain differences of opinion on these subjects are educational attainment and age.

Most Spaniards who held positive views on the EU were those who had completed a higher education (technical 73% and college, over 83%) and the younger cohorts (aged 18 to 44 years) of the population. On the identity question the old-aged population tended to identify more as Spaniard and less as European (more than 76% in the cohort over 55 years of age said that they were Spaniards) as well as those without formal education (87%) and those who only had completed primary school (77%). On the other hand, the younger and better educated population showed a more favorable attitude *vis-à-vis* European identity, with more than 50 percent of the group indicating that they would like to become both European and Spaniard in the near future.

Data from the same study on Table 1.9 show the "correlation" between attitudes on the EU and national versus supranational identification. As expected, those who had a positive attitude toward European unification were more inclined to identify themselves as European as Spanish/European citizens

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in greater proportion. Among those who called themselves "mostly Spanish citizens" the proportion against the European Union was much higher (75%) than the sample total average (10%).

**Table 1.9 Relation between "identity "and "attitude" on the European Union.**

| *Regarding Europe and Spain: How do you feel?* | *Attitude regarding the European Union* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | In favor of % | Neutral % | Against it % |
| Mostly a Spanish citizen | 59 | 81 | 75 |
| Both European and Spanish citizen | 28 | 9 | 9 |
| Mostly an European citizen | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| None of the above answers | 6 | 8 | 15 |
| No Answer | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| (N) | (1657) | (471) | (248) |

Source: CIS, Study 2339.

Finally, Cerulo (1997) indicates that human beings hold multiple identities and these social identities are context-bound. A group of Spaniards might perceive themselves as "fellow Europeans" when dealing with Americans, while emphasizing national differences when interacting with other Europeans. One could then expect that the process of Europeanization would create multiple loyalties —sub-regional, regional, national, European— as well as multiple identities. A shift in contemporary collective identities is an ongoing process that goes beyond Europe and it is part of the cultural and economic globalization that is reshaping the so-called postmodern world (García-Canclini, 1999). In that sense, the current dynamic of Europeanization must be conceptualized in relation to processes of economic, political and cultural globalization. In chapter seven I address the complexity behind both dynamics.

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## Endnotes For Chapter One

[1] Felipe Gonzalez was elected secretary general of the PSOE at its Twelfth Congress in 1974. In the general election of 1982 the PSOE obtained the absolute majority, with 202 deputies and 134 senators and on December 1st Felipe Gonzalez, was elected Prime Minister a position he held until 1996.

[2] The so-called "renovadores" (renovators) represent the moderate wing of the PSOE. They emerged as a group of pragmatic social democrats behind González's neo-liberal orientation when Alfonso Guerra (former deputy party leader) criticized the government's economic policies in the early 1990s. The party's majority was divided in two factions, the *renovadores* (followers of Gonzalez) and the *guerristas* (followers of Guerra).

[3] I discuss the internal dynamic of IU in chapter five, in the section of the parties of the Left (on the subject see Taibo, 1997).

[4] The PDNI supported the democratic determination of the *Galician United Left* (part of IU) to form an alliance with the Galician Socialists (PSOE) against the provincial PP government led by former Franco's minister Manuel Fraga who is honorary president of the People's Party. The pro-PCE dominant faction within IU opposed that alliance and threatened to expel those who favored it. During a ruthless political crisis that lasted several months (from September to December of 1997) the Galician Left received the support not only of the PDNI but also of *Initiative for Catalonia* IC (the largest Catalan organization inside IU). At the end of the conflict in 1997, both PDNI and IC moved away from *Izquierda Unida* now uncompromisingly controlled by PCE leader Julio Anguita.

[5] The *Congreso de Diputados* is the official name of Spain's parliament.

[6] In Spain's popular culture people refer to the period of 1939-1975 as *"Franquismo"*. Those were the years when the dictator Francisco Franco ruled Spain.

[7] The public perception of the "ideological" position of the People's Party changed from right to center-right according to most of the public opinion polls conducted by the Center for Sociological Research (CIS) since the early 1990s.

[8] At least that it is what the economic reports on Spain prepared by the OECD indicate.

[9] I examine the question of the so-called "social dialogue" in chapter six of the dissertation.

[10] The unions' goal has been to put an end to new temporary employment contracts and to obtain specific commitments by employers to convert temporary contracts into permanent ones. So far no one would argue that the workers' organizations have succeeded on this strategic question. As much the proportion of temporary jobs *vis-à-vis* total employment has drooped 2-3 percent in comparison to 1997, but remains too high in comparison to other European Union member states.

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[11] In chapter six I discuss the issue of "incomes policy" as part of the Spanish neo-corporatist social pacts signed between 1977 and 1986.

[12] The trade unions have shown in past years that they are concerned with the issue of high inflation and have defended a policy of wage moderation in order to protect economic growth, job creation and improvement in workers' productivity (Martinez-Lucio, 1998).

[13] The EPA (*Encuesta de Población Activa*) and the INE (*Instituto Nacional de Estadistica*) are the main source of data on employment and joblessness.

[14] The term *"falangista"* comes from the *Falange*, a Spanish neo-fascist political movement founded in 1933 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the son of Miguel Primo de Rivera, Spain's dictator during the 1920s. In 1934 the *Falange* merged with another pro-fascist group, the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Syndicalista* (Union of the Nation Syndicalist Offensive), and in the civil war of 1936-39 supported the rebellion of Gen. Francisco Franco against the Spanish Republic. During Franco's dictatorship it was part of the official political party "the *Movimiento Nacional"* in which it competed with other factions such as the pro-Roman Catholic and the monarchists.

[15] Following Eric Olin Wright's neo-Marxist interpretation the class structure can be conceptualized according to the differential distribution of three productive assets: property, skills, and organizational resources. In capitalist societies there is a basic class distinction between owners and non-owners of productive property. Among non-owners two other kinds of assets determine access to the social surplus. Occupational skills allow expert employees to make claims on the surplus through the monopoly rent components of expert wages. Control of organizational resources associated with the technical division of labor allows company managers to appropriate part of the surplus built into managerial wages. For a complete explanation on class structure in late capitalism Wright's book: *Class Count: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis.* New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

[16] Tezanos' (1984) interpretation of the class structure is based on data collected by EPA on the active population.

[17] The data come from surveys carried out by the *Center for Sociological Research,* (CIS).

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# Chapter Two

## Spanish Labor Unions in the 1990s: Adjusting to Labor Market Flexibility and to Social and Cultural Change.

To what extend have trade unions been able to adapt their strategies and to redefine their identities *vis-à-vis* the economic and cultural changes that Spain has experienced during the past two decades?

Despite the lack of systematic sociological work on the subject important studies that examine themes related to the question have been completed. For example, research on fluctuations on union density by Jordana (1996) has contributed to the understanding of changes in the dynamic of union membership. In addition, research on the changing relationship between the UGT and the PSOE by Astudillo (1998) has addressed issues related to Spain's recent labor politics. Lastly, Serrano del Rosal (2000) has analyzed the transformation of traditional class-based unionism focusing on the social and cultural adaptation of the major labor unions to the current situation.

Other scholars, like Victor Pérez Díaz (1993, 1999), think that trade unions have experienced big difficulties in coming to terms with the social and cultural changes that Spanish society has experienced since the end of Franco's dictatorial regime. In his opinion, the unions have been too reluctant "to break with habits and perceptions that have been deeply rooted in the traditions of the workers' movement over the last 30 or 40 years (Ibid. 1999: 210)."

This chapter focuses on issues related to the process of consolidation of Spanish unions during the 1990s. The first section looks at organizational problems of unions that have been struggling to increase their social base under ad-

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verse economic and political conditions. In the following section, I examine the system of workers' representation that exists in Spain and how this model based on works councils poses dilemmas for organized labor, whose social legitimacy depends on the election of works council delegates. Within that context, I also discuss the public status of labor unions and how the workers perceive them. On section three I discuss issues related to collective bargaining and its relation to the system of representation. Finally, in the last part of the chapter I deal with labor conflicts and strikes and the problem of institutionalization of class conflicts in Spain.

The situation for labor unions at the end of the 1990s was remarkably different to the one in which they were acting during the 1980s. In the words of a journalist who wrote a comment on the subject, Spanish unions under the conservative government of the *Partido Popular* had been "domesticated." According to this source, in only four years the PP handed to UGT and CC.OO. more than half of the funds that the PSOE gave to the unions in fourteen (Prados, 2000). Although this was public money to which the unions were entitled, its impact on the behavior of the workers' organizations cannot be ignored. Unions in Spain depend on the state for resources (especially on funding), legal recognition as workers' representatives and legal protection as social agents. For Pérez Díaz (1999) this "political" dependence acts as an incentive to maintain the *status quo*, thus reducing the unions' ability to adapt.

After the sour experiences of organized labor with the Socialist government (1982-1996) most Spanish unionists have realized that they cannot longer count on political parties as their "natural allies." Like in Western Europe during the past two decades, trade unions are reluctant to act in accordance to the social-

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democratic union-party alliance after they experienced a series of frustrating situations when their social democratic allies came to power. In Spain, like in other European societies where the social-democratic parties have faced the realities of government constrained by international political economic regimes, they usually have disregarded unions' demands (Daley et al., 1991; Golden, 1992).

That is what UGT and CC.OO. learned from the Socialist experience of the 1980s and early 1990s and that is the reason why now they are pursuing a different path as autonomous workers' organizations. In chapter five I analyze this phenomenon in greater detail while in this chapter I focus on other questions and themes.

## I. Union density and organizational consolidation.

Following a serious decline in the 1980s, union membership in Spain recovered in the 1990s. Changes in unions' discourses have encouraged greater membership among women, skilled workers and white-collar employees, though it remains very low among those holding insecure and temporary jobs. The structure of membership has also undergone important changes, including the increasing importance of the public sector as a major source for union recruitment. Some observers are arguing that it has the highest union density rate nowadays (Serrano del Rosal 2000: 169).

Regarding the decline of labor unions evidence from Spain does not fit well into the pattern that Bruce Western (1996) describes in the case of most advanced capitalist societies. Western's research is based on the assumption that

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both, the political institutions and the labor market have shaped union density dynamics. When unions manage the system of unemployment insurance and are actively involved in social policy making, one may expect to find a high level of union density. Furthermore, social democratic governments tend to produce legislative and administrative measures that bolster union organizing and collective bargaining rights and promote public sector and white-collar unionization.

Western's main focus is on the institutional role played by the state in the functioning of centralized systems of industrial relations. Contrary to the postindustrial perspective, Western did not find that changes in the occupational structure, nor structural changes in the capitalist economies, really explain current de-unionization processes (Ibid. 1996: 155). By stressing on the institutional context of union organizing Western explains union decline by focusing on the decentralization of collective bargaining systems, the deregulation of labor markets, and the crisis of social democracy.

Contrary to the de-unionization trends analyzed by Western (1996), the Spanish situation regarding changes in union density has been the reverse of the pattern he describes for most advanced capitalist societies. While in many other Western European countries union membership came down, in this country it went up, at least during the period 1986-1996. As has been acknowledged by Jordana (1996) grow in union density in Spain resulted in a significant increase in union strength. Yet simple comparisons of union density between countries do not really show all the power resources of the labor movement given that membership dynamics work differently under different set of rules and national systems of industrial relations.

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**Table 2.1 Changes in trade union density in 20 OCDE countries.**

| Country | *Union Density 1990's (%) 1* | *Degree of Union Density* | *Years for trend* | *Change in wage and salary earners' union density* | | *Trend** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *In Points* | *In %* | |
| Australia | 35.2 | Middle | 1985-95 | -14.8 | -29.6 | -- |
| Canada | 37.4 | Middle | 1985-93 | 0.7 | 1.8 | = |
| Japan | 24.0 | Low | 1985-95 | -4.8 | -16.7 | - |
| New Zealand | 24.3 | Low | 1986-95 | -29.8 | -55.1 | -- |
| United States | 14.2 | Low | 1985-95 | -3.8 | -21.1 | -- |
| Austria | 41.2 | Middle | 1985-95 | -9.8 | -19.2 | - |
| Belgium | 51.9 | High | 1985-95 | -0.1 | -0.2 | = |
| Denmark | 80.1 | High | 1985-94 | 1.8 | 2.3 | = |
| Finland | 79.3 | High | 1985-95 | 11.0 | 16.1 | + |
| France | 9.1 | Low | 1985-95 | -5.4 | -37.2 | -- |
| Germany | 28.9 | Middle | 1991-95 | -6.1 | -17.6 | -- |
| Greece | 24.3 | Low | 1985-95 | -12.4 | -33.8 | -- |
| Ireland | 48.9 | Middle | 1985-93 | -7.1 | -12.6 | - |
| Italy | 44.1 | Middle | 1985-94 | -3.5 | -7.4 | - |
| Netherlands | 25.6 | Low | 1985-95 | -3.2 | -11.0 | - |
| Norway | 57.7 | Middle | 1985-95 | 2.0 | 3.6 | = |
| Portugal | 25.6 | Low | 1986-95 | -25.8 | -50.2 | -- |
| Spain | 18.6 | Low | 1985-94 | 7.1 | 62.1 | ++ |
| Sweden | 91.1 | High | 1985-94 | 7.3 | 8.7 | + |
| United Kingdom | 32.9 | Middle | 1985-95 | -12.6 | -27.7 | -- |

1- Figures are from 1993, 1994 or 1995, depending of each country.

- Trend in union density rates is calculated for wage and salary earners. Key for trend symbols: ++ change in union density rates is larger than +20 per cent; + change in union density rate is larger than +5 per cent, but not larger than +20 per cent; -- change in union density rate is larger than -20 per cent; - change in union density rate is larger than -5 per cent, but not larger than -20 per cent; = change in union density rate is not larger than ±5 per cent. The trend is calculated on the basis of a 10-year period. If the number of years is shorter, trend scores are adjusted accordingly. For the degree of union density I have used Western's (1996) criteria.

Source: World Labour Report 1997-98. International Labour Organization

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Data are reported on Table 2.1 on changes in union density for twenty OCDE countries between 1985 and 1995. While countries such as Australia (-26.6%), the United States (-21.1%), Germany (-17.6%) or France (-37.2%) suffered losses of two digits in union density, Spain (+62.1), Finland (+16.1%) and Sweden (+8.7%) gained new union members. Both Sweden and Finland are countries with long social-democratic traditions and historically strong labor movements, but not Spain.

Like in other postindustrial societies Spain's union membership has increased in the public sector. Currently 30-35 percent of union members held government and public employment. In larger public and private firms with a more homogeneous occupational structure and a higher percentage of skilled workers and a lower number of temporary recruits, union density is relatively high. Whereas in smaller firms with a fragmented group of wage earners and in the services sector —where more women and temporary workers are employed— union membership is the lowest (Meer, 1997; Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

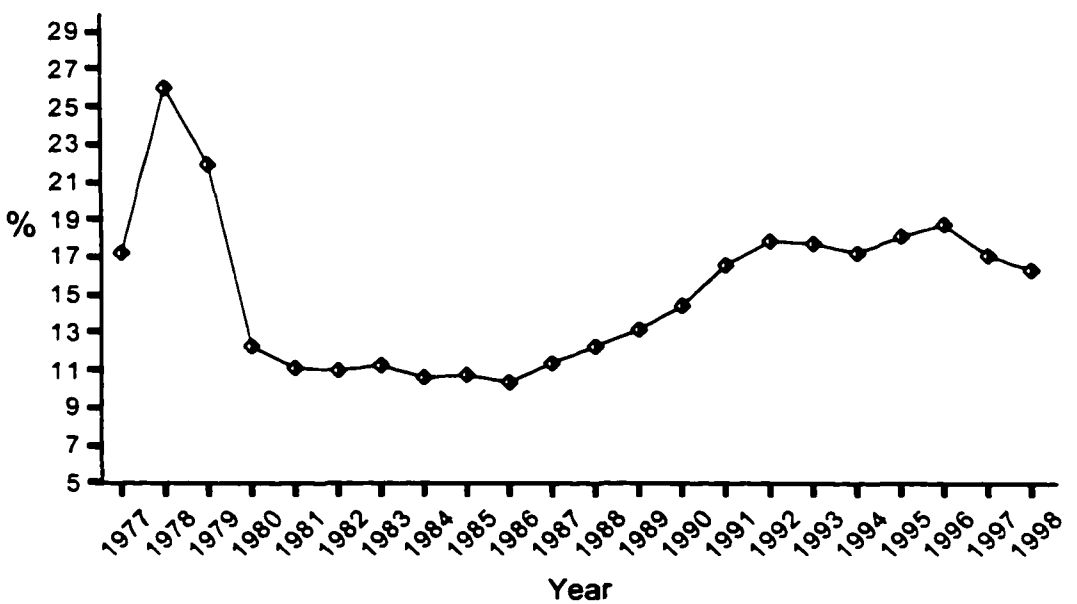
Apart of size of the enterprise the other variable with greater influence on union density is job seniority (Pérez Yruela, 1997). Therefore, "affiliation is higher for those who have held their posts for longer time, mainly more than ten years, and for those working in enterprises with more than 250 employees (Ibid. 1997, 10)." Furthermore, there are significant variations in union density across the employment and occupational structure. In some sectors such as communications and transportation it tends to be high (almost 45%), in public administration and banking it is between 30 and 35 percent (Tuchszirer and Vincent, 2000), while in small private firms is less than 10 percent.

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Survey research has found union density to be lower among unskilled workers and almost nonexistent among those wage earners holding temporary work contracts (Taboadela, 1993). Temporary workers have to deal with the anti-union culture of many small firms, the lack of voting rights in works council elections, the absence of social and cultural exposure to trade unions (that are not present in those firms), and union strategies that have tended to favor the interest of the permanent workers over the temporary employees (Miguélez, 1999; Richards and García de Polavieja 1997).

Analyzing union density, Jancit Jordana (1996) focuses on how a major increase in Spanish trade union membership occurred during the late 1980s and the early 1990s. After a peak in 1978 unions experienced a continuous decline in members until the mid-1980s, when the situation turned the other way around.

**Figure 2.1 Union density in Spain 1977-1998.**




Source: Jordana (1996) & Miguélez (1998, 1999)

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The first period examined (from 1977 to 1981) by Jordana consists of the foundation years of the democratic union movement. During the late 1970s and early 1980s this researcher found intense fluctuations of workers entering and leaving the unions. In this short period of time one can see both the highest and lowest union density rates among all the periods analyzed.

Decline in union membership was from 28 percent in 1978 to 12 percent in 1981, meaning that the unions lost more than half of their members in less than five years. Although an economic crisis did strike Spain between 1978 and 1984, Jordana indicates that economic variables alone could not fully explain the process. Let stress that this was a period of fast political changes and the unions lacked stable organizational resources, as Robert Fishman (1990) did find in his research. At that time new labor legislation was being enacted (The Workers' Statute of 1980) which defined unions as the legal representatives of wage earners for collective bargaining and other public issues. Yet, the new law did not provide unions with enough resources needed to build organizational structures.

The second period, from 1981 to 1986, can be characterized by the stabilization of membership figures. The total number of workers unionized slightly surpassed one million, and the union density rate remained around 11-13 percent. During the early 1980s structural changes in the labor market were very intense given that the Socialist government had undertaken a severe restructuring of traditional industries (steel, shipbuilding). In that context unemployment rose from one million to three millions (reaching the highest rate in Europe) and the number of wage earners decreased by 1 million. Other changes in the structure of production and the breaking down into smaller units of many large companies

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—that were trade union strongholds— may also account for the drop in union membership (Jordana, 1996: 217-8).

The third period analyzed (1986 to 1994) is the time when the surprising rise of union membership occurred. Until 1992 there was an annual average of 10 percent of increase in union density, union membership doubling from one million to more than two million workers. Although there were variations in intensity this union membership rise involved all Spain's regions and economic sectors. Regression analysis done by Jordana shows a strong correlation between the evolution of membership and the growth in number of employed workers *(R= 0.91)*. Also he found a strong relationship between union growth and the reduction of unemployment (Jordana, 1996: 218-9).

Data reported by Ebbinghaus and Visser's (1998) suggest that union membership in Spain for 1995 was near 19 percent, the same figure used by the ILO in its World Labour Report for 1997-98. Agreeing with this source, Miguélez (1999) states that union density for 1995 was around 18 percent of all the active population.

**Table 2.2 Union membership in Spain 1997.**

| *Organization* | *Number* | *Percent* |
|---|---|---|
| CC.OO | 790,000 | 35.2 |
| UGT | 775,000 | 34.4 |
| ELA/STV | 82,000 | 3.6 |
| USO | 80,000 | 3.5 |
| CIG | 40,000 | 1.8 |
| Others | 482,400 | 21.4 |
| Total | 2, 249,400 | 100% |

Source: Brouwer (1999: 51).

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Other data for the period 1995-1998 indicate that union density stabilized around 17-18 percent in 1996 but decreased to a little more than 16 percent in 1998. The reason for this slight decline was due to the increase of the employed population after 1997. The unions did not lose more members, but they were not very successful in attracting new ones while the number of wage earners continued to increase. [1] In 1997 the total union membership (as declared by the main union organizations, see Table 2.2 above) had risen to nearly 2,250,000 affiliates. Considering that unemployment was still relatively high, and that temporary jobs accounted for a third of the jobs in the labor market, the unions' recovery of members between the late 1980s and mid-1990s was really significant.

Other factors should be taken into consideration regarding the process of change in union membership. Spain has experienced a progressive decline of traditional industries accompanied by the rise of smaller workplaces, the growth of the services sector, the increasing privatization of public industries and the deregulation of the labor market. I have examined in the previous chapter how Spain's class structure and the composition of the workforce have changed. During the past two decades the increase of women's participation in the labor force has been higher than ever before.

All these changes do have implications for trade unions that traditionally have represented full-time male workers with secure relatively well-paid jobs. A survey from 1988 revealed that the majority of union members in Spain were skilled middle-aged males, with manufacturing jobs and hired through permanent contracts in large or medium size firms (Milner and Nombela, 1995). Trade unions have pursued strategies for organizing and representing the non-

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traditional employees, such as women and the workers with temporary jobs. Women and workers on fixed-term contracts are likely to be associated with relatively lower wages. A comparative research of union behavior in several sectors done in five European countries (Rigby, Smith and Lawlor, 1999) suggests that Spanish unions had sought to integrate new groups of workers such as women, part-time employees, temporary staff and white collar *cadres*. However, this study concluded that the unions had not developed a clear strategy on how to represent these groups of wage earners.

Policy-oriented documents from both UGT and CC.OO. show their awareness of the danger of being left with a declining industrial base of membership and of the need to develop appropriate policies in relation to the services sector, white collar workers, women, young people and employees in small firms (Rigby and Lawlor 1994). Considering that in Spain 95 percent of all the workplaces/enterprises have less than 50 employees, these are key issues for the union movement.

Other observers suggest that Spanish unions are losing the image of institutions that only represent male, manual, industrial workers and are acquiring one more suitable to the complex labor and social realities of today. According to Miguélez (1998, 1999) female union membership has risen, though it is still below the rate of participation of women in the labor market. Besides, more skilled and technical employees are joining unions, though this phenomenon is to be found mostly in the public sector. While a relative high number of qualified and technical employees in the public sector tend to join the class-based unions (UGT and CC.OO.), in the private sector they tend to join the professional associations of their sector or category (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003).

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In his comparative research Bruce Western (1996) examines the gender gap in unionization rates between men and women across advanced capitalist countries. This sociologist writes that: "in countries for which data are available, unionization is higher among men than among women, except in Sweden and Finland (Ibid. 1996:126)." In those countries, accordingly, women jobs are concentrated in services and public employment, areas where Scandinavian unions enjoy high-density rates. Women's employment is also high in these sectors in Spain with the difference that unions lack the organizational resources of the Swedish or Finish labor movements.

Regarding women who have joined unions no official data are available. However, according to Milner and Nombela (1995), small professional unions tend to have a higher proportion of women, white-collar and administrative workers than the CC.OO. or the UGT. In a research that examines this question Marc van der Meer (1997) points out that in the early 1990s the share of female members in CC.OO. was 22 percent of all members, the same in USO, and around 25 percent in UGT. For the nationalist unions the picture was somehow better. While in ELA-STV (the Basque nationalist union) 26 percent of union members were women in Galicia the CIG's affiliation consisted of 60 percent men and 40 percent women. In the early 1990s, Spain's female union membership fluctuated between twenty and twenty-five percent (Meer 1996: 320). This assessment coincides with data reported by Jordana (1996) who concluded that about 25 percent of the overall union membership in Spain was made up of female members.

Basing her estimates on a large survey carried out in 1991, Taboadela (1993) points out that while the general union density was 14-15 percent, when

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broken down by gender, women membership did account for less than 10 percent and that of men was a little more than 16 percent of the labor force. Women union membership in Spain was similar to that of France but lower than Italy (Andolfatto and Labbé, 2000) where unions had increased their share of female members since the 1980s.

As a final point, during the late 1990s the percentage of women among union members increased. Specifically this was found by a survey-based research studying the CONC (the Catalan branch of CC.OO.). In this regional organization 28 percent of the affiliates are women, a modest increase from the 24 percent reported by a previous study completed in 1992 (Alós et al. 2000).

Evidence allows us to say that during the 1990s Spanish unions developed "adaptive responses" to deal with the new challenges posed by a socially and economically fragmented working class. Within that context, the unions engaged in a process of organizational and ideological modernization to face social and cultural challenges in the context of a global European order (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). Regarding the situation of women and young people, Spanish unions have pursued two courses of action. The first has been to bring into the bargaining table issues affecting jobs and the quality of life of low paid workers (women and temporary ones) seeking to make the employment conditions of these groups as similar as possible to those of the rest of the secure employees. The second has been to put more emphasis on the creation of new organizational structures to recruit women, temporary recruits sand young workers.

Finally, while sociological studies on the social influence of trade unions tend to focus heavily on union membership as the basic component of union strength, in Spain one need to consider other forms of workers' representation

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too. In this case union membership represents only one of several dimensions of union's strength, the two others are workers' support for unions' collective actions and the degree of electoral support that class-based unions receive in the election of works councils (number of delegates elected in union slates).

## II. Works councils and social representation

During the two decades comprised between 1980 and 2000 the UGT and the CO.OO. consolidated their social hegemony in terms of both, the number of union affiliates and the amount of delegates elected under their names to the works councils. Though UGT and CC.OO. are at the national level the dominant organizations, in regions such as Galicia and the Basque country several nationalist labor unions persist.

As I signaled in the previous section the two larger labor organizations account for 70 percent of the unionized workers while the percentage of delegates elected through their "slates" in works council elections was close to 75 percent of the total during the recent electoral period (1996-1999).

The number of representatives obtained in works council elections is a key factor to determine the legitimacy and the *representativeness* of trade unions for the purposes of collective bargaining and employees' representation. Results is works council elections (see Table 2.3 next page) make obvious why UGT and CC.OO. are the most representative national labor organizations. Union membership figures, although important to assess the social base of the organizations, don't determine the legal status of unions in Spanish society.

In spite of the relative low level of union affiliation wage earners do have a voice in unions' affairs through their participation in works council elections.

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Elected delegates unconnected to organized unions, that in the first elections held in 1978 were 18 percent of the total, have progressively diminished to less than 4 percent in 1994. It seems that the support for independent and professional unions had augmented at the end of the 1990s (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003) but candidates supported by the class-based unions were still the most voted. It is also worth noting that the number of workers involved in works council elections has increased despite that fact that workplaces with fewer than 6 salaried workers are excluded from the process.

**Table 2.3 Works council elections: distribution of delegates in percentages.**

| Year | Elected Delegates | UGT | CC.OO. | USO | Nationalist Unions ‡ | Others # | Non-Unions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1978** | 193,112 | 21.7 | 34.4 | 3.9 | 1.0 | 20.9 | 18.1 |
| **1980** | 164,617 | 29.3 | 30.9 | 8.7 | 3.4 | 11.9 | 15.7 |
| **1982** | 140,770 | 36.7 | 33.4 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 8.7 | 12.1 |
| **1986** | 162,298 | 40.9 | 34.5 | 3.8 | 4.0 | 10.0 | 7.6 |
| **1990** | 237,261 | 42.0 | 36.9 | 2.9 | 4.7 | 7.1 | 3.8 |
| **1994** | 203,804 | 34.7 | 37.8 | 5.0 | 6.6 (1) | 12.3 | 3.6 |
| **1996-99•** | 243,424 | 36.7 | 37.7 | – | 6.4 | – | – |

Source: Spain's Ministry of Labor.

• 1996-99 figures are estimates. Source for UGT and CC.OO. is the Secretary of Organization of CC.OO.. For nationalist unions the sources used are; official statistics for works council elections provided by the Basque and the Navarra autonomous communities. For Galicia the source is UGT.

# Results in this column include enterprise unions, and professional organizations.
‡ Election results at the regional level in the Basque autonomous community and in Galicia for the nationalist unions:
1980: ELA-STV (25.6 %), INTG (17,5 %)
1982: ELA-STV (30.2 %), INTG (18.9 %)
1986: ELA-STV (34.4 %), INTG (10.4 %), CXTG (10.5 %)
1990: ELA-STV (37.5 %), CIG (22.5 %) |CIG is the merger of INTG and CXTG in 1990.|
1994: ELA-STV (40.2 %) LAB (15.6 %) CIG (26.3 %)
1996-99: ELA-STV (40.%) LAB (16.%), CIG (25.2 %).
(1) Delegates elected by the radical nationalist Basque unions LAB have been added to nationalist unions after 1994.

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Though candidates for the works council don't need to be union nominees most of them get elected under unions' slates. The percentage of delegates obtained by trade unions determines representativeness across the sector, region or the entire country. Solely those unions that obtain at least 10 percent of the total number of elected delegates are considered to be representative at the specific level of action, (national, sectoral, or company level). In the autonomous communities (regional/territorial dimension) the electoral minimum to gain "representativeness" is 15 percent of the total.

Works councils are defined by law as the unitary organs of representation of workers at the level of the firm. Labor legislation also regulates the functioning of union sections *(secciones sindicales)* in the enterprise. Hence, there is a dual system of representation in the Spanish system of labor relations (Escobar, 1995), one based on works councils the other on union organizations. Yet unions do have a real control on the internal dynamic of works councils and implement their union policies in the workplace mostly through them (Escobar, 1995).

Several scholars suggest that the works councils, —legally independent from the trade unions— have been "unionized" (Miguélez, 1991, 1999; Hamann 1998). In relatively large firms (over 250 employees) one may find that the local union leaders, —the main organizational resources of the union section— tend to be the same people who have been elected delegates to the works council. [2] In most medium and small workplaces, where unions lack organizational structures, the social dynamic is different. In those workplaces where unions' local sections don't exist, the only channel for workers' representation is the works council. [3]

The historical origin of works councils is linked to the last period of the Francoist regime (1959-1975), a time characterized by the economic liberalization

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of Spain. Then labor regulations were loosened through the introduction of a state-controlled system of collective bargaining (Amsden, 1972) and by assigning a limited role as negotiating agents to the works councils, at that time called *jurados de empresa* (enterprise boards).

Balfour (1989) and Maravall (1978) examine how these workplace institutions turned out to be penetrated by anti-Franco militants that through their participation in the *jurados de empresa* created the basis for the rebirth of democratic unions such as *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) during the last years of the dictatorship.

Throughout the transition to democracy, and after the approval of the new post-Franco Constitution in 1978, labor reforms granted collective bargaining autonomy to the workers' representatives. Within the new system of labor relations workers' unions and employers' associations came to life, and state intervention was limited by reforming the system of works councils inherited from the Franco's regime. Their previous name *Jurados de Empresa* was changed to *Comites de Empresa*. The new law extended the realm of works councils from enterprises with more than fifty employees to those with at least ten workers. In smaller workplaces (less than 50 workers) the employee representatives are called *Delegados de Personal* (staff delegates) though they play the same institutional role carried out by works councils' delegates (Escobar, 1995; Führer-Ries, 1996).

The system of interest representation established in post-Franco Spain has concentrated most of the wage earners' representation in the hands of the two larger national union confederations, CC.OO. and UGT. However, at the regional level, there are three trade unions with the same recognized rights in their specific domains: the Basque Workers' Solidarity (ELA/STV) and, since 1994, also LAB in

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the Basque region, and the *Convergencia Intersindical Gallega,* (CIG) in Galicia. In the works council elections held in both autonomous communities during 1996-99 the support for the nationalist unions was relatively high.

**Table 2.4 Delegates elected in works council elections in the Basque Country and Navarra (1996-99).**

| *Unions* | *Basque Country* | | *Navarra* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Num.* | *%* | *Num.* | *%* |
| ELA-STV | 6,781 | 40.1 | 1.014 | 19.9 |
| CC.OO | 3,031 | 17.9 | 1,094 | 21.5 |
| LAB | 2,709 | 16.0 | 673 | 13.2 |
| UGT | 2,633 | 15.5 | 1,660 | 32.6 |
| USO | 313 | 1.9 | 50 | 1.0 |
| Others | 1424 | 8.6 | 598 | 11.8 |
| Total | 16,921 | 100.0 | 5,089 | 100.0 |

Source: Basque Autonomous Government. Dept. of Labor Relations.

Table 2.4 is based on the results obtained by labor unions in the elections held in the province of Navarra and in the Basque country. The reason to include Navarra in the table is that historically Basque nationalists have claimed Navarra to be part of *Euskadi* (Basque region). The Basque nationalist unions (ELA-STV and LAB) participate in the works council elections held in that province and ELA-STV holds the status of "representative union" there since it won more than 15 percent of the total of elected delegates required at that level (the region).

While in Navarra both nationalist unions won around 30 percent of the delegates, in the Basque autonomous community the results obtained made the nationalist unions the hegemonic labor organizations. Together ELA-STV and

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LAB won more than fifty percent of the works council delegates while UGT and CC.OO. gathered around thirty percent of the total.

On the other region in which the dominant role of UGT and CC.OO. is being challenged by a nationalist union the situation is not alike. In Galicia the nationalist union CIG won around 25 percent of the delegates (as Table 2.5 shows) while the class-based unions (UGT and CC.OO.) obtained the majority.

**Table 2.5 Delegates elected in works council elections in Galicia (1996-99).**

| *Unions* | *Delegates* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Num.* | *%* |
| CIG | 4,182 | 25.2 |
| CC.OO | 4,797 | 28.9 |
| UGT | 5,541 | 33.4 |
| USO | 563 | 3.4 |
| Others | 1,518 | 9.1 |
| Total | 16,601 | 100.0 |

Source: UGT-Galician Regional Federation

In Catalonia, —the other Spanish region distinguished by its strong cultural and political nationalism— regional unions did not flourish because the dominant class-based organizations, particularly CC.OO., were capable to "encompass nationalist claims and solidaristic class compromises (Jordana and Nagel, 1998: 98)" in a successfully way avoiding the emergence of nationalist competitors.

In contrast, in the Basque country ELA-STV has a long history and important social roots in civil society. This nationalist union with the name of "Solidarity of Basque Workers-*Eusko Langilleen Alkartasuna*" was founded in 1911 by activists from the PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) inspired by social Christian labor

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ideals. Originally ELA-STV defended Catholicism, Basques traditionalist values and social harmony between classes. After its Second Congress in 1933, its ideology progressively changed becoming a more radical trade union. During the Spanish civil war, ELA-STV supported the republican forces against Franco. After the defeat of the Second Republic in the civil war, ELA-STV worked clandestinely against Franco's dictatorship (Mees, 1998).

Today ELA-STV is the main trade union in the Basque region and it has more members than the rest of unions altogether in the autonomous province. Politically associated with the moderate PNV it had supported the Basque autonomy statute until recently when it moved toward a stronger nationalist position. The ELA-STV argues that the Basque statute needs to be reformed given that it has not created a really autonomous labor relations system in *Euskadi*. In the early 1990s it joined LAB, a pro- independence union linked to radical nationalist groups, in the struggle to obtain a new political status for the Basque country. Both organizations want the Basque's labor relations system to operate independently from Spain's labor laws.

Significant political differences exist between the Basque nationalist unions (ELA-STV and LAB) and the two largest national organizations, UGT and CC.OO., which disagree with the proposed idea of the regional decentralization of bargaining systems the way nationalist unions want.

In Galicia, where the UGT is the largest union, *Convergencia Intersindical Gallega* (CIG) occupies the third place, behind CC.OO. in the number of works council representatives elected under its name. The CIG was created after the merging in 1990 of the *Intersindical Nacionalista de Trabajadores Gallegos* (INTG) and the *Confederación General de Trabajadores Gallegos* (CXTG). It is considered a nation-

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alist left of center union with looses political ties to the *Bloque Nacionalista Galego* BNG (Galician Nationalist Bloc) the largest nationalist political organization in the region.

Political nationalism in Galicia is less intense than in the Basque region. Inside the BNG and the CIG, however, minority factions might want to push their organizations toward independence. But the organizations' priorities are the improvement of the economic situation of Galicia (one of the poorest regions of Spain) and changing the restrictive linguistic policy defended by the actual *Xunta* (Galician Autonomous Government) controlled by the *Partido Popular*. Instead, the moderate nationalist organizations would like a policy centered on promoting the public use of the Galician language in everyday life.

As a final point, Mess (1998) suggests that the reason why the Basque trade union movement is stronger than the Galician one is because the ELA-STV was the early creation of a relatively strong nationalist party. By the contrary, in other regions the nationalists' involvement with the labor movement "came too late, when the workers' affinities had been settled by other unions (Jordana and Nagel, 1998: 98)." In that sense the Galician nationalist union movement is a recent creation, a product of a socio-cultural environment in which political nationalism lacks the intensity and the social support that other peripheral nationalisms incite in Spain (Gunther et al., 1986: chapter nine).

## III. Social influence and public opinion on labor unions

Several scholars affirm that the union movement that exists in Spain should be characterized as a form of voters' trade unionism rather than a membership-based labor movement (Martínez-Lucio 1998; Miguélez, 1991, 1999; Ha-

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mann, 1998). Despite workers' strong identification with the labor organizations and their support for union candidates in works council elections solely a minority of the wage earners join unions. This is a problem that also affects elected works council delegates and a relatively high proportion of them are non-union members. For example, about 40 percent of the delegates elected in 1986 under the UGT's name were not union members at the time of their election (Bouza et al., 1989). In addition, another source indicates that at the end of the 1980s nearly 24 percent of all UGT works council delegates were not union members (Milner and Nombela, 1995: 19). More recently (in 2000) a survey of delegates elected under the sponsorship of CC.OO. found that around 10 percent of its works council representatives had not joined the union yet (CC.OO., 2000 b). This phenomenon of works council delegates who are not union members is prevalent in small firms, where unions lack effective presence.

Faustino Miguélez (1991, 1999) conceptualizes the trade union model established after the return of democracy as one based on "political delegation" with a feeble organizational base. Spanish civil society is relatively weak and the citizens' low social and political involvement in public institutions is related to a political culture of "delegated participation." Not only the labor unions but political parties and other voluntary associations as well, tend to have low numbers of affiliates. Trade union leaders are aware of the necessity to increase membership and have been searching for strategies to strengthen their social ties with the non-affiliated workers that they represent in collective bargaining (Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

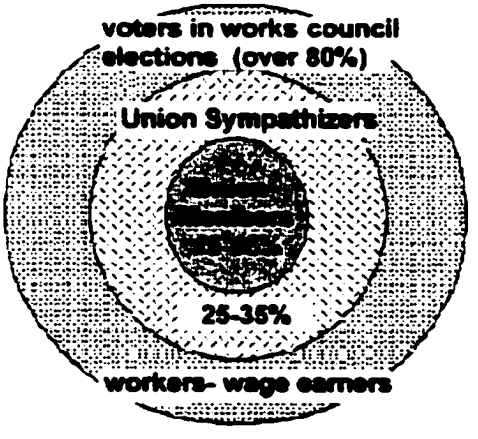
According to Pérez Díaz (1993), trade unions must to do something to avoid a potential "crisis of representation." Even when union candidates attain

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strong support in works council elections, and their representative status is widely recognized, unions' social presence in the daily dynamic of the workplace is not well extended (Alós and Lope 1991; Lope and Alós, 1999). To attract the under-represented wage earners, (women, youth and white-collar employees), unions should invest more resources in the workplace. They should turn their attention away from macro national bargaining processes and center their attention on the micro dynamics of the firm by developing a "new culture of the workplace" and expanding their involvement in the internal functioning of the enterprise (Pérez Díaz, 1999).

Following this observer's analysis one can say that the sphere of social influence of labor unions is composed of a series of concentric circles "in which the intensity of influence is in inverse proportion to the distance from the core of that organization (Pérez-Díaz, 1993: 268)."

**Figure 2.2 Spheres of unions' influence.**




The union membership (or core) composed by 15-16 percent of the wage earners is just the center of an extended network of social and personal commitments that vary according to many factors. Figure 2.2 illustrates how the range of

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unions' support goes from the core of activists (union militants), passing through the inactive paying due members and union sympathizers (some of whom may had been dues-paying members at some point) and ending in a periphery of workers who don't join formal organizations but support union candidates in works council elections. In contrast to the number of union members and the percentage of voters in works council elections, we don't have exact figures on union sympathizers. What one can say about this volatile group is based on survey research, analyses on strikes and other forms of collective action.

Scholars who have studied changes in unions' internal dynamics affirm that a "revolving door" phenomenon accounted for large fluctuations in union membership during the 1980s. Recently, in a study of the Catalan federation of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), it was found that 50 percent of the members surveyed who had joined the organization before 1992 were not longer affiliated in 1998 (Alós et al. 2000: 103). This phenomenon helps to explain the shifting relationship between unions and workers and the formation of a large area of intense unions' influence that has been called the "floating affiliation". Former members feel that they still belong to the organization even after they have stopped paying union dues. This occurrence may explain why surveys on the subject usually report a union density rate much higher than the figures derived from internal union sources. According to Jordana: "between 5 percent and 10 percent of the total of all wage earners, without being paying members, felt themselves to be members of unions (Ibid. 1996 : 218) ." Understandably ,"informal members" are strongly supportive of union goals and actions. The study on the Catalan federation of CC.OO. found that there was a significant percentage of members (around 20%) who frequently moved between the two categories of "dues-

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paying" and "non-paying" affiliates (Alós et al., 2000). Maybe this is the reason why union membership in Spain is not simply reflected in those who pay union dues and the so-called sympathizers (around 25-35 percent) must be taken in consideration when trying to explain the degree of social influence of unions.

On this subject available surveys report different figures. Victor Pérez Díaz (1993: 269) has calculated 20 percent of union sympathizers among wage earners in 1978 and 34 percent in 1984 that in his opinion reflected the decrease of active union members during that period. In 1978 the ratio of member to sympathizers was lower since union density rate was higher, while the contrary occurred in 1984 (less union members and more sympathizers). In the early 1990s (when union density rate had increased in comparison to 1984) the number of union sympathizers was about 25 percent of the workforce. For Obdulia Taboadela (1993: 501) this group might be divided in a larger share of almost 22 percent of sympathizers for UGT and CC.OO., and less than 4 percent for the other organizations. Considering that in the early 1990s the combined membership of UGT and CC.OO. was around 12 percent of the total wage earners, one can say that together the class-based unions "represented" (members + sympathizers) more than 30 percent of Spain's salaried population.

Basing his analysis on public opinion data Gutiérrez (1994) points out that the degree of social sympathy for unions was more than 25 percent among wage earners in 1990. He calculates the level of sympathy for labor unions around 50 percent of the total salaried population (Ibid. 1994: 8).

Table 2.6 (next page) shows that in 1990 the degree of sympathy for labor unions had increased more than 15 percent in comparison to six years earlier. These figures, however, should be handled with caution; probably the data in-

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clude both members as well as union sympathizers. It would be safer to say that the number of union sympathizers is around the range of 25-35 percent of the labor force instead of a higher one.

Besides the degree of sympathy enjoyed by the workers' organizations, researchers say that during the period 1987 to 1996 Spanish unions regained lost social support while their public images improved considerably. While in 1980 unions were the social institutions with the lowest degree of confidence among Spanish citizens (only 31% said that they trusted trade unions) in the early 1990s the degree of public trust had increased to almost forty percent among the surveyed population (Zaldivar and Castells, 1992: 41). These positive changes in public images reflected how UGT and CC.OO. had reshaped their identities and strategies after the general strike of 1988. After this historical event both organizations actively become more cooperative among themselves both in union actions and in the coordination of collective bargaining agendas.

**Table 2.6 Public sympathy *by occupational strata* for labor unions (%).**

| *Social Strata and Occupational groups* | *1984* | | | | *1990* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | UGT | CC.OO | Others | Total | UGT | CC.OO | Others | Total |
| Middle-level technical employees *(cadres)* | 13.8 | 11.6 | 12.3 | 37.7 | 20.0 | 22.6 | 14.4 | 57.0 |
| Administrative Personnel/services | 16.4 | 8.2 | 5.6 | 30.2 | 23.3 | 18.8 | 8.6 | 50.7 |
| Skilled workers | 17.5 | 15.3 | 5.5 | 38.3 | 30.0 | 20.1 | 6.8 | 56.9 |
| Unskilled workers | 13.3 | 15.2 | 4.0 | 32.5 | 26.3 | 21.3 | 3.5 | 51.1 |
| Total wage earners | 15.5 | 13.0 | 6.1 | 34.6 | 26.2 | 20.5 | 6.7 | 53.4 |
| (N) | 2,604 | | | | 2,895 | | | |

Source: CIS, Studies 1401 & 1870.

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Several surveys completed at that time asked the citizenry to assess the degree of trade unions' influence and power in Spain. According to Serrano del Rosal (2000: 163) more than 30 percent of the respondents to a national survey done in 1994 believed that the unions had increased their power and influence since the mid-1980s. However, many Spaniards believed that unions did not have the power and influence that they really deserved.

Table 2.7 reports data collected by several polls. While in 1994 about 41 percent indicated that unions lacked power and influence less than 20 percent of the surveyed citizens stated that Spanish unions were too powerful.

**Table 2.7 Public opinion on unions' power and influence.**

| *Do you think that the power and influence of the labor unions are?* | *1987* | *1988* | *1989* | *1994* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greater than what they should have | 13% | 20% | 15 % | 18 % |
| Appropriate power/influence | 20% | 20% | 24% | 29 % |
| Less than what they should have | 38% | 31% | 31% | 41% |
| Don't know /Not answer | 29% | 29% | 30% | 13% |
| (N) | 2,454 | 3,366 | 2,463 | 5,959 |

Source; CIS, Studies 1711, 1773, 1845, 2088.

Attempting to conceptualize the power and influence of Spanish unions is not an easy question. As indicated above unions enjoy a peculiar public status of representativeness based on their electoral support in works council elections and this status allows them to negotiate with employers and to represent wage earners' interests. There is another dimension of unions' influence in society that the scholarly literature defines as the sphere of political influence of unions.

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Strong unions might be able to reshape government's policy according to the interests of their constituencies (workers, wage earners) protecting them from the "commodification logic" of the capitalist market (Esping-Andersen, 1985).

Scholars suggest that the political influence of Spanish unions and their capacity to reshape public policy making have been limited (Hamann, 1994, 1998). Focusing on the process of deregulation of the labor market during the 1980s and early 1990s this researcher concluded that unions' impact on policy-making processes had been minimal. Under the Socialist government rule (1982-1996) the unions could not stop the decline in employment security, the increase of temporary jobs and the implementation of labor market reforms that deregulated work without solving the serious problem of high unemployment. This situation began to change under the "conservative" government of the *Partido Popular* after 1996. Since then the unions (UGT and CC.OO.) have signed several social agreements with the employers and have been engaged in the negotiation of certain aspects of new labor market reforms (Royo, 2002). Referring to the social pact signed by the unions, the employers' representatives and the government in 1997 Hamann stresses that this was "the first time the unions have directly participated in the restructuring of the labor market (Ibid. 1998: 431)." [4]

Regardless of their inadequate political influence survey data confirm that for the Spanish citizenry trade unions are necessary institutions for democracy, though only a relatively low number of citizens are actively connected to them (Pérez-Díaz 1993).

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**Table 2.8 Public opinion on the necessity of labor unions.**

*Do you think labor unions are indispensable to protect the interest of the wage earners/workers?*

| *Answers* | *Upper Class* | *New Middle Class* | *Old Middle Class* | *Skilled Workers* | *Unskilled Workers* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In agreement | 62% | 57% | 55% | 66% | 68% | 62% |
| Don't agree either disagree | 16% | 20% | 21% | 16% | 14% | 17% |
| In disagreement | 19% | 20% | 18% | 16% | 13% | 17% |
| Don't answer | 3% | 3% | 6% | 2% | 5% | 3% |

Source: CIS, study 2088 (1994).

Overall, the majority of respondents to a national poll believe that labor unions are still an essential collective instrument for the defense of the wage earners' interests. Data reported in Table 2.8 (above) confirm that all the strata surveyed shared this view, though positive opinions were somehow stronger among the skilled and unskilled workers.

In Spain, like in most capitalist societies, trade unions are the organizations that negotiate on behalf of the wage earners. At the level of the firm they do that through the works councils, while at the national and the sectoral (industry) level, unions play a key role negotiating working conditions for most wage earners (around 80% are covered by collective bargaining agreements).

## IV. Collective bargaining and interest representation.

From a sociological perspective collective bargaining should be understood as the process through which the "web of rules" that govern employment relations are agreed to by the actors involved in the dealing. In capitalist society workers and employers come to a basic understanding that permits them to en-

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gage into what Jelle Visser calls "conflictual cooperation (Ibid. 1996: 14)." The bargaining process presupposes that the parties engaged would negotiate in good faith and depending of the country's tradition of industrial relations the state may regulate in lesser or greater measure certain aspects related to the dynamic of the labor market.

After World War II, —the golden age of industrial capitalism— collective bargaining became the major instrument of rule-making in employment relations in most of Western Europe and in other advanced societies such as the United States. The outcome of the process, the work contract or collective agreement, establishes a written set of rules that govern the substantive and procedural terms of the employment relationship and define the scope of the relationship between the engaged parties (employers/managers and unions as workers' representatives).

After the end of Spanish Civil War in 1939, and up to the late 1950s, collective bargaining was completely banned. In 1958 a limited system of collective bargaining emerged in which the state maintained a high degree of involvement. In addition, most aspects of the employment relations were codified in a rigid system of *Ordenanzas Laborales* (labor ordinances) that continued to operate until the labor market reform of 1994, when they were completely derogated (Fraile, 1999).

Spain is a country that outlawed strikes and suppressed unions until the mid-1970s. It lacked a pluralistic system of collective bargaining until the return of democracy. Yet, the authoritarian Franco's regime created a compulsory corporatist system of interest representation in firms with more than 50 employees. These corporatist bodies called *jurados de empresa* (headed by the employer or an

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employer's representative) established controlled forms of workers' representation through the official sindicato *vertical* (vertical union), an organic part of the authoritarian corporatist-state. With the passage of time the *jurados de empresa* came to play a real part in representing and defending workers' interests. Therefore, the outlawed trade unions utilized them effectively to extend their own presence in the firms (Amsden, 1972). Despite the regime's repression against workers' leaders, these labor activists formed the basis for the creation of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) one of the two main unions in democratic Spain (Balfour, 1989; Ruiz, 1993).

Between 1977 and the early 1980s Spanish society underwent a peaceful transition to democracy. For the unions and other democratic organizations the priority at the time was the consolidation of the new political regime. In that context, trade unions became involved in a framework of "neo-corporatist pacts" that started in 1977 with the so-called "Moncloa Pacts "*(Pactos de la Moncloa)* that became the blue print for other social pacts signed during that period. This "consensual" framework for labor relations lessened uncertainties created by the political changes and provided institutional legitimacy to the social agents (unions, employers' organizations) in a situation in which the union movement was too fragmented because of interrelated political and social factors that I examine in chapter four.

Researchers argue that the legacy of the centralized negotiations during the first period of neo-corporatist agreements (from 1977 to 1986) was the establishment of a system of collective bargaining detached from the enterprises (Rigby and Lawlor, 1994). At that time most wage negotiations with employers —and in some cases with the state— were concentrated at the unions' top level

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leadership with little consultation to the social bases. This dynamic strengthened the unions' national leadership at the expense of the sector federations and the works councils. At the end, the neo-corporatist experience may have contributed to weaken labor organizations that did not develop stronger workplace's structures (Alós and Lope, 1991).

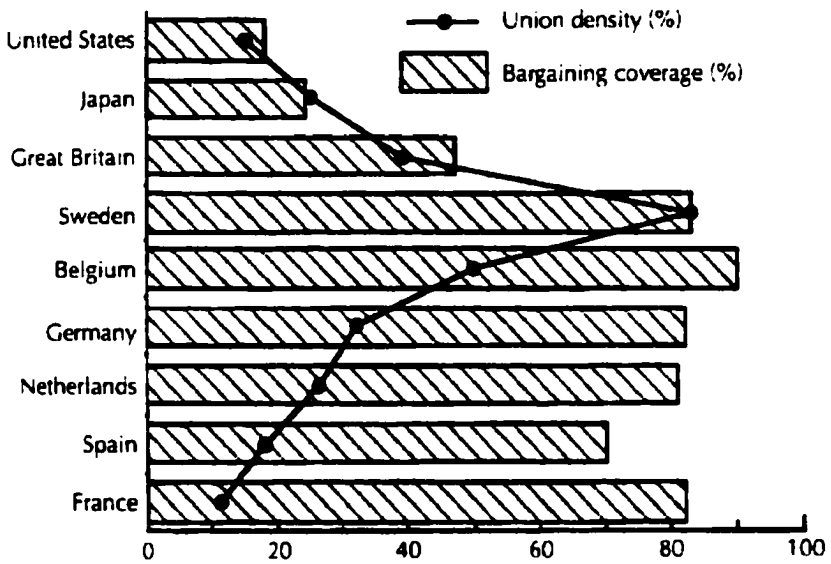
John Elster (1989: 40) notes that "before a union can force or induce workers to join, it must have overcome a free-rider problem in the first place." In Spain, however, there are not too many selective incentives that unions facing the typical collective action problem can offer to non-members since all employees benefit from what unions achieve in collective bargaining agreements regardless of being union members or not. Elster's observation might apply better to the cases of the United States or Great Britain where unions need to achieve a certain level of membership before the employer might agree to bargain with them. However, in Spain the state provides a legal right to representation for all workers who want it, (union members or not) through the works council system. This system of labor representation has undermined the employees' motivation to join unions and seek recognition from employers by weight of numbers. Under such a system of labor relations it sounds perfectly rational to save the cost of union membership since being a union member makes no difference to whether or not a union bargains over the individual's wages and working conditions. A widespread complaint I heard from the trade unionists I interviewed in 1990 was "no need to join because covered anyway." Without doubt this is an important reason why so many workers do not join unions in Spain. [5]

For Milner and Nombela, (1995), union coverage in collective bargaining may be a more appropriate indicator of union strength in Spain than union den-

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sity. According to the authors measuring union strength by weight of membership numbers rests on the assumption that union density translates into procedural and substantive power. In this society, however, this is no the case. Spanish trade unions do have a significant degree of procedural and substantive power through their institutional participation in public agencies and through their role negotiating with employers regardless of their relatively low membership figures.

**Figure 2.3 Bargaining coverage and union density in 1990.**




Source: Van Ruysseveldt and Visser (1996)

Figure 2.3 illustrates how in Spain, as well as in France, Germany and the Netherlands, a significant disparity between union density and the proportion of workers covered by union negotiated collective agreements is the main characteristic of the industrial relations system. In most of these countries collective bargaining coverage in 1990 was near 80 percent of the labor force while union

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membership varied from around 10 percent in the case of France to almost 40 percent in Germany.

Regarding the structure of collective bargaining the academic literature presents two opposite points of view. On the one hand, Hamann (1998) argues that it has been decentralized following a similar pattern to the one found in other Western European countries. This scholar states that the trend reflected the crisis that the unions were experiencing during the last period of the Socialist government rule.

From a different angle, Rigby and Lawlor, (1994) argue that Spain's structure of collective bargaining must be conceptualized as a mixed system with a tendency towards centralization since the evidence they examined did not point towards increasing decentralization. For the period 1987 to 1994, a time in which collective bargaining lacked any nationally social pact constraining pay agreements, according to Rigby and Lawlor:

> "...the percentage of workers covered by company level collective agreements declined from 17.4% to 15.3%. Pay bargaining during this period has been dominated by sectoral agreements either at industry wide or provincial level (80.5% of workers are covered by agreements at provincial or industry wide level). Both trade union confederations have sought to increase the significance of industry wide sectoral agreements at the expense of the provincial level. The weakness of trade unions at company level, particularly within smaller firms, has made it important for them to seek to bind as many companies as possible into industry wide agreements and thus regulate the small and medium sized enterprises (Ibid. 1994: 265)".

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Concerning this issue Perez-Yruela (1997) agrees with the view stated above arguing that the large number of collective agreements had been signed at the sectoral level within the province range while increases in company contracts were lower than other types. A similar perspective is advanced by Martínez-Lucio who says that provincial-sectoral agreements covered more than 4 million workers in 1995 while national agreement covered about 2 million and company contracts covered a little more than a million wage earners (Ibid. 1998: 443).

Martínez-Lucio (1998) stresses on the nature of Spain's firm structure dominated by small enterprises with little unions' presence. Within that context provincial-sectoral agreements are essential for the vast majority of workers employed in those small and medium-size companies without solid structures of representation at the workplace level.

Furthermore, the collective bargaining dynamic varies across the country. While Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and few other regions have stronger well-articulated union structures capable of coordinating effectively different levels of bargaining, that is not the case in regions where unions are weaker. Given the peculiarities of the Spanish system of labor relations, the sectoral-regional agreements cannot be considered the most effective system of collective bargaining (Martínez-Lucio 1998: 445).

Trade unions, principally UGT and CC.OO., have sought the rationalization of the system expecting to move beyond the narrow content (pay and working conditions) that has characterized collective bargaining thus far. A series of labor reforms passed in the 1990s have affected the way unions and employers negotiate agreements introducing a new rationality in the field that

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might increase the unions' capacity to articulate different levels of collective bargaining in a more effective way (Miguélez and Rebollo, 1999: 333).

Until 1994 certain aspects of the employment relation were still regulated by the so-called labor ordinances enacted by the Franco's regime (Fraile, 1999). The ordinances had created a rigid system of labor classifications and made highly difficult for employers to dismiss workers because of economic strife. Many of the labor ordinances' protective aspects were incorporated into the Workers' Statute approved in 1980. The labor reform of 1994 changed it and modified certain aspects of the basic labor law. A larger range of labor issues previously fixed in the legal code —such as duration and pay of certain kind of contracts and the distribution of working time during the year— have become part of the arena for collective bargaining.

According to Fraile (1999: 297) and Martínez-Lucio (1998: 446), the elimination of legal constraints opened the door for what has been termed the "enrichment" of collective negotiations. The content and scope of collective bargaining expanded from traditional questions of pay and working conditions to new areas such as training, work organization, health and safety and the most important of all, some control over temporary recruitment.

In exchange for more "functional flexibility" the unions have demanded less "numeric flexibility" on the part of the employers (Fraile, 1999). This is occurring at the level of the firm where internal labor markets are highly fragmented into those workers with stable jobs and the ones without them. The conversion of temporary contracts into permanent ones (one of the unions' main demands) has resulted in the creation of dual payment scales for old and new employees. Apparently, the unions have accepted two different remuneration

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systems for workers doing the same jobs (Miguélez and Rebollo 1999: 336) as part of the deal with employers to increase the number of permanent workers. Basically the trade-off has been lower entry-level wages in exchange for some job security for the new employees. However, this pro-active employment strategy might undermine the egalitarian ideology of the labor organizations in the long run.

Another significant change after the 1994 labor reform was the greater integration in the unions' bargaining agenda of questions related to the diversity of demands and interests of a highly heterogeneous workforce (Fraile, 1999). In addition, between 1994 and 1999 the structure of collective bargaining experienced significant rationalization regarding the multi-level dimension of labor agreements (CES 2000: 302).

Although the 1994 reform had abolished the *"temporary contract for employment promotion"* —the most widely used of all types of temporary contract in Spain at that time— a second labor reform in 1997 attempted to solve the problem of job insecurity. An amended legal labor framework and a new type of "permanent" contract based on the reduction in the compensation payable for dismissal was introduced in 1997 as part of the new labor reform. This reform was negotiated with the labor unions and the employers' organizations [9] and it initiated a new phase of national agreements and social bargaining (Royo, 2002) under the name of *diálogo social* (social dialogue). In 1999, two years after the agreed labor reform employment had growth by 563,000 permanent jobs and 110,200 temporary jobs, making a total of 673,200 new jobs. Further, unemployment dropped from 22 percent to 17 percent. However, on the whole the rate of temporary employment fell very little, and it was still far higher than the EU av-

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erage (see Table 1.3 and Table 7.4). For the major trade unions (UGT and CC.OO.) the growth in employment and the increase in permanent contracts was a positive sign.

Trade unions argued that changes in their collective bargaining strategies had played a part in the conversion of temporary jobs into permanent ones within the new framework of the 1997 agreement. [7] However, UGT and CC.OO. have been more critical than the employer organization (CEOE), *vis-à-vis* the outcome of the labor reforms negotiated during the 1990s [8] (Royo, 2002). At the beginning of the 21st century the social dialogue between the unions and the employers' organization stalled. Confronted with this impasse in 2001 the PP-led government decided to undertake a new labor reform without the unions' consent but backed by the employers' organization. After its victory in the last general election of 2000 the PP government, — supported by the CEOE— considered imperative to undertake a deeper structural reform involving greater labor market flexibility but the unions did not share the government's priorities.

Given the current high level of temporary employment, (32% of wage earners) the unions' priority is to negotiate agreements that focus on this question. Organized labor has already stated that its main objective endorsing new social pacts is to introduce measures that allow temporary employment to be drastically reduced. [9] Unions claim that the high level of temporary employment weakens the competitiveness of Spanish firms even if, in the short term, it brings greater profits to business.

Refocusing on the structure of collective bargaining , at the end of the 1990s observers have stated that regardless of some important improvement it remained highly fragmented and not well articulated (Miguélez and Rebollo,

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1999; Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003). Though the 1997 agreements on collective bargaining and labor market reform included proposals for greater coordination between levels of bargaining, serious problems have persisted. In this context, the trade unions are seeking a more effective national coordination from above, in an attempt to replace regional-sectoral with national-sectoral bargaining. For the unions it is difficult to apply the content of agreements reached in regional-sectoral bargaining in an employment structure dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises characterized by high levels of precarious employment.

The unions' aim is to reach agreements at the nationwide sectoral level preventing agreements at the company, provincial or regional levels from establishing unfavorable conditions of employment. From this perspective sectoral agreements at a level lower than nationwide must be complementary but in no case offer substandard labor conditions. On the other hand, company 's contracts should be linked to higher-level agreements in a way for bargaining agendas to converge.

Spain's production structure is increasingly versatile and working conditions increasingly diverse depending of industries and type of contracts. Sectoral collective agreements, concluded at provincial level, are largely ineffective in regulating the working conditions of small firms. Trade unions argue that bargaining should focus more on the workplace in order to organize, represent and defend all groups of workers, yet this might be possible only within a solid framework of general working conditions regulated for the entire sector at the national level. Finally, the contents of the labor agreements are increasingly complex particularly for dealing with "flexible management" of the workforce.

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Between 1980 and 1998 the number of workers covered by collective bargaining increased from about five million to around eight million and six hundred thousand wage earners as stated in Table 2.9.

**Table 2.9 Collective Bargaining (1980-1999).**

| Year | *Number of union contracts* | *Workers covered (1,000)* | *Wage Increases (mean)* | *Inflation Index (mean)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 2,564 | 6,069,6 | 15,26% | 15,5% |
| 1981 | 2,694 | 4,435,1 | 13,06% | 14,5% |
| 1982 | 2,305 | 6,262,9 | 12,02% | 14,4% |
| 1983 | 3,655 | 6,226,2 | 11,44% | 12,2% |
| 1984 | 3,796 | 6,181,9 | 7,81% | 11,3% |
| 1985 | 3,834 | 6,131,2 | 7,90% | 8,8% |
| 1986 | 3,790 | 6,275,1 | 8,23% | 8,8% |
| 1987 | 4,112 | 6,867,7 | 6,51% | 5,3% |
| 1988 | 4,096 | 6,864,7 | 6,38% | 4,8% |
| 1989 | 4,302 | 6,993,8 | 7,77% | 6,8% |
| 1990 | 4,595 | 7,623,9 | 8,33% | 6,7% |
| 1991 | 4,848 | 7,821,9 | 7,96% | 5,9% |
| 1992 | 5,010 | 7,922,0 | 7,27% | 5,9% |
| 1993 | 4,749 | 7,737,1 | 5,48% | 4,6% |
| 1994 | 4,581 | 7,502,1 | 3,59% | 4,7% |
| 1995 | 4,827 | 7,605,1 | 3,94% | 4,7% |
| 1996 | 5,028 | 8,128,2 | 3,82% | 3,6% |
| 1997 | 5,040 | 8,365,1 | 2,88% | 2,0% |
| 1998 | 5,071 | 8,592,2 | 2,57% | 1,8% |
| 1999 * | 4,636 | 8,477,1 | 2,44% | 2,4% |

Source: *Gabinete Tecnico, Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO.)*

* Figures for 1999 are partial.

In 1999 around 72 percent of the agreements were negotiated at the company level but only 11 percent of the wage earners were covered at that level. On the other hand, about 51 percent of the workers covered by collective bargaining

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had a regional-sectoral agreement while other types of contracts covered a relatively small part of the workforce (CES, 2000: 298).

During the 1990s the ratio between the number of wage earners covered by company contracts and those under other types went down. In the early 1990s around 15 percent of the workers were affected by collective bargaining done at the company level while other type of working arrangements covered 85 percent of them. At the end of the decade company level agreements had decreased to 11 percent of the covered labor force while workers covered by national or sectoral agreements represented 89 percent of all employees covered by collective bargaining.

Finally, UGT and CC.OO. are the major unions involved in the negotiations of most of the agreements signed with the employers at all levels of collective bargaining.

**Table 2.10 Composition of Collective Bargaining Tables by Sectors (1999).**

| Workers' representatives | Enterprise Agreements | | | | | Sectoral & National Agreements | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Num. Agreements | Covered Wage-earners | | Representatives | | Num. Agreements | Covered Wage-earners | | Representatives | |
| | | Num. | % | Num. | % | | Num. | % | Num. | % |
| CC.OO. | 1,502 | 675,970 | 85.5 | 4,956 | 35.2 | 969 | 6,746,348 | 96.5 | 3,333 | 44.1 |
| UGT | 1,528 | 681,510 | 86.2 | 4,773 | 33.9 | 973 | 6,844,953 | 97.7 | 3,259 | 43.2 |
| Other labor unions | 827 | 554,242 | 70.1 | 2,465 | 17.5 | 333 | 1,955,690 | 28.0 | 856 | 11.3 |
| Independent workers | 739 | 108,098 | 13.7 | 1,907 | 13.5 | 29 | 53,331 | 0.8 | 105 | 1.4 |

Source: CES *Memoria 2000.*

As shown on Table 2.10, in 1999 representatives of UGT and CC.OO. signed agreements at the sectoral and national level that covered around 97 percent of all wage earners affected by collective bargaining. Together these repre-

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sentatives constituted about 90 percent of those entitled to sign sectoral and national agreements. At the level of the firm the presence of UGT and CC.OO. was high but not so overwhelming. At that level, UGT and CC.OO. represented around 85 percent of all workers covered by enterprise agreements. However, at the company level the proportion of wage earners represented by non-union negotiators was close to 14 percent.

The increasing number of "independent" groups of workers engaged in negotiations at the company level is linked to a tendency towards the "individualization" of labor relations in Spain (Miguélez and Rebollo, 1999). Rather than negotiating with works council delegates, or the union representatives, many large firms (specially multinational companies) are "individualizing" labor relations by offering special individual contracts to certain groups of employees and categories of workers and are establishing special "flexible" working conditions separately of the traditional channels of collective bargaining. Closely related to this phenomenon a report on collective bargaining prepared by CC.OO. (2000c) points out that an increase in the number of special firm agreements and company social pacts has occurred without union involvement.

As a final point, during the 1990s, UGT and CC.OO. shared common negotiating agendas based on a policy of wage moderation (see Table 2.9) in exchange for improvements in employment, reduction of subcontracting, more job stability and shorter working hours. [10] And available data on collective bargaining coverage for 1999 indicated that between 80 and 85 per cent of the wage earner population was affected by it (CES 2000: 298).

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## V. Strikes and the institutionalization of industrial conflicts.

I have pointed out that in Spain unions' strength must be conceptualized by focusing simultaneously on the number of affiliates, the unions' electoral support in works council elections, the degree of union sympathy and the union coverage through collective bargaining. One should consider all these dimensions of union action altogether. Another important dimension is the unions' capacity to mobilize workers reflected in collective actions and strike participation. I share Pérez Yruela's opinion when this scholar says that "despite the low level of affiliation, the capacity of unions to mobilize the working population is not as low (Ibid. 1997: 11)."

In sociology some scholars have stated that industrial conflicts are a reflection of the struggle for power over the control of workplace relations. Others have stressed on the importance of institutional factors arguing that strikes would "wither away" as the institutions set up to deal with class conflicts resulting from industrial change become more mature and consolidated. Whereas other sociologists have suggested the likelihood of higher levels of strike activity in countries where political parties representing worker interests have been excluded from government (Andolfatto and Labbé, 2000; Crouch, 1982).

In the late 1950s, during a period of economic restructuring, massive demonstrations and strikes were organized by loose networks of labor activists in the Basque country and in Barcelona, two of the most industrialized regions of Spain at that time. At the end of the dictatorship a new Trade Union Law in 1971 sought to institutionalize industrial conflicts but strike activity and workers' protests continued increasingly until 1975 when Franco died (Meer, 1997).

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During the democratic transition labor unions' organizational weakness did not prevent the workers' frequent use of strike action (Fishman, 1990). Under an emerging system of labor relations, in which collective bargaining procedures were still underdeveloped, strike action was often used to support negotiations around sectoral or provincial wage disputes and most collective actions centered on medium and large firms with fairly strong union presence.

Spain had a relatively high strike rate between 1978 and 1980 after workers were first granted this right. With the exception of the wave of strikes in the late 1970s (after the so-called *Moncloa Pact*), labor disputes declined during those years when a national social pact framed collective bargaining (Royo, 2000, 2002).

**Table 2.11 Working days lost in industrial disputes per 1000 employees (annual averages).**

| *Country* | *1976-80* | *1981-85* | *1986-90* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.2 |
| Denmark | 75.9 | 262.3 | 79.6 |
| France | 152.2 | 65.8 | 34.6 |
| Germany | 44.1 | 43.3 | 4.1 |
| Greece | — | 36 | 126.4* |
| Ireland | 716.1 | 360.6 | 183.7 |
| Italy | 940 | 536.8 | 218.2 |
| Netherlands | 27.8 | 18.7 | 11.2 |
| Spain | 1089.8 | 400.9 | 433.6 |
| Sweden | 220.3 | 36.7 | 121.2 |
| UK | 521.7 | 387.4 | 117.5 |

* only 86-88

Source: Anthony Ferner & Richard Hyman, *Industrial Relations in the New Europe*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992. ( p. xlix).

After the massive general strike of 1988, —and two additional general strikes in 1992 and 1994— a new trend of decline of strike actions and in the in-

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tensity of labor conflicts unfolded. However, the intensity and the length of the conflicts of the late 1980s placed Spain again at the top of the European list (see Table 2.11 on previous page) in strike activity.

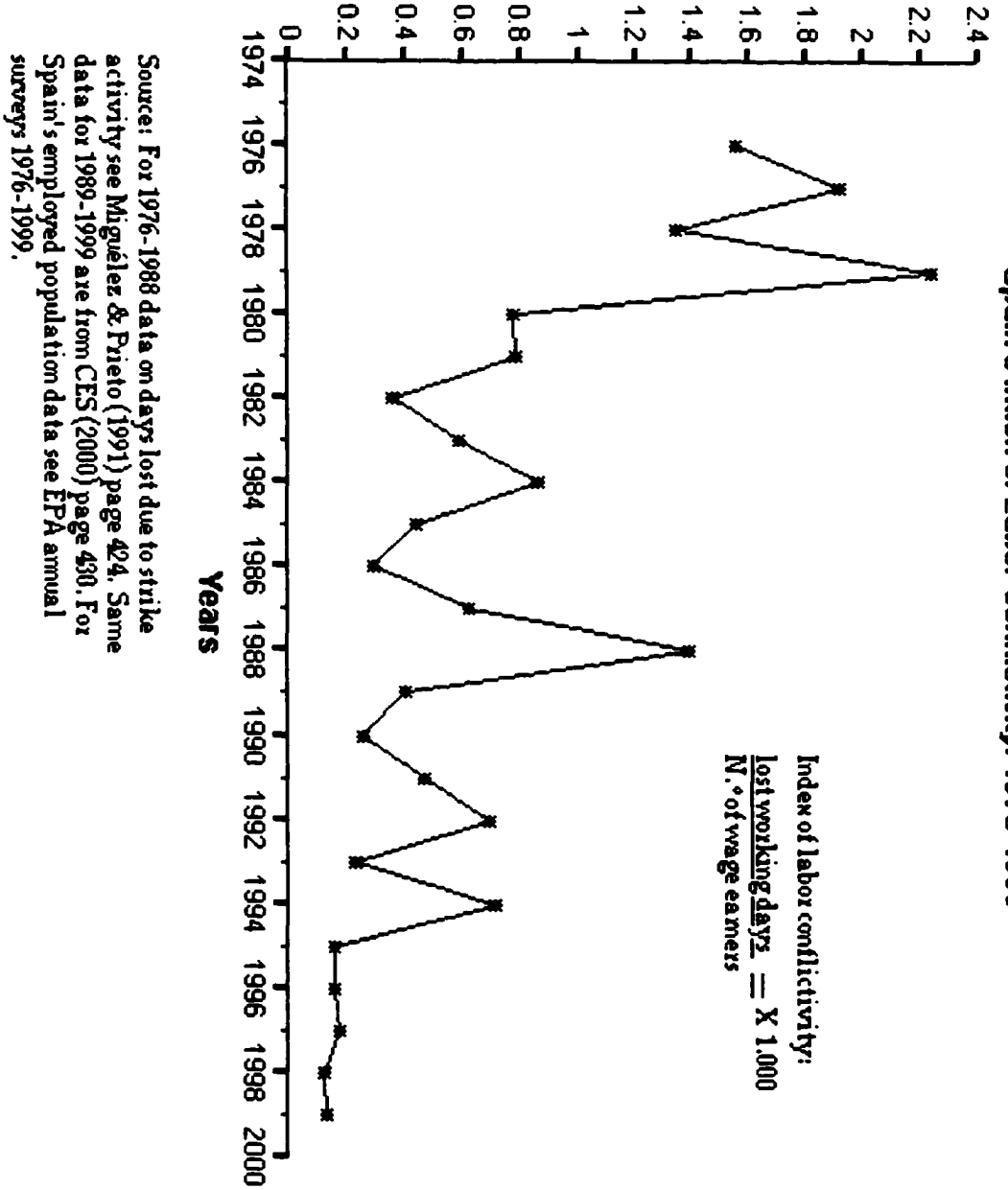
Negotiations between the Socialist government and the trade unions (especially with CC.OO.) were difficult during the early years of Felipe González's government (1982-1986). These difficulties extended to UGT after 1987 when relations between the PSOE and the union entered into a period of crisis (Astudillo, 1998). The conservative PP-led government, on the other hand, sought to negotiate with the trade unions from the beginning of its rule because of its narrow victory in the 1996 election (Royo, 2002).

One can notice on Figure 2.4 (see next page) how industrial conflicts declined after 1996 in contrast to the high number of labor disputes during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the time period in which the PSOE was in power.

Data on industrial disputes plotted on Figure 2.4 suggest that unions employed strikes as a flexible strategy independently of their low affiliation rates. For Hamann (1998) the three general strikes of 1988, 1992, and 1994 illustrate how unions mobilized workers showing considerable popular support that far exceeded union membership. Workers' strike objectives consisted of a balance between issues directly related to union goals and employment issues of relevance to a wider constituency for which the unions were speaking to (Rugby and Lawlor, 1994). The general strikes called by the unions did not attempt to overthrown the government but were collective efforts to challenge government policy on a range of employment and socioeconomic questions.

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**Figure 2.4 Strike activity in Spain (1976-1999).**




Source: For 1976-1988 data on days lost due to strike activity see Miguélez & Prieto (1991) page 424. Same data for 1989-1999 are from CES (2000) page 430. For Spain's employed population data see EPA annual surveys 1976-1999.

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Most strike activity in this country seems to have an external origin (disputes outside the enterprise). This is not surprising given the relative organizational weakness of the labor unions at the firm level. Unions lack organizational structures in small firms and the collective bargaining system based on works councils does not encourage unions to pay more attention to membership recruitment. In that context, in the opinion of some observers, unions' attention is mostly focused on winning elections —rather than in finding new members— and this approach contributes little to strengthen union organization at the firm level (Milner and Nombela, 1995).

Rigby and Marco (1999: 7) point out that most working days are lost in the course of strikes which are short, predictable in terms of timing and length, and represent attempts to apply pressure on the course of multi-employer bargaining processes at the regional, sectoral and national levels. In addition, Martínez-Lucio (1998: 449) states that many strikes occur as an almost "ritualistic accompaniment to the collective bargaining process" reflecting expected union pressure on the employer in the course of negotiations rather than the breakdown of negotiations. Thus, for Rigby and Marco (1999), most strike activity in Spain is relatively institutionalized and is not reflective of industrial conflict specific to the firm but is part of a demonstration at provincial or national / sectoral level. The association of most strike activity with multi-employer bargaining processes is emphasized by the concentration of strikes in the first six months of the year. Almost 70 percent of Spanish strikes occur at that time, thus coinciding with the annual pay round. For example, in 1997 (a year with relatively low conflict) 451,000 working days were lost at the company level while almost a million and a half were lost at the multi-employer level, both regional and national. This

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means that about 75 percent of the strike activity took place for reasons beyond the specific domain of the firm.

Most strike actions take place in large companies, where union membership tends to be higher and unions can sustain labor actions in better conditions. The opposite is the case in small firms dominated by a paternalistic business culture in which employers can exercise additional personal pressures against employees participating in work stoppages.

Observers have stated that relatively strike activity should not be interpreted as being indicative of a high level of conflict in labor relations at enterprise level (Ridby and Marco, 1999: 5). Moreover, the way labor statistics are collected makes difficult to know how serious particular strikes have been in terms of extent and duration. Work stoppages and strikes are included in official statistics provided they have a duration of one hour whereas most countries adopt a more restrictive duration of one day. For Ridby and Marco (1999) this wide-ranging criterion is likely to inflate the working days lost in Spain in comparison with other countries.

Other observers state that Spain and Greece have been European countries with relatively higher strike actions given the way collective bargaining takes place in these societies (Milner, 1995). Differently from UK or the U.S., where most strikers are union members, in Spain that is not the case. Within this context, Milner argues that in comparison to other OECD countries Spanish strikes data are more "comprehensive" since there are no limitations on criteria for inclusion of stoppages in official statistics. However, this analyst states that even if "these measurement differences are likely to bias upwards differences in the number of stoppages" it may only marginally affect the difference in working

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days lost in comparison to other less inclusive countries (Milner, 1995: 2). In addition the fragmented structure of the multi-level collective bargaining system and the absence of adequate voluntary dispute resolution procedures might explain the high incidence of strike for the period comprised between 1977 and 1994.

The social agents agreed to set up a voluntary dispute resolution system as result of the social dialogue in which unions and employers engaged after 1997. The national Intersectoral Mediation and Arbitration Service *(Servicio Interconfederal de Mediación y Arbitraje, SIMA)* was set up in 1998. Since then an increase in the number of disputes that do not involve stoppages but are taken to the system of mediation, arbitration and conciliation has been reported (Royo, 2002).

Other factors have been involved in the decrease of strikes and the increase in mediation and conciliation. One of them is that the trade unions have become more inclined to seek agreements before resorting to industrial action (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). This moderate strategy has led to internal conflicts within the main trade union confederations, particularly inside CC.OO. in which a faction led by PCE militants has been actively opposed to the change on strategy and union behavior.

During the 1990s increase of conflict in the public sector occurred while a decline of strikes in large private companies —in which a "culture of conflict" had been replaced with new forms of micro-corporatism— started to unfold (Martínez-Lucio, 1998). Besides, workers in the public sector continue to be more inclined to support unions demands with stoppages because they are less likely to risk dismissal.

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On the other hand, strike activity not associated with the two major trade unions has augmented. Some "wild strikes" have been called by independent organizations representing specific groups of workers often in key areas of public and private services and with strong bargaining power. Among wage earners that have not felt adequately represented by the CC.OO. and the UGT one can mention the Metro workers of Madrid, the airline pilots of *Iberia* and doctors and other health service workers employed by the state (Rigby and Marco, 1999).

Finally, observers argue that the decline of industrial disputes might be sustained given all the factors mentioned thus far (Serrano del Rosal, 2000; Rigby and Marco, 1999; Martínez Lucio, 1998). The progressive reduction in the amount of strikes and the number of working days lost might suggest a tendency toward the institutionalization of industrial conflict in Spain along the lines of other advanced capitalist societies.

To conclude, in Spain strikes were more frequent during the transition to democracy and its early consolidation, a time when the new labor institutions were still fragile. In that context, Alonso (1991) suggests that industrial conflicts passed through a number of stages since 1975. Up to the late 1970s, there was a period of intense conflict reflecting the workers' high political and economic expectations generated by the end of the Franco's dictatorship. An emphasis upon social pacts and on the need to consolidate the new democracy contributed to a decline in conflict in the early 1980s. After the Socialists come to power in 1982 a period characterized by the re-politicization of industrial conflicts, increasing social protests and general strikes in 1988, 1992 and 1994 made Spain the European country with the highest number of strikes. At last, a system of labor relations dominated by a "culture of conflict" and low levels of trust between unions and

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employers entered into a new phase after 1997 when the social actors agreed on new institutional mechanisms to solve industrial disputes. Perhaps in the long run this new course of action might contribute to "wither away" strikes in post-Franco Spain.

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## Endnotes for Chapter Two

[1] I have been in contact with Faustino Miguélez, from the University of Barcelona, who is the director of QUIT (Group for the Study of Work), he has shared information with me on union density for the period 1995-98, that is not covered by Jordana (1996). Data on figure 2.1 for the years (1997-8) are from this source. Miguélez visited New York City in the summer 2001 and we talked on the subject several times.

[2] That was exactly what I found in my research in fifty workplaces located in the Madrid region. I discuss this work in details in chapter four.

[3] This dual system of representation does not function the same way across all firms. In large and medium workplaces there is a "balance of power" between union sections *(sessions sindicales)* and the works councils (Hamann, 1998) while in small enterprises the situation is one of little or none unions' presence.

[4] Unions' participation in policy-making through their involvement in corporatism or neo-corporatism is a well researched subject in Spain. The unions have participated in several neo-corporatist social pacts with employer representatives, from time to time in conjunction with the state. As result of this policy of social pacts trade unions have been part of advisory boards or labor commissions set up by the government to oversee the process of what Spaniards call the *"concertación social"* (social agreements). The social pacts and corporatism are the subject of chapter six.

[5] Workplace-level activists (union and works council delegates) signaled this question as one of the main reasons why workers did not join unions in Spain during my field-work in 50 large and medium size firms in the Madrid region in 1990 (see table 4. 31). Recently, in a study done by CC.OO. in manufacturing and traditional industrial firms, the surveyed works council delegates basically said the same thing (see Table 7.6).

[6] Both the CEOE (Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations) and the CEPYME (Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) participated in the accord.

[7] The weaker point of the labor reform was that temporary employment as a proportion of the total had fallen less than 3 percent, and only in the private sector, whereas in the public sector it had risen from sixteen to almost nineteen percent of all employment.

[8] Organized labor would like the use of temporary recruitment to be regulated more restrictively, —eliminating any type of economic advantage for employers— while the CEOE has concluded that the labor reform has been a success given the reduction in unemployment that it has achieved.

[9] On the other hand, for the employers' organization (CEOE), the goal in signing a new social agreement, is to reduce further the cost of dismissals, that organized business argues would create more jobs and increase the quality of employment.

[10] However, the unions' objective of the 35-hour week is still remote possibility given the current relation of forces unfavorable to the unions *vis-à-vis* the employers

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# Chapter Three

## The *Union General de Trabajadores* and *Comisiones Obreras*: Pillars of the Spanish Union Movement.

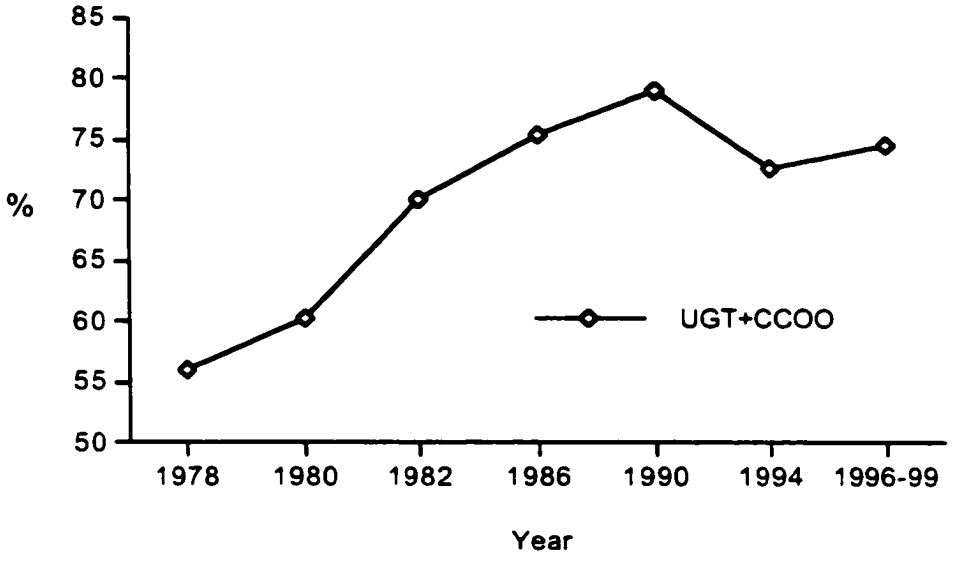
This chapter focuses on the two main trade union confederations: the *Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), in the past close to the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) with past links to the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party (PSOE). They both have broadly similar levels of membership and electoral support in works council elections. In 1997 the CC.OO. had an average paying membership of 790,000 and the UGT of 775,000 affiliates (Miguélez, 1998). In the last works council elections —which now take place continuously rather than one time every four years— together the CC.OO. and the UGT won about 75 percent of the seats contested. After losing some votes in the 1994 election, for reasons that I examine in this chapter, the class-based union confederations regained previously lost support in the works council elections of 1996-99.

Since the first works council elections held in 1978, UGT and CC.OO. increased their share of delegates from 56 percent to 80 percent of the total in 1990. However, UGT lost electoral support in 1994 due to an internal crisis related to a contentious process of leadership succession and a financial scandal that exploded after the failure of a joint venture with real-estate developers to build low-income housing for workers (Hermógenes and Torres, 1995). Though the UGT has recuperated workers' votes in the last works council elections (from

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35% to almost 37%) during the 1990s the CC.OO. regained the dominant position it had during the early period of the democratic transition.

**Figure 3.1 Trend of workers' support in works council elections for UGT and CC.OO. (1978-1999).**




Source: Table 2.3 Chapter two, page 54.

As I showed in chapter two, in Spain there are other important trade union organizations with a regional base; the Basque Workers' Solidarity *Euzko Langilleen Alkarasuna* (ELA-STV) in the Basque region and Navarra and the Galician Inter-union Confederation (CIG) that operates exclusively in the autonomous community of Galicia. Since the 1980s ELA-STV has been the strongest union confederation in the Basque region winning more delegates in the works council elections held during the 1990s than CC.OO. and UGT combined. [1] In Galicia, however, the CIG finished in a close third place behind CC.OO. in the most recent elections (see Table 2.5, page 58). The ideologies of both ELA-STV and CIG are strongly influenced by political demands for greater

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autonomy/independence for the "historical nationalities" of *Euskadi* and Galicia (see Meer, 1997; Mees, 1998).

At the national level there are other much smaller union confederations that gain enough seats in works council elections held in large firms to enjoy certain rights to bargain at that level. Among these labor organizations the *Union Sindical Obrera* (USO) and the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), are the most important. In the 1980s the CNT split up in two parts and a new union named *Confederación General de Trabajadores* (CGT) was created. The CGT and CNT dispute the representation of the anarcho-syndicalist tradition but their influence in modern Spain is very limited (Meer, 1997).

Another important phenomenon regarding the organized representation of interests has been the emergence of several professional, company, and sectoral unions that concentrate on certain categories of employees in private and public services (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003). Among them the *Confederación de Sindicatos Independientes-Confederación de Sindicatos Independientes de Funcionarios,* (CSI-CSIF) is the largest. [2]

My research focuses on the UGT and the CC.OO., which are class-based unions, and the principal labor organizations. The chapter starts with a brief outline of the history of Spain's labor movement during the 20th century before the return of democracy in 1977. Then, I examine the role played by UGT and CC.OO. during the period of democratic transition (1977-82) while in the following part the focus is on the dynamic that unfolded after the coming to power of the PSOE in 1982. In the last section of the chapter I look at the structure and the ideology of the class-based labor organizations.

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## I. Historical background of the Spanish labor movement

During the late 19th century anarcho-syndicalist ideas —rather than Marxist socialism— gained reception among the Spanish working class. In 1910 the CNT, the most important anarchist union organization at that time, was founded. On the other hand, Spain's Marxist inspired socialists organized the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE) in 1879, and the same leadership composed of skilled artisans and middle class professionals created the UGT in 1888. While anarcho-syndicalism expanded across the country, the socialist movement was concentrated mostly in Madrid, Asturias and in the Basque country where UGT competed with ELA-STV for the workers' support (Meer, 1997; Martin, 1989; Führer-Ries, 1996).

During the first decades of the 20th century the union movement was weak due to the economic and social backwardness of the country. In 1923 Miguel Primo de Rivera overthrew the constitutional parliamentary monarchy establishing an authoritarian corporatist regime that lasted until 1931 when a republican government was installed. During the Second Republic (1931-39) the country adopted a modern democratic constitution that explicitly recognized trade unions' rights and collective bargaining. Under the republican regime labor unions gained in strength and rights but remained divided over whether to press for social and democratic reforms or to fight for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism (Martin, 1989: Chapter 10).

The 1930s were a period of political instability, economic crises and increasing class conflicts. Within the labor movement clashes between socialists and anarchists weakened the unions and increased the uncertainties created by

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rapid political and social changes. At the end, the radicalization of the unions (including UGT under the leadership of Largo Caballero), the exacerbation of social rifts embedded within traditional cleavages, Catholicism versus anti-clericalism, monarchical-conservatism versus democratic-republicanism, ruling class versus oppressed strata, and other symbolic issues, such as the demise of Spain's centralist state and the rise of regional nationalism, all these factors led to the eruption of a civil war in 1936 (Martin, 1989).

The defeat of the Republic opened the door to Franco's dictatorship and forced the unions into clandestine activity. During the Francoist regime (1939-1975) trade unions were prohibited and strikes were proscribed. Inspired by Primo de Rivera's corporatist state the Francoist regime set up a new vertical corporatist trade union organization *(sindicato vertical)* dominated by *cadres* associated with the *Falange*. The ideology of the vertical union, in which employers and employees were compulsory members, was to eliminate class conflict in the name of Spain's national unity (Linz, 1981).

After decades of economic autarky and stagnation, the authoritarian climate of labor suppression gradually changed. During the last period of the dictatorship (1959-75), many were convinced of the impossibility of perpetuating the authoritarian regime and creating a "Francoism without Franco". The original fears that served to justify the dictatorship had gradually dissipated with the accumulation of newfound freedoms gained little by little by citizen movements within civil society (Maravall, 1978). Without the same ideological supports the dictatorship began to lose ground *vis-à-vis* the democratic opposition that gained social, cultural and political terrain. On the left an active Spanish Communist Party (PCE), became influential among intellectuals and working class circles

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(Mujal-León, 1983). Within that context, *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), at that time under Communist leadership, had infiltrated the Francoist vertical unions. Other minor forces of socialist/social-democratic and Christian inspiration such as UGT and USO started to rebuild the clandestine union movement and organized important economic strikes in Madrid, Asturias and in the Basque region (Meer, 1997; Fishman, 1990; Führer-Ries, 1996).

In the 1960s, CC.OO., USO and other democratic groups organized workers on a local basis in different industrial regions and were able to infiltrate the vertical union organizations. While USO was created by members of the Catholic youth workers' organization in the Basque country in 1961, the CC.OO. emerged more or less spontaneously as an informal network of workers' organizations behind an unofficial strike movement in Asturias around 1958 (Ruiz, 1993).

This new labor movement played an important role in the democratic struggles against the authoritarian regime establishing the basis for the emerging trade unions. The democratic workers' movements of the early seventies had accumulated a great amount of resources during the last years of the dictatorship. The rise of workers' militancy between 1974 and 1977, and the regaining of public spaces in the principal urban areas was the outcome of a labor culture reinvented through the collective struggles against Francoism (Balfour, 1989).

Workers did not get a fair share of the prosperity that followed the economic liberalization of the regime in 1959 (Casanova, 1982). Wages remained low in comparison to European standards and the workers resented rising inflation and sought to make up for what they did not get under the dictatorship. After Franco died in 1975 countless distributional conflicts arose as workers and their semi-legal union representatives extracted significant pay increases from em-

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ployers (Royo, 2000: 70-1). From 1974 to 1976, wages rose much more rapidly than did the cost of living. Profits declined sharply, while the wage component of Spain's national income rose abruptly. [3]

Trade unions were formally legalized on April 28, 1977, and the first post-Franco parliamentary elections, which were held the following June, saw Adolfo Suarez and his center-right Union of the Democratic Center *(Unión de Centro Democrático, UCD)* emerge victorious, but with only a plurality of the parliamentary seats (Gunther et al., 1986; Maravall, 1984).

The transition to democracy was a difficult period for the labor movement. The gap between high social expectations and real possibilities under the new political order had an adverse effect upon the reorganization of labor unions in the post-Franco era. Ironically, the democratic transition took place during a time of international and domestic economic crises. While during the 1960s Spain had enjoyed one of the highest rate of growth among the OECD countries, after the mid-1970s the economic situation turned into one of high unemployment, mounting inflation, and deterioration of most of the macroeconomic indicators (Führer-Ries, 1996: 216-220).

This poor economic environment plus the uncertain outcome of the political changes established the framework within which social and political actors designed their strategies. Let us stress; labor unions played a secondary role in this uncertain process. The principal players of the transition were the political parties primarily interested in assuring the consolidation of the new competitive regime. Organized labor contributed to the process of democratic change by standing for economic and political restraint. For several observers after 1977 the labor unions imposed political and economic restraint from above to the workers

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(Aguilar et al., 1984), while others think that the workers themselves were convinced of the need of economic and political moderation recognizing the fragility of the new democracy (Maravall, 1984; Fishman, 1990).

Within this difficult economic environment the rise of the national social pacts between 1977 and 1984, became the main feature of the new system of labor relations (Royo, 2000; Encarnación, 1997). The transformation of the state-controlled system of limited bargaining and the legal recognition of the institutional autonomy for labor unions and employers' organizations became the basis of the new labor legislation.

At that time it was difficult to distinguish between economic and political bargaining given the interconnection of both, and the state's active role in the process of social concertation. Actually, the first national pact *(Pacto de la Moncloa)* early in the democratic transition was signed only by the political parties and tacitly accepted by the labor unions. The policy of social pacts and consensus politics that characterized these years reassured the regime stability and the political management of uncertain economic variables. What is still relevant today is the lasting cultural meaning of these policies and how the Spanish extended experience of neo-corporatism has marked the labor culture of contemporary Spain. These questions are the subject of chapter six.

Today the way organized labor assesses this period of centralized social bargaining is more critical. For the UGT the policy of social concertation was a necessary ingredient for economic and political bargaining between employers, workers' organizations, and state representatives under the constraints of that time. The CC.OO. seems to agree to a certain extend with the UGT on this subject (Domínguez, 1988).

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Although the stated goal of the social agreements was an incomes policy based on wages moderation and the accommodation of collective bargaining to lower inflation goals it provided the appropriate setting for the institutionalization of a modern system of labor relations and trade union guarantees to act as workers' representatives inside the enterprises (Royo, 2000).

Important pieces of labor legislation were approved during this period of democratic change. First, the *Workers' Statute* was passed on March 10, 1980, in accordance with the mandate laid down in Article 35.2 of the Spanish Constitution. The law included guarantees pertaining to minimum wages and to social security, and it stipulated that employment relations were to be worked out between unions and employers, without direct state intervention. In addition, the statute outlined the format for collective bargaining, recognizing the right of the workers' elected representatives to negotiate on their behalf. Except in strictly trade union matters regulated by another law, the *Workers' Statute* is still the focal point of Spain's labor law. It has been amended several times (1983, 1984 and, above all, 1994, the year of the last Socialist labor reform), to adapt new labor regulations governing the contract of employment, mobility and termination of work contracts, and to strengthen the position of the most representative trade unions in the Spanish labor relations system on which workers' participation and collective bargaining is based.

Secondly, the *Trade Union Freedom Act* (LOLS) that regulates trade union rights at the workplace was passed in 1984. This law spelled out the rights to which larger unions are entitled and it prohibited any form of discrimination on the part of employers against trade unionists. For the labor organizations the LOLS represents a key piece of legislation since it defines the figure of the trade

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union delegate as the union representative in enterprises or workplaces with more than 250 employees where unions have organized branches *(secciones sindicales)*. Union delegates are elected by and from among union members and they defend members' interests by acting as the channel of communication between the employer and the union.

As stated above, the trade union movement was a secondary player in the political process that brought democracy back to Spain. According to Robert Fishman (1990) organized labor acted more successfully in the task of consolidating democracy than in building the organizational infrastructure needed to consolidate itself. In part its current organizational weakness is the legacy of those long years without free unions. A product of 40 years of dictatorial rule that excluded labor unions from the Keynesian-class compromise institutionalized after the Second World War in most of Western Europe.

According to Miguélez, (1991) at the beginning of the 1980s the trade unions' landscape was more or less fixed. There were three national trade union organizations competing for workers' representation: the *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), the *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT), and the *Union Sindical Obrera* (USO). While the first two were being consolidated both politically and organizationally, the third was experiencing internal tensions, resulting primarily from its relations with the UCD government. After USO suffered a major split in 1979, which led to the integration of a large segment within UGT, this organization never recuperated its previous position (Meer, 1997).

In the early 1990s it was clear that the trade union movement was dominated by the two national confederations, UGT and CC.OO., that are organized on a multi-industry and multi-occupation basis. The duopoly of UGT and

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CC.OO. has been consolidated during the 1990s a period that, —differently from the 1970s and 1980s when unions' ideological rivalries shaped the dynamic between class-based labor organizations— has been distinguished by the increasing co-operation between the two major labor confederations and the development of a common strategy based on union unity (Martínez-Lucio, 1998; Hamann, 1998).

## II. The *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT) and *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) during the democratic transition (1977-1982)

This section examines each one of the major labor organizations addressing several questions. Under what conditions did the class-based unions reemerge from clandestine existence after Franco's death in 1975? What was the dynamic between UGT and CC.OO. during the transition to democracy? How they acted *vis-à-vis* the workers and other social and political actors?

*Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions, CC.OO. (1977-1982)*

The origin of the CC.OO. can be traced back to the amalgamation of independent mostly informal workers' commissions that arose in the late 1950s within the official works councils (jurados de empresa) created by the Franco regime. Permanent commissions were established in the mid-1960s along with loose coordinating bodies at the provincial level, but following their success in the official works council elections in 1967, they were severely repressed by the dying dictatorship (Meer, 1997; Ruiz, 1993).

Originally the informal workers' commissions organized on the basis of mass meetings *(asambleas)*. Between the mid-1960s and 1975 *Comisiones Obreras*

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(CC.OO.) sought to become a structured labor organization. In the early 1970s a basic formal structure was established. The emerging *Comisiones* were coordinated by provincial inter-branch commissions and by a national executive committee led by a group of Communist trade unionists. This union-social movement was successful in its strategy of infiltration of the vertical unions and the organization of the workers under restricted conditions for collective action (Sartorious, 1977; Führer-Ries, 1996).[4] From its beginnings the CC.OO. maintained strong ties to the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), an organization with which it then shared important leaders like Marcelino Camacho, but from which it has increasingly distanced because of complex political factors that I analyze in chapter five.

In a period of massive mobilization and strike activity immediately after Franco's death in 1975, the CC.OO. emerged as the most important trade union organization, with a strong social base in large industrial workplaces. However, early attempts o monopolize workers' representation under a single national union were frustrated by the advent other political movements and union organizations. In an uncertain and highly unstable political environment in June 1976, CC.OO. joined forces with USO and UGT creating the *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Sindicales* (Coordination of Trade Union Organizations, COS), which served as a platform for union cooperation and formulation of political and economic demands for the creation of a democratic system of labor relations. Yet, this labor alliance collapsed after the legalization of the unions in 1978 (Meer, 1997; Köhler, 1995; Führer-Ries, 1996).

During the mid-1970s CC.OO. claimed to be an independent labor union that defended the workers' interests, that was committed to the emerging democ-

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ratic system and to the eventual creation of a socialist society. Originally it defined its membership as the whole working class regardless of formal affiliation to the organization. One cannot forget that *Comisiones Obreras* was born in the shop floor and in the industrial workplaces and it encouraged the participation of all workers in the *asambleas* (workers' assemblies) regardless of political orientation. At the beginning of the democratic transition CC.OO. was still involved in internal debates on how to create a formal structure with unambiguous criteria of union membership (Soto Carmona, 1993; Hamann, 1998).

The formal structure of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), and its status as the leading workers' organization, took form around 1978. Then, the organization held its First Congress in Madrid constituting itself as a class-based union, with a relatively centralized structure. Based on its past as a "sociopolitical movement" CC.OO. favored a new labor relations system based on works councils since it coincided with the participatory character of this union-movement that claimed to represent all workers, regardless of political or religious affiliation (Sartorious, 1977; Hamann, 1998).

In the early period of the democratic transition, *Comisiones Obreras* promoted workers' assemblies in the firm and emphasized open lists for works council elections whereby workers could support individuals they knew from their struggle against the dictatorship (Hamann, 1998: 436). It is important to stress that CC.OO. had provided the bulk of workplace leaders who were personally known for their activity against the Francoist regime, while UGT did not participate in the same way CC.OO. did in those struggles inside the vertical unions (Fishman, 1990; Führer-Ries, 1996).

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Because of its active role under the dictatorship *Comisiones Obreras* was able to win almost 35 percent of the seats in the works council elections of 1978 while UGT got about 22 percent of the total. The pro-Socialist UGT, —which had not infiltrated the vertical union structure— did not possess enough militants in most workplaces capable to mobilize workers to support the union in works council elections (Fishman, 1990).

Studies realized during those years indicate that the majority of the CC.OO's militants were sympathizers or members of the PCE. A minority of them belonged to other radical and left-wing organizations (Maravall, 1984; Pérez Díaz, 1993; Fishman, 1990). On the other hand, a important minority of militants that did not belong to the PCE or any political party were active union members as well. [5]

During the years of Spain's democratic transformation (1977-1982) the UGT and the CC.OO. were engaged in a fierce rivalry for hegemony within the labor movement. The struggle and conflicts between the unions were political ramifications of the differences between the PSOE and the PCE that "controlled" the executive committees of both labor organizations at that point in time. One cannot overlook that the PCE had built a strong political base around the trade union movement led by CC.OO. and when Franco died in 1975 the PCE, under the leadership of Santiago Carrillo, was the most effective political organization of the Spanish left (Mujal-León, 1983).

Historical evidence enlightens how the PCE failed to dominate the social space of the left after the transformation of the authoritarian regime. Though its membership multiplied following the party's legalization in 1977, the PCE only won less than 10 percent of the popular vote in the elections held that year. On

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the other hand, the PSOE won almost 30 percent of the vote becoming the dominant political force on the left (Maravall, 1984). [6]

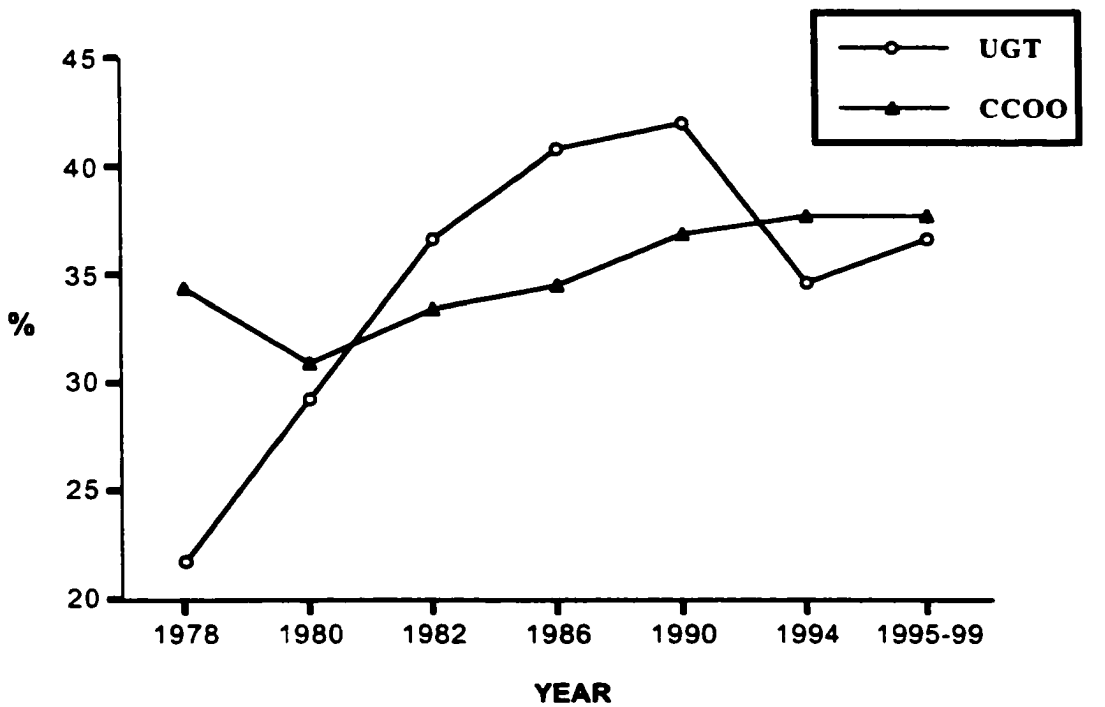
The CC.OO., like the PCE, supported the first social pact of the democratic transition, the *Moncloa Pact* in 1977 and followed the same moderate position the party had regarding political and economic questions (Fishman, 1990; Maravall, 1984). Internally in CC.OO. ideological conflicts erupted regarding the organization's moderate policies under the influence of the PCE. As of consequence of internal disagreements two smaller unions emerged as splinter groups from *Comisiones*. These unions were the extreme-left *Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores* (Confederation of United Workers' Unions, *SUT)* and the *Sindicato Unitario* (United Syndicate, SU). Both were linked to small Marxist political parties and their aim was to present a distinctly radical alternative *vis-à-vis* the moderation of the major confederations, CC.OO. and UGT, during the period of social pacts and neo-corporatist agreements. Though they gained some workers' support in the works council elections of 1978, their influence increasingly declined until their disappearance in the early 1980s (Meer, 1997; Führer-Ries, 1996).

During the immediate years following Franco's death in 1975, *Comisiones Obreras* became the dominant force in the labor movement. However, in the late 1970s it declined in strength and lost support among workers, in part because of its ties to the PCE' and the increasingly dominant role in the labor arena of the UGT, an union that benefited from its identification with the PSOE (Maravall, 1984). [7] In the works council elections of 1982 the UGT gained a greater share of the works council seats than CC.OO., which had dominated previous elections (see Table 2.3 page 54). Between 1982 and 1990 the UGT became the dominant

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force in these electoral processes obtaining over 42 percent of the works council delegates elected in 1990. Yet the works councils' dynamic changed again during the 1990s, a decade when the CC.OO. regained its previous hegemony as the dominant union. Data plotted on Figure 3.2 show the dynamic of electoral competition between both class-based organizations since 1978.

**Figure 3. 2 Percentage of works council delegates elected by UGT and CC.OO.**




Between 1977 and 1982 *Comisiones Obreras* attempted to reconcile its roots as an union-social movement —rooted on workers' assemblies in the firm— with an institutional need to establish a strong national organization. Many of the union workplace-level activists felt disappointed with the negative economic consequences of the *Moncloa Pact* and the concentration at the top of the confederation of major decisions regarding national-level neo-corporatist bargaining. In

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the period 1978-1979, after the *Moncloa Pact,* apparently under pressure from the union's base the national leadership denounced the policy of neo-corporatist social pacts and encouraged its militants to strike in order to regain losses in wages' purchasing power (Vega, 2000). This relatively short period of time (around 2 years) had the highest strike activity since the end of the dictatorship increasing political uncertainties (see Figure 2.4 page 85).

Spain's political and economic situation turned worse in the early 1980s. A frustrated coup attempt by a group of pro-Franco militarized *guardias civiles* (civil guards) seeking to overthrow the democratic regime in 1981 and increasing Basque terrorism made the situation of the country too unstable. Then, increasingly enterprise failures (plus mounting unemployment) moved the national leadership of CC.OO. to declare that the rapidly deteriorating economic condition required a change of union strategy. The confederation new policy asked its works councils' representatives to limit their wage demands and accept restructuring plans. Within that context, jointly the class-based unions promoted a return to state-level tripartite bargaining to cope with the mounting crisis.

In the 1980 works council elections the CC.OO. lost workers' support, while the UGT gained votes (increasing its share of works council seats from 22 percent to almost 30 percent of the total). Differently than CC.OO., the UGT had pursed a policy of economic and political moderation after the *Moncloa Pact* and it signed several national social agreements in which the CC.OO. did not participate. Confronted with this reality and convinced that the workers wanted to pursue a moderate strategy CC.OO. returned to a moderate position, like the one it had held in 1977. After 1982, when the PSOE came to power, CC.OO. shifted again and attempted to return to a more radical line.

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*The General Confederation of Workers (UGT) 1977-1982*

I pointed out that, while the CC.OO. sought to infiltrate the official *jurados de empresa* and the *sindicatos verticales,* the pro-Socialist *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT) boycotted them. During Francoism the UGT, due to repression, was reduced to a group of leaders in exile with no power to act as a trade union movement within Spain.

In the early 1960s, UGT attempted to rebuild its organization and began recruiting new members who started to participate in the democratic workers' social movements but from outside of the vertical unions. Moreover, the UGT's leaders in exile did not return to Spain until the early 1970s. [8]

Since its foundation late in the 19th century in the UGT diverse ideological currents had competed holding opposing organizational conceptions and political strategies. During the 1930s, while one of these tendencies assumed a pragmatic approach favoring the democratic transformation of a traditionalist patrimonial society, the other led by Largo Caballero, adhered to radical Marxism and advocated social revolution (Martin, 1990). After the return of democracy in 1977 the pragmatic orientation has prevailed among the UGT' s leadership.

Historically the UGT had its strongholds in the northern mining centers of Asturias and among the immigrant working class of the Basque region. During the early 1970s it gained some terrain in Madrid and Andalucia. In comparison to CC.OO. it had enjoyed less support among industrial blue-collar workers employed in traditional industries and more among services sector employees. In the late 1970s and early 1980s UGT's social strength was concentrated in small

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and mediums sized firms, whereas the CC.OO. was the dominant force in large industrial firms and in the public-sector.

During the first years of the democratic transition the UGT made no effort to hide its links with the PSOE. Both union and party frequently reiterated their common social-democratic aspirations, although there were some minor disagreements between them regarding organizational issues (Astudillo, 1998). Needless to say, the political ties of both the UGT with the PSOE, and those of the PCE with the CC.OO., were significant factors feeding the rivalry between the two unions. PSOE members were required to join the UGT and to work with the union while the PCE encouraged its members to be active in the CC.OO. (Fishman, 1990).

The PSOE underwent a rapid ideological de-radicalization after 1979 becoming a pragmatic social democratic organization with a fundamental aim of consolidating what at the time was still a fragile and unstable democratic regime (Share, 1989).

Fishman (1990) suggests that one of the factors that explains the organizational success of the UGT in building an union structure in a short period of time were its ties with the PSOE. To a great extent the pro-Socialist union benefited from the ideological orientation the party followed after 1979 which was closer to the ideological moderation of the Spanish working class (Pérez Díaz, 1993).

Different from the organizational dilemma of CC.OO., of "union versus movement", from the beginning of the democratic transition the UGT defended a standardized formal trade union model. The other significant difference between UGT and CC.OO. regarding organizational structures have to do with the

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plant or enterprise-level channel of workers' representation. While UGT proposed the creation of new union structures *(secciones sindicales)* as the main form of representation in the firm, CC.OO. wanted to keep the works council system in place since it might encourage the "participative" union-social movement type espoused by the union.

Between 1976 and 1977 the CC.OO. and other radical unions proposed to create a single unitary union confederation (Pérez-Yruela, 1997). The UGT that was struggling to create a social-democratic labor movement rejected this idea. Despite the failure of the organic unity project, CC.OO. continued to press for joint action, as a step towards future trade union unification. In contrast, during the first legal congress of UGT held in Madrid in 1976, emphasis was placed on plural trade unionism and ideological diversity arguing that it reflected better the various interests and ideologies of the Spanish workers. The UGT agreed, in principle, to unity of action under certain circumstances but not as an ideological belief in the way CC.OO. did. These disagreements caused confrontations between these trade unions that persisted until 1987 when a new policy favoring unity of action was embraced by both organizations.

While the CC.OO. emerged as a new socio-political movement-union *(sindicato de nuevo tipo)* the UGT represented a more traditional type of social-democratic unionism (Soto Carmona, 1993). Regarding works council elections it disagreed with CC.OO. on the question of open lists that favored well-known workplace-level activists over organizations. In brief, UGT emphasized the institutional role of the confederation, a pluralist system of workers' representation and did not embrace the unity of action of the labor movement as its main political goal (Hamann, 1994: 142).

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Given that the UGT lacked the human infrastructure that CC.OO. had created during its gestation inside the official vertical unions, it could not count like *Comisiones Obreras* on the political capital accumulated during the dictatorship. Thought the UGT was a labor organization with a long history in Spain, the same way the PSOE was still be remembered as the dominant force of the left during the Second Republic, both socialist organizations had played a secondary role during the last years of popular unrest against the Francoist regime (Gillespie, 1989).

Both Socialist organizations (union and party) stressed on the "historical memory" as their steppingstone to rebuild their weak structures under the new post-Franco regime. That strategy worked well for both organizations. The PSOE, that was less active than the PCE in the struggle against Franco, received more electoral support of the Spanish workers while the UGT step by step displaced CC.OO. as the dominant force in the labor movement. The decision of a large number of USO affiliates to merge with the UGT also enhanced its strength (Meer, 1997). In brief, during the democratic transition the UGT kept a moderate strategy based on economic and social restraint during a period of rapid political changes. Differently than CC.OO. it did not shift between radical and moderate positions depending of the circumstances either reflecting changes in the strategy of the PCE (Köhler, 1995).

After the 1980 works council elections (when CC.OO. lost almost 4 percent of the seats it had won in 1978) the mounting economic crisis had weakened the social base of organized labor. Confronting this situation CC.OO. called for workers' mobilizations and strikes rather than cooperation and economic restraint. In part, this was a reaction of CC.OO. against the approval of the Work-

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ers' Statute (1980) that for this union undermined the workers' power. According to Fina and Hawkesworth (1984: 16) disagreement regarding the new labor law was also a factor in the negative of CC.OO. to sign a new social pact with the employers' confederation (CEOE) and the government that, in contrast, was endorsed positively by UGT.

The moderate strategy adopted by UGT was useful for this organization. Given its close ties with the PSOE, the dominant left-wing party in parliament, the UGT was able to push for legislation that favored the union's strategy. For instance, the recognition of the union's workplace branch (as representative of workers' interests in the firm, independently from the works council) was incorporated in the Workers' Statute of 1980. For the UGT this issue was an essential question since the organization was committed to the union sections rather than the works councils as the basic workplace structure for workers' representation.

At the end, the labor strategy of UGT based on cooperation and negotiation paid off since it became the labor organization with the larger share of works council seats. The UGT hoped to be compensated for its moderation and patience when the Socialists were elected to office. However, when the PSOE came to power after 1983 the Socialists embarked on a harsh austerity policy aimed at the modernization of the economy (Kennedy, 2001). The PSOE-led government embraced a neo-liberal philosophy of labor-market flexibility and industrial restructuring that the labor unions were unprepared to accept (Recio and Roca, 1998).

## III. The UGT and the CC.OO. under the Socialist Government 1982-1996

*The intensification of inter-union rivalries (1982-1987)*

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Observers say that the electoral victory of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) in 1982 was the expected conclusion of the democratic transition. The Socialist government inaugurated a new era in post-Franco Spain, after all, since the end of the Second Republic in 1939 the left had been out of power (Maravall, 1984).

To move Spain out of a persistent economic crisis the Socialist government counted with the support of the UGT. The pro- Socialist trade union considered that the only alternative to overcome Spain's serious structural economic deficiencies was a concerted solution between unions, employers and government. Though the CC.OO. favored a change in government it was reluctant to support the PSOE project (Meer, 1997; Köhler, 1995).

Though the PSOE came to power with a social-democratic program it rapidly realized that the economic electoral promises were unrealizable. Rather than creating the expected 800,000 new jobs, the preparation of Spain's entrance into the European Economic Community (EEC) became the Socialist government first priority (Kennedy, 2001). To reach this goal the country needed the rapid restructuring of noncompetitive industries and a reform of public finances. The Socialists termed this policy an "adjustment for solidarity" to get Spain back on its feet. During this period early forms of flexible employment were introduced, and traditional organized labor strongholds suffered the first shocks of the restructuring (Köhler, 1995).

During this phase of industrial reorganization *(reconversión industrial)* the relationship between the two larger labor confederations deteriorated to the point of deep strategic disagreements regarding the restructuring process. The

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UGT supported the government policy arguing that it was the only way out of the crisis. *Comisiones Obreras* opposed it on the basis that it lacked a credible industrial policy for alternative job creation (Wozniak, 1991: 242). Since CC.OO. was left out of the institutional body in charge of following up the restructuring process, the *Comisión de Seguimiento*, (follow-up commission) the union argued that the government's real goal was to undermine the power of the labor movement.

The only published study on how the labor unions handled the industrial restructuring process reveals than half of the workers interviewed disagreed with the strategies adopted by the CC.OO. and the UGT. Furthermore, among the workers interviewed in the regions directly affected by the restructuring, the views on the UGT were even more negative. Only 18 percent of the workers agreed with this organization's policy during the restructuring period. On the other hand, 41 percent of those interviewed held a positive view on the way that CC.OO. reacted to the industrial restructuring process in the targeted regions (EDIS, 1984: 57-85).

Although, reliable figures on the number of jobs destroyed as the result of the restructuring process are unavailable, some studies have calculated that at least 85,000 jobs disappeared. I want to stress this restructuring of large industries took place at the end of a period of job loss. Between 1977 and 1984 the Spanish economy lost over 1,500,000 jobs (Zaldivar and Castells, 1992: 122).

Wozniak (1991) has researched how workers and their organizations reacted to the industrial restructuring of traditional labor strongholds. She found that local workplace union leaders acted with a high degree of independence from the national organizations' strategies (Wozniak, 1991: 294). Given the dual

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structure of workers' representation, the works council on the one hand and the local union branch on the other, what she defines as the "structure of opportunities" available to the works council leaders allowed them to decide their workplace strategies according to the peculiarities of each case.

The industrial restructuring process had a high social cost for the UGT, particularly in the regions where it experienced challenges from local and regional union branches. In 1984 the regional branch of UGT in Cadiz joined CC.OO. and the *Intersindical Gallega* (INTG), in a sectoral general strike opposing the PSOE plan to restructure the shipbuilding industry. Further, in many of the workplaces Wozniak (1991) studied, the local UGT union leaders did not follow all the national confederation's policies regarding the industrial restructuring of their enterprises.

During its first term in office (1982-86) the Socialist government applied an economic policy of harsh adjustment directed to straighten declining industrial sectors and to reestablish basic macroeconomic equilibrium. The UGT accepted the economic adjustment and the industrial restructuring as unavoidable, while CC.OO. kept its distance from those policies. The Socialist government ensured the UGT that in order to prepare Spain for its entry in the EEC another approach was unthinkable. The government proposal was based on the premise that after solving the crisis no more sacrifices would be necessary and that the workers would benefit from an eventual economic recovery.

However, after 1986 when the economic situation showed some improvement the Socialist government stuck to the same neo-liberal orientation arguing this time for the need to liberalize the economy through the deregulation

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of the labor market and of the banking and financial activities (Recio and Roca, 1998; Share 1989).

The restructuring of the social security system was another area where the Socialist government's policies clashed with the labor unions. In 1985 the government proposed changing the criteria on which pensions were allocated. This controversy generated the first public encounter between the UGT and the PSOE government. The union's general secretary, Nicolas Redondo, who at the time was a PSOE deputy in parliament, voted against the government proposal and later resigned his party post. The CC.OO. called a general strike against this law that paralyzed the principal industrial centers. However, it was not a massive collective action since the UGT did not support the general strike (Köhler, 1995: 175-6).

Perhaps the most important gain for the support given by the UGT to the Socialist government's policies in the early 1980s was the new labor law approved in 1984. The Trade Union Freedom Act *(Ley para la Organización de la Libertad Sindical, LOLS)* established the legal framework within which trade unions have operated since then. The previous legislation (The Workers' Statute 1980) instituted the basic structure of representation (the works councils) and the set of rules for collective bargaining. The LOLS gave new rights to the unions in the domain of workplace organization and workers' representation, but it maintained the basic elements of the previous system based on the results of the works council elections.

The PSOE won easily the 1986 general elections with the public endorsement of the UGT. The Socialists main concerns remained the same ones of the previous period; the maintenance of macroeconomic equilibrium, and the low-

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ering of the inflation differential with the rest of the EEC countries. Wage moderation was still a key element in the Socialist policy design in order to maintain the process of recovery and economic growth. The sings of some overheating of the economy, in the eyes of the Socialist policy-makers, discarded any demand-oriented course preferring instead a supply-side neo-liberal approach relying mostly on the market (Share, 1989).

Though differences between UGT and the Socialist government became public around 1985-6, informants (from UGT) told me that they began earlier during the phase of industrial restructuring. [9] Among the issues that strained the historical relationship between party and union besides the so called *"reconversión industrial"* were questions such as NATO membership, the reform of public pensions and the insistence on wage moderation and demands for more economic sacrifices once the economy had improved (Royo, 2000; Köhler, 1995).

The UGT became progressively more embarrassed by its political ties with the Socialist government. Under pressure from union militants active in workplace action, and disappointed by the relatively poor showing of the UGT in large companies in the 1986 works council elections, the union increasingly distanced itself from the PSOE-led government. At the end it adopted a position *vis-à-vis* the Socialist government which was increasingly more similar to the relationship which had existed between CC.OO. and the government since the early 1980s (Royo, 2000).

It is important to note that inside UGT not all industry federations backed the national leadership when they openly criticized the PSOE-led government. That happened in 1985 when three of the largest, the metalworkers, chemical and trade-commerce federations, defended the economic policies of the Socialist gov-

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ernment while the general secretary, Nicolas Redondo (then, a PSOE member elected to parliament) opposed them (McElrath, 1989). These internal conflicts weakened the organization and created a series of legitimacy problems for the national leadership positioned around Nicolas Redondo. As result of the disagreements important federation leaders were forced to resign and the UGT experienced a period of internal tensions that lasted until the 36th National Congress of 1994 (Royo, 2000).

During those years CC.OO. sought to avoid becoming involved in internal struggles that were destroying the PCE [10], and showed a greater acceptance of internal pluralism and the existence of competing political currents within the union structure (Soto Carmona, 1993). Nonetheless, inside CC.OO. increasing disaffection flourished from ideological differences between "pragmatics" and "radicals." Inside CC.OO. (that was still under Communist's influence) the ideological fight between the "pragmatics" and "radicals" affected the way the organization related to the UGT. In a region like Barcelona, the pro-Soviet group took over some local and regional structures (Fishman, 1993) while in Madrid the "pragmatic" group kept the control of the national union. These controversies took place during a period of organizational transformation of the CC.OO., —from a sociopolitical movement into a structured trade union— and a change in the leadership structure of the organization.

Between 1983 and 1986 the PCE lost control of some of the CC.OO.'s most important federations including the largest one, the Metalworkers' Federation. The split of the PCE into several groups was felt in CC.OO.. At the 4th Congress held in November 1987, several factions competed for power in the organizational structure. A group called *"Carrillistas"* (because they were followers of

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Santiago Carrillo) faced another faction identified with Gerardo Iglesias, the new reformist general secretary of the PCE. This group of "reformed Communists" won 75 percent of the delegates' votes and elected Antonio Gutíerrez as the secretary general of CC.OO. at the 4th Congress (Soto Carmona, 1993: 492-495).

The election of Gutíerrez would help to change the relations between CC.OO. and UGT. His predecessor Marcelino Camacho was the historical leader of the original *Comisiones Obreras* and a prominent leader of the PCE. This generational shift opened the door to a new group of younger trade unionists that during the 1990s have played significant roles by changing CC.OO. from the inside. Besides Nicolas Redondo, the UGT secretary-general, found that it was easier to work with the new union leadership around Antonio Gutíerrez. Having learned from past experiences, the new reformed leadership that emerged from the 4th Congress strengthened the autonomy of the organization *vis-à-vis* the PCE (Soto Carmona, 1993: 492; Köhler, 1995: 198). This new orientation was important in order to avoid that *Izquierda Unida,* (United Left) could exercise the same degree of influence within the union that was enjoyed by the PCE during the democratic transition.

The increasing distance of UGT and CC.OO. from their "political allies" was an essential factor to change inter-union relations in Spain (Royo, 2000, 2002). Since the late 1980s it has been marked by unity of action, a strategy always desired by CC.OO., instead of the competitive strategies that dominated the first decade after Franco's death.

*Unity of action and identity change (1988-1996)*

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The two-year *Economic and Social Agreement* (AES), which covered wages and related matters that was signed by the government, employers' representatives, and the UGT, expired at the end of 1986. Thereafter, government efforts to convince labor unions to accept a new social agreement failed because of union insistence on wage increases substantially higher than those proposed by the Socialist government, and because of unions' opposition to further dismissal of employees in public enterprises that operated at a loss. The result was that union contract renewals in early 1987 led to a resurgence of labor disputes and to an increase in the number of work stoppages. For the first time since the early years of the transition UGT joined forces with CC.OO. to overcome the wage guidelines suggested by the government (Royo, 2000).

On the labor market arena the government had introduced new employment schemes allowing for the hiring of temporary employees and the use of special apprentice contracts. This deregulation of the labor market was seen as the only way to create favorable conditions for the creation of new jobs by employers (Recio and Roca, 1998).

In 1988 the Socialist Government espoused a special project to promote youth employment. The stated objective of this plan was to create new work opportunities through new types of temporary employment using a new contract scheme (professional insertion contract). This project generated the strongest opposition from the unions. At that juncture disagreements between labor unions and the Socialist government contributed to increase the widening gap between the UGT and the PSOE (Astudillo, 1998). After Spain's entry into the EEC in 1986 the relationship between party and union had become increasingly tense. Deepening these tensions the *Plan for Youth Employment* ignored trade unions' de-

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mands for significant changes in the socioeconomic and labor policy of the government. The labor unions were asking for the "social re-payment" of workers' wage restraint in the years previously to the economic recovery. Their main argument was that the government had not fulfilled its promise to the workers that once the country had overcome the economic crisis they were to get their fair share of the produced wealth.

Even if both unions had followed separate strategies after the coming to power of the Socialists in 1982, a trend toward greater labor unity developed since 1987. This new orientation led to the most important workers' collective action in recent Spanish history, the general strike of December 14, 1988. Then, the country was paralyzed by the labor unions that mobilized over 6 million workers to protest the government's economic and social policies (Hamann, 1998; Martínez Lucio, 1998).

During 1987-88 the Socialist government had refused to satisfy most trade unions' demands that at the end triggered the massive protest. Basically, the unions expected that the government fulfilled previous accords in the area of social policy and unemployment benefits. Specifically they expected that the coverage level of the state unemployment insurance system to reach at least 50% of the jobless population, something agreed to by the government in the *Economic and Social Agreement* of 1984-86. Furthermore, the unions demanded improvements in public pensions and that the public functionaries were granted the right to engage in collective bargaining (Royo, 2000). After the general strike, some unions' demands were partially satisfied, like the expansion of the unemployment benefits coverage, the creation of a new type of pension for citizens who did not meet certain criteria established by the contested law on the question passed in

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1985 and the approval of the *Law of Trade Union Control on Contracts*, one of the most important issues for the unions at that time (Köhler, 1995: 199).

The general strike of 1988 became a landmark in Spain's labor politics. This event had an impact on the political spectrum as well. Although the PSOE won the 1989 elections, part of its traditional working class constituency began to move away from the party. The success of the general strike allowed unions to regain a role in the political arena that helped them to reverse their organizational decline (unions' membership grew after 1988 as I have shown in chapter two).

During my fieldwork (1989-90) I interviewed nineteen national, sectoral and regional leaders of both confederations. [11] All of them concurred that the UGT and the CC.OO. emerged stronger after the general strike. Labor unions that were relatively weak and without well developed organizational resources, were able to represent social forces beyond their traditional constituency. In a society where the conservative opposition to the PSOE government was not yet a serious threat to the Socialists' hegemony, trade unions increasingly assumed that role after this popular mobilization.

The decade (1980s) ended with mounting labor conflicts, placing Spain at the top of the list among European countries (Martínez-Lucio, 1998). The success of the general strike contributed to the solidification of a new strategy followed by UGT and CC.OO. based on three principles: unity of action, the abandonment of tripartite social agreements, and the appeal to the unstable constituency of atypical workers attempting to broaden the bases of support for class-based organizations (Royo, 2000).

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A significant consequence of the general strike was the adoption of the *Propuesta Sindical Prioritaria* (Trade Union Priority Proposal) by CC.OO. and UGT as an alternative economic program that served as a common platform for labor collective action between 1989 and 1992. The "unity of action" between the two major confederations became a key question in Spain's labor politics. After the general strike, both labor organizations shared a similar strategy *vis-à-vis* the Socialist government's economic and labor policies, and after 1996, when the PP came to power, the unions continued in the same path of unity and cooperation (Hamann and Martínez Lucio 2003).

During the economic recovery (1987-91) the unions pursued two goals: to keep wage increases one or two points above the inflation rate, and to push the government to change its social and economic policy. The argument pushed forward by the unions was that the gap in the social wage between Spain and the rest of the European Union was too high. Organized labor's position from 1987 to 1992 was that the workers had already made too many sacrifices and that the government had not carried out its past commitments. The UGT expected a *giro social* (social turn) and that the Socialist government "repays" what unions called its "social debt" to the workers. Within this context, Spanish public debate was framed around the issue of a Socialist government that was applying a non-social democratic policy. The PSOE's dominant current backed Felipe Gonzalez's policies and defended the government's economic approach in the name of political realism. The unions, by contrast, considered the Socialist government's economic policy as neo-liberal and harmful for the workers' interests (Royo, 2000; Recio and Roca, 1998).

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After Spain's admission as a full member in the EEC (in 1986) the macro-economic indicators (see Figure 1.5 in page 16 ) became favorable for the Socialist government. The inflation differential between Spain and the rest of the EEC was reduced, and the GDP grew at a higher rate that the rest of the European Community's economies. On the labor market arena, the government pushed toward greater flexibility that in its view would encourage job creation by private firms. Thought close to 2 million new jobs were created between 1986 and 1992 most of them, however, were unstable and fixed-term. To control the abuse of fixed-term job contracts, the unions were granted the right to monitor new contracts at the firm level in 1991. This labor prerogative sought to reduce fraud and other abuses by employers misusing this form of flexible employment (Fraile, 1999).

The way Spain was going to cope with the effects of the completion of the single European market, and problems associated with its membership in the European Monetary System (EMS), became the two mayor questions for the PSOE-led government after 1991. That year the government initiated tripartite discussions for what was called the *pacto de competitividad* (competitiveness agreement). The objective of the proposed pact was to encourage wage moderation and to strengthen Spain's economy *vis-à-vis* the EEC without triggering an inflationary spiral. However, the unions opposed the return to broad social pacts preferring instead to sign partial or sectoral bipartite agreements with the government, the autonomous communities, or with the CEOE, rather than engaging in a policy of national tripartite agreements again (Royo, 2000).

The endorsement of the *Maastrich Treaty* by Spain in 1992 required further restructuring of labor regulations and the rapid implementation of a convergence plan to close the gap between this country and the rest of the EEC, that changed

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its name to the *European Union* (EU) in 1993. At least, that was the rationale used by the Socialist government when it sought to implement a new labor market reform. The labor unions reacted strongly against attempts to further deregulate the labor market and to any major cuts in social and workers' rights.

The differences between the PSOE-led government and the labor organizations deepened during 1991-92. To face the proposed reforms the UGT and the CC.OO. called a partial general strike in 1992 that did not generate the same level of support the 1988 general strike had. After a relatively partial success of the strike (held in May), late that year the labor unions softened their opposition *vis-à-vis* the government plans and returned to the negotiation table. The unions in exchange for economic moderation accepted a negotiated strike law. On November 1992, the Socialist government, the UGT and CC.OO. jointly announced an agreement on the new strike law, presenting a text that significantly softened provisions in the Government's original legislative proposal to which labor unions objected. The employers' confederation (CEOE) rose new objections to this law and complained about not being consulted on a legislative initiative that affected their interests. The proposed labor legislation died short of passage before the June 1993 general elections.

Economic growth began to slow in the early 1990s in part as result of weaker economic in the emerging single market based European economy. Spain reported a decline in foreign investment, and higher interest rates related to Government anti-inflation policies and to the need to finance the public sector deficit. Within this adverse economic environment the Spanish economy entered into recession in 1992 after the strong growth it had enjoyed after the 1986 entry into the EEC. Between that year and 1990 Spain averaged five percent annual real

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GDP growth (see Figure 1.5, page 16). The Spanish economy in 1992 grew at less than one percent rate, down sharply from 2.3 percent in 1991 and around 4 percent in 1990. In 1993 Spain had negative growth, something that did not occur since 1981 (Salmon, 2000).

Within this adverse context, a rapid fall in total employment and a lower GDP growth followed and the economic situation deteriorated further. The number of unemployed increased from 2.4 million in 1991 to 3 million at the end of 1992. With the destruction of more jobs in 1993, the job prospects for the unemployed worsened. In 1994 unemployment rate reached 24 per cent of the labor force, the highest point since the early 1980s.

The general elections of June 1993 ended a decade of Socialist hegemony (Hamann, 2000). Though PSOE did win the elections it lost its absolute majority in parliament. Within this political context the PSOE formed a minority government supported by the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties. To face the deterioration of the economy the PSOE government sought a comprehensive social pact with labor and employers organizations that did not prosper (Royo, 2000).

From 1992 onwards, the Socialist government tackled the economic crisis mostly through a series of labor market reforms. One of the most relevant aspects of these reforms was the increase in the flexibility of the conditions to leave work. Specifically, the reforms reduced dismissal costs for employers and eliminated standard administrative procedures in the case of collective dismissal. At the end Socialist government's labor market reforms encouraged an increase in the number of temporary jobs. In 1994 around 35 percent of all contracts were temporary ones. For some observers the deregulation of the labor market by the PSOE-led government failed to increase the level of employment and produced

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further deterioration of jobs (Pérez-Díaz, 1999). Needless to say, relations between the UGT and the PSOE remained tenses after the approval of the labor marker reforms of 1992-94 by the government against the opposition of the unions (Hamann, 1998: 432). In addition, trade unions kept calling on the Socialist government to abandon its efforts to be among the first countries to reach EU economic convergence criteria, concluding that efforts to fulfill such criteria were exacerbating the unemployment crisis.

Between 1993 and 1996, the last three years of the PSOE in power, the Socialist government continued its previous course to achieve the *Maastricth* criteria for EMU membership. After the partial general strike of 1992 the unions called another general strike in January 1994. To cope with mounting economic difficulties the Socialist government had reduced social wage benefits and unemployment coverage tightening eligibility conditions by increasing the required period of work to collect unemployment insurance. Early in 1994 the government decided to deepen labor market flexibility one step further. The new reform removed restrictions on labor mobility, promoted further decentralization of collective bargaining and eased dismissals procedures expanding types of temporary contracts the employers could use to recruit new employees. In addition it repealed the remaining labor ordinances that were still in place since the times of Franco (Fraile, 1999).

Even if key group of workers supported this general strike it did not have the same effect of the one that stopped the country in 1988. This time the PSOE passed the labor reform law in the Spanish Parliament with the support of the nationalist parties. Definitely it was the most important reform of the labor relations system since the establishment of the Workers' Statute in 1980. Without the

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unions and with the tacit approval of the employers' organization (CEOE) the new legislation would redefine the structure of the labor market. Organized labor could not stop the labor reform of 1994 and after a period of persisting social mobilizations the unions realized that times had changed. The new situation forced labor unions to re-evaluate past strategies and to adopt a more conciliatory tone that included resuming limited forms of "social bargaining" with employers and the government (Royo, 2000). [12]

Neither UGT nor CC.OO. expected to return to the previous neo-corporatist type of centralized pacts that had characterized the period of 1977-1986. Within the new context, organized labor, the employers' organization and the state were able to sign some "partial agreements" during the last period of Socialist government. [13] At the end, the social agents recognized that a modern system of labor relations requires a certain degree of compromise from all the participants. Further, the labor unions realized that after having pursued a strategy of strong confrontation with the government since 1988 they remained in a weak position and unable to change unwanted policies (Espina 1999).

Sebastian Royo (2000) states that this shift in union strategy reflected the internal problems experienced by the two main confederations during those years. While the UGT was struggling to turn the page on the collapse of the low income housing venture, the CC.OO. attempted to put aside internal ideological differences. These problems framed the process leading to the emergence of new leadership in both organizations that sought to strengthen the unity of action strategy while resuming partial agreements with the government and the employers' organization.

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Regarding the internal politics in the CC.OO., during the 1990s it underwent increasing conflicts between a pro-Communist faction led by Agustín Moreno and the majority current led by Antonio Gutíerrez who at the time was secretary-general of the union. At the Fifth Congress in 1992 a series of contradictions arose between "moderates" and "radicals" inside CC.OO., that had been left unsolved since the previous congress of 1987. During that time the moderates led by Gutíerrez decided to move CC.OO. away from the factional struggles in *Izquierda Unida* (IU) reconsidering the political orientation that the union had followed since 1988.

Essentially, the moderate wing realized that through social mobilizations they were not reaching far enough and the times had come to change course. The radical group, by the contrary, wanted the union to engage in more militant actions and to contribute further to strengthens IU *vis-à-vis the* PSOE (Moreno, 2001). Previously to the Sixth Congress, which was held in 1996, the pro-Communist faction began to organize an internal opposition against Gutíerrez's leadership. Its discourse was that the issues at stake did not reflect personal conflicts between Moreno and Gutíerrez but a clash between two different ideological conceptions of union's models. On the one hand, a "pragmatic-neo social-democratic type" embraced by the moderates identified with a "soft political reformism" and the "radical group"— known popularly as the *critical sector*— which defended a trade unionism of class action and the traditional model of left-wing strong political-unionism that had distinguished CC.OO. during the 1970s and early 1980s. In a certain way the new conflicts echoed the ones that CC.OO. underwent in the late 1970s when it decided to become a "formal union" instead of remaining a "sociopolitical union movement".

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At the Sixth Congress of *Comisiones Obreras* the critical sector managed to win the support of 36 percent of the delegates and to elect seven members to the confederal executive national board. In some of the regional and sectoral federations the critical sector maintained a strong presence and it became the dominant current in territorial unions structures like in Asturias and in Sevilla. More recently the power and influence of this current has diminished and in the last 7th Congress of CC.OO. the *criticos* (critical sector) won less than 30 percent of the delegates' vote. In that congress, held in 1998, Antonio Gutíerrez stepped down as secretary general and a new national leadership identified with the moderate wing was elected. Under the current leadership *Comisiones Obreras* has continued in a process of ideological redefinition and identity change distancing itself from its original nature of "union-movement" and moving toward trade union pragmatism in a way that "increasingly resembles the UGT in terms of organization and self-definition (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003: 64)."

On the other hand, UGT experienced a serious crisis between 1994 and 1995 as part of a financial scandal involving the union. [14] In the early 1990s, the UGT was still experiencing the sequels of its "divorce" from the PSOE. [15] Nicolas Redondo's policy of union autonomy *vis-à-vis* the party came under attack by some members of the union's executive board during the electoral campaign of 1993. Indications of a real possibility that the PSOE might be defeated by the People's Party, (as it happened in 1996) moved some PSOE's supporters in the UGT to ask for a reconsideration of the union's refusal to endorse the party. They wanted the union to give official backing to the PSOE in the 1993 election as it had done before with the exception of 1989 when it did not happen for the first time since the return to democracy. In addition, some industry leaders of the

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metalworkers' federation questioned the UGT pro autonomy policy arguing that indirectly it had contributed to move the Socialist government to the right. Then, Nicolas Redondo, supported by the core of the confederation's national leadership, turned down the demands for active party's endorsement. However, he accepted that UGT militants could campaign for the PSOE privately, in their own names.

An uncompromising position on the union's autonomy *vis-à-vis* the party played a part in Redondo's decision to step down as secretary general at the union's 36th Congress held in April 1994. At that congress a new younger leader Candido Méndez was elected secretary general replacing Nicolas Redondo whom had held the position since 1976. The new union's leadership elected with Méndez faced internal opposition, including an open challenge from the general secretary of the Metalworkers Federation in 1995. This internal opposition led by sectoral union leaders openly identified with the PSOE reached a momentum of crisis in 1995 when an extraordinary congress was held to determine the strategic orientation of the UGT. Nevertheless, Méndez won that congress supported by the same group of unionists that had backed Redondo's policies before. [16]

Finally, though the UGT has maintained its policy of union autonomy regarding explicit political ties, the relation between UGT and the PSOE improved once the party left power in 1996. Recently, after the "electoral debacle" of the PSOE in 2000 the union and the party —under a new leadership influenced by the so-called third way social-democracy— have moved even closer and it seems that the current UGT leadership is more willing to support the Socialists again (Royo, 2002: 249).

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## IV. Structure and ideology of class-based unions (UGT and CC.OO.)

After the return to democracy in 1977 the UGT and the COOO defined themselves as class-based trade unions *(sindicalismo de clase)*. This kind of class-based unionism aspires to represent workers' socioeconomic interests particularly as members of a specific social class in capitalist society. In addition, class-based unions pursuit the transformation of the economic system to make it more favorable to the wage earners' interests. Needless to say that this type of social unionism historically has been opposed to business-oriented professional unionism. In that sense class-based trade unions do not limit their activities to the economic sphere but actively participate in the political process. Customarily this type of class-based unionism has supported in lesser or greater degree working class political parties.

Spain's main unions, UGT and CC.OO. have been committed to specific political projects since the early 1970s. Historically, the UGT has been ideologically aligned with social democracy, while the CC.OO. has been identified with the Communist left, at least, until the late 1980s. During the 1990s the ideology of CC.OO. underwent a process of readjustment and it has become, more or less, a left-wing social democratic union ideologically closer to the UGT, with the exception of an internal pro-Communist current that still challenges the moderate orientation that CC.OO. has taken since the early 1990s.

Though in public documents, class-based unions still declare that the organizations are inspired on the ideas of class struggle and working class's emancipation, the reality is that both labor organizations have evolved in a direction that is far away from radical left-wing unionism. The UGT and the CC.OO. have

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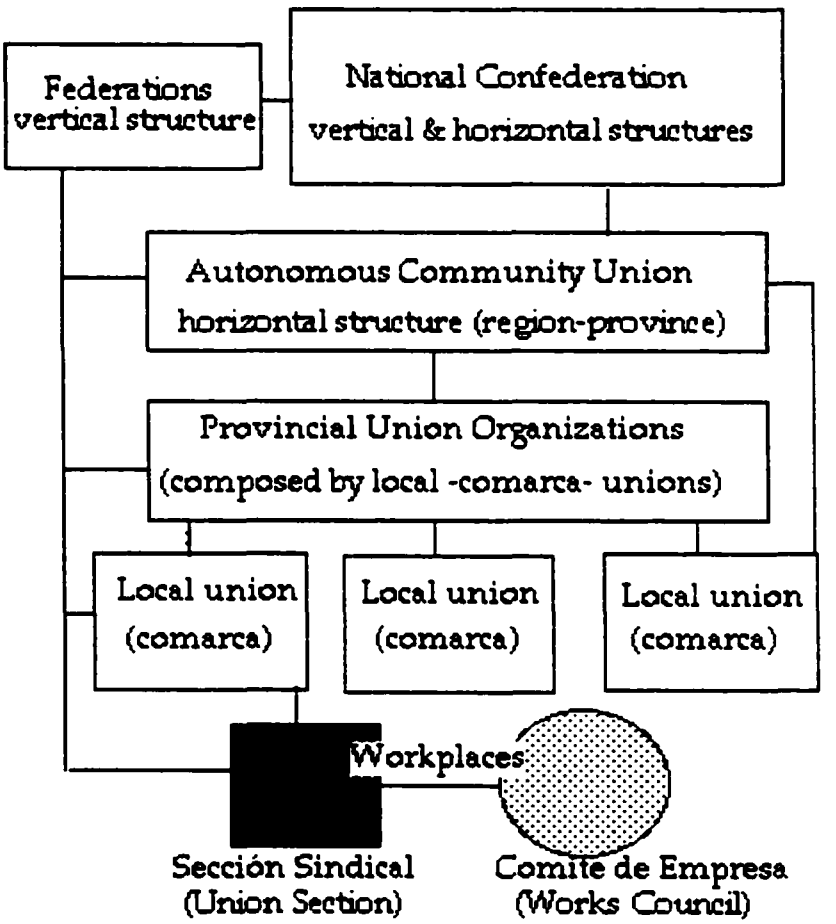
undertaken a pragmatic approach that in the long run may push them to reconsider their long-established identity markers. Both organizations have undergone what Serrano del Rosal (2000) calls a "second ideological union transition" characterized by a new emphasis on union's negotiating role and by less involvement in direct political action. This process of ideological change and organizational modernization has been signaled by other scholars as well (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003).

Although UGT and CC.OO. have not abandoned their "historical identities" as class-based organizations, their congress resolutions express a more moderate orientation with a focus on union participation in public policy-making and negotiations with employers and the government (Meer, 1997). Regarding formal structures both unions share a similar type of organization and governing structure, which articulates together the regional/territorial and industry-federation structures. For Milner and Nombela (1995: 20) in many organizational aspects "the internal structures of UGT and CC.OO. are almost identical." Both unions are organized along confederal lines encompassing a number of regional and sector based federations. Most local branches are part of both, a regional and an industry federation.

Despite the fact that unions' organizational structures are very similar for Pérez Yruela (1997: 8) significant differences exist that cannot be overlooked. Historically, the regional organizations of the CC.OO. have enjoyed a greater independence *vis-à-vis* the national confederation and in some cases the territorial units possess a strong cultural/regional identity. That is the case of the Catalan territorial organization of *Comisiones Obreras*, the *National Workers' Confederation of Catalonia* (CONC).

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**Figure 3.3 Organizational structure of UGT and CC.OO.**




As I pointed out UGT and CC.OO. as formal organizations are structured along horizontal and vertical lines. Generally, the UGT's basic unit had been the *sección sindical* (union's section) while the CC.OO. had tended to privilege the works council as the main organ of union representation at the workplace. Differences on this subject have narrowed and now both organizations are attempting to create stronger workplace organizations capable to articulate both structures of representation (Serrano del Rosal, 2000: 184).

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At the level of the firm the workplace union branches called *secciones sindicales* are grouped together in local-territorial unions in the *comarca* (town), which include workers of the same industry in the district. These local unions are combined in provincial and regional industry federations all the way up to the national structure. I have indicated that workplace unions' structures are part simultaneously of both a regional and an industry federation. Currently the UGT has eleven national industry federations while CC.OO. has around twelve. Since the late 1980s both unions have undergone a process of organizational rationalization of vertical structures encouraging mergers between federations covering similar economic activities. The same phenomenon of increasing organizational merging has taken place among other European trade unions during the same period (Waddington and Hoffmann, 2000).

Apart of the standard sector/industry federations both unions have set up specific organizational structures for technicians, white-collar employees and retired workers. In addition, the unions have special departments for women and younger workers.

The territorial unions' structure follows the political-administrative organization of Spain after the return of democracy. Both labor organizations have set up regional federations in each one of the seventeen autonomous communities. At that level smaller territorial units (provinces and local union federations) link the regional federation with the union branches at the level of the firm.

The degree of regional implantation of trade unions in Spain varies according to historical, political and cultural factors. Regions such as Asturias and Aragon have a long history of Socialist unionism and in these provinces the UGT has been the dominant force for a long time. Meanwhile, in Spain's two larger

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urban centers, Madrid and Barcelona, where large industrial firms usually are located and where the industrial working class is concentrated, the CC.OO. has been the dominant union since the 1960s.

Table 3.1 (next page) indicates that both unions seem to have their major human resources concentrated in the same regions. Examining data for 1994 one can see that in predominantly rural provinces like Extremadura and Cantabria the unions (UGT and CC.OO.) were underrepresented in comparison to cities like Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, where the unions had a larger segment of their members. An exception to this pattern was Andalucia (a less developed region) where both unions had strong bases of support. In part this was a reflection of the long tradition of working class anarcho-syndicalism that had characterized that part of Spain since the late 19$^{th}$ century.

Both unions have justified their double organizational structures (horizontal/vertical) as a way of giving unity to their policies, considering not only the particular interests of workers in a sector, but their collective interests as a class in the context of Spanish society (Milner and Nombela, 1995) The territorial-horizontal structure plays a complementary function in the unions' confederate structure, since most relevant internal tasks (collecting members' fees, strategies in works council elections, etc) are generally responsibility of the vertical-sectoral-structure. However, some collective agreements and social pacts have been signed at the regional/territorial level, hence they are negotiated by the territorial federations since they may include several economic sectors and occupational strata.

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**Table 3.1 CC.OO. and UGT membership by regions in 1994.**

| *Province–region* | *CC.OO.* | | *UGT* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andalucia | 100,570 | 15.3% | 117,699 | 16.8% |
| Aragon | 19,731 | 3.0% | 29.871 | 4.3% |
| Asturias | 33,290 | 5.1% | 47,908 | 6.8% |
| Baleares | 13,435 | 2.0% | 14,827 | 2.1% |
| Basque Country & Navarra * | 39,155 | 6.0% | 51,188 | 7.3% |
| Canary Islands | 19,577 | 3.0% | 20,081 | 2.9% |
| Cantabria | 9,423 | 1.5% | 14,672 | 2.1% |
| Castilla-Leon | 30,868 | 4.7% | 57,908 | 8.3% |
| Castilla-La Mancha | 34,503 | 5.7% | 28,456 | 4.1% |
| Catalonia | 108,790 | 16.6% | 75,859 | 10.8% |
| Extremadura | 10,141 | 1.5% | 23,363 | 3.3% |
| Galicia | 31,638 | 4.6% | 38,105 | 5.4% |
| Madrid | 98,249 | 15.0% | 70,074 | 10.0% |
| Murcia | 14,837 | 2.3% | 15,925 | 2.2% |
| Valencia | 85,864 | 13.1% | 80,766 | 11.5% |
| La Rioja | 3,662 | 0.6% | 9,136 | 1.3% |
| Ceuta & Melilla | 2,436 | 0.4% | 4,188 | 0.6% |
| Total | 656,268 | 100% | 700,026 | 100% |

* Navarra is a separate "autonomous community" but CC.OO. includes this region with the Basque country.

Source MarcVan der Meer 1997.

In the vertical structure of the unions each federation (sector-industry) has a relatively high degree of autonomy over policies, strategy and union action. The federations' statutes should not be in contradiction with the statutes of the union national confederation. Each federation is obliged to comply with confederate agreements and general lines of policy designed by the national organization, but otherwise they are the ones that decide how to manage their assets and what strategies are needed in order to implement their own sector policies according to their organizational priorities.

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The vertical structure of each organization tells a lot about the strata and occupational groups that the unions represent. Though its *"obrerista"*(workerist) image has changed in recent years, usually CC.OO. has been identified more as an industrial working class union while the UGT has attempted to be a more heterogeneous wage earner' organization capable to attract more white collar and services sector employees.

**Table 3. 2 Distribution of UGT and CC.OO. membership by sectors (%).**

| Sector | *UGT* | | *CC.OO.* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1981 | 1990 | 1981 | 1990 |
| Agriculture | 6.3 | 2.3 | 4.3 | 3.2 |
| Industry | 50.0 | 38.1 | 59.2 | 50.9 |
| Construction | 11.9 | 5.4 | 12.0 | 10.9 |
| Services | 31.8 | 54.2 | 24.5 | 35.0 |

Source: Taboadela (1993)

During the 1980s and early 1990s both unions experienced changes in their membership structure that reflected the transformation of the employment structure in Spain during that period (see Table 3.2). The shift from manufacturing to services explains why unions lost members in industry while increasing the ones employed in the services sector. On the other hand, UGT was more successful in gaining new support among public and private service employees than *Comisiones Obreras* had. According to Taboadela (1993) the UGT increased from 34 percent to 54 percent its non-industrial members while the CC.OO. gained around 10 percent of new members from these strata.

Regarding new groups of wage earners such as the non-manual white-collar workers it appears that UGT has been their choice over CC.OO.. The truth is that among those employees the business-oriented professional unions tend to

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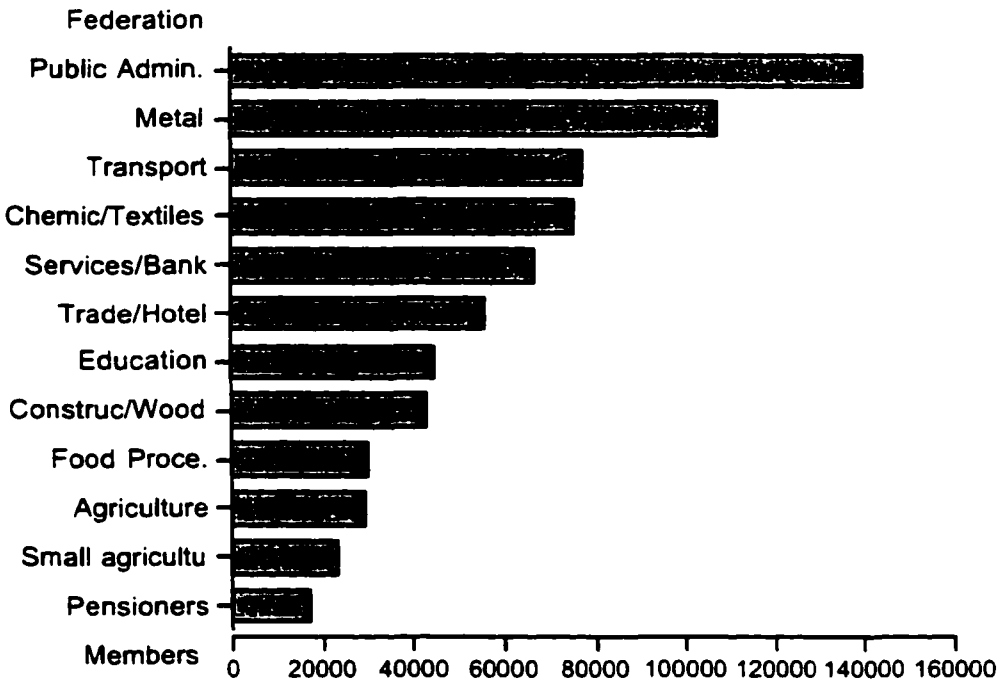
attract more support than the class-based unions. [17] However, when they join a class based-union the tendency has been to select UGT in a greater number. In contrast, CC.OO. has remained identified more as an industrial blue-collars' union than UGT (Taboadela, 1993). [18]

In both cases, the most significant number of affiliates and works council delegates from UGT and CC.OO. are to be found in traditional blue-collar federations like metalworkers, construction, transports, the food and chemical industries and in mining that since then has merged with the metalworkers' federation. Unions also have a significant presence in public administration.

As mentioned before, the UGT and the CC.OO. have undergone a process of organizational rationalization that has reshaped the federation structure of both union confederations. The process of merging of industry federations has reduced their numbers transforming the vertical structure of the class-based organizations. While in the mid-1970s CC.OO. had twenty-two different federations and UGT twenty-one, the new vertical structure is composed by eleven industry federations in the UGT and twelve sector federations in CC.OO., a process that reflects a reduction to a half of the original sectoral structures. This tendency toward merging and increasing concentration of resources began in the late 1980s and accelerated during the 1990s. Simultaneously to the structural rationalization the union leadership from industry and sectoral federations demanded a shift in power from the horizontal to the vertical structure of the confederations.

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**Figure 3.4 Membership of UGT by Sector-Industry Federations (1994).**




Through the merging process UGT moved faster than CC.OO. having reduced its sectoral federations to twelve in 1994, as Figure 3.4 shows. Later in 1997 the second largest federation (metalworkers) merged with the construction/wood federation and the merging process was completed becoming the larger sectoral federation of UGT. However, in 1994 the largest federation of UGT was still the one representing public sector employees followed by the metalworkers.

One must frame the merging process in the context of organizational building undergone by both labor unions during the past twenty years (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). When the unions reemerged as the legal workers' representatives in 1977-8 their stronger and best developed structures were the territorial-provincial unions located in large urban and industrial centers (Führer-Ries,

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1995: 167-170). It was a complex process of building first the national framework of the industry federations to reorganize step by step the rest of the emerging sectoral union organizations. Within that context, the process leading to the creation of industry/sectoral federations began by channeling human and economic resources from the territorial structures into the workplaces.

In UGT the national industry/sector federations are responsible for collective bargaining and policy formulation in their specific domains. They organize workers independently of their occupation statuses according to a broad principle of inclusive class unionism. However, the federations have developed special policies for the technical and white-collar staff. Specifically, the UGT metalworkers' federation since the late 1980s established separated union sections for technicians and managers in the firms in which it had organized local union branches.

On the other hand, the autonomous community/regional unions (see Figure 3.3) comprise all the industry federations that are geographically located within their territorial space. While the territorial union organization addresses issues and problems that affect all unions within its particular domain providing specific union services to all the members, the sectoral/industry federations are in charge of union policies for each industrial/economic sector. Needless to say, there is a considerable overlapping between the membership of industry and territorial federations. In the past this structural dualism has created internal tensions and authority issues between the union's vertical and horizontal structures (Zapatero-Ranz, 1993).

Recently in the early 1990s, the industry/sector federations gained more competencies and decision making power within the union structure. In the case

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of the UGT, for example, a group of industry federations led by the metalworkers' leadership achieved a new organizational arrangement that might strengthen the federations' competencies *vis-à-vis* the territorial organisms. Seeking to develop a *sindicalismo de base* (grass-root unionism) centered on the workplaces' union structures (*secciones sindicales*) the industry federations want to reinforce links between union local branches and the sector federation bodies instead than with the territory provincial union organizations.

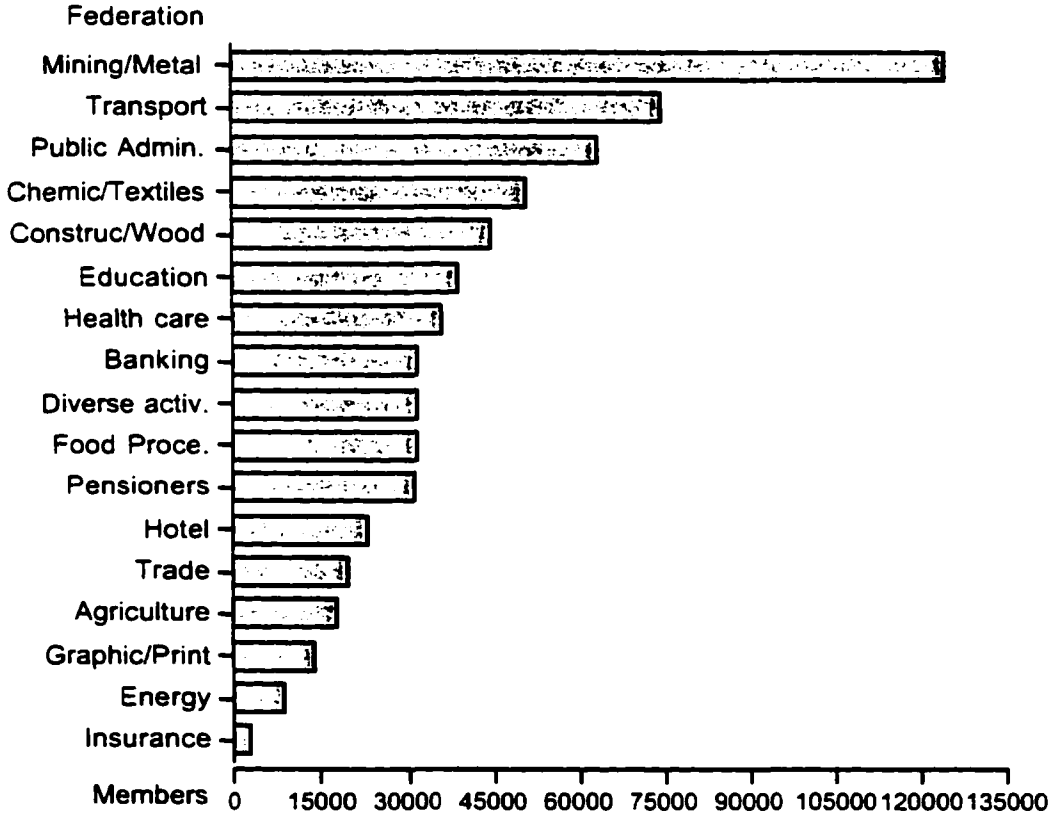
In its 36th Congress held in 1994, the UGT approved a new organizational design giving more organizational power to the sectoral federations. The role of the industry federations within the UGT's institutional structure have been strengthened by changing the system used to allocate votes in national congresses in favor of the industry/ sectoral federations. Additionally, the organizational rationalization undergone by UGT has affected the functioning of the territorial structures encouraging some decentralization of resources previously held by regional and provincial unions in favor of the local union organizations *(comarcas).*

In the case of the CC.OO., this union has experienced similar processes of organizational rationalization like the ones the UGT has undergone. While in the early 1990s there were 21 sectoral/industry federations in CC.OO. —and 18 regional/territorial federations— during the past decade the organization has reshaped both the vertical and the horizontal union's structures. Within that context, several federations' mergers had been completed in 1994. For example the metalworkers and mining unions joined forces creating a larger multi-industry federation. The same happened with the chemical union that united with the textiles and leather union into a new federation while the entertainment union

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merged with the federation of paper and graphic industries. The total number of industry / sectoral federations was reduced to seventeen. During the second part of the 1990s the process was completed with a new wave of union merging bringing the number of sectoral / industry federations further down.

**Figure 3.5 Membership of CC.OO. by Sector-Industry Federations (1994).**




Regarding this merging process in CC.OO., for example, in 1997 the insurance and banking federation merged forming a new stronger sectoral union. Another important fusion that took place at that time was the one that created the new federation of communication and transports that re-grouped three industry unions into a single federation. At the end of the decade the number of

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industry-sector federations were twelve including the federation of pensioners that now includes the unemployed workers. [19]

Regarding the authority structure both unions have similar schemes. The central decision-making body of both labor organizations is the *Confederal Congress,* held every four years. The Congress is the body that determines union policies and strategy for the following four years and its delegates elect the members of the confederation executive boards. Congress' delegates get elected both at sector/industry and territorial level in proportion to the importance of each structure. For example, after the changes undergone by the UGT, its *Confederal Congress* consists of 60 percent delegates from industry/sector federations and 40 percent from regional federations. On the contrary, in the CC.OO. the Congress' delegates are still split in a fifty-fifty proportion.

When the *Confederal Congress* is not in session, the unions' governing body is the *Executive Committee* formed by a secretary-general and a small number of members who held executive responsibilities on certain areas such as finances, communication and organization. There are another larger representative bodies that meet regularly during the periods between Congresses to supervise the actions of the *Executive Committee.* These bodies are the *Confederal Committee* in UGT, with meetings held twice a year and the *Confederal Council* in CC.OO., which meets several (3 to 4) times a year (Serrano del Rosal, 2000: 97-99).

For Milner and Nombela (1995) this organizational similarity between the two main unions may suggest that the labor relations environment in which the unions operate heavily influence their structures. "This dual structure must be in large part because of the mix of collective agreements at sector and regional level which are the prime focus of union activities (Ibid. 1995: 22)".

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Finally, unions' main sources of revenue are; members' dues, which comprise the largest single source and rents from assets, which have increased since the return of democracy as the state has gradually returned assets (principally office buildings) seized under Franco (called *patrimonio sindical*). Another important source of income are state subsidies (split according with the number of delegates obtained at works council elections), and public money granted for special training courses (Milner and Nombela, 1995). [20]

To conclude, both UGT and CC.OO. employ a number of full time officials and union staff. While in 1998 the CC.OO. had in its payroll about 2,200 employees the UGT had in 1997 around 2,350 paid workers. It is important to mention, however, that most everyday union work is carried out not by the paid staff but by union and works council delegates that are entitled to a number of paid hours from their employers to do union-related tasks. This is a theme that I address in chapter four.

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## Endnotes for Chapter Three

[1] There is another nationalist union in the Basque country called LAB, *Langille Abertzale Batzordeak*, (Basque Workers' Assembly) politically linked to the radical nationalist movement.

[2] It seems that the increase of professional organizations has played a part in the rise of the union density rate and they may account for 250,000 union members. In this work I won't refer to the so-called professional organizations since almost nothing has been written on the subject.

[3] It has been estimated that wage increases in those years averaged 20 to 30 percent.

[4] This penetration of the corporatist institutions was a successful adaptation of labor strategy to the difficulties and possibilities for collective action during the last years of Franco's regime. The incipient structure of CC.OO. in the new democratic Spain was shaped by its experiences of active involvement in Franco's *jurados de empresa* (Fishman, 1990).

[5] It is worth noting that CC.OO. did not experience with the same intensity the factional disputes that ended destroying the PCE in the early 1980s. As I will discuss in chapter five CC.OO.'s strategies reflected most of the political strategy of the PCE during the transition to democracy (see Camiller, 1984; Mujal-León, 1983).

[6] After the PCE's share of the vote fell to less of 4 percent in the 1982 elections, internal tensions within the party reached crisis proportions, and the leadership of Santiago Carrillo was challenged and he resigned as the secretary general of the party (Camiller, 1984).

[7] In 1982, the same year the PSOE won the general elections with an absolute majority, the UGT emerged as the most voted union in works council elections.

[8] After 40 years of authoritarian rule the UGT reemerged to public life in 1976 becoming jointly with CC.OO. one of the two main workers' organizations.

[9] In total, between 1989 and 1990 I interviewed nine leaders of UGT. Two national leaders of the Confederation, two middle-level leaders of the Metal Federation, one from the Transportation Federation , another from the Public Employees Federation, and three regional leaders of the Madrid regional federation. In addition to that in 1990 I conducted a survey in 50 workplaces where 136 plant-leaders of UGT were surveyed.

[10] After the electoral debacle of 1982, the PCE entered a period of factionalism and political disarray. The party was divided in two groups, the pro-Soviet and the "official" Euro-communist faction while the former general secretary Santiago Carrillo left the party to create its own organization, the Workers' Party (PT), that was less critical than the PCE *vis-à-vis* the PSOE government.

[11] In addition to the nine informants from UGT mentioned before I interviewed ten leaders from CC.OO.. Two national leaders, two industry leaders of the Metal Federation,

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one from the Banking Federation, one from the RENFE -railroad union, one from the Federation of Textiles, and three regional leaders of the territorial-regional union of Madrid.

[12] Other institutional changes favored this partial return to social concertation between social agents, specifically the establishment of the *Consejo Económico y Social* (Economic and Social Council, CES) in 1992. In part prescribed by the Spanish Constitution, the CES membership comprises labor unions, employers' representatives and few representatives from consumer and citizen associations. Its mandate is to advice the Government on economic and social policy. During the 1990s the CES has been an important public forum in which representatives from the labor unions and the employers' associations convene to discuss labor-related questions (Magone, 2001).

[13] One of the most significant was an agreement between CC.OO., UGT and the government changing electoral procedure for the establishment of works councils. The new method has softened the competitive aspects of the process contributing to lessen tensions between unions.

[14] Many workers — members and non-members of UGT— had invested their life savings in an union project to build low-income housing that did not materialize (Hermógenes and Torres, 1995). As a consequence of this outrage the public prestige of UGT was affected and the organization lost members and social support in the works council elections of 1994.

[15] Some attempts at ending the estrangement between the two organizations were made at that time. For instance, on September 30, 1992 Nicolas Redondo met informally with the PSOE vice secretary general Alfonso Guerra and they talked about improving relations. However, the UGT national leadership rejected any subordination of the union to party's interest.

[16] The leader of the Metalworkers Federation Manuel "Lito" Fernández challenged the leadership of Candido Méndez in 1995 presenting him-self as the defender of a new union model in which the industry federations would be the dominant units in the structure of the labor organization. His received around 47 percent of the votes in the extraordinary congress.

[17] In most of the advanced postindustrial societies these new social categories are developing a closer relationship with trade unions and many of them are committed to the principles of equality, protection and improvement of employment and working conditions. All the same, there are still significant differences between professional and white-collar employees and other groups of manual and industrial workers. For the unions it has been hard to define overall or shared wage earners' interests and consequently to devise across-the-board strategies for different groups of workers. During the 1990s Spanish class-based trade unions such as UGT and CC.OO. tried to take into account white collar and professional employees' demands more seriously (see Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

[18] Part of the problem is that for many years, professional and managerial staff received scant attention in terms of trade union action. As I showed in chapter one the number of qualified non manual employees has been rising in Spain during the last 3 decades, together with numerous, rapidly-evolving qualifications and new skilled employees.

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[19] The largest segment of CC.OO.'s membership is found in metal-mining industries, transport-communications, public administration, chemical-textile-leather, and construction. The sociological base of CC.OO. has broadened but it still the largest industrial workers union in Spain.

[20] Although unions received financial contributions from the general state budgets, for diverse uses including training or employment programs, their main source of income comes from members' dues, which are the fundamental source of support for all unions' activities. (see Ojeda-Avilés, 2002: 22).

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# Chapter Four

## Shop Floor Unionism: UGT and CC.OO. in medium-sized and large workplaces in the Autonomous Community of Madrid.

Trade unions are organizations of employees who have joined together to improve pay and conditions at work trough collective bargaining. At the workplace level unions represent workers' interests when they negotiate on their behalf with employers' representatives. With the development of democratic capitalism trade unions became institutionalized complex organizations that began to function separately from the dynamic of the workplace.

Inspired on Weber's sociology, Robert Michels argues that the process of institutionalization of workers' organizations lead to the establishment of oligarchic bureaucracies that no longer represent members' interests. [1] Although these tendencies exist, sociological research suggests that a relatively high degree of unions' representativeness might be maintained when unions keep strong workplace organizational structures under the direct control of rank-and-file members (Andolfato and Labbé, 2000).

Precisely this chapter's focus is on union dynamic at the workplace, and the institutional role that trade unionists play at that level of collective action. Next, I discuss workplace's representative institutions intending to shed light on the context of a survey that I carried out in 1990.

### I. Workplace representative institutions.

Democratic capitalist societies have developed diverse institutional forms to represent workers' interests in the firm. In the United States and in Great Brit-

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ain the system of workers' representation is based on shop stewards who are elected by union members to conduct collective bargaining with firm managers. In Spain, by the contrary, there are two channels of representation through which workers can make hear their voice: the *comité de empresa* (works council) and the *sección sindical* (union section). These workplace institutions, theoretically, play different institutional roles albeit many of the workers' representatives engaged in both of them tend to be the same people (Alós and Lope, 1991: 243).

**Table 4.1 Statutory number of representatives at workplace level.**

| *Type of Workers' Representatives* | *Number of Employees* | *Number of Representatives* |
|---|---|---|
| Staff Delegates | 6-30 | 1 |
| | 31-49 | 3 |
| Works Council Delegates | 50-100 | 5 |
| | 101-250 | 9 |
| | 251-500 | 13 |
| | 501-750 | 17 |
| | 751-1000 (1) | 21 |

(1) In workplaces with more than 1,000 employees, the works council must have two additional members for every 1,000 workers or fraction. The maximum size of a works council is 75 members.

Spain's labor legislation has established that in workplaces with more than fifty employees, the workers have the right to elect a works council. In workplaces with more than six employees but less than fifty, the workers might elect *delegados de personals* (staff delegates) that represent employees *vis-à-vis* management (Art. 62 of the Workers' Statute). The same legislation allows that in large enterprises with multiple workplaces an inter-firm works council *(comité intercentro)* comprised of delegates elected to the different works councils in the workplaces of the same company can be set up to coordinate works council related

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tasks and collective bargaining. However, employees only elect delegates to the works council in their workplace following a formula that the Workers' Statute established in 1980. Table 4.1 (previous page) shows how the size of the works council is determined.

In 1995 a new type of workers' representatives were introduced by law *(Prevention of Risks at Work Act)* called delegates for labor health and injury prevention. These delegates are elected by workers in firms with more than 5 employees and are entitled to monitor work-related health and safety issues in the labor process. In firms with more than 50 employees special boards for health and labor safety must be established and they are expected to coordinate their tasks with other workers' representatives. This is a relatively new system of labor health prevention extended to Spain as result of the European Union's legislation and it did not exist when I did my fieldwork in 1990. Thus, I won't deal with this form of employees' representation in this chapter.

Other workers' representatives that participate in workplace action are the so-called *delegados sindicales* (trade union delegates) who are elected only by union members. The law for trade union issues (LOLS) of 1984 provides the institutional framework for the creation of workplace union sections (*secciones sindicales)* in firms with more than 250 employees. Through collective bargaining unions have been able to obtain recognition of workplace's union sections in some firms with less than the established threshold of 250 workers.

The workers' representatives (elected works council's delegates and trade union delegates) have been conceptualized as the "natural" workplace-level leaders by Robert Fishman (1990) and Lynne Wozniak (1991) who have studied the dynamics of workplace unionism in post-Franco Spain. Both researchers

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agree on the sociological similarities that distinguish the workplace leaders from the rest of the workers.

**Table 4.2 Number of trade union delegates according to firm size.**

| *Firm Size* | *Trade Union Delegates** |
|---|---|
| from 250 to 750 workers | 1 delegate |
| from 751 to 2,000 workers | 2 delegates |
| from 2,001 to 5,000 workers | 3 delegates |
| more than 5,001 workers | 4 delegates |

* For each trade union with a legally recognized local branch.

The first significant difference between workplace union and works council leaders and rank and file employees is on their ideology and political background. The majority of the workplace leaders come from the political left and many of them had been involved in the popular struggles against the dictatorship.

On the whole, workplace-level leaders are somewhat more "radical" than the workers they do represent are. For instance, Fishman (1990) compared their political attitudes with those of rank and file workers and found that the plant-level leaders he interviewed were considerably more likely to perceive the firm in conflictual terms than the rest of the staff. He describes the works council leaders as a fairly coherent group facing similar problems and challenges irrespective of their union affiliation. However, the fact that the political ideology of the workplace leaders was farther left in comparison to the workers' political views in no sense undermined their democratic legitimacy. Robert Fishman points out that if the workers had chosen more radical leaders despite the presence of these ideological differences, it was either because there were no more

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moderate leaders willing to offer themselves as representatives or because the workers felt that the more radical leaders would be more effective in the defense of their interests (Ibid. 1990: 40-42).

Like Fishman did earlier, in 1990 I posed the same question to a sample of 269 workplace-level leaders associated with the two major labor unions. The question was: do you think that the workers in this firm are more radical than their representatives, are they more moderate, or they share the same political views held by their representatives?

When Fishman (1990: 44) asked this question in 1981 sixty percent of the plant-level leaders interviewed believed that the workers were more moderate while only four percent said that they were more radical. About thirty-five percent indicated that the workers shared the same political views held by the workplace leaders.

**Table 4.3 Workplace leaders' opinion on workers' political views compared with those held by them.**

| *Responses* | | | | Fishman's Study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| More radical | 5.1 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 5.7 | 4.3 |
| More moderate | 64.7 | 69.2 | 66.9 | 59.6 | 61.7 | 59.6 |
| Same views | 28.7 | 25.6 | 27.1 | 37.8 | 32.6 | 35.6 |
| No answer | 1.5 | 0.8 | 1.1 | - | - | 0.6 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

In 1990 the responses my informants offered were alike. However, minor differences did exist. In reference to workers' moderate political views the percentage of positive answers that I recorded was slightly higher than the ones Fishman had. Among my informants sixty-seven percent agreed with that as-

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sessment while the plant-level leaders interviewed by Fishman who had chosen that option were less than sixty percent. Remarkably, the workplace leaders linked to UGT and CC.OO., both groups shared similar views on this question.

As Fishman (1990) stresses, workplace-level leaders are not the mechanical reflections of the workers that they represent. Furthermore, they also disagree at times with the official policy of their own unions, as Wozniak (1991) found out in her research. Workplace leaders are fully capable of thinking for themselves on local labor issues and on large national questions. Plant-level leaders, according to Fishman (1990), form a crucial organizational mechanism linking the macro and the micro dimensions of trade union activity. In order for a union national campaign or workers' mobilization to succeed they must have the active participation of the workplace-level leaders. If union organization is to move forward, it requires such workplace leaders to initiate and coordinate collective worker action at the firm level.

Workplace-level union leaders are essential if there is to be formal union activity —an organizational presence— on the shop floor level (Fishman and Mershon, 1993: 72-3). In Spain there has been a chronic shortage of those willing to assume the special costs and responsibilities of the workplace leadership role. Moreover, this is a common problem of modern trade unionism that is found even in large unionized enterprises. When there are not workplace leaders available very little collective action of any sort takes place at the firm level. Yet, in extraordinary circumstances informal workers' leaders may emerge in conjunction with collective worker action in firms where the trade unions don't have organizational presence. The question, however, is how to maintain the informal structures once the episode (strike, labor unrest) has passed away.

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## II. Who are the workplace union leaders?

In the comparative literature on European trade unionism Spain has always be classified among the weakest cases regarding the institutional power of labor (Crouch, 1993). This statement is partially true. In almost every aspect such as union density, organizational resources and institutional power, Spanish trade unions are still relatively weak. In part this has been the product of the way organized labor reemerged in Spain after the disintegration of a long dictatorship.

As I showed in chapter three Spanish labor had to simultaneously cope with two interrelated processes. It had to rebuild its organizational structure to integrate a sociologically diversified working class that had been denied autonomous forms of representation, and it had to participate as a democratic actor in a process of regime change. According to Fishman (1990) the labor movement did not fulfill both roles successfully. It played a key role in the democratic transition by restraining economic demands that could had strained the new political regime, but it did not accomplish what he calls its "organizational tasks."

Following Kjellberg (1992) it can be argued that in societies where labor is strong, its force is grounded on a widely spread workplace organization. To be capable of acting organizationally as an institutional actor the national trade unions must be strong at the micro level; that is in the workplace. Colin Crouch (1993) develops this idea arguing that it is a mistake to believe that only the degree of centralization of a labor organization assures greater power and institutional capability. Spanish organized labor has low level of organizational articu-

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lation given its structural and historical peculiarities (Crouch, 1993: 283). However, to understand why trade unions in have not been able to consolidate stronger organizations a closer examination of the actors' views is required. Specifically, one need to focus on the workplace leaders who, as Fishman (1990) indicates, are essential actors at the base of the labor organizations.

There are few empirical studies on labor organizations at the workplace level. The importance of the workplace-level leaders for the implementation of union policy as well as for the articulation between the national, regional and local levels of the organization has been documented by Fishman (1990) and by Wozniak (1991). Besides, the UGT carried out a national survey of its elected delegates to works councils (Bouza et al., 1989) that I examine in this chapter too.

Next, I examine the sociological characteristics of the UGT and the CC.OO. workplace-level leaders. In the following section I analyze how they perceive their organizations and how they assess certain key questions related to union identity, collective action and changes in union strategy. I try to show that UGT and CC.OO. are complex and fluid social organizations, in which many active members bear views and opinions that do not always coincide with the policies the national and regional leadership do hold. Like in all formal organizations the workplace-level leaders accommodate, as best as they can, to the instituted set of rules that govern their organizational experiences. Nonetheless, that does not mean that their union loyalties can be taken for granted.

In 1990, I conducted a survey in fifty workplaces with 200 employees or more in the Madrid region that had elected at least two delegates sponsored in each of the electoral slates of UGT and CC.OO. to the works council. A total of 269 workplace-level leaders linked to these organizations were interviewed. [2]

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Smaller workplaces were excluded on the assumption that they had a low union presence. My research focused on workplaces where union local branches *(secciones sindicales)* were relatively well organized. [3]

I have indicated in the preface that my research built up on a previous study done by Robert Fishman in 1981. However, there are differences in the research design. Fishman's study focused on the plant-leaders in Madrid and Barcelona elected by the workers as their representatives to the works council. His sample included workplaces with more than 50 employees that held works council elections in 1980, and it was representative of all kind of enterprises while my study focused on the two major labor unions and it was limited to the Madrid Autonomous Community. [4]

In addition, Fishman interviewed the chairperson *(presidente)* or the secretary of the works council. When he could not meet either one of those plant leaders, then, he interviewed a plain works council member. The workplace-level leaders I interviewed reflected the specific characteristics of each firm. A complete random selection of informants using official documents was unfeasible given that around 25 percent of those elected in 1986 were not longer members of the works council. To deal with the problem I decided that in each workplace at least six interviews needed to be done; three from informants associated to each union, for a total of six per firm. [5]

When possible I interviewed the chairperson or the secretary of the works council and the secretaries of the local union branches of UGT and CC.OO. as well. Furthermore, interviewed elected delegates were chosen from each one of the two electoral colleges that are represented in the works council: the blue collar/manual labor force and the white-collar staff and office personnel.

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*The characteristics of the sample*

In my sample there are a few more delegates from UGT than from CC.OO.. Forty percent of the interviewed workplace-level leaders worked in plants, offices, and businesses with more than 200 but less than 500 employees. Twenty percent were from workplaces with a staff that fluctuated from 501 to 1,000 employees, while the remaining 40 percent of the informants were employees in workplaces with over 1,000 workers. Most of the workers' representatives interviewed were employed in industrial plants or in service organizations, including services for industry. Construction was the only sector underrepresented in the sample since the selection criteria excluded smaller mobile workplaces from the population to be surveyed.

In the sample around 80 percent of the informants were men while 20 percent were women. Most of them were married and the age mean was 41 years for informants linked to UGT and 40 years for those associated to *Comisiones Obreras*. In comparison to the Spanish population workplace leaders tend to be less religious, more inclined to vote for left-wing parties, somewhat better educated, and have a higher participation rate in other voluntary associations.

The occupational profile of the workplace leaders interviewed was to a great extent diversified. Although 37 percent were skilled blue-collar workers there was a notable variety of salaried employees in the sample. A significant group of informants were white collars employees and technical personnel as Table 4.4 illustrates.

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**Table. 4.4 Occupational status of workplace leaders (%).**

| *Occupational Status* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Upper level skilled technician | 5.9 | 6.0 | 5.9 |
| Middle level skilled technician | 14.0 | 12.5 | 13.0 |
| Blue collar supervisor | 8.1 | 3.8 | 5.9 |
| Blue collar skilled worker | 35.3 | 38.3 | 36.8 |
| White collar/office employee | 22.8 | 16.5 | 19.7 |
| Unskilled worker/employee | 8.1 | 18.8 | 13.4 |
| Others | 5.9 | 4.5 | 5.2 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Data on the informants' occupational statuses indicated that sociologically speaking the workplace leaders of both unions were alike. In both organizations the skilled blue-collar workers were the dominant group. Yet there were more unskilled workers among the CC.OO. workplace leaders. The reason for this difference lies in the history of this union organization that traditionally has attracted more industrial workers than the UGT. Nonetheless, in general the workplace leaders from both organizations shared numerous social, economic and political characteristics. As I have pointed out, other researchers have confirmed this sociological resemblance (Fishman, 1990: 40; Wozniak, 1991:126).

**Table 4.5 Gender of workplace leaders (%).**

| | | | | Fishman's study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| Men | 83.1 | 75.9 | 79.6 | 98.8 | 88.7 | 92.3 |
| Women | 16.9 | 24.1 | 20.4 | 1.2 | 11.3 | 7.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

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In comparison to Fishman's informants the proportion of women in my sample was somehow higher. It has been confirmed that the proportion of women elected as works council members increased during the 1980s (Brunel et al., 1995). While 20 percent of my surveyed delegates were women, in Fishman's study these ones represented about 8 percent of his total sample.

According to Brunel et al. (1995: 44-45) the proportion of women elected to works council positions under the sponsorship of UGT and CC.OO. were about 20 percent of the total in 1990. This fact may explain why I ended interviewing more women than what Fishman did in 1981. This phenomenon reflects the policy followed by the labor unions seeking to increase the women's share of leadership roles. However, most women are still in subaltern positions in the union power structure. Among the thirty-five works council presidents interviewed only four of them were women. Furthermore, of the seventy-three local branches secretaries surveyed about 22 percent were women. [6]

Another variable that made my sample a little different to that of Fishman was the informants' age structure. That is what I examine on the following table.

**Table 4.6 Age distribution of workplace leaders (%).**

| | | | | Fishman's study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| Less than 29 years | 6.6 | 8.3 | 7.4 | 9.8 | 26.3 | 25.0 |
| 30 to 35 years | 21.3 | 21.8 | 21.6 | 28.1 | 32.6 | 27.8 |
| 36 to 41 years | 27.2 | 29.3 | 28.3 | 28.0 | 18.4 | 21.0 |
| 42 to 49 years | 27.2 | 23.3 | 25.3 | 13.4 | 12.1 | 13.6 |
| More than 50 years | 17.6 | 17.3 | 17.5 | 20.7 | 9.9 | 12.0 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

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Table 4.6 (previous page) shows that, in general, the informants I interviewed were more aged than the ones Fishman surveyed. The majority of my informants were between the age of 30 and 41 years old while the ones interviewed by this scholar tended to be younger. In addition, the age differences this researcher found between workplace leaders from UGT and CC.OO. were less remarkable among my informants. In general, the workplace leaders associated to the CC.OO. that I surveyed were younger than the ones linked to the UGT, but not as sharp as the ones Fishman came across several years earlier.

The workplace-level leaders that Fishman interviewed were part of a new generational cohort that experienced the death of Franco and the return of democracy. They had entered the labor market at an early age during the difficult years of the dictatorship and many of them participated in the opposition movement against the authoritarian regime. When I did my fieldwork many of these younger leaders had aged and they were not so young anymore. On the other hand, UGT expanded its social base during the 1980s and it recruited a new generation of workplace leaders who had not lived the political experiences many CC.OO. workplace leaders had.

Another variables that one must consider are the educational attainment and the religious beliefs of the informants. In comparison to Fishman's sample the workplaces leaders I interviewed had a mixed educational profile as Table 4.7 shows (next page).

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**Table 4.7 Educational attainment of workplace leaders (%).**

| | | | | Fishman's study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Educational Attainment* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| None | 0.7 | 2.3 | 1.5 | – | 2.9 | 1.2 |
| Primary | 19.1 | 30.1 | 24.5 | 35.4 | 35.0 | 29.7 |
| Intermediate | 25.7 | 13.5 | 19.7 | 19.5 | 18.6 | 19.2 |
| High School (HS) | 11.8 | 12.8 | 12.3 | 12.2 | 9.3 | 12.1 |
| Vocational | 17.6 | 14.3 | 16.0 | 6.1 | 12.9 | 9.6 |
| College Education * | 11.0 | 16.5 | 13.8 | 21.9 | 17.2 | 24.1 |
| Technical after HS | 14.0 | 10.5 | 12.3 | – | – | – |
| Other ° | – | – | – | 4.9 | 4.3 | 4.1 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

* Refer to those who had attended college with and without university degrees.
° In "other" Fishman (1990) included those with non-university technical education.

The education level of the workplace leaders varied considerably. A small minority did not have any formal schooling and a considerable number of them had completed primary or intermediate education. Additionally, around 26 percent of the informants reported to possess some college or technical education. In comparison to Fishman's informants, my sample had less college educated people and more who had attended technical schools or completed a vocational training program that in Spain is called *"formación profesional"* (professional training). The percentage of those who had finished high school was similar in both samples. About 12 percent of my informants had completed secondary education. Meanwhile, around 25 percent of Fishman's informants had attended college while they were around 14 percent of the total of my sample. In addition, the workplace leaders associated with CC.OO., in both samples, did have a higher number of people with just primary or non-formal education at all. The

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data may reflect the social composition of this organization that is more "working class" than UGT.

In Spain religious beliefs and religious practices are among the most important variables associated with political behavior and political ideology (Linz, 1981). As I pointed out, workplace leaders have been found to be less religious than the rest of the Spanish population as a whole (Fishman, 1990: 85).

**Table 4.8 Religious beliefs of workplace leaders (%).**

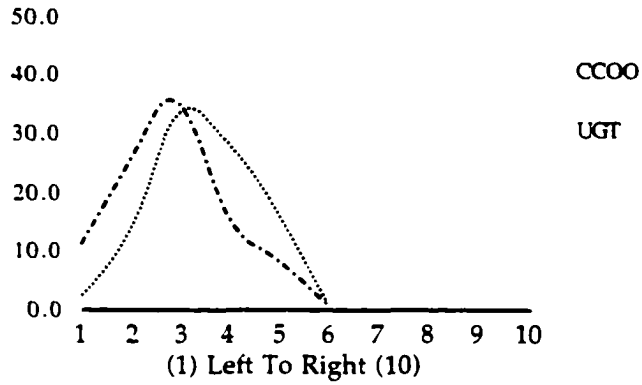
| | | | | Fishman's study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Religiosity* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| Practicing Catholic | 9.6 | 5.3 | 7.4 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 15.4 |
| No-practicing Catholic | 39.0 | 17.3 | 28.3 | 32.9 | 22.0 | 27.8 |
| Indifferent | 30.1 | 32.3 | 31.2 | 45.1 | 34.0 | 31.8 |
| Atheist | 29.1 | 43.6 | 31.2 | 11.0 | 34.0 | 22.2 |
| Others | 2.2 | 0.8 | 1.5 | - | - | 0.3 |
| No Answer | - | 0.8 | 0.4 | 2.4 | 1.4 | 2.5 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

In comparison to Fishman's sample my informants were generally less religious (with some exceptions) as one can confirm by looking at the figures on the table above. Regarding the workplace leaders of UGT, 49 percent were Catholic (practicing or not) while Fishman came across a lower number of Catholics among his UGT informants (41%). However, the proportion of atheists in my sample was considerably higher not only for the UGT but also for the CC.OO. workplace leaders too. In both samples the CC.OO. delegates indicated that they were less religious while the ones linked to UGT showed somehow a greater tendency to define themselves as Catholic.

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Sociological research indicates a positive correlation between atheism and political radicalism. Based to this assumption one should expect to find a higher proportion of workplace leaders linked to CC.OO. to be located on the far left when asked to place themselves on a left to right continuum.

**Figure 4.1 Self-placement of workplace leaders on the Left-Right Scale.**




The large majority of the workplace-level leaders interviewed placed themselves on the left on the political spectrum while a minority of about 14 percent preferred to position themselves on the center (5 and 6). More CC.OO. delegates tended to place themselves on the far left while, proportionally, more UGT delegates preferred the center on the scale. In general, the dominant tendency among all the delegates was to select the political space located between the 3 and the 4, that is the moderate left. About 60 percent of the interviewees chose this region on the scale.

When both variables (religion and political ideology) are correlated one find a clear overlapping between ideological leftism and the absence of religious beliefs. The farther to the left the workplace leaders placed themselves, the less

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religious they tended to be. In the following table I examine this strong relationship.

**Table 4.9 Relationship between religiosity and political ideology (%).**

| Religiosity | UGT | | | | CC.OO. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Far Left* | *Left* | *Center* | *Total* | *Far Left* | *Left* | *Center* | *Total* |
| Practicing Catholic | 5.9 | 7.8 | 20.0 | 9.8 | 2.1 | 5.6 | 15.4 | 5.3 |
| Non-practicing | 29.4 | 41.1 | 44.0 | 40.2 | 12.5 | 16.9 | 46.2 | 18.2 |
| Non-believer * | 64.7 | 51.1 | 36.0 | 50.0 | 85.4 | 77.5 | 38.5 | 76.5 |
| (N) | (17) | (90) | (25) | (132) | (48) | (71) | (13) | (132) |

* Including indifferent and atheist (see table 4.8)

As expected almost 86 percent of the CC.OO. delegates who positioned themselves on the far left (1 and 2) reported to be non-believers. The same tendency is found among the UGT delegates (65%) but with a lower intensity. On the other hand, among those who declared to be believers (practicing or not) more than 60 percent were positioned on the political center.

Overall, workplace-level leaders associated with CC.OO. tended to be less religious and more leftist than the ones linked to UGT. Data confirm the same tendency found by Fishman (1990) that has been reported by other researchers who have done investigations at the level of the workplace (Iriso, 1993). Another important difference that one need to stress refers to the class identity of the informants. Overall, informants associated with CC.OO. reported to be more "proletarian" than the ones from UGT. Workplace-level leaders were asked to identify themselves according to what they considered to be their class position. In Spanish there is a subtle semantic difference between *"obrero"* (proletarian or working class) and *"trabajador"*(worker, wage earner). The meaning of both

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words is related but the nuances reflect certain disagreement on the "notional intensity" of both expressions. For example, when I posed the question on class self-identification to a middle-aged woman who was the secretary in her works council she looked at me a little surprised. Then she mulled over for a moment stating in her own words:

> "....before we were proletarians *(obreros)* now we have become workers *(trabajadores)*. I'm not a working class person anymore, now I'm a wage earner like many other industrial workers in this factory who are not longer what they were 20 years ago."

The following table reports data on class self-identification of the work-place leaders surveyed. The responses have been re-coded into three broad categories; working class, wage earner and middle class.

**Table 4.10 Class self-identification of workplace leaders (%).**

| *Class identification* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Working class | 16.2 | 27.8 | 21.9 |
| Middle class | 21.3 | 12.8 | 17.1 |
| Wage earner | 62.5 | 59.4 | 61.0 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

A majority of workplace-level leaders from both unions identified as wage earners (around 60 percent). Differences in opinion between those who selected middle versus working class reflected the unions' social identities. Among UGT delegates the tendency to self-identify as middle class was higher than among those of CC.OO.. The contrary occurred among the CC.OO. delegates. In this group 28 percent of the informants chose working class as their class self-identification while only 16 percent of the UGT delegates did the same.

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So far I have shown some of the similarities and the differences between the UGT and the CC.OO. workplace leaders interviewed. In the next section I examine their position in the workplace structure and the complex relationship between the works council and the local union branches.

**III. The union organization at the firm and the works council.**

In the United States or in Great Britain employee representation is traditionally associated with trade unions. However, in Spain, unions are not the only mechanism of employee representation. There is another institutional channel that gives workers a collective voice in their firm; that is the works council.

Works councils are among the oldest forms of employee participation in decision-making within enterprises, dating back as far as the end of the 19th century in Germany. However, works councils only really flourished during the golden age of modern capitalism (1950-1970) and in many European countries have now become one of the more widespread forms of employee participation.

Rogers and Streeck (1994: 98) define works councils as "representative bodies elected by all workers at a particular workplace, regardless of union membership and inclusive of white-collar and many supervisory employees." Works councils are usually made up of employee representatives, but in some cases they also include management. Usually the institutional role of works council is consultation or joint decision-making over issues of governance relating to the workplace or enterprise as a whole. In Spain the Workers' Statute of 1980 established what are its prerogatives in the firm as the unitary organ of workers' representation.

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In 1978, for the first time without the restrictions imposed by the Franco's regime, Spanish employees voted to elect works council delegates as their company-level representatives. Until 1982, union elections were held every two years. From 1982 to 1994, however, they were held every four years. In 1995 a new electoral system was introduced, known as "dynamic computation". This allows elections in the firms to be called at any time by agreement between the interested parties. All workers in their workplaces directly elect works council members and they face re-election every four years. The works council elections have a meaning that far exceeds workplace representation; they determine who would be the workers' representative in the firm, but they also legitimize unions as public institutions beyond that domain (Hamann, 1998).

The works council has major responsibilities in the workplace. First, it receives from management information regarding labor issues and in some cases economic or financial questions related to the functioning of the company. Works council delegates must pass the information [7] they received to the workers. Moreover, works council members review employer proposals to introduce changes in the structure of the staff that involve dismissals, reductions in hours of work, or transfers from the plant. Therefore, the works council is expected to enforce provisions concerning working conditions. Finally, this body is the main workers' representative in collective bargaining at the company level, a function it may share with local union branches in larger firms.

On the other hand, there are the *"secciones sindicales"*. The employees in an enterprise or workplace who are members of the same union form the union sections. The union local branch serves as the institutional channel of communication between the organization and its members. Under the *Trade Union Freedom*

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*Act* (LOLS) of 1984, any legally constituted trade union has the right to set up such branches in workplaces with more than 250 employees. The local union branch has the right to hold meetings and distribute union information, provided it does not disrupt the normal functioning of the company. In addition, local branches of the most representative trade unions are entitled to have the use of a notice board and of a suitable room in which to carry on their activities, and have the right to negotiate collective agreements. The union sections also have the right to elect trade union delegates to represent union members and defend their interests *vis-à-vis* the employer.

A complex dynamic between union sections and the works council unfolds in each large workplace. The Spanish system of workers' representation has produced a close relationship (almost symbiotic) between both. In many cases members in the union sections are the same people elected as delegates to the works council (Hamann, 1998: 437). Most members of the works council are elected on union lists even if they are not union members. While the union sections deal directly with union affairs, the works council represents all employees regardless of union affiliation. For some observers (Hamann, 1998; Wozniak, 1991) this dual structure of representation gives less importance to the union sections *vis-à-vis* the works councils as the main institution for workers' representation within the firm. I may agree with that statement regarding the labor situation of small enterprises where unions lack organizational presence. In larger enterprises with relatively high union density the situation is not alike.

I did my fieldwork in workplaces where unions had established an explicit organizational presence. Some of those workplaces had a high percentage of union members and in that sense were different to most Spanish workplaces

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that tend to have less than 50 employees without organized unions at all. Let me describe the institutional roles my informants had in the works council system and in the structure of the local union organization.

**Table 4.11 Position in the works council of workplace leaders (%).**

| *Position* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| President | 14.0 | 12.0 | 13.0 |
| Secretary | 5.9 | 11.3 | 8.6 |
| Member | 63.2 | 58.6 | 61.0 |
| Trade union delegate [1] | 16.9 | 18.0 | 17.5 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

(2) Elected only by union members.

Around sixty percent of the interviewees were plain members of the works council. Among this group about 20 percent were the secretaries of the local union sections. Considering that this was the largest group of people that I surveyed (including secretaries and presidents) it meant that 75 percent of the local union secretaries were active members of the works council.

Unions' members had elected a smaller group of my informants (18% of the total) as their trade union delegates. They might seat in the works council and participate in broad workplace discussions but their institutional role is to represent union members and not the rest of the staff. In this group 38 percent of them held the position of local union section secretaries. The two other categories (president and secretary) are works council members who have been chosen (by their colleagues) to lead the representative body. I interviewed 35 presidents in a sample of 50 workplaces. [8] Almost half of them held the position of secretaries of

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the union section as well. In those cases the same person had assumed the two main leading roles in the structures for workers' representation in the firm.

The most obvious overlapping of leadership functions found was among works council presidents. Remarkably, of the nineteen works council chairpersons from UGT interviewed fourteen of them were also the secretaries of the union sections. By the contrary, in the case of the sixteen works council presidents linked to CC.OO., only three had been chosen by union members to lead the union section.

Why this discrepancy between the union roles played by the works council chairpersons from these organizations? A reasonable explanation that I can offer to explain it is that UGT traditionally had given more weight to the union local branches as the most "important" workplace labor institution while CC.OO. had preferred the unitary organs of representation. May be that was the reason why so many UGT leaders tended to run both bodies in a greater proportion. Within that context, I posed the following question to all the delegates surveyed: what body should be the main workplace institution for the defense of workers' interests *vis-à-vis* management, the works council or the union section?

**Table 4.12 Works council or union section? (%).**

| | | | | Fishman's study | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Body* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| Works council | 21.3 | 74.4 | 47.6 | 30.0 | 54.0 | 53.6 |
| Local union section | 73.5 | 16.5 | 45.4 | 67.0 | 32.0 | 36.5 |
| Both (not read) | 5.1 | 9.0 | 7.1 | 2.0 | 14.0 | 8.4 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (320) |

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Figures on table 4.12 (previous page) show that on this question there were marked differences of opinion between delegates. Almost 75 percent of workplace-level leaders linked to CC.OO. selected the works council as the main body, while more or less the same proportion of UGT delegates did the contrary. Only a minority of all informants believed that both bodies (union sections and works councils) should have the same importance in the workplace. This was a spontaneous answer since it was not in the questionnaire. Fishman (1990) and Wozniak (1991) had used similar questions in their studies, thought minor differences in the wording of the questions lingered.

For instance, in Fishman's study the delegates from CC.OO. interviewed selected the works council in a lower number (54%), while sixty seven percent of the UGT workplace leaders indicated that they preferred the local union section. On the other hand, 32 percent of the CC.OO. workplace leaders agreed with the idea of the union section should be the main representative body, while 30 percent of the UGT informants selected the works council for the same purpose. In both studies a similar tendency among delegates from different unions reflected the official policies of their organizations. However, the delegates surveyed by Fishman seemed less constraint to choose according to their unions' preferences.

In a different context, Lynne Wozniak asked a similar question to a group of works council delegates who represented workers affected by industrial restructuring and, in many cases, were opposed to the strategy followed by the national unions on this matter. In her sample the majority preferred the works council (52%) while a minority selected the factory union organization (21%). The remaining 27 percent agreed with the idea that both bodies should represent workers equally (Wozniak, 1991: 138). A considerable number of her UGT in-

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formants shared CC.OO.'s traditional view regarding the role of the works councils. Among this group only 30 percent selected the local union section as the main representative body while 58 percent preferred the works council instead. Her findings on that peculiar case reflected the nature of the sample within the context of that political juncture. Nationally the UGT defended the Socialist government's policy favoring industrial restructuring regardless of the negative consequences for employment and job security for workers affected by the process. As I mentioned in chapter three, the position adopted by UGT had negative results for that organization. For many workers the UGT was not acting as a labor union but as the political ally of the PSOE. Another characteristic of the workplaces researched by Wozniak (1991: 139-42) is that differently from the tensions that existed between UGT and CC.OO. at the national level, the relations between the union members of both organizations in those firms were friendly and they acted together as representatives of the employees. There was a great deal of unity and solidarity between the works council delegates of UGT and CC.OO. something uncommon in most workplaces at that time. Given that those works councils served as the common arena for unitary collective action, —that was opposed by UGT at that time— then the factory leaders from UGT disagreed with the official position of their union and acted independently of the national organization.

During the 1990s both UGT and CC.OO. moved toward a similar position on this matter. Now both unions give the same importance to the local union section on which workers' affiliation depends (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). Moreover, they keep working hard to elect as many works council delegates as possible since their legitimacy as "representative" labor organizations is grounded on

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their number of elected delegates. As I indicated in chapter two, the works councils have been "unionized" and most of their members are affiliated to the labor organizations (Miguélez, 1991, 1999; Hamann, 1998). The exception are the small firms where unions don't have real organizational presence and candidates for the works council are recruited from "outside" the gate of the plant. In those cases union officials and "liberated" works council delegates from larger firms visit the small workplaces during the election period and organize a union-sponsored slate to run for the representative positions at stake. In many cases the people who run under the union banner are not members of the organization. Yet, in more than 60 percent of the cases they become union members after they have been elected (Bouza et al., 1989).

**Table 4.13 Union membership among workplace leaders (%).**

| | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Union member | 97.1 | 99.2 | 98.1 |
| Not member | 2.9 | .8 | 1.9 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Of the 269 workplace-level leaders interviewed only 5 were not union members. All non-union informants were white-collar employees who had been elected as delegates backed by UGT or CC.OO. in their firms. Generally, the percentage of white-collars and technical personal that joins unions is lower than the number of blue-collar workers who do so (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003; Miguélez, 1999). In my study all the manual blue-collar workers surveyed were union members. On the total sample 98 percent of the informant surveyed were union members. [9] Regarding the year of affiliation to their respective union, most

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workplace-level leaders linked to CC.OO. had joined the organization earlier than the ones from UGT.

**Table 4.14 Year of union affiliation of workplace leaders (%).**

| *Year* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Before 1975 | 10.6 | 31.8 | 21.2 |
| 1976 to 1980 | 48.5 | 38.8 | 43.6 |
| 1981 to 1985 | 24.2 | 11.4 | 17.8 |
| 1986 to 1990 | 16.7 | 18.2 | 17.4 |
| (N) | (132) | (132) | (264) |

A majority of workplace-level leaders joined their unions between 1976 and 1980, the time of the democratic transition. Almost a third of the informants associated with CC.OO. had been active in the labor movement during the years of the dictatorship while only 11 percent of the UGT delegates had been union members at that time. On the other hand, UGT had recruited more members during the 1980s. More than 40 percent of its delegates had joined the organization during that decade (1981-90) while less than 30 percent of the CC.OO. workplace leaders did join during that time. Data show that a greater proportion of workplace-level leaders associated with CC.OO. were more experienced in labor politics and had been involved with the union movement for a longer period of time. These factors may help to explain why the delegates from CC.OO. interviewed were older than the ones Fishman (1990) surveyed in 1981.

When asked if they had been members of other unions before, a significant number of workplace leaders responded affirmatively. Around 25 percent of the delegates belonged to another union at some point in their lives. That was the

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situation for more than 32 percent of the UGT workplace-level leaders and around 16 percent of those who were members of *Comisiones Obreras.*

Six percent of the UGT trade unionists had been members of USO before joining the organization. As I indicated in chapter three, a large segment of USO merged with UGT in the late 1970s. On the other hand, around 6 percent of CC.OO. workplace leaders had been members of SU or SUT, the radical splinters from CC.OO. during the democratic transition. What I did not expect to find was that more than 18 percent of the surveyed members of UGT, had belonged to CC.OO. before. By the contrary a lower 5 percent of CC.OO. informants had been members of UGT at some point.

Informally, I asked to some of these informants (who used to be members of CC.OO.) why they had left their previous organization. Most of them said that they shifted from CC.OO. to UGT during a period when *Comisiones Obreras* was still engaged in "radical labor politics" and it did not want to behave in a more realistic way. [10] On the other hand, many of the same informants from UGT recognized that CC.OO. had changed under the leadership of Antonio Gutierrez and that in the early 1990s it was acting is a more moderate way (see Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

Regarding the time spent in union and works council related activities I asked the workplace-level leaders for the amount of time they invested in such matters (see Table 4.15, next page). Overall, there was a nucleus of very militant delegates who spent more than 25 hours per week taking care of union tasks. These ones represented almost 32 percent of the entire sample while those investing more than fifteen hours but less that twenty five were about 23 percent of the total.

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**Table 4.15 Time spent in works council or union related tasks (%)**

| *Time Spent in Union Related Tasks* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| More than 25 hours per week | 34.5 | 27.8 | 31.6 |
| Between 15 and 24 hours per week | 22.1 | 24.1 | 23.0 |
| Between 5 and 14 hours per week | 28.7 | 34.6 | 31.6 |
| Less than 5 hours per week | 14.7 | 12.8 | 13.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Additionally, around 31 percent of the workplace-level leaders spent between five and fourteen hours taking care of union and works council responsibilities while about 14 percent dedicated less than five hours per week to union work. The only remarkable difference between UGT and CC.OO. was the relatively high number of delegates associated to UGT who spent more than 25 hours per week on union tasks. What happens is that labor unions in large enterprises tend to add together the allowed paid hours (up to 40 per month) to which delegates are entitled. That is the strategy used by unions to "liberate" some delegates from their jobs and use them in union-related work. These groups of "liberated" delegates play the same role that paid union organizers have in other countries such as in the United Kingdom or the United States. [11] The "full time" works council delegates become *de facto* union officials who have responsibility for building and reproducing workplace organization. Given the limited economic resources Spanish unions have, they can only employ a reduced number of full time staff to run the national bureaucratic structure of the organizations (Milner and Nobela, 1995). At the workplace level, unions such as UGT and CC.OO. rely on the "liberated" delegates to carry out diverse union tasks. [12]

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To conclude, I want to address the question of endurance and continuity of the workplace-level leaders on their leadership role. Despite many problems the majority of the delegates interviewed indicated that they were going to run as candidates in the works council elections that were being held that year. [13] According to Fishman (1990) the relative low level of organizational support from the workers has been a discouraging factor for the continuity of many works council delegates in their role as plant-leaders. Another study on the UGT delegates found that one of the major reasons for the disenchantment of many workplace union leaders, was the "apathy" of many workers regarding what unions do in the firm (Bouza et al., 1989). That was one of the main reasons (according to the mentioned study) for the high number of UGT delegates who had resigned their works council responsibilities before their terms have expired.

## IV. The setting for the workplace leaders surveyed.

The random sample of 50 workplaces was drawn from those firms and establishments with 200 employees or more in the Madrid region, where works council elections were held in 1986. Works councils in the surveyed population needed to have elected at least two works council delegates from each union, UGT and CC.OO., since these were the organizations being researched. A fairly representative sample of large and medium size workplaces in the city of Madrid (80%) and other municipalities in the region (20%) was chosen. [14]

Of the fifty workplaces surveyed the industrial factories comprised the largest segment (see Table 4.16, next page). In addition, there was a variety of work settings ranging from public administration offices to the main headquarters of private corporations and other kind of businesses. Regarding the size of

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the workplaces surveyed I should indicate that generally they were relatively large in comparison to the average size of Spanish firms.

**Table 4.16 Type of workplaces surveyed.**

| *Type of workplace* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Factories /industry | 21 |
| Offices/ services to industry | 6 |
| Services/ public & private | 5 |
| Banks/commerce | 5 |
| Hospitals/ public & private | 3 |
| Public administration | 3 |
| Urban Sanitation | 3 |
| Hotels/tourism | 1 |
| Construction | 1 |
| Printing/ Typography | 1 |
| Sub-contracting firm | 1 |
| Total | 50 |

Of the fifty workplaces 40 percent had between 200 and 500 employees. Another 40 percent ranged between 501 and 2000 workers, and the remaining 20 percent had more than 2001 employees. The last group included four of the largest enterprises located in the region. A detailed picture of the distribution of workplaces according to size is presented on the following table.

**Table 4.17 Workplaces' Size.**

| *Size of workplaces* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 200- 500 workers | 20 |
| 501- 1000 workers | 10 |
| 1001-2000 workers | 10 |
| 2001-5000 workers | 7 |
| over 5000 workers | 3 |
| Total | 50 |

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On the whole, forty workplaces were private firms while ten of them belonged to the public sector. Fifteen workplaces were part of multinational corporations from Europe and the United States. Thirty-four workplaces were covered by company collective agreements while the employees of the remaining sixteen firms had different types of regional or national-sector contracts regulating their labor relations. Thirty-five workplaces had experienced some form of collective dispute during the previous three years, in most cases, related to the process of collective bargaining. Most of the strikes had been short (one to three days) and were convened by the works council and the unions involved in the bargaining process. Thirty-four percent of the strikes took place in firms and plants regulated by regional and national-sector contracts and sixty-six percent in workplaces with their own enterprise agreements. The informants' assessment of the outcome of the strikes was generally positive arguing that most of the strike objectives had been accomplished.

Regarding technological and organization changes twenty-six workplaces had experienced some form of technical rationalization during the late 1980s. In sixteen of the twenty-one industrial factories visited some form of technological innovation had occurred. The changes ranged from the introduction of industrial robots and other microelectronic computer-based technology in a large automobile assembly-plant to the automation of production processes in a large Swedish multinational establishment. Organizational rationalization had occurred in six firms connected to services for industry, and in other four workplaces in services related to finance and banking. In twenty-six workplaces that had experienced technological and organizational change the works council delegates indicated that in thirteen cases they were kept informed by manage-

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ment but they had not been actively involved in the process. Only in one large private firm the works council as a representative body became a partner in the design and implementation of the technological changes, while in the remaining twelve workplaces informants indicated that they did not participate at all in the process.

Another widespread company practice at that time was to subcontract services outside the firm, or to contract out the manufacturing or production of certain components used in the labor process of the main company. Most of the so-called industrial subcontracting is exported to smaller firms without union presence, in which traditional forms of paternalism rule the employment relationship between employers and employees and in which labor conditions are substandard.

I found that twenty-two firms in the surveyed group had used some form of subcontracting during the immediate period to the interviews. Most of these firms were industrial factories (18 of 21) and they had been using subcontracting as a way to decrease production costs and undermine the power of the unions. [15]

Around the same time I did my fieldwork in Madrid (1990) a group of researchers associated with CC.OO. in Barcelona found a similar pattern like the one I'm describing. They studied 144 companies in that region and found out that in more than 40 percent there was an increase of subcontracting and in more than 67 percent of the firms some form of technological change related to the restructuring of the labor process had occurred (Miguélez et al., 1990).

Another issue that is relevant to understand the dynamic of labor relations at the workplace is the question of employment. As I have indicated in chapter one, since 1984 there has been a tremendous increase of temporary jobs. Given

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that trend I wanted to investigate what was the employment situation in those workplaces that I was surveying.

In twenty workplaces I was informed that the labor-force had increased while in twenty-six it had shrank. In the remaining six workplaces the informants reported no change. In those workplaces in which employment had increased it was important to know if management was hiring permanent or temporary workers. In four firms increases in employment were based on the creation of stable permanent jobs. By the contrary, in thirteen firms the creation of new jobs was basically temporary and unstable while in three workplaces the increase was due to a combination of both. The four firms that had created new permanent jobs were large multinational corporations that were expanding their activities in Spain and in which trade unions had significant social influence.

Overall, unions had organizational presence in varying degrees in the fifty workplaces surveyed. While the UGT had organized forty-eight local union sections the CC.OO. had forty-seven. Besides the main labor organizations, other unions had some organizational presence too. In eight workplaces there was a section of the anarcho-syndicalist unions, CNT or the recently formed CGT that, as I indicated, was a splinter from CNT. In three workplaces USO had organized local branches and it was the dominant union in one of the works council. In seventeen workplaces it was found that other professional or company unions had established at least one union section in those firms. Altogether there were 123 union sections organized in the fifty workplaces where I did the survey.

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**Table 4.18 Union sections by size of the workplaces.**

| *Size of workplaces* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *CNT-CGT* | *USO* | *Others* | *Number* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200- 500 workers | 19 | 17 | 2 | – | 3 | 41 |
| 501- 1000 workers | 10 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 25 |
| 1001-2000 workers | 9 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 26 |
| 2001-5000 workers | 7 | 7 | 1 | – | 5 | 20 |
| over 5000 workers | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Total | 48 | 47 | 8 | 3 | 17 | 123 |

Data on table 4.19 outline the power dynamic between unions in the fifty workplaces surveyed. Clearly the UGT was the dominant union in services and in the public administration while CC.OO. had more support among industrial workers. In the services sector there were other trade unions challenging the dominant positions held by UGT and CC.OO.. Yet, the class-based trade unions dominated in larger workplaces.

**Table 4.19 Union's dominance in the workplaces by sector.**

| *Sector of workplaces* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Balance CC.OO.-UGT* | *Others* | *Number* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Services | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 19 |
| Industry | 6 | 11 | 4 | – | 21 |
| Public administration | 2 | – | 1 | – | 3 |
| Services to Industry | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Construction | – | 1 | – | – | 1 |
| Total | 16 | 20 | 10 | 4 | 50 |

In twenty workplaces (mostly industrial factories) CC.OO. was the hegemonic union with a clear majority of delegates elected to the works council. In sixteen of them the dominant union was UGT, while in ten workplaces the

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balance of power between UGT and CC.OO. was more or less equilibrated. In four workplaces other unions held the majority of seats in the works council, even if UGT and CC.OO. had at least two elected representatives in them.

## V. Unions' strength and social influence in the workplace.

In unionized environments social relations at the workplace occur within a structured organizational setting. They involve a web of formal and informal relations and a set of rules that workers and unions develop seeking to reshape the labor process (Visser, 1996). Workers and their unions have peculiar objectives and interests that they expect to realize when they engage in workplace action. They react against managerial attempts to fully control the labor process when they believe that those attempts are not in their best interests. Hence, trade unions may engage the workers into collective action that is intended to push back the frontiers of managerial control.

When unions are relatively strong the social relations with management at the workplace acquire a distinctive dimension. Under specific circumstances trade union representatives may be involved jointly with management in deciding policies, procedures and practices that play a crucial part in shaping the workplace dynamic. Within this context, unions protect workers' interests according to what is regulated by contract and take steps to ensure that managerial decisions affecting employees follow institutionalized procedures.

In unionized settings organized labor's influence on the micro dynamics of the workplace has been conceptualized as a form of collective (union) voice. According to Freeman and Medoff (1984: 8), "voice means discussing with an employer conditions that ought to be changed, rather than quitting a job. In

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modern capitalist economies, and particularly, in large enterprises, a trade union is the vehicle for collective voice, that is, for providing workers as a group with a means of communicating with management."

In workplaces where unions have explicit organizational presence workers' collective voice may sound louder. There the power resources of the employees are embedded within the representative institutions created to defend wage earners' interests. Most of the fifty workplaces that I visited had a relatively robust union presence. How workplace-level leaders assessed the power and influence of trade unions at the firm level? This is the subject that I want to discuss next. Informants were asked about the union situation in their firms. Given that these were relatively well organized workplaces it was important to look at the role played by labor organizations at that level.

**Table 4.20 Unions' strength in the firm according to workplace leaders (%).**

| *Strength in Workplace* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *Fishman's study* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong, or very strong | 50.0 | 50.4 | 50.2 | 30.2 |
| Either strong nor weak | 35.3 | 29.3 | 32.3 | 35.1 |
| Weak, or very weak | 14.7 | 20.3 | 17.5 | 33.8 |
| No Answer | - | - | | 0.9 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (322) |

The majority of the delegates interviewed (Table 4.20) considered the unions' presence in their workplaces to be strong or very strong. In comparison to Fishman (1990), who did ask the same question, over fifty percent of my informants considered that unions were strong in their workplaces, while only thirty percent shared that view among Fishman's informants. Besides, a relatively high percentage (34%) in the mentioned study believed that unions were weak or very

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weak while among my informants less than 18 percent estimated that to be the unions' situation in their workplaces.

According to a large unpublished survey completed at the time I was doing my fieldwork the higher unionization rates were to be found in workplace between 200 and 500 employees. [16] Hence, most of the workplaces I was surveying were expected to be among the best unionized. Nonetheless, 61 percent of the workplace leaders linked to UGT and a 66 percent of the ones associated with CC.OO. held the view that the level of unionization in their workplaces was low. Only 14 percent of the UGT informants and 15 percent of those from CC.OO. rated it as high. However, the same informants rated the strength of the unions in a more positive way (see Table 4.20). Over fifty percent of the interviewees responded that the unions were strong or very strong in their workplaces.

This apparent paradox makes sense because of the unique system of labor representation that exists in Spain. As have been pointed out by observers (Pérez Díaz, 1993; Martinez-Lucio, 1998) the relation between relatively low unionization levels and the fairly greater institutional influence of organized labor is a peculiarity of the Spanish system of labor relations. The unions' public status depends on the support received in works council elections. This institutional recognition has not helped the unions to develop stronger organizations (Estivill, & de la Hoz, 1990: 285) and has undermined the unions' autonomous capacity to consolidate member-based organizations instead of the form of voters' unionism that exists today (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003).

In addition, a significant number of workplace-level leaders rated the overall situation of trade unions at the national level differently to the one they knew in their workplaces (see Table 4.21, next page). Regarding the issue of un-

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ions' power in Spain, I asked a similar question but the informants' responses were less enthusiastic. Almost 27 percent of the workplace leaders reported that unions in Spain were weak or very weak. In addition, around 36 percent saw the unions' power as strong or very strong. In comparison to Fishman's informants, workplace-level leaders' views were more positive, nonetheless. I ought to speculate that this difference did make sense given the change in the context of labor politics between 1981 and 1990. On must keep in mind that I was asking the same question in a moment characterized by greater collective enthusiasm after the general strike of 1988.

**Table 4.21 Unions' strength in Spain according to workplace leaders (%).**

| *Strength in Spain* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *Fishman's study* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong, or very strong | 34.5 | 38.3 | 36.4 | 26.1 |
| Either strong nor weak | 37.5 | 36.1 | 36.8 | 35.7 |
| Weak, or very weak | 28.0 | 24.8 | 26.4 | 38.0 |
| No Answer | – | 0.8 | 0.4 | 2.2 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (322) |

The majority of the trade unionists interviewed held the opinion that UGT and CC.OO. had increased their social power as a result of the success of the popular strike. Furthermore, as a consequence of this and other forms of collective action the class-based unions were acting together and there was a widespread feeling that the new strategy based on "unity of action" was a contributing factor in the process of recruiting new members and increasing the unions' institutional presence.

Another issue explored in the interviews was about the unions' ability to rally workers and wage earners behind union actions. Specifically, the infor-

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mants had to assess the workers' willingness to back unions' actions. As Table 2.22 indicates more than 60 percent of the workplace leaders said that in Spain workers supported union actions to a certain degree, not too high either too low. Around 18 percent indicated that workers' support for union actions was high, while 20 percent believed that it was rather low. Attempting to make sense of these answers I looked at Fishman's data. In the case of his informants the option preferred was a midpoint (54%) between high and low support. However, a greater number among his informants held the view that unions' support was rather low (40%) while less than nine percent of the workplace leaders reporting that it was high or very high. Again, general situation for organized labor had improved between 1981 and 1990, and that might account for the differences in opinion between the two groups.

**Table 4.22 Workplace leaders' opinion on workers' support for union action (%).**

| *Workers' support* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *Fishman's study* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High, or very high | 16.2 | 18.8 | 17.5 | 8.6 |
| Regular | 58.8 | 66.2 | 62.5 | 53.6 |
| Low, or very low | 25.0 | 15.0 | 20.0 | 40.2 |
| No Answer | – | – | – | 0.3 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (323) |

In the early 1980s Spanish unions were in the middle of a deep social crisis (Hamann, 1998). The workers' organizations were loosing members and the general economic situation was in process of deterioration. Furthermore, the political conflicts between trade unions were at a high point. In the early 1990s the prospects were somehow more positive. A new leadership had taken over the CC.OO., while the UGT had become less dependent of the PSOE, and the shift in

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unions' strategy was producing positive results. Overall, union density was still low but there was a favorable tendency towards an increase in unions' members (Jordana, 1996). As I showed in chapter two, after 1988 Spanish unions started to recuperate part of the previously lost membership.

It is time to pay attention to the situation of UGT and CC.OO. in the surveyed workplaces. I have said that both labor organizations had a relatively strong presence in most of these workplaces. While CC.OO. was the dominant union in twenty firms, UGT enjoyed that position in sixteen. In ten workplaces both unions had elected enough delegates to the works council to be more or less in a state of balance. Altogether they were the dominant organizations in forty-six of the fifty workplaces. Within that context, I asked informants —from both organizations— to assess the amount of influence that their unions had in their firms.

**Table 4.23 Workplace leaders' views on the influence of UGT and CC.OO. (%).**

| *Degree of Influence in the Workplace* | *Influence of UGT* | | | *Influence of CC.OO.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| A lot of influence | 11.0 | 4.5 | 7.8 | 5.9 | 4.5 | 10.4 |
| Enough influence | 41.2 | 16.5 | 29.0 | 33.8 | 44.4 | 39.0 |
| Average influence | 35.3 | 36.8 | 36.8 | 40.4 | 33.1 | 36.8 |
| Little influence | 12.5 | 41.4 | 36.1 | 19.9 | 7.5 | 13.8 |
| No Answer | – | 0.8 | 0.4 | – | – | – |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Overall, the perceived influence of the CC.OO. was higher than the one the UGT had. However, one need to examine the data carefully since the tendency among informants was to assign a higher degree of influence to their own union and a lower to the "rival" organization.

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I have analyzed the relationship between union influence and other variables such as economic sector and size of the firm, dominant union in the workplace, and the political orientation of the delegates. I did find that in the industrial sector the proportion of workplace leaders that rated the influence of CC.OO. relatively high (1 and 2) was more than 73 percent. On the other hand, among informants from the services sector the contrary was the case. Only 35 percent agreed with that view while the majority (more than 64%) indicated that the influence of CC.OO. was average or little. By the contrary, among services sector informants the positive assessment on UGT's influence was higher. Around 41 percent indicated that the influence of the Socialist union was above average while over 58 percent of the workplace leaders from industry considered the influence of UGT to be average or just little.

In addition, I found that positive appraisals regarding the influence of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) improved with the size of the firm. A stronger relationship between high influence and the workplace's size was found in firms with more than 1,000 employees. On the other hand, the UGT obtained relatively high positive assessment in firms with more than 200 but less than 500 workers. Forty-two percent of the workplace leaders in those firms indicated that the influence of UGT was above average. The lowest estimation on the level of influence of the UGT was in firms with 1,001-2000 employees. Around 40 percent of the workplace leaders in that category considered the influence of UGT in their firms to be below average (or just little).

Considering other factors I added two additional variables into the analysis. Thus, I found a positive relationship between union dominance and relatively high degree of influence of the same union in the firm. Sixty-nine percent

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of the workplace leaders from firms in which UGT was the dominant union rated its influence as above average. The same logic applied to CC.OO.. In workplaces were it was the dominant union its influence was rated above average in a higher proportion (72%). Remarkably, in firms in which there was certain equilibrium between both organizations the general assessment tended to favor CC.OO. over UGT. In those cases, more than 41 percent of the delegates categorized the influence of CC.OO. as above average while only 26 percent held the same opinion regarding UGT. Finally, in all the four firms in which UGT and CC.OO. held a minority of seats in the works council the negative views on their influences reached the highest point. In those workplaces more than 80 percent of the informants held the view that UGT and CC.OO. did not have too much influence among the workers, while less than 20 percent considered that their influence was above average.

The last factor considered to interpret the findings (see data on Table 4.23) was the effect of political ideology on the opinion held by the workplace leaders. I re-coded two variables; political sympathy with party membership, to create a new variable named political orientation. Let me summarize the connection that I found. Overall, workplaces-level leaders identified with the PSOE tended to give somehow more weight to the influence that UGT had in their firms. Almost fifty percent in this group indicated that the level of influence of the Socialist organization was above average. In this group the tendency to categorize the influence of CC.OO. only as average or just little was relatively high (56%). In addition, among informants politically identified with the PCE and IU around 57 percent considered the influence of CC.OO. in their workplaces to be above average.

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When they assessed the influence of UGT only 23 percent considered it as above average while the rest (76%) rated it the other way around.

These data show how the informants' views were framed within a larger macro social and political context beyond the micro dynamics of the workplace. The workplace delegates interviewed were the local union leaders but many of them were also active party members with diverse life experiences. [17]

One of the issues upon which not all workplace-level leaders agreed what on the new strategy the CC.OO. and UGT had pursued after the general strike of 1988. Specifically what distinguished the new union strategy was the "unity of action" that, at that time, was still in the process of consolidation.

As I have pointed out, the UGT did not favor the unity of action with CC.OO. between 1977 and 1986. At that time its priority was to build its own social base and to contribute to the electoral victory of the PSOE. On the other hand, CC.OO. had favored not only the unity of action but at some point in 1977 contemplated the idea of creating a single national labor confederation to bring altogether the workers' organizations under the same structure. The project died almost immediately and the post-Franco union movement was plagued with rivalries and political disputes that only weakened the unions (Köhler, 1995; Meer, 1997).

The crisis (and eventual divorce) between the UGT and the PSOE created political conditions that facilitated for the Socialist union to move closer to CC.OO. after 1987. At first the UGT moved apprehensively toward a "soft union unity" and the unions were not always in agreement on key political issues. [18]

The problem faced by the unions in the early 1990s was how to create the needed trust among their constituencies at the unions' bases like the one that had

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emerged at the top among national leaders of both organizations. One cannot overlook that for many years the dynamic between UGT and CC.OO. had been one of mistrust and fierce antagonism and people don't forget easily past inflicted wounds.

**Table 4.24 Unity of action between UGT and CC.OO. at the workplace (%).**

| *Level of Unity of Action* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| A lot of unity | 14.0 | 14.3 | 14.1 |
| Enough unity | 33.8 | 35.3 | 34.6 |
| Average unity | 25.7 | 20.3 | 23.0 |
| Little unity | 14.0 | 16.5 | 15.2 |
| Very little unity | 12.5 | 13.5 | 13.0 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Within the context of the new union strategy, I asked workplace-level leaders about the degree of unity between the unions in their firms (Table 2.24). Around 50 percent indicated that there was considerable unity, while less than 25 percent said that unity between UGT and CC.OO. was rather low. The rest (23%) rated the level of unity of action as average indicating that it was not too high either too low.

Regarding the context in which the unity of action occurred I examined the relationship between this and other variables. Firms that had the highest degree of unity were part of the services sector in which 55 percent of the informants reported that it was above average (enough and strong unity). In the industrial sector it was relatively high with 51 percent rating it as above average and only 20 percent reporting that it was too little or almost nonexistent in their firms. On the other hand, in the public administration there was very little unity

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of action. Seventy-five percent of the workplace leaders from this sector rated it as below average (little or nonexistent).

In addition, I examined the link between firm size and the degree of unity of action. I found that it was above average in firms with 501 to 1000 employees (58% of the informants in that category rated it that way) while in workplaces with 200 to 500 workers the proportion of informants who said it was little or nonexistent reached 35 percent of the total. In firms with more than 1000 employees the differences were not so significant with the exception of the biggest workplaces (more than 5000 workers) in which 51 percent of the informants indicated that it was above average and only 11 percent rated it as little or very little.

To my surprise, in firms classified as being part of a multinational corporation the level of unity of action was higher than in national firms. Fifty-eight percent of the workplace leaders interviewed in those settings rated the unity of action in their firms as above average while thirty-five percent of the informants employed in Spanish firms rated it as rather low (little or nonexistent). This association may explain why the unity of action was rated higher in private firms (50%) than in public enterprises (43%).

Finally, the unity of action between UGT and CC.OO. was stronger in the workplaces in which other unions held the majority in the works council. Sixty-seven percent of the informants interviewed in those workplaces indicated that the unity of action was above average. In firms in which the relation of forces between UGT and CC.OO. was more or less the same, there the unity of action was relatively high too. In that context, 57 percent of the informants rated the unity of action as strong or enough strong. In the rest of the workplaces the situation was more complex. In firms dominated by CC.OO. the frequency dis-

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tribution of the data was the one might expect. In those workplaces 48 percent of the delegates agreed that the unity of action was above average while 19 percent considered it low. On the other hand, in workplaces dominated by the UGT the unity of action was the lowest ever found. Forty percent of informants from those firms rated it as above average while forty-two percent indicated that there was little or not unity of action at all.

Data show that the dynamic between the local union organizations was more complex than the dealings and interactions between the national union confederations. Not all union members actively engaged in shop floor unionism agreed with the official polices of their organizations. One needs to understand how the workplace is a microcosm with its peculiar traditions and personal histories. I visited firms in which the local union leaders had forged strong ties and amicable relations for years, even during the time in which CC.OO. and UGT opposed each other at the national level. Whereas other workplaces were characterized by harsh personal and political conflicts between these unions, firms where the local union leaders hardly speak to each other.

Furthermore, the national legitimacy of the trade unions depends of the electoral outcome of the works council elections. The organization of the election is in the hands of the local union sections that have to recruit candidates and prepare the campaigns. The works council elections are by nature a competitive process in which each union claims to represent better the interests of employees *vis-à-vis* management. Even under optimal conditions —and good social relations between union members in the firm— the pressure to obtain as many delegates as possible unleashes additional strain on the dynamic between both organiza-

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tions. Perhaps that explains why so many workplace leaders agreed less with the unity of action in their firms while supporting this policy at the national level.

**Table 4.25 Workplace leaders' views on unity of action between UGT and CC.OO. in the firm and at the national level (%).**

| *Degree of Agreement with Unity of Action* | *Workplace Level* | | | *In Spain (Nationally)* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Strong agreement | 22.1 | 39.8 | 30.9 | 23.5 | 45.1 | 34.2 |
| Enough agreement | 30.9 | 25.6 | 28.3 | 32.4 | 32.3 | 32.3 |
| Some agreement | 13.2 | 18.8 | 16.0 | 20.6 | 15.8 | 18.2 |
| Little agreement | 16.9 | 6.5 | 11.9 | 13.2 | 4.5 | 8.9 |
| None agreement | 16.2 | 7.5 | 11.9 | 10.3 | 1.5 | 5.9 |
| No answer | 0.7 | 1.5 | 1.1 | – | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Overall, workplace-level leaders associated with CC.OO. were more favorable to the unions' strategy based on unity of action than the ones linked to UGT. Besides, as Table 2.25 shows, there was less opposition to the unions' strategy at the national level than at the workplace. For example, around 23 percent of the UGT delegates did not really agree with the unity of action with CC.OO. at the national level. Moreover, their opposition increased to 33 percent of the total when the same question was asked regarding the workplace. Even in CC.OO. the delegates' support for unity of action with UGT was higher in reference to Spain as a whole. Around 77 percent of them indicated that they supported this policy (strongly and enough) as the appropriate strategy at the national level while 65 percent said the same regarding the strategy to be followed at the workplace.

Data suggest that, at that time, UGT had more internal problems accepting the new strategy the union had designed after 1988. Thus, on a key question such

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as the unity action with CC.OO. there were numerous workplace leaders who did not agree with the official policy of their organization. Data presented on Table 4.24 indicate that the firms with less unity of action were those in which UGT was the dominant union, and the figures on Table 4.25 confirm the opposition of many UGT followers to the new strategy.

**Table 4.26 Workplace leaders' views on who (or what union) benefits more from the unity of action between CC.OO. & UGT (%).**

| *Who benefits from Unity of Action?* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Workers in general | 58.8 | 87.2 | 72.9 |
| CC.OO. | 20.6 | – | 10.4 |
| UGT | 2.2 | 3.8 | 3.0 |
| Both UGT & CC.OO. | 17.6 | 8.3 | 13.0 |
| No answer | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Workplace-level leaders were asked an additional question regarding the unity of action practiced by the class-based unions. The question referred to the group or organization(s) that was (were) benefiting more from the new strategy (see Table 4.26, above). The majority of the CC.OO. workplace leaders (87%) indicated that the workers in general were the ones who gained more from the unity of action. Fifty-nine percent of the UGT works council and union delegates agreed with that view. Meanwhile, more than twenty percent in this group believed that CC.OO. was getting the real advantage from this policy while only 3 percent of the CC.OO. informants said the same thing regarding UGT. In addition, around 13 percent of the informants indicated that both organizations were benefiting equally from the unity of action.

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The relationship between UGT and CC.OO. has passed through different phases ranging from one characterized by open conflict to the present dynamic of union cooperation. In a national survey of both delegates and affiliates of UGT most of them rated their relations with the representatives of CC.OO. in the firms as positive or satisfactory (Bouza et al., 1989). [19] This research inquired about changes in the behavior of CC.OO. after the election of Antonio Gutiérrez as secretary general of that organization in 1987. Thirty two percent of the delegates and thirty percent of the affiliates said that CC.OO. was changing in the right direction and it was becoming a modern and more moderate union. By the contrary thirty-six percent of the delegates and thirty-four of affiliates indicated that CC.OO. had not changed at all (Bouza et al., 1989: 301). According to the first group these changes contributed to move CC.OO. towards "better relations with UGT" and to become "a less radical trade union."

In the early 1990s both organizations were involved in a process of political and cultural change and new union identities were in the process of being created.

## VI. Shifting unions' identities in the workplace.

Serrano del Rosal (2000) has conceptualized the period 1987-1990 as the time of transition from old political trade unionism to a more "modern" and "less partisan" form of unionism based on new social concerns and organizational objectives. As Fishman (1990) have indicated, the labor movement main goal during the transition to democracy was the consolidation of the new political regime. In that context, trade unions were politically subordinated to the

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strategies of the parties and the trade unions could not create solid organizational structures. [20]

The class-based unions' public images at the end of the 1980s were a product of the political identities that had been constructed during the period of democratic transition. A study carried out in 1988 reported that Spanish workers perceived quite differently the UGT and the CC.OO. (IDES, 1989:121-134). For instance, 45 percent of the workers interviewed said that CC.OO. was a trade union more inclined "to mobilize" wage earners in order to achieve its goals. In addition, 36 percent of the interviewees used the word "hard" to characterize this union while only 8 percent referred to UGT in the same way. On the other hand, UGT was seen as a union more inclined "to negotiate," a view shared by 35 percent of all the workers interviewed (only 17 percent used the word to describe CC.OO.). Further, 28 percent mentioned the word "submissive" to characterize the Socialist union (only 4 percent did the same regarding CC.OO.). According to this study there were two different "trade union models", and UGT and CC.OO. were associated each one with one of them (IDES, 1989: 143).

My interpretation (and that of Serrano del Rosal, 2000) is that those widespread public images were being challenged by the way the main labor unions had acted during the late 1980s and because of their attempts to become autonomous institutions *vis-à-vis* the parties. In that context, I asked my informants to assess the changes that UGT and CC.OO. had experienced since 1987. The question allowed multiple responses. Data on Table 4.27 (on the next page) reflect the informants' views. [21]

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**Table 4.27 Workplace leaders' views on changes experienced by UGT and CC.OO. (%).**

| *Type of Changes* | *Change in UGT* | | | *Change in CC.OO.* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| More importance is given to workplace's issues | 44.9 | 29.3 | 37.2 | 25.0 | 35.3 | 30.1 |
| More collective action (pressure) is used to get results | 45.6 | 42.9 | 44.2 | 17.6 | 12.0 | 14.9 |
| It stresses more on qualitative demands in bargaining | 52.9 | 17.3 | 35.3 | 22.1 | 54.9 | 38.3 |
| Takes more into consideration interests of white collars | 16.9 | 21.1 | 19.0 | 13.2 | 28.6 | 20.8 |
| Takes more into consideration interests of women, youth & unstable workers | 80.1 | 32.3 | 56.5 | 34.6 | 74.4 | 54.3 |
| It has not changed at all during the past 3 years | 0.7 | 16.5 | 8.6 | 21.3 | 8.3 | 14.9 |
| It's more restrained and less radical than before | 0.7 | – | 0.4 | 24.3 | 7.5 | 16.0 |
| Other changes | 0.7 | 3.0 | 1.9 | – | – | – |
| No answer | 0.7 | 6.8 | 3.7 | 10.3 | – | 5.2 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

A significant change perceived by many informants referred to collective action and the issue of "moderation" versus "radicalism." While CC.OO. was perceived by 25 percent of the UGT informants as being less radical, —and more willing "to negotiate" rather than "to mobilize"— the opposite was the case in regard to UGT. Almost forty-five percent of the workplace leaders from both organizations indicated that UGT had become more willing to engage in collective action. One must remember that both trade unions were acting together for the first time in years. They had joined force and resources not only by supporting strikes and other popular mobilizations but also in the negotiation process with the government and the employers' organizations. In addition, after the dis-

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missal of the macro agreements the unions sought to increase their social presence in the workplace. A shift in the order of priorities was one of the factors that accounted for the improvement in union density Spain had between 1988 and 1995.

Furthermore, both organizations had become more aware of the need to integrate the interests of unprotected workers (mostly women and the youth) in their collective bargaining agendas (Serrano del Rosal, 2000; Miguélez, 1999, 1995). Both unions have sought, to a certain degree, to provide a "collective voice" for employees holding precarious jobs. [22] The workplace leaders interviewed mentioned other aspects that were relevant to make sense of the ongoing changes at that time. For instance, the unions were demanding not just higher wages but more "voice" on work-related matters. Workers' representatives wanted more union control on the use of temporary employment and on the quality of working life in the factory. Most informants considered that the workers' representatives had little participation in many significant areas that affected the working conditions in their firms and that the employers only provided them with the minimum amount of information as required by law.

What is more, I asked workplace-level leaders about issues of "cultural change" in the trade unions' discourse [23] and on the "modernization" of unions' structures. Regarding union structures around 60 percent of the workplace leaders agreed with the idea of a decentralization of the confederal union structure and the strengthening of the local union branches at the firm level. Over 85 percent of the UGT representatives agreed with the idea that in order to represent a more heterogeneous group of wage earners employed in non-industrial settings the unions needed to transform their traditional working class culture. The num-

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ber of CC.OO. workplace-level leaders who agreed with this idea rounded 78 percent of the informants.

Moreover, when I asked a very specific question on the need for union identity change, to my surprise, the workplace-level leaders' responses were not so overwhelming positive. The same workplace-level leaders who agreed with a broad cultural change were somehow more reluctant to specific changes in unions' collective identity.

**Table 4.28 Workplace leaders' opinion of the need to change the "workerist" labor identity (%).**

| *Degree of Agreement with Identity Change* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strong agreement | 11.8 | 10.5 | 11.2 |
| Enough agreement | 33.8 | 23.3 | 28.6 |
| Some agreement | 16.9 | 24.8 | 20.8 |
| Little agreement | 21.3 | 22.6 | 21.9 |
| None agreement | 14.7 | 18.8 | 16.7 |
| No answer | 1.5 | - | 0.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

On the whole (Table 4.28), informants from UGT were more favorable to a transformation of the *"obrerista"* (workerist) identity that had characterized the dominant labor organizations. Forty five percent of them indicated strong or enough agreement with that idea while less than thirty-four percent of informants linked to CC.OO. shared the same opinion. On the other hand, over 41 percent of the CC.OO. delegates clearly disagreed with this idea indicating little or none agreement with it. Even among the UGT representatives the opposition was significant since 36 percent were not really in favor of a change in union identity.

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The majority of informants who agreed with less "workerism" tended to be non-manual white collars and administrative personnel (48%), while among the manual blue-collar workers the support was lower. Around 47 percent of the manual workers disagreed with the change, while only 30 percent of the non-manual workers shared that opinion. Regarding the relationship between class self-identification and union identity change, 59 percent of workplace-level leaders who self-identified as "working class" were opposed, while 52 percent of those who self-identified as middle class indicated that they agreed strongly or enough with the abandonment of the "workerist" identity. Finally, 57 percent of the informants who placed themselves on the far-let on the *Left-Right Scale* disagreed with the idea of throwing away the traditional class-based union identity.

A relatively large number of workplace-level leaders surveyed were aware of the difficulties and challenges labor unions face in a postindustrial society, and most of them wanted to do something to "modernize" their organizations. However, the weight of "traditional labor culture" was still too strong and many remained anchored in the working class discourse of the past. [24]

Bouza et al. (1989) found strong reluctance regarding changes on union identity in their research on UGT. When asked if they agreed with a change in the "ideological definition" of the union only 19 percent of the UGT delegates and 16 percents of the union affiliates said yes (Ibid. 1989: 287). I examined part of the data collected in the two surveys completed by Bouza et al. (1989) [25] and found that the opposition to identity change was higher among the UGT members and the works council delegates who were also members of the PSOE. Figures on Table 4.29 (next page) suggest that the UGT followers who were active

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members of the PSOE were more strongly opposed to a change on the definition of UGT as a "class-based and socialist union" than those who were not.

**Table 4.29 Opinion of UGT delegates /members about change on union identity (%).**

| *Position Regarding Change on UGT's Identity* | *UGT- Delegates* | | | *Union Members* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *PSOE* | *Not PSOE members* | *Total* | *PSOE* | *Not PSOE members* | *Total* |
| Yes (in favor) | 13.3 | 19.7 | 18.7 | 13.3 | 16.0 | 15.7 |
| Not (against it) | 85.6 | 77.1 | 78.4 | 86.7 | 79.2 | 80.1 |
| Not answer & Don't know | 1.1 | 3.2 | 2.9 | - | 4.8 | 4.3 |
| (N) | 90 | 503 | 593 | 60 | 457 | 517 |

Source: *Fundación Largo Caballero*, UGT members & delegates (1988) surveys.

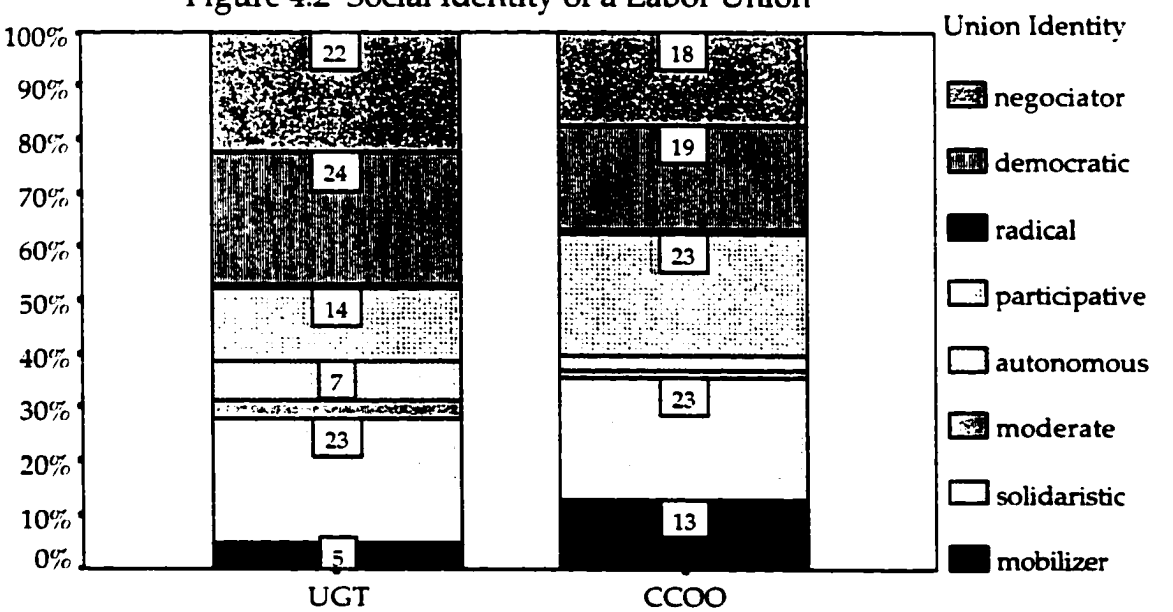
A research focusing on the unions during the early 1990s (Serrano del Rosal, 2000: 182) coincides with the assessment that Bouza et al. (1989) had made. From this perspective the dilemma the class-based unions face when trying to adapt to a changing social and cultural reality are amplified by the persistence a traditional labor organizational culture that does not contribute to the process of innovation and change required to modernize the union movement. This researcher interviewed local, regional and national leaders of UGT and CC.OO. and found out that even if they were aware of the adjustment problems that the unions faced, they were constrained by ideological views that made problematic the cultural transformation of the workers' organizations (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). Among my informants, many workplace leaders wanted a change in the unions' culture and most of them understood that without such a change the

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future of the labor unions was in jeopardy. Yet, they felt that the organizational and ideological transformation of the labor movement was difficult to achieve.

To conclude, I must address a last question. How workplace-level leaders "imagine" their labor organizations? How they understand the symbolic elements that characterize trade unions' social identities? Within this context, I asked the informants to select up to three adjectives that, according to them, might identify a labor union as such.

Figure 4.2 Social Identity of a Labor Union




The term most frequently used by informants to describe an union was *"solidaristic."* For workplace-level leaders a labor organization is the embodiment of the solidarity that workers pursue when they come together and organize an union to represent their interest as a class. Informants from UGT and CC.OO. employed this term in the same proportion. Another important adjective used to identify a labor union referred to its role as the collective *"negotiator"* on behalf of

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wage earners. A slight difference between workplace-level leaders of both organizations was recorded but, overall, it was one of the most commonly words used. On the relationship between the organization and the working people it represents informants from UGT preferred to use the word *"democratic"* while those from CC.OO. tended to use the word *"participative"* more often. This difference reflected two conceptions of trade unions as formal organizations. For the informants of CC.OO. it made more sense the word *participative* since it recalled the origins of this union as a sociopolitical movement based on the active participation of workers in factory assemblies. That was the reason why more workplace leaders linked to CC.OO. selected more the word *"mobilizer"* a word that was used less by the informants associated with UGT.

Finally, one can say that a trade union is a organization of solidarity created to represent the wage earners' interests in the labor market. This type of formal organization needs to be democratic and participative since there is always a danger of bureaucratization and greater disconnection between the workers and their representatives. And unions sometimes need to exert pressure and mobilize the workers to gain social and economic benefits trough collective actions and negotiations.

## VII. Unions and workers in the firm.

A number of workplaces surveyed had experienced different economic, technological and other workforce-related changes during the late 1980s and early 1990 that had consequences on the position and influence of the main trade unions in those firms. In some of the large firms visited technological changes made it possible to reshape production processes through new forms of indus-

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trial organization, including sub-contracting and the spatial reorganization of production systems increasing the sociological fragmentation of the wage earners as a "class." Changes in the composition of the workforce, along with the increase on the entry of women into the labor market since the early 1980s, changed the "traditional" social parameters for the representation of workers' interests (Miguélez, 1999, 1995; Jordana, 1996).

Several of the large factories that I surveyed had been established during the 1950s and 1960s, a time when Franco's regime changed its economic orientation and facilitated the operation of modern industrial conglomerates in Spain. Within those firms workplace-level leaders interviewed were proud of the role that many of them had played in the struggles against the dictatorship.[26] But the situation of the early 1990s was a different one. Many former strongholds of the labor movement were not the same places anymore. Thought many remained relatively well unionized, most of these workplaces had undergone (in the early 1980s) a decline in union density rate.

**Table 4.30 Workplace leaders' views on union membership in their firms (%).**

| *Workplace-level union membership* | *Blue-collar workers* | | | *White-collar workers* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| High | 14.0 | 15.0 | 14.5 | 8.8 | 2.3 | 5.6 |
| Average | 25.0 | 18.8 | 21.9 | 11.8 | 6.8 | 9.3 |
| Low | 61.0 | 66.2 | 63.6 | 77.2 | 90.2 | 83.6 |
| No Answer | - | - | - | 2.2 | 0.8 | 1.5 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Figures on Table 4.30 refer to union membership among blue and white-collar workers in the fifty workplaces surveyed. The shared opinion by most

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workplace leaders from both unions was that union membership was rather low in their firms. While union density was appraised as low for blue-collar workers by 63 percent of the informants, it was assessed as much lower for the white-collars employees. More than 80 percent of the informants agreed with such a view when they assessed union membership among the white-collar personnel.

Data on Table 4.31 reflect the workplace-level leaders' opinion regarding the issue of the relatively low union membership. [27] I asked the informants why the majority of the workers did not join unions? Five explanations were offered and I asked the respondents to select the ones that they considered the most significant. The data suggest at least two possible explanations. First, the lack of organizational incentives and, second, a high degree of workers' individualism. About 50 percent of workplace-level leaders stressed on these two factors, while the others three items were chosen much less.

**Table 4.31 Workplace leaders' opinion on factors that explain low union density (%).**

| *Factors for low union density in Spain* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| "Free rider problem" (unions' gains benefit both union & non-union workers | 54.5 | 45.1 | 49.8 |
| Workers' individualism and low social commitment to unions | 53.5 | 51.1 | 52.1 |
| Cultural sequels of the Francoist regime that made "unionization" compulsory | 26.1 | 24.8 | 25.5 |
| Fragmentation of working class in diverse social strata with different interests | 37.3 | 35.3 | 36.3 |
| Crisis of traditional union values, such as solidarity, equality and social justice | 25.4 | 36.1 | 30.7 |
| (N) | (134) | (133) | (267) |

My informants' views suggested that the old *Olsean free-rider* problem was still alive and well in the Spain of the early 1990s. Being a union member does

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not bring selective incentives since the collective benefits of union actions equally apply to union and non-union workers. It is preferable to receive the gains without paying the costs. According to rational choice theory, workers join unions only if their engagement in collective action is to their advantage.

On the other hand, Marino Regini has stressed that "identity incentives" have declined as a source for collective action (Ibid. 1992: 13). Today it is more problematic to construct the solidarity needed to generate a lasting form of cooperative behavior among wage earners. Old strong identities (such as class) have been "weakened" by the structural and cultural changes of recent decades. This "identity" problem does not depend on how effective are workers' organizations in cementing moral sentiments of "belonging-ness." As Victor Perez Díaz (1993) has pointed out in his thoughtful analysis of Spanish society, workers' collective identity has become problematic. Their social ties with the labor unions cannot be taken for granted anymore. Their "ambivalent" support for these class organizations can shift according to the issues at stake. Their relationship with trade unions has evolved into a more instrumental than an ideological engagement. These are the same phenomena that other studies mention when explaining the social and cultural dynamic behind union membership in Spain (Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

The increase of instrumentalist values and the weakening of "identity incentives" have been found even among members of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) a union identified historically with a strong political identity. In their study of CC.OO. in Catalonia, Ramón Alós et al. (2000: 99) point out that those instrumental reasons to join the union (defense of economic/wage interests and solution of concrete work-related issues) had become more significant than ideologi-

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cal or moral reasons. Interestingly, the degree of "instrumentalist reasons" has been higher among those groups with low market power such as "women, youth, unskilled workers and the ones who had joined the organization recently (Ibid. 2000:117)." Among older members, and those who held positions in the union structure, the "identity incentives" were still somehow important.

In their study of the late 1980s, Bouza et al. (1989: 165-9) found that instrumental motives were remarkably important to explain union membership in the case of the UGT. Forty-nine percent of the works council delegates and sixty-one percent of the UGT affiliates said that "protection" of their wage-earner interests was their main reason to join the union. Meanwhile, "ideology" was mentioned much less as a relevant factor to join the Socialist union (26% of delegates and 22% of grass-roots affiliates). Further, identity motives were more important among union members working in large industrial enterprises. [28]

Regarding their views on why so many workers don't join unions the members of CC.OO. interviewed by Alós et al. (2000) agreed considerably with the opinion of the workplace leaders that I interviewed in 1990. More than 53 percent of the union members surveyed said that many workers did not join since collective bargaining and wage negotiations carried out by unions benefited all the wage earners independently of their union status. Furthermore, over 71 percent indicated that workers had become more individualistic and that they were not interested in belonging to a labor organization (Ibid. 2000: 118-9). A study of works council delegates that the Metalworkers' Federation of this organization completed in 2000, did find the same problem (see Table 7.6).

Similar reasons for unions' low affiliation in the late 1980s were reported by Bouza et al. (1989: 170-1). According to their study, workers themselves —and

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not the labor organizations—were responsible for not affiliating to trade unions, either because of apathy or individualism.

Iriso (1993) offers a different explanation for the low union density rate. Let us try to summarize his main points. Basically, this researcher suggests that UGT and CC.OO. don't invest enough resources in increasing the number of affiliated workers because they don't really need to do so. One should keep in mind that the institutional power of organized labor comes from the number of seats obtained in works council elections and not on union membership. According to this research unions attract mostly workers who are ideologically and politically identified with the left-wing parties and who share a "common identity with the unions (Iriso, 1993: 258)." According to this observer, in the last instance, the unions are the institutions bearing the responsibility for the absence of stronger union organizations given that they don't develop the appropriate strategies at the level of the workplace that are needed to represent the interests of all the wage-earners. There were some exceptions, however, according to his analysis based on fieldwork in 4 industrial factories located in Madrid. In one of the four workplaces where he carried out his research, the local labor institutions (works council and union sections) had developed a different strategy of co-regulation that helped the trade unionists to integrate more workers. In that case the works council and the unions developed a form of "inclusive unionism" that was missing in the other three workplaces he surveyed (Iriso, 1993: 274-5).

Other researchers, like Richards and García de Polavieja, (1997) indirectly "blame" the unions for their low affiliation. According to this interpretation, unions' social base is concentrated in a particular segment of the labor force *(the insiders)* while increasing numbers of workers held precarious jobs and are ex-

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cluded from a meaningful working life. These "outsiders" cannot identify with labor unions whose policies are centered on the "insiders" the core of the unions' constituency. [29]

Additionally, both UGT and CC.OO. have attempted to deal with the special concerns of working women. How have the unions managed to reconcile the competing interests of diverse groups of workers: women and men, highly skilled and unskilled, secure and insecure workers? Some observers argue that unions have struggled with those issues but that they have not put in place the specific policies that are needed to address those questions (Rigby, Smith and Lawlor, 1999).

Besides, in Spain, as elsewhere in the postindustrial world, there is a heterogeneous group comprised by highly skilled professional employees, new categories of white collar workers and the declining industrial blue-collar workers. Unions strategies need to address the concerns of this diversified "new wage-earner class", and in particular, the specific interests of white-collar and skilled employees (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). The only way to create a stronger union movement is by taking into account those special needs and interests, thus developing the basis for "uniting diversity" in order to represent heterogeneous salaried groups.

The last question I want to address concerns the relation between the workers and their representatives. What kind of consultation mechanisms should the unions employ to sound out workers' opinions? To what extend trade unions must consult the workers regarding their actions and strategies.

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**Table 4. 32 Workplace leaders' views on union democracy and consultation (%).**

| *Statements on mechanisms of consultation between unions and workers* | *Workplaces' survey 1990* | | | *EDIS Studies* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *1986* | *1988* |
| Unions should consult the workers all the time about their actions | 12.5 | 30.1 | 21.2 | 53.7 | 51.4 |
| Unions should consult the workers only on very important questions | 41.2 | 45.9 | 43.5 | 20.3 | 18.9 |
| Unions should take decisions based on the trust the workers have placed on them as their representatives | 46.3 | 24.1 | 35.3 | 21.3 | 23.0 |
| Other answers | - | - | - | 2.8 | 4.9 |
| No answer/ Don't know | - | - | - | 2.0 | 1.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (1271) | (2014) |

Table 4.32 reports data from several sources. The left part of the table is based on responses recorded by my study. Attempting some comparison between my informants' views and data collected by two surveys I report workers' answers to an identical question asked in 1986 and 1989 on the two last columns on the right side of the table.

More than 50 percent of the workers surveyed in 1986 and 1988 indicated that they expected to be consulted by the trade unions all the time. A view shared by 30 percent of the workplace leaders linked to CC.OO. and only 12 percent of those associated with UGT. A clear majority of my informants agreed with the idea of consulting the workers on important issues and questions (over 43%) and a minority held the opinion that unions should act according to the mandate they have received in works council elections. On this last point, the proportion of UGT delegates who supported the statement 46%) was considerably higher than the ones from CC.OO. (24%).

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Data (from surveys done in 1987 and 1988) suggest that most workers supported a form of unionism based on direct-control by the represented while the workers' representatives were divided on this issue. A larger proportion of the workplace leaders tied to CC.OO. defended a more "participative" form of unionism while those linked to UGT preferred a "formal" one based on the democratic legitimacy unions receive through electoral processes.

This discrepancy on how trade unions must relate to the workers have to be investigated further. My hypothesis is that this question may reflect problems of "trust" between unions and workers. It is true that workers vote for unions' candidates in works council elections and many support unions' actions. Undoubtedly, workers want more "voice" on unions' policies and union-related issues. But the majority of them don't become active participants in labor organizations; the only acceptable way to gain more voice on unions' affairs.

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## Endnotes for Chapter Four

[1] In his classic book "Political Parties" Michels developed what is known as the "iron law of oligarchy". In his preface to the English edition, Seymour Martin Lipset writes: "Political parties, trade unions, and all other large organizations tend to develop a bureaucratic structure...The sheer problem of administration necessitates bureaucracy. As Michels stated: *it is the inevitable product of the very principle of organization...* But the price of increasing bureaucracy is the concentration of power at the top and the leavening of influence by rank and file members." (Ibid. Page 16).

[2] Actually, 270 interviews were completed. One was discarded because of technical problems with the questionnaire. I explain what happened in the Appendix.

[3] In the randomly selected 50 workplaces where I conducted the survey I found that the UGT had forty-eight local union branches organized while the CC.OO. had forty-seven.

[4] My sample was selected from those workplaces where works council elections were held in 1986. I was interested only in researching the two class-based labor unions, UGT and CC.OO., while Fishman was interested in the labor movement as a whole. See Appendix for details.

[5] In each workplace I attempted to interview four elected works council members, two from each union. I also sought to interview two of the so-called "trade union delegates" *(delegados sindicales)*, one from UGT, the other from CC.OO. in each firm. As I have already indicated, the *delegados sindicales* are chosen/elected by union members and enjoy the same rights elected works council members have. The trade union delegates are entitled to participate in the works council meetings but they don't vote.

[6] Amazingly, in comparison to the number of women presiding a works council the number of women leading the local union was higher, mostly in the case of *Comisiones Obreras*.

[7] This information may include general trends in the sector, production, balance sheets or other data given to shareholders, penalties imposed as disciplinary measures, and statistics on absenteeism.

[8] Considering that in four of the fifty workplaces the majority in the works council did not belong to UGT either to CC.OO., (thus that the presidents were not from these unions) I could only have interviewed 46 chairpersons in total. That means that I was able to reach more than 75 percent of the chairpersons that I could had interviewed.

[9] My sample had a higher number of union members than Fishman's (around 79%).

[10] I kept a fieldwork notebook to record impressions, ideas and comments uttered by the informants, see Appendix for details.

[11] The difference is that they remain in the company pay roll and the unions benefit from their paid time.

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[12] For instance, the "liberated" works council delegates are the ones who visit the smaller firms and workplaces located in the nearby area in order to recruit candidates for works council elections. Moreover, they serve as the link between these under-unionized workplaces and the regional and sectoral trade union structures.

[13] More than 75 percent of these workers' representatives had decided to run again. On the other hand, almost 70 percent of the trade union delegates were to be included in the union lists for works council positions. Whereas, around 10 percent of the elected delegates had decided to quit, about 14 percent were still undecided.

[14] The Madrid region comprises not only the city of Madrid but several localities and smaller municipalities. Ten of the workplaces surveyed were located in; Getafe, Leganes, Alcala de Henares, Coslada and Torrejón. The rest (40) were located within the metropolitan boundaries of Madrid.

[15] Other than the standard questions asked to the informants, I used a more specific questionnaire to assess the situation of the firms, see Appendix.

[16] Price Waterhouse International carried out this survey in 1989, in 6,000 Spanish enterprises.

[17] Almost all of the informants were paying dues members of labor organizations (98%) but they were not the blind followers of their unions' policies. In many instances they acted independently of their formal organizations as Fishman (1990) and Wozniak (1991) had found out.

[18] Only after 1990 both unions decisively adopted a common strategy based on unity of action that with ups and downs has been maintained.

[19] According to the study the UGT delegates were less supportive of the new relationship than the union members in general. Furthermore, the study found that in relative large enterprises (with more than 250 employees, like the ones I was surveying) the UGT delegates tended to see the relationship with CC.OO. in a more critical way (Bouza et al., 1989: 303).

[20] In the early 1980s when the PSOE came to power, the sequels of the transition were still too strong and the unions remained anchored to the political parties. With the end of the first period of macro-corporatism in 1986, and the dissociation between UGT and the PSOE a new phase for organized labor opened that according to Serrano del Rosal (2000) created the appropriate conditions that facilitated the direction taken by trade unions during the 1990s.

[21] As happened with the question asking on the degree of unions' influence the tendency among workplace leaders was to be more positive with their own union. However, their responses allow us to point out the nature of the changes

[22] Works council and union delegates were aware of the need to be more flexible with the so-called "atypical workers" that at that time were increasing relatively fast. More than 80 percent of the delegates indicated that the "unions needed to be more sensible to the specific problems of women and youth with precarious jobs" that represented an important segment of the labor market.

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[23] On the need of cultural change two questions were asked. One in reference to change of the "labor movement traditional culture" the other dealing with the issue of the so-called "workerist identity" of class-based labor unions.

[24] When I asked vaguely for a trade union's cultural change the informants seemed to agree more or less with the idea. Nevertheless, when they were confronted with specific changes that might undermine what was familiar to them, many "hesitated" and were not so convinced on the urgency of the proposed change.

[25] Researchers at the *Fundación Largo Caballero* facilitated the survey data. I used some questions from their questionnaire that I analyze in chapter five.

[26] Many of them told me stories about how their firms had been scenarios of significant workers' mobilizations during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

[27] As I have mentioned the unions' low affiliation problem is not an exclusive feature of the workers' organizations. In Spain the civil society is still weak and membership in voluntary organizations, political parties, and professional associations remains relatively low.

[28] Similarly to the mentioned study on CC.OO. in Catalonia, women in the UGT mentioned the "instrumental" reasons more often, and unskilled workers with lower wages did the same (Bouza et al., 1989).

[29] I tend to disagree with their assessment. During the two years I researched unions in Spain (1988-1990), in addition to the 269 recorded interviews analyzed I spoke to several union officials and regional and industry leaders of both labor confederations. The impression I got form them s was that Spanish trade unionists were aware of the need to attract new members from the work force, especially unstable workers and skilled workers in service industries.

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# Chapter Five

## The Changing Relationship between Parties and Unions: From "Colonization" to "Problematic Autonomy."

This chapter examines the evolution and change in party-union ties during several interconnected periods. It focuses on the historical relationship that unfolded between the UGT and the PSOE, and the links that CC.OO. had, first with the PCE and later with *Izquierda Unida* (IU), a leftist coalition led by this party but with a broader base of support.

The chapter is sub-divided in several sections: first it examines how parties "subordinated" labor organizations during the democratic transition and early regime consolidation. Secondly, it looks at the evolution and transformation of a model of union-party relations that has been conceptualized by Schmitter (1995) as the "colonization" of unions by political parties. [1] In the following part I analyze workplaces' survey data from a comparative perspective. The section examines how from subordinated position labor unions gradually moved toward greater institutional autonomy. In the last part I discuss what factors explain the transformation of the party-union relationship in Spain. Further, I examine how unions have struggled to consolidate their autonomy *vis-à-vis* the political parties, and why those attempts have produced a series of internal organizational crises in both labor unions.

After a long period during which the PCE and the PSOE politically colonized *Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO.)* and the *Union General de Trabajadores (UGT)* respectively, mounting tensions and ideological conflicts led the unions to seek

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the rearrangement of previous political ties. For both labor organizations the process of moving toward what I have named "problematic autonomy" created internal organizational legitimacy problems. Apparently, UGT overcame most of the internal tensions at its extraordinary congress of 1995 when the current secretary-general (Candido Méndez) won the majority of the delegates' vote by a narrow margin. Meanwhile, internal conflicts have continued affecting CC.OO. where a minority tendency would like that this labor organization reestablishes its previous strong association with the Communist left.

As I show at the end of the chapter, labor unions are still struggling to redefine themselves politically and ideologically *vis-à-vis* the parties to which they depended (in different forms and degree) when democracy was still an uncertain possibility in 1977.

## I. Parties and unions during the democratic transition.

The unions' alignment to leftist parties during the final years of the Francoist dictatorship was the "normal" state of affairs given the conditions of existence for workers' organizations and political forces aspiring to overthrown the authoritarian regime. Under harsh political constraints, further delimited by the corporatization of civil society, the natural allies for "illegal" democratic unions were the Socialists and the Communist activists who played an important role in the reorganization of Spanish labor movement. In 1975, when Franco died, the Spanish civil society had been reorganizing itself for over a decade. Since the mid-sixties a diversity of social movements (nationalists, students, and workers) had been mobilizing resources and forces against a regime that at its final hour became more repressive and intolerant (Maravall, 1978, 1984). [2]

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As has been argued (Köhler, 1995; Fishman, 1990; Soto Carmona, 1993) the role played by *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) in the mobilization of social forces against the regime during this period was greater than UGT's limited involvement within these popular struggles. The same rule applies to the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE). This party played a relative minor role inside the diverse social movements that challenged the authoritarian regime during the sixties and early seventies. The PSOE and the UGT militants and supporters were active only in a few areas of the Spanish territory. At that time, the PCE and *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) were active in civil society making these organizations the principal source of activists in the struggle against Francoism. The relative weakness of Spanish Socialism *vis-à-vis* the Communist left was a determining factor for the kind of party-union relations established when the post-Franco regime under the reformist government of Adolfo Suárez began to dismantle, one by one, the main authoritarian political institutions after 1976 (Maravall, 1984; Gunther et al.,1986).

The legalization of labor organizations never was the priority of the first Suárez's government. Unions were legalized only after the legalization of political parties, and from the early beginning of the democratic transition their participation in the political process was limited to tag along the strategy of the parties. A study on this period indicates that unions depended on the parties to make hear their voice by the new government authorities (Hamann, 1994: 153-163), and basically followed the decisions and compromises reached by the left-wing parties.

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I indicated in chapter three that the dynamic of the democratic transition favored the establishment of an incomplete neo-corporatist system of interest intermediation which framed the way unions' strategies unfolded (Royo, 2000; Encarnación, 1997). Although never fully developed the Spanish neo-corporatist model reinforced the political colonization of unions by the parties and, further, by the state itself. By granting political prerogatives to the workers' organizations the state made them dependent on external institutional and governmental sources for their legitimization as wage earners' representatives. In the Spanish experience of regime democratization the neo-corporatist mechanisms set up to channel economic demands assured that the political changes stayed within well-defined margins (Encarnación, 1987: 401-2).

The *Pacto de la Moncloa* of 1977, initiated what was known as the *consertación social* (social agreement policy).[3] Only the parties signed this first national agreement, even if most of what was being agreed upon depended of the compliance by the unions. Paradoxically, these were the organizations charged with the task of implementing the policy of economic moderation and political restraint among the workers that was needed to assure the re-establishment of Spanish democracy (Royo, 2000).

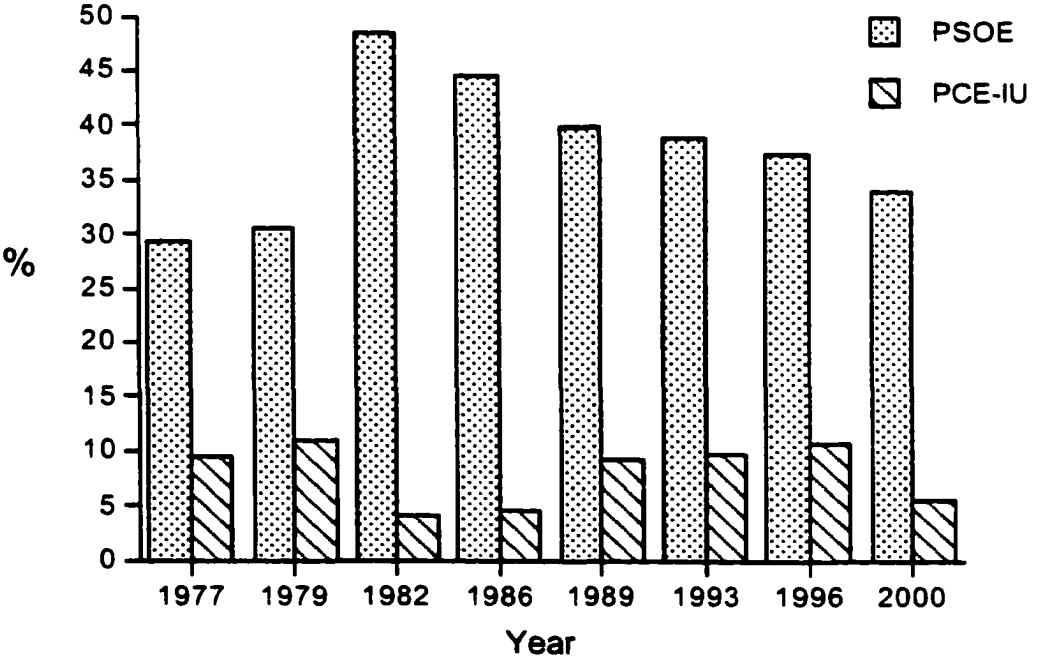
Why the workers' organizations did accept the policies of political and economic moderation during a period of high political uncertainty? This question has been the subject of intellectual debates and political controversies. While Fishman (1990) and particularly Pérez-Díaz (1993) argue that the workers' moderation was not imposed from above, and must be understood as the reflection on the prior existence of an "implicit social compromise" between the workers

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and the dominant classes, others like Köhler (1995) and Aguilar et al. (1984) hold the view that the parties (PCE and PSOE) exerted pressure through the unions to restrict any form of workers' radicalism. [4]

After 1977 the electoral competition between the PSOE and the PCE in the political arena turned out favorable to the Socialists. Ironically the PCE could not benefit either electorally or organizationally of the role it had played under Francoism (Gunther et al., 1986; Mujal-Léon, 1983).

**Figure 5.1 Electoral force of the Left (1977 to 2000).**




The PSOE became the preferred electoral option for those citizens who wanted to change the conservative government. Since the first democratic elections of 1977 the PSOE became the dominant force of the Spanish left, [5] a trend that continued during the 1980s and the 1990s.

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## II. The political left in Spain: the PCE and the PSOE.

This chapter focuses on the two main organizations of the Spanish left: the PSOE and the PCE. Thought other Marxist organizations of various orientations ranging from Maoist to radical groups associated with Trotsky's Fourth International are active in Spain, their political relevance is insignificant. Followers of the extreme left are active in the union movement but they don't play an important role in the power structure of the labor organizations. Solely activists from the PCE and the PSOE have played such a role within unions' structures.

### *The Spanish Communist Party*

The Spanish Communist party (PCE) was founded in 1921 as a splinter group from the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). The PCE attained strength in the early 1930s, during the period of intense political polarization that preceded the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Upon that conflict's outbreak the PCE grew extremely rapidly, its membership expanding from 30,000 in early 1936 to almost 1,000,000 by 1937. The PCE became the best organized, most tightly disciplined, and most militarily effective of all the parties in the Spanish Republic, and it received special amounts of Soviet aid and assistance in its armed struggle against Franco's neo-Fascists forces (Mujal-León, 1983: 10-11).

The PCE went underground upon Franco's military victory in 1939 and most of its surviving leaders went into exile. During the harsh years of the dictatorship the Communist militants were persecuted and the party's organization in Spain was maintained with tremendous difficulties. Santiago Carillo became the party's secretary-general in 1956, and under his leadership the party adopted a

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moderate stance and continued its clandestine reorganization of the emerging democratic labor movement.

The PCE was legalized in 1977 against the opposition of the military hierarchy that threatened the democratic regime with the possibility of political involution (Maravall, 1984). During the 1970s the PCE joined the Italian and the French Communists by embracing the Euro-communist project and pledging adherence to parliamentary democracy at home and independence from the Soviet Union (Mujal-Léon, 1983). In spite of its ideological redefinition the PCE lost many voters to the PSOE over the following years of democratic change. Between 1977 and 1982 the PCE led by Santiago Carrillo underwent a series of internal crises that little by little eroded the party's social base. It received only four percent of the vote in the 1982 general election, and by 1986 it had split into several smaller groups, one of them led by Carillo himself who in the mid-1980s abandoned the PCE (Camiller, 1984).

According to some observers the PCE was not capable of becoming a mass working class party (Van Biezen, 1998). Due to its role as the main opposition movement under Franco, the PCE possessed a substantial number of party members at the outset of the political transition. It is estimated that when Franco died in 1975 the party had around 15,000 members. The strategy followed by the PCE after the transition sought to increase party membership. By late 1977 the PCE had more than 200,000 members (Heywood, 1994: 63). The Communists followed a strategy of mass mobilization and aspired to construct a party in accordance with the characteristics of a mass party (Van Biezen, 1998). By the end of 1977, however, membership figures started to decline rapidly. Especially during the early 1980s, when the PCE suffered from internal disputes, the loss of

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members was dramatic. Between 1981 and 1983 almost half of the members abandoned the organization. The declining trend continued thereafter at a lower rate. According to one observer the party affiliation had fallen to less than 35,000 members at the end of the 1990s (Van Biezen, 1998: 47).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the PCE demanded a strong political commitment from their members. Party's members were expected to participate actively within and outside the party organization and to be active in the union movement, particularly in *Comisiones Obreras*.

In 1986, the PCE joined other left-wing groups in the electoral coalition of *Izquierda Unida* (IU), which was transformed into a unified movement in 1992 (Taibo, 1997). In 1994, IU claimed to have a social base comprised of approximately 50,000 followers. However, since the constituent elements of the coalition were not dissolved, citizens can be affiliated to either the PCE or to IU, or to both parties simultaneously. [6]

United Left is the name of a coalition that has included the PCE, a breakaway socialist party known as the PASOC, left-wing republicans, feminists, greens and pacifists (Taibo, 1997). With the collapse of Soviet Communism, a debate opened up inside the PCE about its future. One group wanted *Izquierda Unida* to become a proper party in which the PCE could be dissolved. The other wanted the party to go on as before. Whereas in Italy, where the Communist party dissolved itself after the reformers outnumbered the old party guard, in Spain the reformers found themselves in a minority. After the constitution of IU as unified political movement, the PCE has been reluctant to give up its separate identity and the party continues to exist concurrently with IU (Van Biezen, 1998). [7]

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*The Spanish Socialist Worker Party*

The *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) has played an important role in 20th century Spanish politics as the dominant party of the left (Gillespie, 1989; Share, 1989). Pablo Iglesias, who was also the founder in 1888 of the party's affiliated trade union, the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) founded the party in 1879. By the time the Spanish Republic was proclaimed in 1931, the PSOE was the largest political party in the country. Among the republican forces the Socialists were the principal supporters of the Second Republic. As the result of the deep social crisis that encroached on republican Spain and the uprising led by Franco, the party (and the UGT) experienced a process of political radicalization and a serious internal struggle between the left-wing of the party called *Caballeristas* (followers of Largo Caballero) and the moderate wing led by Julian Besteiro and Indalecio Prieto (Martin, 1990).

During Franco dictatorship, the PSOE within Spain was almost nonexistent. The party's leadership in exile gradually lost touch with what was happening inside the country. In the mid-1950s, informal Socialist groups began to organize within Spain; while in the 1960s a small group of activists led by Alfonso Guerra and Felipe Gonzalez began to ask for changes within the party under the control of an exiled leadership based in France (Gillespie, 1989).

Until the 1960s there was very little Socialist presence in Spain. At that time the internal wing of the party took over the leadership from its aging, exiled leaders and elected the young Felipe González to be the party's secretary-general at its Twelfth Congress in 1974. The PSOE, along with other political par-

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ties, was legalized in 1977 and took almost 30 percent of the vote in national elections that year (Share, 1989; Tezanos, 1983).

With the return of democracy the PSOE strongly invested resources to build a modern party organization. Increasing party membership, from about 4,000 in 1975 to over 50,000 in 1977, reflected the new political dynamic. In 1978, PSOE's membership, were almost 100,000 members and it had reached the number of 150,000 affiliates in 1982 (Tezanos, 1983).

The new party leadership around Felipe González and Alfonso Guerra was identified with a relatively more radical socialist project than the one classic social democracy had defended in other European societies (Share, 1989). Nevertheless, the party's new leadership received the support of the Socialist International and in 1976 the PSOE made its public reappearance in Spain's political life. The first congress of the party in Spain after Franco's death was held in Madrid that year although the PSOE was still illegal. There the delegates approved what, at the time, was called the most radical program of a democratic socialist party in Western Europe. The program proposed the overcoming of capitalism without any delay, the seizure of political power by the working class and rejected any politics of accommodation with capitalism. In theory, the revitalized PSOE was far more leftist than the "old-fashioned" PSOE in exile. The rapid growth of party's membership had pushed the Socialists to the left, and that explains why in 1976 the party adopted a radical socialist program (Share, 1989).

The electoral success of the PSOE exceeded all expectations. The party won 34 percent of the seats in parliament in the first general elections of 1977. It overpowered the PCE in the electoral and political arena and clearly established itself as the hegemonic force of the left (Maravall, 1984).

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Between 1977 and 1979 an internal struggle between González, who had become a "pragmatic" and the left-wing of the PSOE —that at the time was called *criticos* and later *Izquierda Socialista* (socialist left) — developed and in the party Congress of 1979 González's position was defeated. Confronted with a new situation Felipe González resigned his position of secretary-general while the left-wing group was unable to present a coherent alternative to him. Later the same year the party celebrated an extraordinary congress previously pre-arranged by Alfonso Guerra who manipulated the selection of delegates making it difficult for the left to advance its positions at that time. In that extraordinary congress González returned to the party leadership and his views favoring an ideological redefinition of the PSOE were accepted. The so-called *criticos* lost their positions of power within the party executive committee and became a marginal group (Share, 1989; Tezanos, 1983). Thus, in 1979 González and other pragmatic leaders dropped the party's official Marxist definition and thereafter managed to attract large numbers of middle-class and moderate voters, while the revived UGT successfully competed with the pro-Communist CC.OO. in trade union organizing (Maravall, 1984; Fishman, 1990).

The Socialists, the principal opposition to the governing coalition during the first part of the transition (1977-82), abandoned their previous radicalism (an expression of other sociopolitical circumstances) in order to win voters in the competitive electoral system and by doing so contributed to the consolidation of the fragile political regime. After four decades of authoritarian rule, the PSOE leadership knew that a highly ideological organization was not what Spaniards wanted. Finally, the PSOE leaders, unlike their predecessors in the Second Re-

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public, recognized that the consolidation of democracy was more important than the defense of rigid ideological principles (Maravall, 1984; Tezanos, 1983).

For the PSOE, being the principal candidate to replace the center-right UCD in power during a period of political change with an electorate basically moderate and not ideologically committed to radical socialist politics, the turning toward the center of the political spectrum was the only rational strategy in order to win votes in the general elections (Gunther et al.., 1986). As pointed out by one of the principal newspapers after the Socialist victory of 1982: "Before the center was Right, now it is Left." The historical weakness of the Spanish bourgeoisie, and its political incapacity to become the promoter of what in other parts of Europe was the bourgeois democratic revolution, created unique conditions in the country that compelled the Socialists to assume the role of "modernizers" instead of transformers of capitalist society (Share, 1989).

In 1982 the PSOE, with its more moderate platform, became the ruling party of Spain. The PSOE won close to 50 percent of the valid votes in that general election and almost 60 percent of the seats in the Spanish parliament. The party won elections again in 1986, 1989, and 1993, but by declining margins on each occasion. In 1996 it lost power to the *Partido Popular*.

The absolute majority in parliament between 1982 and 1989 gave the Socialist government an unprecedented degree of control on government's policies. From the start in 1983, the PSOE-led government moved rapidly to pursue a neo-liberal macroeconomic policy (Recio and Roca, 1998). The Gonzalez's government gave control over economic policies to Miguel Boyer and Carlos Solchaga, the first two economics ministers who were well connected with financial circles and represented the most conservative sector of the Socialist party. The

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PSOE economic policy in government favored the integration of Spain into the European political economy, economic restructuring of noncompetitive industries, and the building of infrastructures needed for Spain's modernization (Kennedy, 2001; Share, 1989).

Between 1982 and 1988 the PSOE did not go through serious internal ideological tensions as had occurred in the late 1970s (Share, 1989). It was the general strike of December 1988, called by the UGT and the CC.OO. to protest over the socioeconomic policies of González's government that impacted negatively on the PSOE's internal politics (Royo, 2000; Méndez-Lago, 2000). As result of the strike the party lost labor support.

The start of the 1990s saw the PSOE more internally divided than at any time during the previous decades (Méndez-Lago, 2000: 145-6). The left-wing faction that had been silence during the 1980s reemerged gaining some support among party members. At the same time some of the followers of Alfonso Guerra began to criticize the neo-liberal wing of the party on the basis that the PSOE was loosing electoral support among its working class constituency. The long strong relationship between Guerra and González suffered and by the mid-1990s the so-called *Guerristas* had lost most of its authority positions within the party power structure (Méndez-Lago, 2000: 148-9). [8]

After the PSOE electoral defeat in 1996 many party members felt that their organization needed to undergo a process of internal democratization. Therefore, at the PSOE's Congress held in 1997 a primary election system was adopted to select candidates for local and regional elections and to the select the Socialist candidate for head of government for the 2000 election. The party's leader Joaquín Almunia was defeated in the primary election by José Borrell. As I indi-

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cated in chapter one, Borrell soon resigned and Almunia, his replacement, was the party candidate in the March 2000 elections in which the PSOE lost almost two million votes in comparison to the electoral results of 1996 (Chari, 2000).

Immediately after this electoral defeat Almunia resigned his position of secretary-general. The same year, at its 35th congress, the PSOE elected José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero as its new leader. The new general secretary is the leader of a party's current named *Nueva Vía* (new way) and ideologically he feels close to the so-called "third way" European social democracy (Kennedy, 2001).

Finally, in the mid-1990s party membership had increased to more than 350,000 members (Méndez-Lago, 2000). The party is strongest in the cities and in certain regions of the country like Andalucia and Asturias. The PSOE is organized following a federal model with the local *agrupación* being its primary structure, electing provincial and regional bodies. The national congress, held every four years, is technically the highest authority in the party since it elects the party leaders.

## III. Models of party-union relations (1977-1987).

In the following part I examine the links and ties that the political left (PSOE and PCE) had established with the class-based labor unions (UGT and CC.OO.) during the period of democratic change and consolidation of the new regime. Let us start with the ties between the PSOE and the UGT.

### UGT-PSOE

I have indicated that both Socialist organizations (PSOE and UGT) were founded by the same groups of artisans, skilled workers, and traditional middle class professionals late in the 19th century. Under the leadership of Pablo Iglesias

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the Spanish socialist movement embodied the forces struggling to bring secular rationalization and democratic republicanism to a backward pre-modern society heavily dominated by religious and political conservatism.

Both organizations, UGT and the PSOE, remained relatively close to each other until the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931 (Martin, 1990; Gillespie, 1989). Under the leadership of Francisco Largo Caballero the radicalized UGT of the thirties criticized and opposed many of the social and economic policies of the republican government in which the PSOE was the dominant partner. The increasing ideological differences between party and union fractured the unity of a Socialist movement that could not overcome serious internal conflicts. When the conservative forces led by Franco put an end to the Republic in 1939, the Socialist labor movement was in disarray (Martin, 1990).

During the forty years that the Francoist regime lasted, the UGT and the PSOE lacked effective political intervention in Spain's public life. With the exception of a few cells of Socialist militants concentrated in specific places, but without resources to rebuild their proscribed organizations, the Socialists did not play a significant political role during that period. As has been documented (Gillespie, 1989: 170-218) during the dictatorship UGT or PSOE members were the same people and party and union were indistinguishable organizations.

In 1977, after trade unions were legalized, the UGT reemerged into public life weaker than the CC.OO.. The PSOE found it-self in the same organizational chaos. The party however, regained past electoral strength relatively fast while the UGT realized that it needed the party's political resources to rebuild its social bases (Fishman, 1990).

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For the PSOE, the hegemony held by CC.OO. in industrial factories and in the majority of Spain's large workplaces represented direct threat of the Communist forces *vis-à-vis* its own social-democratic project. The PSOE sought to gain enough social and electoral support among the blue and white-collar salaried classes to reach power in a relative short time period (Maravall, 1984).

Without the unfolding by the PSOE of a clear strategy to undermine the CC.OO. hegemony, the possibilities for the UGT to regain its past role as one of the main labor organizations were in jeopardy. Pursuing that objective the PSOE put into practice a *política sindical* (trade union policy) between 1977 and 1982 that sought to strengthen UGT in factories and in workplaces. [9] Though the UGT obtained greater support in the works council elections after 1980, the organizational strength of the "pro-Communist" CC.OO. remained untouched in the major industrial workplaces (Fishman, 1990).

Several of the UGT national, regional, and sector leaders that I interviewed (in 1989-1990) acknowledged that the resources the union had received from the party, as well as financial help from German social democratic institutions, had been significant factors in the union's re-building process. [10] For many UGT activists their engagement in union-related tasks during this period (1977-82) was seen as a "natural" extension of their political activism in the PSOE. The same thing was happening in CC.OO. where PCE militants fulfilled essential organizational responsibilities (Köhler, 1995; Hamann, 1994; Soto-Carmona, 1993).

Jordana (1994) has conceptualized this phenomenon as the dual experience of "double militancy". This notion helps to understand the "overlapping" of both organizations (party-union) within civil society. Double militancy did mean committed ideological involvement in a political project in which both entities,

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union and party, were intermingled political arenas. Thus, what Jordana (1994) calls the political culture of double militancy played a significant organizational function during the difficult process of union rebuilding between 1977 and 1982.

Additionally, the close ties that UGT and CC.OO. had with the Socialist and Communist parties at the national level were reflected in the unions' identification by the workers as pro-PSOE or as pro-PCE organizations. These social identifications reshaped each one of the specific *modelos sindicales* (trade union models) of the democratic transition. According to Jordana (1994) the development of a highly competitive union arena in which UGT and CC.OO. confronted each other in the firms was a direct reflection of how the PSOE and the PCE competed against each other at the level of the political system. Similar opinions are held by Fishman (1990), and Maravall (1984) for whom the increasing support the UGT gained after 1980 was due in great part to its Socialist identity and its close ties with the PSOE.

Evidence allows us to say that during most of their common history the relation between party and union was of a "solidaristic" nature, not so much because of the mutual interests, but because of a mutual ideological commitment to the same political project. Party and trade union maintained an organic fluid relationship as two arms of the labor movement pursuing the same social-democratic goals (Astudillo, 1998). The PSOE depicted itself as a working class and wage earners' party, for which the mobilization of the workers and their integration into the party and the trade union was a fundamental objective. Therefore, it offered active support for the UGT and encouraged its members to fulfil their party obligation of joining the union (Craig, 1994; Tezanos, 1983).

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From 1986 onwards, however, the relationship between the PSOE and the UGT deteriorated. Nevertheless, the party continued until 1990 to emphasize the need to strengthen the position of the union and to maintain a cooperative relation with the UGT (Méndez-Lago, 2000).

After the resignation of the UGT secretary-general, Nicolas Redondo, as a PSOE representative in parliament in 1987 and the ensuing general strike in December 1988, it became clear that the relationship had been seriously damaged (Gillespie, 1990; Wozniak, 1992-3). For the first time, the UGT did not openly support the PSOE in the national legislative election of 1989. Facing the tense situation with the union the PSOE approved a new trade union policy in 1990 abolishing the obligatory affiliation to the UGT (Méndez-Lago, 2000).

**CC.OO.-PCE**

The relationship between CC.OO. and the PCE has been more complex and fluid than some observers have assumed (Couffignal, 1981). In that sense, it would be a conceptual mistake to reduce CC.OO. to the role of being the "transmission belt" of the party's strategy and policies. This metaphor, employed to describe the traditional relationship between party and union in the Communist movement, poorly describes the party-union nexus in this case.

On the other hand, the early involvement of Spanish Communists in the emergence of CC.OO. has been well-documented (Foweraker, 1989; Mujal-León, 1985). However, since its beginning CC.OO. had been a plural workers' organization in which diverge ideological tendencies, leftist groups, and even Catholic workers, joined forces together. Furthermore, the PCE was not always in abso-

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lute command given the decentralized nature of the original CC.OO.'s movement.

For opposite reasons to those accounting for the interdependence of the UGT and the PSOE, the CC.OO. did not depend on the PCE for its organizational strength and social presence in the firms. As I have pointed out this labor union, originally defined as a "sociopolitical movement", originated inside the popular struggles against Franco's dictatorship during a decade of rapid economic growth and gradual weakening of the authoritarian regime (Köhler, 1995; Führer-Ries, 1996).

When Franco died the rapid development of events took CC.OO. by surprise. Between 1976 and 1977 a harsh internal struggle exploded between a faction that wanted to keep its identity as a "socio-political movement" and the preponderant pro-PCE sector that wanted to "institutionalize" the trade union. At the end the pro-Communist sector overcame internal opposition and in a constitutional assembly held in Barcelona in 1976 the "informal" *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) were converted into a structured trade union. Only after the foundation of the formal union's organization did the PCE start to exert its "strategic control" over CC.OO. but not without serious sporadic conflicts.

At the CC.OO.'s First National Congress of 1978 the PCE was able to place a large number of *party cadres* in key positions in the union's power structure. [11] At that meeting Marcelino Camacho was elected secretary-general of CC.OO., a year after his election as a PCE's representative to parliament. Between 1978 and 1985 the Communists would come to hold the large majority of the key posts in the union national executive committee.

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Between 1980 and 1985 the PCE experienced a period of crisis and severe factionalism. Several splinter groups broke away from the party, further depleting its support to form pro-Soviet or Marxist-Leninist parties (Mujal-León, 1983: 187-221). Among these were the pro-Soviet Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain (PCPE) and the Communist Party of Spain-Marxist-Leninist (PCE-ml). Within the PCE, the followers of Santiago Carrillo strongly opposed the new secretary-general Gerardo Iglesias. Inside CC.OO. two relatively large Communist currents developed each one behind one of these party leaders, Carrillo or Iglesias. [12]

Since the early 1980s the CC.OO. sought to emphasize its independence from the PCE. (Hamann, 1998). Nonetheless, relations between the two organizations remained close at least until 1987. The PCE kept consulting the union on labor issues and it included CC.OO. demands in its official labor policy statements. Furthermore, the PCE presented union proposals in parliament the same way the PSOE did with UGT at least until the mid-1980s (Hamann, 1994).

The PCE had built a political base around CC.OO., and its main leader Marcelino Camacho was an important party leader. While the PCE lost more than half of its members during the early 1980s the trade union was able to stand firm surviving the Communists' crisis because the union leadership sought to shell the CC.OO. away from the party's misfortunes. However, it remained "ideologically" close to the PCE at least until 1987 when a new leadership was elected and *Comisiones Obreras* began its process of political redefinition (Soto-Carmona, 1993; Köhler, 1995).

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## IV. The sociology of party-union linkages.

The "interlocking" of party and union national leaderships may indicate the degree of political identification of the larger unions with their respective party-allies (Hamann, 1994). The question, however, is how to explore the complexity of party-union networks at the macro and the micro levels, seeking to understand how union activists inside their organizations implemented the parties' strategies. The questions that must be addressed are: How successful were the parties in their attempt to "colonize" the social and cultural spaces where union actions unfolded? How did the parties' objectives impact on the way the organizational strategies of both UGT and CC.OO. were designed?

There is little sociological information on party cleavages inside the labor unions. Other than general information on the political profile of the delegates who participated in the First National Congress of CC.OO. (Ruíz, 1993: xvii) and survey data on the electoral behavior of union members during the transition (Pérez Díaz, 1979: 71-124; Maravall, 1984: 192-202) little is known about how different party tendencies dominated the internal political life of the workers' organizations during the democratization period (1977-1982).

For Gunther et al. (1986: 204-215) the party-union situation during the late 1970s (and early 1980s) was neither uniform across regions nor identical for all organizations. This research suggests that leftist parties (at the polity level) successfully "influenced" unions' strategies which, depending of the issues, followed (in lesser or greater degree) the parties' strategies. Nonetheless, it shows how at the regional and local level of the unions' structures the PCE and the PSOE were not always in command. In several regions the union internal politics reflected

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struggles led by extreme-left militants who challenged the hegemony of the Communist and the Socialist parties in the interior of the labor unions. Similarly, Vega-García (2000) stresses on what he calls "radical unionism" that during the late 1970s and early 1980s was fomented by political militants linked to the extreme-left inside the large trade unions.

What's more, Gunther et al. (1986) point at the means through which parties intended to control union's policies suggesting that party's polices were not so well structured. These researchers identify a set of mechanisms that facilitated the "informal" colonization of unions' affairs by party militants who pursued certain policies at the interior of the unions in accordance with their parties' strategies (Ibid. 1986: 208). They found out that because of the political importance of the "informal" and "formal" ties that existed between CC.OO. and the PCE during the democratic transition for many Socialist activists the relationship between the UGT and the PSOE needed to be even stronger, to a point that for some of them the union "was an extension of the party (page. 209)."

Let us pay attention to research findings from sociological studies that might shed light on the party-union ties. [13] Survey research on the PSOE and the UGT provides a fairly accurate idea of the degree to which both organizations shared a common membership up to the late 1980s. The way their social bases were interconnected is an indicator of the degree to which political parties sought to "penetrate" labor unions.

Around 81 percent of the UGT delegates to the 33rd Congress surveyed in 1983 declared to be PSOE members, while 80 percent of the delegates who attended the 34th Congress in 1986 responded that they belonged to the same

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party (Tezanos et al., 1986: 47). [14] A majority of this group of UGT members who were members of the PSOE joined the party after having been actively involved in the union. Apparently, the pro-Socialist union played an important socializing role by attracting new party members during that period (late 1970s and early 1980s).

**Figure 5.2 Percentage of PSOE members who were members of UGT (1980-89).**




Source: Méndez-Lago (2000: 245)

The same pattern described above was found among a considerable number of PSOE activists in a series of surveys conducted between 1980 and 1989 inside the party (see Figure 5.2). Although the proportion of PSOE members who were members of UGT declined during the 1980s, a considerable group became union members before joining the party (Tezanos, 1986: 24). In addition, the proportion of party activists who said to be UGT members was higher among the cohort that had joined the party before the 1979 general election (Ibid. 1986: 32). Then, party and union shared the same human resources, at a

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time when the UGT was struggling to build up its social presence in the workplaces (Fishman, 1990). During those years (late 1970s) the PSOE sought to organize "Socialist groups" inside large firms seeking to increase the number of affiliates of UGT and to create a viable political alternative to the "Communist hegemony" embedded in the stronger workplace organization of CC.OO.. This policy was abandoned when the party realized that it was not producing the expected results (Méndez-Lago, 2000: 247). [15]

According to Méndez-Lago, (2000: 245) forty-one percent of the party members surveyed in 1980 were members of the UGT. There was a significant increase in the general membership of the PSOE between 1980 and 1983, when the party came to power. Another study conducted in 1983 indicates that around 48 percent of those surveyed said that they were affiliated to the UGT. In the following survey of 1986 party members claiming to belong to the UGT remained more or less the same (around 46%). [16] During the following three years the relations between union and party were strained by the conflicts already described. In 1989, one year after the general strike of 1988, many members of the PSOE had given up their membership in UGT. Then, about 38 percent said that they held membership in the "Socialist" trade union.

The increasing deterioration of the UGT-PSOE ties did have a serious impact inside the party, as Craig's study suggests (1993: 202-4). Despite the seriousness of the conflicts that existed between the union and the party this researcher did find that more than 60 percent of the party local and regional leaders interviewed remained UGT members (Craig, 1993: 53). Since the mid-1980s the decline of PSOE affiliates holding UGT cards had been noticed particularly among

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members who had joined the party after 1982, when the PSOE came to power. Craig (1993) confirms this trend in her study on the party local organizations. This observer found that only 20 percent of the PSOE members interviewed, —who joined the party after 1986— belonged to the UGT (Ibid. 1993: 194).

In 1988 researchers associated with the Fundación Largo Caballero (Bouza et al., 1989) carried out two studies (one on members the other on works council delegates). The mentioned studies offer a good internal picture of the UGT, and on some of the union's problems at that time. Several of the questions asked were related to the PSOE and the Socialist government. Regarding political orientation and party membership the data indicated that only 12 percent of the union affiliates belonged to a political party (almost all of them to the PSOE), while around 16 percent of the delegates surveyed were party members (a little more than 15% to the PSOE). On electoral and political behavior the majority indicated that they had supported the PSOE. Among union affiliates, around 85 percent had voted for the Socialists in 1982 and 1986 while delegates' support for the PSOE had been close to 79 percent in both elections. [17]

Even if conflicts and tensions between the union and the party had undermined the social bases of the party, political and electoral support for the PSOE among UGT members was still high in the late 1980s (Gillespie, 1990). Clearly, most UGT members had remained electoral supporters of the PSOE even when they disagreed with certain policies of the Socialist government. That was what Bouza et al. (1989) found in their studies, and I found the same pattern among the majority of UGT workplace-level leaders that I interviewed.

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These and other studies confirm how the PSOE and the UGT "overlapped" organizationally during the late 1970s and the 1980s. However, they don't shed light on the mechanisms that facilitated the "political colonization" of the union by the party. How the members of the PSOE inside the UGT did influence the direction of the organization? What resources they possessed to shape union's policies?

Given that the evidence is sketchy, positive answers for these questions are only partial. We know, for instance, that among PSOE members, who had belonged to UGT, 45 percent of them occupied authority positions in the union organizational structure (Tezanos, 1986: 33). This finding suggests that, at least until 1986, the PSOE members inside the union played a significant role not only in the national direction of the organization but in the intermediary and local structures as well. [18] In addition, for many years the national executive committees of UGT and the PSOE held joint meetings together to discuss political and labor-related questions (Share, 1989). The situation changed in the early 1980s when those joint meetings were suspended. However, Nicolas Redondo, the union secretary-general at that time, kept attending the meetings of the party executive committee at least until 1984. With the deepening of the differences between party and union after 1985 the UGT national leadership did split in two groups; one led by José Luis Corcuera (deputy union leader after Redondo) that defended the party line, the other led by Redondo and José María Zufiaur, who wanted more autonomy from the party and the Socialist government. [19]

There is not specific evidence on the way parties have exerted influence and in some cases, political control over unions' strategies. Other than data on

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the number of party *cadres* who were involved in the workers' organizations and the degree of interlocking between party and union executive bodies no one really know how the party strategies were made part of the unions' behavior. For instance, Astudillo (1998), who has studied the links between UGT and the PSOE, suggests that the party did not control the union but that the leadership of both organizations shared the same project and objectives at least until the early 1980s when the situation began to change. While other observers, like Sebastian Royo (2000), suggest that the UGT had little influence on the internal politics of the party since it did not have a structured organizational presence in the PSOE. In Royo's opinion: "The centralized nature of the PSOE prevented the UGT from playing a stronger role within the PSOE government (Ibid. 2000: 181)."

Let us turn the attention to the party-union ties at the level of the firm. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, the workplace is the Achilles heel of Spanish unionism (Alós and Lope, 1991). This is the terrain where labor unions face the workers' demands and it is the arena where unions confront each other seeking to gain workers' support. Without a strong presence in the factory shop floors labor unions cannot effectively mobilize workers in order to exert direct social and political pressure on the employers and on the government.

In a general sense the political realities that frame unions' actions at the workplace are unique. Community and specific firms' traditions, personal relations between trade unionists and old rivalries are factors that shape actors' experiences configuring workplace-unions' fields of action. Given that in most workplaces trade unions such as UGT and CC.OO. reemerged in 1977 heavily identified with the left-wing parties, in which many plant leaders were militants,

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the unions local political identities were defined as "pro-Communist" or "pro-Socialist" by the workers themselves (Jordana, 1994). Even today, after a process through which unions have regained independence and institutional autonomy the cultural sequels of their past political subordination to parties have not completed disappeared (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). Furthermore, many workplace leaders active in the unions are still identified with the political left.

Within this context, Pedro Iriso (1993) has sought to show how workers' commitment to trade unions is greater among those involved within that political culture of the left. In a general sense union activists are involved in a singular political practice in which their identities as trade unionists reinforce their political ideologies, and vice versa. For Iriso, this strong identification of Spanish unionism with left politics has been a deterrent against potential new union members who don't share necessarily this political culture and, as a consequence of it, remain uncommitted to unions. According to Iriso (1993: 259-270) class-based unions such as UGT and CC.OO. have not been successful in recruiting more affiliates in the workplaces where unions interact with workers because the organizations don't make a serious effort to reach beyond the social and cultural spaces composed by the sympathizers, the activists, and the supporters of the political left. To a certain extent, Iriso's findings have been supported by survey data. During the 1980s a significant number of workers surveyed in factories and other workplaces opposed unions' political partisanship holding the opinion that unions needed to be more independent from political organizations (Perez Díaz, 1993: 242; IDES, 1989: 62).

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In any case, being a party member does not always determine the course of actions decided by plant-union leaders in their workplaces. Sometimes party loyalties could be stronger than unions' identities and there must be situations in which the contrary occurs. Within the context of the workplace, the study conducted by Wozniak (1991) on shipyards and steel mills during a process of industrial restructuring sheds light on the complex interactions between party politics and unions' actions at the firm. Her study suggests that political beliefs and party membership, even if they are significant variables shaping labor politics, do not necessarily explain the course of action decided by works council delegates (Ibid. 1991: 126-130). Under the specific circumstances of the firms surveyed in her research other kind of social and personal loyalties did overshadow the importance of political identities. Wozniak argues that in many workplaces subjected to the Socialist government's industrial restructuring policies the PSOE militants, who were UGT local plant leaders, confronted the party's policies and joined CC.OO. and other unions in their protests and popular mobilizations against the so-called *reconversión industrial* (industrial restructuring).

In the industrial zone of Barcelona, and in a different social context, Lope's research (1990) shows how internal political divisions within two local union sections of the same factory shaped local union dynamics and its repercussion on the works council's daily affairs. This single plant study focused on a relative large industrial workplace where CC.OO. had been the dominant union since 1977. The observer identified inside the local union section of CC.OO. two opposed Communist groups; one linked to the official PCE (the Catalan PSUC) and other linked to a pro-soviet smaller Catalan Communist group.

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In the same factory, meanwhile, in the union section of the UGT only the PSOE activists played a significant role. Contrary to what Wozniak (1991) found in the factories she had studied, in this case local union leaders' party loyalties had more weight when they decided their strategic courses of action. The UGT leaders' strong political loyalties "framed" their intervention on the dynamic of the shop floor (as elected works council members) exacerbating conflicts and tensions *vis-à-vis* the workers linked to CC.OO. ( see Lope, 1990). Furthermore, the principal plant leader of UGT, —who also held a party position at the local community organization of the PSOE— articulated political views opposed to the UGT official policies regarding strategic questions such as the general strike the union had called in 1988 and the unity of action with the rival union.

During the time I did my fieldwork I visited several workplaces where the local UGT union section was under the control of trade unionists who openly opposed many of the UGT strategic decisions and were in disagreement with the union's criticism of the Socialist government's policies. Like in the case analyzed by Lope (1990) most of these union sections belonged to the Metalworkers' Federation of UGT in which some of the pro-PSOE groups had maintained control of important organizational resources by keeping their power positions.

## V. **Political parties and the workplace unions' organization.** [20]

In this part I analyze workplace-level leaders' views on party-union relations. As I have indicated, after the mid-1980s both labor organizations passed through a process of "political redefinition". At the national level the UGT and the CC.OO. were trying to reaffirm their institutional autonomy *vis-à-vis* the PSOE and the PCE, a process not free of tensions. In that context, I wanted to ex-

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plore if the images of the union-party relations held by workplace-level leaders had changed or not.

We already know that the PCE and the PSOE had played significant roles within the major labor unions during the early phase of union rebuilding when democracy returned to Spain. According to Jordana (1994) workers politically inclined to the left were the ones actively involved within the unions during the period of democratic change. In the early 1990s the image of highly politicized unions was changing. Though unions' political identities of were still important, at that time the process of decline of "political unionism" was evident (Serrano del Rosal, 2000).

Exploring how workplace-level leaders' perception had changed since the time of the democratic transition I included in the questionnaire a number of questions that Fishman (1990) had asked in his survey of 1981. Although the samples were not identical both reflected a similar population of plant leaders.[21]

**Table 5.1 Party membership of workplace leaders (%).**

| | Fishman's study | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Membership* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| PSOE | 27.9 | - | 14.1 | 33.3 | - | 8.4 |
| PCE | - | 25.6 | 12.7 | - | 38.8 | 16.7 |
| PTE | - | 4.5 | 2.2 | - | - | - |
| Extreme-Left * | .7 | 1.5 | 1.1 | - | 5.7 | 3.1 |
| Other | .7 | .7 | - | 1.2 | - | 1.2 |
| No member | 70.6 | 67.7 | 69.1 | 65.5 | 55.5 | 70.6 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

* Marxist-Leninist groups (Maoists, Troskyists)

Regarding party membership, Fishman (1990) indicates that almost 30 percent of the works council delegates he had interviewed were actual party

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members. A decade later I found essentially the same percentage (30%) of party members among my informants (see Table 5.1). However, the proportion of party members in UGT and CC.OO. had decreased. While in the study of 1981 about 33 percent of the UGT delegates were PSOE members, in my research 28 percent of workplace-level leaders associated to UGT were members of this party. In regards to CC.OO. I found that around 26 percent of the workplace leaders belonged to the PCE. Remarkable dropping from 39 percent of CC.OO. delegates who were affiliated to the party in Fishman's study. Comparing change in party membership for both organizations (from 1981 to 1990) differences were greater in CC.OO. than in UGT. Though party membership among UGT delegates had declined, most of them remained linked to the same party. Regardless of the differences between union and party the tendency among UGT delegates was to join the PSOE, and not other parties. This was the same pattern described by Bouza et al. (1989) in their study of the UGT members and works council delegates.

The situation in CC.OO. was somehow different. Union's ties with the PCE had been weakened during the crisis that the party suffered in the early 1980s. Then, the PCE former secretary-general (Santiago Carrillo) left the party to create a new communist organization and a group of his union supporters inside CC.OO. followed him joining the new Partido *del Trabajo,* PTE (Spanish Workers' Party).

In the early 1990s, supports for the *"Carrillistas"* and the PTE among CC.OO. members were much less than the ones the PCE and *Izquierda Unida* had. Almost 5 percent of workplace-level leaders from CC.OO. reported that

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they were PTE members. The so-called *"Carrillistas"* in CC.OO. had followers in some of the regional and sectoral structures of the organization and controlled two of the union sections of CC.OO. that I surveyed (from a total of 47).

Another significant change that characterized the evolution of CC.OO. during the 1980s was the decline of union militants from the extreme-left. For instance, Fishman (1990: 169) reported that 6 percent of the CC.OO. works council delegates were members of either Maoist or Trostkyist groups. Nonetheless, I only surveyed around 2 percent of CC.OO. workplace-level leaders who belonged to those organizations in 1990, just a little more than in UGT.

Only partial data are available on party sympathies among union members for the 1990s. According to Alós et al. (2000: 61-2) between 1992 and 1998 party identification declined and became more diverse within the organizational structure of CC.OO. in the region of Catalonia. Although a significant number of union members surveyed identified politically with the Communist and post-Communist left, a recent study from the late 1990s has found important increases among those who identify with other parties such as the Greens, the Catalan Nationalists, and even with the center-right *Partido Popular*. On the other hand, the consensus among observers on labor politics is that party membership among union members has declined (Astudillo, 1998; Alós et al., 2000).

In spite of this decline in party membership the ideological and political orientation of the majority of workplace-level leaders who I interviewed was not remarkably different from the one described by Fishman (1990). Table 5.2 shows that a large segment of the CC.OO. delegates had remained strong supporters of the PCE or IU. In 1981 around 68 percent of the works council leaders inter-

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viewed by Fishman voiced sympathies for the PCE. Nine years later the proportion of "Communist" sympathizers among my informants from CC.OO. had increased to almost 78 percent of the total.

**Table 5.2 Political sympathy/identification of workplace leaders (%).**

| *Party Identification* | | | | *Fishman's study* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parties | UGT | CC.OO. | Total | UGT | CC.OO. | Total |
| PSOE | 77.9 | 2.3 | 40.5 | 87.6 | 5.7 | 35.3 |
| PCE-IU | 4.5 | 77.5 | 40.5 | 1.2 | 66.7 | 30.6 |
| Extreme-Left | 3.7 | 4.5 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 9.2 | 6.2 |
| PTE | 0.7 | 6.0 | 3.3 | - | - | - |
| Others | 1.4 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 15.8 |
| No Party | 8.1 | 3.8 | 5.9 | - | - | - |
| Unknown | 3.7 | 3.0 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 12.5 | 7.5 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

In the early 1990s, after passing through a series of internal crises and transformations, the PCE was a different kind of organization. The party's identity had been partially "dissolved" in the broader electoral coalition *Izquierda Unida* (IU) that has brought together left-socialists from the PASOC, supporters of the former pro-soviet PCPE, green-red leftists, and the PCE itself. Through *Izquierda Unida* (IU) the PCE recovered part of the political and electoral space it had lost in 1982 (Taibo, 1997).

On the other hand, the PTE led by Santiago Carrillo (former secretary-general of the PCE) had limited but important support among a minority of the CC.OO. delegates. Six percent of my informants from that union indicated that they favored this organization. [22]

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Though the extreme-left's followers in CC.OO. had not completely disappeared, they were fewer in 1990. Less than five percent of this union's informants stated sympathies or electoral support for it. Approximately they represented half of the number of works councils' leaders from CC.OO. who had declared their political sympathies in favor of smaller radical Communist organizations to the left of the PCE in 1981 (Fishman, 1990).

Among the UGT works council delegates almost 78 percent identified politically with the PSOE. About 10 percent less than the support reported in Fishman's survey (almost 88%). In contrast, the support of the UGT workplace leaders for the PCE-IU coalition increased among my UGT informants. Almost five percent of the informants linked to UGT voiced political sympathies for this electoral coalition. Additionally, the political support for the extreme-left has never been very significant in UGT. Not in Fishman's study of 1981, either in 1990.

Data on workplace-level leaders' political orientation offer a general idea of internal ideological cleavages at the firm level. Both labor organizations shared, at least until the early 1990s, old political identities that had been created during a period marked by the active involvement of the Communist and the Socialist activists in the labor movement. After 1988 the unions sought to reaffirm their institutional autonomy by stressing on their independence from the PCE in case of CC.OO., and from the PSOE in the case of UGT. How the process towards greater unions' independence *vis-à-vis* parties was perceived? What were the workplace-level leaders' preferences regarding union-party relations? How they did assess the changing situation on union-party ties in the labor movement as a whole? These are questions that I examine next.

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To assess workplace-level leaders' views and preferences regarding party-union ties I used a series of questions containing closed-ended responses in a ranking order from total control of the union by the party to the opposite, the hypothetical total control of the party by the union. The same set of closed-ended responses was employed in all the questions. I started by inquiring on party-union ties in the union movement as a whole. Next, I moved to the specific unions in query (UGT and CC.OO.). Finally, I asked the informants about preferences for an ideal type of party-union relations they would like to exist in Spain. I followed the same model Fishman (1990) used in 1981, without changing the wording of neither the questions nor the answer. The alternatives of closed-ended responses offered were the following:

- Control by the parties over the unions,
- Influence by the parties over the unions without reaching total control,
- Mutual influence between parties and unions but with autonomy for each of them,
- No relations between parties and unions,
- Influence by the unions over the parties without reaching total control,
- Control by the unions over the parties.

The same order of the original questions was followed based on the rationale that by starting with a broad general question the workplace-level leaders would be more likely to subsequently speak willingly about their own organizations (Fishman, 1990: 173).

Let us examine the data. Early in the decade (1980s) the prevailing view on party-union ties among the works council leaders interviewed by Fishman was that parties either controlled or heavily influenced the behavior of the labor organizations. Over 70 percent responded this way (see Table 5.3, next page). In

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1990 about 38 percent of the respondents were still viewing the union-party relations the same way. When Fishman did his research, by the contrary, only 22 percent believed either that unions and parties were fully autonomous organizations or that they influenced each other reciprocally. Notably, more than 50 percent of the total held those views when I asked the same question in 1990.

**Table 5.3 Workplace leaders' views on party-union ties in Spain (%).**

| *Image of Union/Party Relations in the Union movement as a whole* | | | | *Fishman's Study* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| View of Relationship | UGT | CC.OO. | Total | UGT | CC.OO. | Total |
| Control by Parties | 5.9 | 3.8 | 4.8 | 17.1 | 14.2 | 26.2 |
| Influence by Parties | 37.5 | 30.1 | 33.8 | 50.0 | 49.6 | 44.4 |
| Mutual influence with autonomy for each | 35.3 | 45.1 | 40.1 | 22.0 | 27.0 | 20.1 |
| No relation between parties and Unions | 16.9 | 9.0 | 13.0 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 1.9 |
| Influence by the Unions | 0.7 | 3.8 | 2.2 | 4.9 | 1.4 | 1.9 |
| Control by the Unions | - | - | - | 1.2 | - | 0.6 |
| No answer | 3.7 | 8.3 | 5.9 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 4.6 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

Data on Table 5.3 show how certain views regarding party-union ties had changed in less than a decade at the level of the workplace. Yet in 1990 a minority (no larger than 5 percent in both labor organizations) held the opinion that unions continued to be controlled by parties. Considering that over 25 percent of the works council delegates surveyed by Fishman responded in that way in 1981, the group of workplace-level leaders who believed that was the situation in 1990 was not so significant. Yet the proportion of informants who perceived that parties were still exerting influence on the unions' course of action had remained significant.

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About 37 percent of workplace-level leaders associated with the UGT indicated that unions in Spain were still under the influence of the parties while 30 percent of CC.OO. delegates agreed with that opinion. However, there was a notable difference with Fishman (1990). Among his informants from UGT, 50 percent of the total indicated that unions were under the parties' influences.

In addition, the number of workplace-level leaders stating that unions had gained autonomy had increased, as well as those indicating that there were not relations between parties and unions. Among my informants from CC.OO. 45 percent stated that reciprocal influences between parties and unions existed but with autonomy for the organizations. An opinion shared by 35 percent of informants from UGT. At the same time, in UGT almost 17 percent did not see any relations between unions and parties in 1990. An opinion held only by 9 percent of the CC.OO. delegates. Overall, figures on Table 5.3 reflected the emerging awareness among labor activists on this subject, in a context that was different from to the one that had framed the views held by the works council delegates surveyed by Fishman. At that time only 27 percent of workplace-level leaders from UGT and 22 percent from CC.OO. stated then that labor unions had some autonomy *vis-à-vis* political parties, while a tiny minority (2%) said that there were no relations at all between these organizations.

Finally, data on Table 5.3 need to be interpreted within the broad social and political context of that period. This was a time of change and realignment within the union movement when things were still unsettled. The labor organizations had gained autonomy and political independence, but the ongoing

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changes were still creating conflict and controversy among trade unionists and those dilemmas were reflected in the informants' views.

**Table 5.4 Workplace leaders' views on party-union ties in CC.OO. (%)**

| *Image of Union/Party Relations in CC.OO.* | | | | *Fishman's Study* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| View of Relationship | UGT | CC.OO. | Total | UGT | CC.OO. | Total |
| Control by Parties | 31.6 | 3.0 | 17.5 | 45.1 | 7.8 | 34.6 |
| Influence by Parties | 32.4 | 26.3 | 29.4 | 42.7 | 42.6 | 35.5 |
| Mutual influence with autonomy for each | 15.4 | 54.1 | 34.6 | 4.9 | 39.7 | 21.6 |
| No relation between parties and Unions | 5.1 | 8.3 | 6.7 | 2.4 | 5.0 | 3.1 |
| Influence by the Unions | 7.4 | 6.8 | 7.1 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Control by the Unions | 3.7 | - | 1.9 | - | - | 0.6 |
| No answer | 4.4 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 4.3 | 4.0 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

After addressing the general situation on union-party ties in Spain I asked the informants to review the question in reference to CC.OO. and UGT. At that point, things became more complicate. By looking at the following tables (5.4 and 5.5) one can say that the general tendency was to regard the "rival" union as strongly influenced by the "rival" political party. The same phenomenon that Fishman (1990) had encountered earlier.

For instance, when UGT informants rated the union-party relations regarding CC.OO. (see Table 5.4 above) around a third (32%) indicated that the union was under the control of the party (meaning the PCE-IU) while only 4 percent of the CC.OO. delegates agreed with that appreciation. Regardless of these "critical" opinions about CC.OO. one must stress that on this question the majority views in UGT had changed. Data show that 45 percent of the works council

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delegates of UGT surveyed by Fishman said that CC.OO. was under the control of the party. A view that was shared by only 8 percent of the CC.OO. delegates interviewed in 1981. [23]

Moreover, differences of opinion between workplace-level leaders from UGT and CC.OO. diminished among those who viewed the relationship as one of party' influence but without autonomy. Thirty-two percent of the informants linked to UGT and twenty-six percent of those associated to CC.OO. shared that view when assessing the relation between CC.OO. and the party.

While only 15 percent of the UGT delegates viewed the party-union relationship in CC.OO. as autonomous (with mutual influences) the majority of the CC.OO. informants held that view (54% said it was like that) when appraising the union's ties to an undefined party that everybody assumed was the PCE-IU.

In reference to other options, a minority (5 % in UGT, and 8 % in CC.OO.) believed that CC.OO. did not have any relations with parties. That was slightly higher than what was said by five percent of CC.OO. delegates and two percent from those of UGT in the compared study of Fishman (1990).

In addition, seven percent of the plant leaders from UGT and CC.OO. indicated that it was CC.OO. the one that influenced the party (PCE-IU). A response that was not completely absurd considering that CC.OO. had played a significant role as a "political actor" inside IU, —but less in the PCE — particularly after the election of Antonio Gutiérrez to the position of secretary-general in 1987. That was an opinion shared by some of the UGT leaders that I had interviewed. [24] For them CC.OO. had been the real "political engine" behind the IU (and PCE) mobilizations against the Socialist government during the 1980s.

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Given the organizational weakness of the PCE after the crisis of the 1980s for a number of UGT informants CC.OO. was the main structural support for IU and not the party it-self. Within that context, some of the UGT leaders believed that the new leadership of CC.OO. had played a significant role in reshaping the strategy of the PCE in favor of the consolidation of IU as a strong political and electoral movement. Yet it was an incomplete appraisal of the internal situation of CC.OO. as recent events have confirmed. A majority of the union national leadership, deeply ideologically divided, abandoned the PCE in the 1990s. Some of them kept supporting the original project of IU while former PTE members who are still union leaders in CC.OO. (like Julian Ariza) have joined the PSOE since then. Otherwise, a minority group led by Agustín Moreno, (a protégé of former secretary-general Marcelino Camacho) has emerged in the 1990s as the main defender of the union's "Communist identity" and of closer links with the PCE -IU movement.

Let us turn our attention to the image of union-party relations in UGT. I discussed earlier that when democracy was restored the union and the PSOE reemerged so closely identified that many observers could not distinguished one from the other. Notwithstanding, those close ties were severed after the mid-1980s when each organization followed divergent paths although the party and the union did continue to share, to a certain extend, the same social base.

For most of the trade unionists linked to *Comisiones Obreras* the UGT had been seen as the "natural" extension of the PSOE in the arena of labor politics. Two years after the general strike of December 1988 (symbolically speaking, the completion of the "rupture" between the union and the party) some of the

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workplace leaders linked to CC.OO. interviewed continued to hold more or less the same opinion regarding the historical ties between the PSOE and the UGT.

**Table 5.5 Workplace leaders' views on party-union ties in UGT (%).**

| *Image of Union/Party Relations in UGT* | | | | *Fishman's Study* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| View of Relationship | UGT | CC.OO. | Total | UGT | CC.OO. | Total |
| Control by Parties | 2.9 | 16.5 | 9.7 | 9.8 | 34.8 | 35.5 |
| Influence by Parties | 23.5 | 45.1 | 34.2 | 45.1 | 39.7 | 38.3 |
| Mutual influence with autonomy for each | 35.3 | 19.5 | 27.5 | 40.2 | 16.3 | 19.4 |
| No relation between parties and Unions | 30.1 | 11.3 | 20.8 | 3.7 | 0.7 | 1.5 |
| Influence by the Unions | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Control by the Unions | 1.5 | - | 0.7 | - | - | - |
| No answer | 2.9 | 3.8 | 3.3 | - | 7.8 | 4.6 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

Figures on Table 5.5 indicate that for more than 60 percent of the informants linked to CC.OO. the *Union General de Trabajadores* was still under the control, or the influence of the Socialist party. More than 16 percent of them said that it had been under the control of the party while 45 percent indicated that it was under its influence.

In comparison to Fishman's study it was somehow less than the 85 percent of his informants who held that opinion. Although there were some changes, the majority of this group maintained that UGT was still under strong control / influence of the PSOE meaning that it had not gained real autonomy *vis-à-vis* the party. But, as I have indicated, evidence shows hat the UGT had become more independent and less "subjugated" by the PSOE after 1986-87.

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My interpretation on the data is that strong "resentment" against the role played by UGT during the period 1982-86 as a supporter of the Socialist government was still present in the mind of many trade unionists from CC.OO..

By the contrary, most of UGT delegates interviewed (over 70%) did not think that their organization was still under the control or the influence of the party (meaning the PSOE). A minority of them, not larger than 3 percent, considered that the union had remained under the control of the party, while 23 percent said that UGT was still under its influence. Fifty-five percent of the UGT delegates surveyed by Fishman in 1981 had articulated similar views regarding control/influence of the party over the union.

In addition, 35 percent of the workplace-level leaders from UGT claimed that the union had become more autonomous and that if there were political influences, they were mutual between the union and the party (meaning, in both directions). Thirty percent of this group stated that in 1990 the UGT was completely independent from any political party. Regarding those views held by Fishman's informants in 1981, the differences were not so great. Forty percent of the UGT plant leaders expressed the same opinion in 1981. The only answer that was remarkably different was than only 4 percent had indicated that UGT was fully independent from parties in 1981, while among my informants almost a third of delegates from UGT held this view. A small group in both categories of informants (around 4%) said that UGT was the one that influenced the party.

Important issues one most consider are: how informants tended to assess their own organizations? One can say that informants saw the "rival union" ties to a party in more negative terms, while they had a predisposition to view their

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own union's relations in a more autonomous way. On this issue I agree only partially with Fishman's analysis when he indicates that on union-party relations a significant number of works council delegates were most likely to accept the "official positions" of their union confederations when assessing their own organizations (Ibid. 1990: 175-76). By the contrary, my interpretation on the data is that opinions held by workplace leaders on the union-party relations regarding their organizations matched relatively well the real union's political ties to the party in question (implicitly identified as the "closest" in ideological terms).

**Table 5.6 Workplace leaders' views on ideal state of union/party ties (%).**

| *Ideal Image of Union/Party Relations* | | | | *Fishman's Study* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| View of Relationship | UGT | CC.OO. | Total | UGT | CC.OO. | Total |
| Control by Parties | – | 0.8 | 0.4 | – | 2.8 | 1.2 |
| Influence by Parties | 1.5 | 5.3 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 5.7 | 3.4 |
| Mutual influence with autonomy for each | 55.1 | 54.9 | 55.0 | 64.3 | 60.3 | 56.8 |
| No relation between parties and Unions | 30.1 | 27.1 | 28.6 | 15.9 | 21.3 | 27.8 |
| Influence by the Unions | 10.3 | 10.5 | 10.4 | 9.8 | 6.4 | 6.5 |
| Control by the Unions | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 6.1 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| No answer | 0.7 | – | 0.4 | – | – | – |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (82) | (141) | (324) |

The last question asked sought to assess opinion on party-union ties in reference to the ideal type of relations that for the workplace leaders should take place between the unions and the political parties. Figures on Table 5.6 suggest that almost no one wanted the parties to control or influence unions' behavior. On this point differences between the compared studies were not so marked. With respect to the preferred alternative for the majority of the informants (mutual influences with autonomy) it is important to stress on how the views of the

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UGT and the CC.OO. informants had changed over time. While in the earlier survey done by Fishman about 64 percent of the UGT delegates did choose this option, in my sample it had decreased to 55 percent in this group. Furthermore, there was also a slight decline among my informants from CC.OO. (from 60% to 55%) sharing the same opinion. However, what might be really significant was the increase in both unions of those workplace leaders who favored the complete independence of unions from parties.

Thirty percent of the informants from UGT said that unions must be completely independent from political parties. In the previous study, that asked the same question, only 16 percent of the UGT delegates shared this view. Furthermore, around twenty-seven of the workplace leaders linked to CC.OO. selected this option in 1990, while 21 percent of the CC.OO. delegates interviewed by Fishman had chosen this alternative as their preference. My interpretation on the data is that informants from UGT were a little more aware than the ones from CC.OO. on the issue of political control of the union movement given the controversy between the UGT and the PSOE at that time. Nonetheless, in both organizations the tendency was towards greater institutional autonomy and independence from political parties.

One must keep in mind that in Fishman's study around 28 percent of his entire sample had chosen the option "no relations between parties and unions." It meant that a higher proportion of workplace-level leaders who were not part of UGT or CC.OO. favored complete political independence much earlier than the plant leaders of the class-based unions. Around 29 percent of my informants from UGT and CC.OO. agreed with that view in 1990. This relative increase

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might indicate that views on this subject among activist from UGT and CC.OO. had moved in a similar direction to the ones most workers already had.

Concluding the analysis let us indicate that little more than ten percent of the informants from both organizations said that they would like that unions were the ones that influence the parties instead of the other way around. This view represented somehow little change from the views voiced by Fishman's informants in the prior study. The "desire" for more unions' influence on parties makes sense given the prominent political role trade unions had taken in public affairs since the early 1980s. Another possible explanation would be that some workplace-level leaders were still under the ideological influences of the "culture of the double militancy" described by Jordana (1994), and that they wanted to bring their unions' perspectives into the parties in which they were involved. During my fieldwork I spent time talking to trade unionists about diverse issues and personal experiences. This idea of bringing class-solidaristic values, produced day by day at the factory shop floor, to the internal political life of left-wing parties was a question raised often by the workers.

During the 1980s and early 1990s union-party relations experienced an intense process of redefinition. Data examined so far reflect the ongoing changes that were taking place at that time. Why those changes after a period of intense party's colonization? To address this question one need to pay attention to the dynamic that unfolded between labor unions and the Socialist government from 1982 to the early 1990s.

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## VI. Conflicts between the Socialist government and the unions: the work-place leaders' perspective.

I have indicated that the deregulation of the labor market had been at the center of labor unrest in Spain. Under Franco's regime the labor market was very rigid, with firms being able to dismiss workers only under exceptional circumstances, such as for political reasons (Hamann, 1998). A series of reforms seeking its "flexibilization" through the extensive use of different types of non-permanent contracts were introduced by the Socialist government after 1984. The consequence of this labor policy has been an extraordinarily increase in the number of temporary jobs (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003).

Labor unions have protested strongly the decline in employment security, arguing that the labor market reforms did fail in creating new jobs. Until 1997 a series of labor market reforms were implemented against the opposition of the unions and several general strikes were called against the Socialist government for these reasons.

In chapter three I examined how the UGT supported the policy of industrial restructuring that the PSOE government undertook between 1983 and 1986. With the exception of some local union branches that joined forces with other labor organizations (Wozniak, 1991) the official position of UGT was to defend the so-called *"reconversión industrial"* as something unavoidable in order to modernize Spanish economy by restructuring outdated industrial factories. The UGT had initially supported the industrial restructuring policies, hoping for a long-term improvement in the overall economic situation, including lower unemployment rates. On the other hand, from its beginning the CC.OO. opposed the industrial restructuring policies playing an active role in the popular mobiliza-

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tions against the closing of large industrial plants that were strongholds of organized labor (Köhler, 1995).

Though the UGT avoided public criticism of the way the Socialist government handled industrial restructuring, and it was engaged in difficult negotiations with government officials seeking to mitigate the loss of thousands of jobs, from the onset there were underlying tensions between the union and the PSOE because of this policy. Relations between UGT and the PSOE started to deteriorate during its first term in office (1982-86), when the Socialist government initiated the industrial restructuring program (Royo, 2000). In the mid-1980s the labor market flexibility policies and a revision of the public pension and social security systems increased the opposition of UGT against the "neo-liberal" orientation of the Socialist government. The union finally withdrew its support for governmental policies when the overall state of the economy improved during the latter part of the 1980s, but unemployment decreased only marginally and real wages did not increase significantly (Hamann, 1998).

Tension between the labor unions and the Socialist government reached its peak in 1988 when UGT and CC.OO. called a nationwide general strike against its social and economic policies. Subsequently the national leadership of both labor organizations shared a common public discourse *vis-à-vis* the Socialist government (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003). Union leaders referred to the government social and economic policies as "neo-liberal" and not really as "social-democrat" either "progressive". How workplace-level leaders understood the views articulated by the unions' national leadership? Did they agree with

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them? And if not: what were their views regarding the Socialist government policies at that time?

**Table 5.7 Workplace leaders' assessment on Socialist government's policies (%)**

| *Assessment of Socialist Government Policies* | *Industrial Restructuring* | | | *Labor Market Flexibility* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Very Positive | 5.1 | – | 2.6 | 0.7 | – | 0.4 |
| Positive | 49.3 | 4.5 | 27.1 | 9.6 | 1.5 | 5.6 |
| Average | 36.0 | 33.1 | 34.6 | 38.2 | 10.5 | 24.5 |
| Negative | 7.4 | 45.9 | 26.4 | 38.2 | 45.1 | 41.6 |
| Very Negative | 1.5 | 15.8 | 8.6 | 13.2 | 42.9 | 27.9 |
| No Answer | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 | – | – | – |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Data on table 5.7 refer to the opinion held by informants regarding two major policies of the Socialist government; industrial restructuring and labor market flexibility. I asked workplace-level leaders to assess these policies independently of the official position of their organizations.

In general, workplace leaders' assessment on the policies regarding labor market flexibility (labor deregulation reforms) were more critical than those related to industrial restructuring. Besides, the workplace leaders associated to UGT were less critical *vis-à-vis* the Socialist government that those from CC.OO..

On the policy of *"reconversión industrial"* the majority of the UGT informants evaluated it in relatively positive terms. Over 50 percent considered that it was "positive" while less than 9 percent said that it was negative or very negative. On the other hand, more than 60 percent of the workplace-level leaders from CC.OO. considered the industrial restructuring policy to be negative.

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When asked to assess the policy encouraging greater labor market flexibility the informants from both unions shared, more or less, the same critical judgments. Only 10 percent of the UGT informants said that it was positive while more than 50 percent believed the contrary, that it had been negative. Around 49 percent valued it as average. Among the informants from CC.OO., their opposition *vis-à-vis* the labor policies of the PSOE government was higher, almost 90 percent said that it was negative or very negative while less than 2 percent considered it as positive.

Overall, data on Table 5.7 suggest that informants associated to UGT in the surveyed workplaces had a difficult time when they were confronted with the dilemma of criticizing the PSOE or the Socialist government. Given that most of them were party members or strong sympathizers of the Socialist government, these political views could explain their "ambivalence" when asked to assess the government policies.

The UGT had openly criticized the social and economic policies implemented by the PSOE in government. Disenchantment *vis-à-vis* the neo-liberal orientation of the government had unfolded within the party as well (Tezanos, 1986: 87-8) but it was not the dominant view of most party members who in general agreed with the ideological orientation of the government.

Did my informant agree or not with their labor organizations' critical views on the non-social democratic economic policies of the PSOE? Did they hold different views?

Figures on the following table are from two different sources; my survey of 1990 and the study on UGT that Bouza et al. (1989) completed in 1988. To

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compare the views held by the UGT works council delegates and union members surveyed by these researchers I used the same question in my survey. Workplace-level leaders were asked if they agreed or not with the Socialist government economic policies.

**Table 5.8 Workplace leaders' views on PSOE-led government economic policies (%).**

| *Agreement with Socialist Government Economic Policies* | *Workplace Leaders* | | | *UGT-Surveys 1988* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* | *Delegates* | *Members* |
| Strong agreement | 2.2 | – | 1.1 | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Enough agreement | 35.3 | 2.3 | 19.0 | 24.7 | 22.2 |
| Little agreement | 46.3 | 51.9 | 49.1 | 39.5 | 40.5 |
| None agreement | 16.2 | 45.1 | 30.5 | 28.5 | 30.9 |
| No Answer | – | 0.8 | 0.4 | 3.4 | 2.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (590) | (515) |

An ambivalent pattern, like the one described before, emerges from the distribution of the responses. Even if the majority of the activists related to this union voiced disagreements with the Socialist government, around one-third of the workplace leaders from UGT expressed a relatively high agreement with the same economic policies that had caused the breakdown of relations between the PSOE and the union. By the contrary, workplace-level leaders linked to CC.OO. acted more coherently in their opposition to the Socialist government economic policies. Around 95 percent in this group indicated little or none agreement with those policies while 62 percent of the UGT informants shared the same view. Why differences so marked between the two unions at the workplace? What factors explain the greater ambivalence associated with the views held by a relatively large group of UGT informants?

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**Table 5.9 PSOE membership as a factor to be considered in the UGT workplace leaders' opinion on Socialist government economic policies (%).**

| *Agreement with Socialist Government Economic Policies* | *UGT-Workplace Leaders* | | | *UGT-Delegates 1988* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *PSOE* | *Others* | *Total* | *PSOE* | *Others* | *Total* |
| Strong agreement | 7.9 | – | 2.2 | 12.2 | 2.4 | 3.9 |
| Enough agreement | 39.5 | 33.7 | 35.3 | 31.1 | 23.6 | 24.7 |
| Little agreement | 34.2 | 51.0 | 46.3 | 37.8 | 39.8 | 39.5 |
| None agreement | 18.4 | 15.3 | 16.2 | 17.8 | 30.4 | 28.5 |
| No Answer | – | – | – | 1.1 | 3.8 | 3.4 |
| (N) | (38) | (98) | (136) | (90) | (500) | (590) |

Table 5.9 reports data suggesting how party membership (in this case, PSOE) explains why a significant number of workplace leaders from UGT were less critical *vis-à-vis* the Socialist government's economic policies. On the table above I compare data from two samples; the one I surveyed in 1990 and a group of works council delegates surveyed in 1988. This variable *(party membership)* had more weight in reshaping responses given by the trade unionists interviewed by Bouza et al. (1989) than what it had on my informants. While around 26 percent of the non-party members surveyed in 1988 said that they relatively agreed with the Socialist government on the question of economic policies, 43 percent of those who were party members voiced the same opinion. Among my informants those who belonged to the party (47%) tended also to agree more with the Socialist government's economic policies than those who did not (34%). Yet political loyalties did not determine completely the position taken by the informants in both studies. A considerable number of party members disagreed with the economic orientation of the Socialist government in spite of their affiliation to the PSOE.

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In addition, more than 70 percent of the workplace-level leaders linked to UGT in both studies supported their union's opposition *vis-à-vis* the government's economic policy. The oldest affiliates (those who had joined UGT between 1977-80) were the group that voiced a larger agreement with the Socialist government's economic policies, while the ones who joined during the 1980s were the group with a higher disagreement with those same policies. Workplace leaders, who had joined the union during the period of democratic changes, when the party and UGT were closely associated, tended to be PSOE members in a greater proportion. More than 55 percent of the party members had joined UGT during that period (1977-1980) and 57 percent of the union members who joined during those years said that they essentially agreed with the Socialist government's economic policy.

Survey findings show that after 1979 the Socialist party recruited a significant segment of its constituency from the trade union while, at the same time, expanding its base of support among other social groups beyond organized labor (Tezanos, 1986, 1983). Data suggest that workplaces leaders from UGT who had been active in the union when it depended organizationally more from the PSOE (and who tended to be party members in a greater proportion) were the ones more "ambivalent" in criticizing the PSOE or the Socialist government. Basically, my findings confirmed what Bouza et al. (1989) had previously indicated regarding the same issues in 1988 when the UGT was struggling itself to break away from the PSOE.

Last but not least, a majority of the UGT activists and works council delegates (members or not) had voted for the PSOE previously. About 80 percent of the informants surveyed in both studies declared to have voted for the PSOE in

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the previous general election of 1986. Even if electoral backing was still highly favorable for the PSOE, among my informants there was a relatively small shift in favor of supporting other political formations such as IU. The number of undecided or informants, who declared that they would abstain, was more significant than the number who had already swing political allegiances.

Next I asked my informants about the general impact of the Socialist government' s policies upon Spanish society. Workplace-level leaders were surveyed about which groups or "classes" had benefited, in their opinion, more from the Socialist policies during the time the PSOE had been in power. The same question had been asked to a large sample of wage earners in another study carried out in 1988.

**Table 5.10 Workplace leaders' views on the Socialist Government (%).**

| *Which category has been favored more by the Socialist government?* | *Workplace Leaders 1990* | | | *EDIS* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *1988* |
| Workers and wage-earners | 1.5 | – | 0.7 | 11.6 |
| Business and the employers | 30.1 | 80.5 | 55.0 | 54.6 |
| Both equally (business & workers) | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 11.2 |
| General interest of the country | 64.7 | 15.0 | 40.1 | 3.9 |
| No answer/ Don't know/Others | 1.5 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 18.7 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (2014) |

In the previous study more than 50 percent of the interviewees said that the Socialist government's policies had favored in particular business and the employers. Then, eleven percent of the respondents chose the workers/wage-earners as the groups that had benefited from those policies while more or less the same number said that both, business and labor had benefited equally. Among workplace-level leaders surveyed from both unions, each group re-

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ported different views. A majority (80%) from CC.OO. believed that the Socialist government had favored capital and not the workers. Only 30 percent of the informants from UGT agreed with that assessment. Sixty-five percent of the interviewees from this group said that the Socialist government had been acting for the benefit of the general interest of the country, an opinion shared only by fifteen percent of the informants from CC.OO. and less than four percent of the workers interviewed in 1988.

Yet again the UGT informants tended to be more ambivalent regarding this question avoiding to challenge the Socialist government. Basically, the majority among them agreed with the "official" position of the PSOE on the necessity to govern for the "common good" rather than favoring mostly the working class or the wage earners. The data reflect the dilemmas of many trade unionists that had been strong supporters of the Socialist government at a time when their union was challenging it. They felt that the Socialists in power were not doing what they had expected, but they remained "critical" supporters, nonetheless, of the PSOE and its government. While the UGT was contesting the "Socialist" legitimacy of the government, arguing that it was doing the same politics of the conservative right, at the base of the organization there was not an uniform consensus on this issue. By the contrary, there was more coincidence of views between the leadership of CC.OO. and the grassroots.

Figures on Table 5.10 (next page) reflect the opinion of workplace-level leaders regarding the questions and concerns that had triggered the conflicts between the PSOE in power and the two major unions.

On the policy of *concertación social* (known in the sociological literature as neo-corporatism) the generalized view was that it had created more tensions be-

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tween CC.OO. and the PSOE than between UGT and the party. As I explain in chapter six, the UGT was a strong supporter of the social pact policies until 1986 while CC.OO. did not endorse the AES (Economic and Social agreement) that was the most important social agreement signed under the Socialist government. Afterward, however, the UGT moved closer to the position held by CC.OO. on macro-social pacts and after 1986 declined to sign another tripartite national agreement.

**Table 5.11 Differences between organized labor and the PSOE (%).**

| *Areas of Conflict & Differences between PSOE & Labor Unions* | *Conflict UGT-PSOE* | | | *Conflict CC.OO.-PSOE* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Social concertation | 17.1 | 13.8 | 15.4 | 20.4 | 24.9 | 23.0 |
| Income & wage policy | 16.7 | 11.5 | 14.4 | 23.0 | 19.7 | 21.6 |
| Industrial policy | 5.9 | 4.5 | 5.0 | 22.7 | 21.9 | 22.6 |
| Union autonomy | 25.3 | 28.3 | 26.7 | 1.1 | – | 0.6 |
| Economic policies | 34.9 | 37.9 | 36.3 | 20.4 | 30.5 | 25.8 |
| No Answer | 0.7 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 11.5 | 1.1 | 6.4 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

On the issues of wage increases and industrial restructuring, important discrepancies between organized labor and the government had unfolded. Both unions [25] had supported wage moderation during the democratic transition and UGT continued defending wage earners' restraint under the government of the PSOE. When the economic situation improved after 1986 the unions assumed a common position demanding real wage increases to recuperate for previously losses in wage earners' purchasing power. The Socialist government major concern was to keep inflation down and it did not favor higher wage increases.

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On the policy of industrial restructuring, which was publicly backed by UGT at least until 1986, the opinion of the workplace leaders reflected the ways both organizations had dealt with the problem. While CC.OO. took a confrontational approach *vis-à-vis* the government since the beginning of the process, the UGT did not. Data on Table 5.7 on the assessment of the industrial restructuring suggest that for a number of informants from UGT what the Socialist government did for the "modernization" of the industrial infrastructure of the country was necessary regardless of the social costs.

The threat that the PSOE had represented against the "institutional" autonomy of UGT never was an important issue for *Comisiones Obreras*. The problem of CC.OO. regarding its "political identity" was with the Communist left and not with the Spanish social democrats. The PSOE, by the contrary, sought to destabilize the UGT and replace Nicolas Redondo with a union leadership loyal to the party. It failed in the attempt and a significant number of regional and national leaders openly identified with the party were forced to quit the organization. However, as evidence from my survey and the study of Bouza et al. (1989) suggest, inside the UGT there was still an important segment of union members closely identified with the PSOE and the Socialist government.

The last item on Table 5.11 refers to the economic policy of the Socialist government. This question was a major source of tension between the UGT and the PSOE. Without underestimating the opposition of CC.OO. to the economic policies of the government, it was the UGT the labor organization that had articulated a more coherent alternative *vis-à-vis* those policies. For UGT, it was the union and not the PSOE the organization that really defended a "social-democratic" alternative to the neo-liberal policies of the government. [26] In its

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public discourse the UGT argued that the PSOE had lost its "Socialist" identity and that the union was the real "social-democratic" organization (Royo, 2000).

However, instead of attempting to change the party from inside, as the internal left-wing current *"Izquierda Socialista"* was trying to do, the union kept its distance from the infra-party dynamic. Changing the old pattern of behavior based on the social democratic principle of related but separated tasks; political action for the party and economic action for the union, the *Union General de Trabajadores* became a political actor by itself, an approach that was reinforced by the unity of action with *Comisiones Obreras*.

The strengthening of the unity of action between UGT and CC.OO. was possible because the increasing independence of the labor unions from the political parties (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003; Royo, 2000). Organized labor realized that it needed to act independently as a social and political movement in order to ensure social and economic benefits for the workers. Trade unions obtained economic concessions from the Socialist government only when they acted jointly and based their strategies on common proposals. After 1988 the nature of the political ties between parties and unions in Spain underwent a process of redefinition. From strong "solidaristic" bonds reinforced by widespread dual membership in unions and parties that characterized the period 1977-1986 they became more "instrumental" and uncertain (Astudillo, 1998).

## VII. Unions' autonomy: dilemmas and explanations.

Organizational and politico-ideological links between social democratic parties and workers' unions are central questions in theoretical discussions on politics and policies in modern capitalist societies (Esping-Andersen, 1985;

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Kitschelt, 1994). Historically, party and union had constituted two related forms of class representation (in the political and in the economic realms) as well as institutional channels through which the power resources of the working class have been mobilized.

Because of the ideological transformation of European Social Democracy during the 1980s, a change in the relationship between socialist parties and organized labor has taken place (Taylor, 1993). The articulation between the two wings of the same movement; party and union has been weakened in most advanced capitalist societies. This re-composition of European Social Democracy over the past two decades has redefined the role played by labor organizations in the project of the democratic left (Paramio, 1992; Daley et al., 1991).

However, most European trade unions remain committed to some kind of social project linked to the political success of social democratic governments. Almost always trade unionists have preferred a social democratic to a "bourgeois" government, believing that it would be more willing and able to further policies favorable to wage earners (Armingeon, 1982; Esping-Andersen, 1985). Yet, as we have seen, this has not always been the case. On more than one occasion trade unions and social democratic parties have disagreed on policy options, as happened in Great Britain during the Labour party government of the 1970s and in Spain during the late 1980s.

Why the organizational and political links between the PSOE and the UGT, its closest ally in civil society, were strained once the party gained state power? One can try to answer the question by stating that the party represented an amalgam of multi-class interests as a governmental party, while the UGT remained committed to defending particular wage earners' interests (Paramio,

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1992). The PSOE came to power with a moderate program of socioeconomic and political modernization after it had undergone a rapid ideological de-radicalization (Share, 1989). The Socialists inherited an appallingly weak economy with rising inflation, rising unemployment, a large balance of payments deficit, and a public sector deficit well above the OECD average; an economy that relied heavily on declining industries (such as steel, shipbuilding and textiles) which were no longer competitive in international markets (Kennedy, 2001). The Socialists' approach to policy focused on gradual economic adjustment, with an emphasis on reducing inflation and improving the balance of payments. Inflation dropped from 14 percent in 1982 to 4 percent at the end of its term in office. The Socialist government strategy of "gradual adjustment", pursued after 1982, was not different to orthodox neo-liberal policies implemented by governing conservative parties (Share, 1989). What the Socialist government did in Spain was quite different to traditional Keynesian social-democratic attempts to govern the economy through counter-cyclical demand-management policies.

The dismissal of counter-cyclical demand management in favor of a more orthodox macroeconomic policy, according to Boix (1995), must be linked to the Socialist policy-makers' views on the country's persistent poor economic performance derived from structural factors that could not be solved by merely boosting internal demand. In addition to that, the progressive internationalization of Spain's economy had altered significantly the parameters on how to conduct of macroeconomic policy-making.

In the early 1980s there was no clear unions' social-democratic alternative to the economic program of the PSOE yet. During the first years of Socialist government, the UGT accepted the main priorities of macroeconomic policy, the

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wage freeze, and the legislation passed in order to promote temporary work contracts (Boix, 1995). As we had indicated in chapter three the first public discrepancy arose in the mid-1980s when the UGT leaders opposed the reform of the public pension system in 1985. Besides the UGT felt "cheated" when the government did not carry out its promises about unemployment benefits agreed to in the last national agreement (ASE) of 1984-86. Finally, the Socialist government and union positions on wage policy and labor market reform became sharply divergent and the unions called the general strike of 1988 (Royo, 2000). These conflicts were revived again in 1992 when government decreed a cut in unemployment benefits and in 1994 when a new labor reform was approved by parliament.

Confronting the economic orientation of the neo-liberal policy-makers the unions embraced a traditional Keynesian social-democratic discourse *vis-à-vis* the government's economic policies (Paramio, 1992). Their main rationale for the proposed change was that demand-management policies had the virtue of reconciling the general need for growth and economic efficiency with the genuine social-democratic goal of redistribution. However, the PSOE policy-makers rejected the unions' proposal under the assumption that in the macroeconomic context of the integrated European political economy those conventional social-democratic polices had become unfeasible. This Spanish social democrats were aware of the failure of the French Socialist experiment of 1981-82 under the government of Pierre Murroy and for them, the same fiasco could not be afforded in Spain (Boix, 1995).

Within the European context attention has been paid to the manner in which labor unions has helped or hindered the strategic reorientation of social-

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democratic parties (Kitschelt, 1994; Taylor, 1993). Apparently, the strategic flexibility needed to adapt government's policy to changing social and economic conditions can be compromised by strong ties between social democratic parties and unions because these ones are likely to react against the social effect of market-oriented policies and greater emphasis upon macroeconomic stability that have been embraced by the parties when they have come to power. Social democratic parties can be "trapped" by traditional union demands that may trigger higher inflation and this could have a negative electoral impact on the party's non-working class constituency.

Observers have offered similar explanations on the causes behind the party-union split in Spain. For instance, Javier Astudillo (1998: 633) points out that both organizations (party and union) realized that the context which framed the relationship had changed making more "costly" than "beneficial" to maintain the same kind of ties that had been created under a different opportunity structure. Adding to this the specific dynamic of inter-unions relations, that was changing from competition to cooperation, the unions needed to revalue their political ties in order to overcome previous tensions that (as I said before) were a reflection of the competition between the PCE and the PSOE.

As previously indicated, UGT and CC.OO. had competed fiercely to be the hegemonic labor organization after democracy returned to Spain. The model of labor representation based on the works council system had encouraged the logic of union competition over labor solidarity fragmenting and weakening the union movement. This dynamic had been reinforced by the strong ties that UGT used to have with the PSOE and CC.OO. with the PCE. As Ross Martin writes:

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> "...high level of both party control and inter-party antagonism tend to be associated with intense confederal competition...Correspondingly, confederal competition tends to be slight when inter-party antagonism is muted and party control is diffused...(Ibid. 1989: 132)."

After the crisis of the PCE, a process of gradual political re-definition began in *Comisiones Obreras*. The union remained identified with the Communist left until a new leadership sought to reshape the political ties in a different direction. After 1987, when the old Communist leadership was replaced by a younger group led by Antonio Gutiérrez the union entered a new phase that culminated with the defeat of the pro-Communist sector in the Sixth Congress held in 1994.

The route taken by UGT to reach its political "autonomy" has not been the same. The union remained loyal to the PSOE until it realized that its own organizational survival was in jeopardy because of its close association to the party. After all, the pro-Socialist union had benefited of material and political support provided by the PSOE. In a relatively short period of time (from 1977 to 1982) it became the dominant union electing more works council delegates than CC.OO. the same year that the PSOE came to power. However, it remained weak particularly among the industrial working class and in large firms where CC.OO. had its strongholds. After supporting the Socialist government for four years, the results obtained by UGT in the 1986 works council elections were below the union's expectation. Albeit it kept its dominant position (since it got more votes in small workplaces and among employees from the services sector) UGT lost support among industrial workers and in large enterprises (Paramio, 1992).

The "political cost" paid by the union for its support of unpopular policies, the negative of the Socialist government to change course after the economic cri-

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sis began to recede and the increasing feelings of "frustration" among UGT leaders who did not understand why the government was not fulfilling its commitments, these factors altogether did account for the divorce between both "Socialist" organizations (Astudillo, 1998; Gillespie, 1990).

At that point in time (mid-1980s) the UGT reconsidered its previous position against the unity of action with CC.OO.. Both organizations moved closer cooperating on specific labor strategies. Between 1985 and 1988 the basis for the unity of action were built favored by the gradual unions' detachment from political parties. When UGT and CC.OO. convened a general stoppage in 1988 they took a big risk, but the outcome of this popular protest was positive for the unions. The leader of the Socialist government and secretary-general of the PSOE, Felipe González conceded his defeat in the public arena saying that his government was willing to negotiate the unions' demands. [27]

After Candido Méndez replaced Nicolas Redondo as secretary-general in 1994 a process leading toward the relative normalization of the relations between the PSOE and the UGT unfolded. It did not mean that both organizations reestablished the same ties that existed in the 1970s and early 1980s. After the defeat of the PSOE in the general election of 1996, the party sought to attract greater union support but the UGT rejected the offer defending its "autonomy" while reaffirming its "Socialist" identity. [28]

The situation in CC.OO. has remained more problematic. The union reaffirmed its political independence from the PCE and IU in its 6th Congress of 1994 while a minority group led by a pro-Communist trade unionist (Agustín Moreno) has sought to regain power. In the Congress of 1994 the pro-Communist faction received around 35 percent of the delegates' votes while in the 7th Con-

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gress held in 1998 its share had decline to less 30 percent of the delegates. In the late 1990s relations between *Comisiones Obreras* and the Communist left turned sour after the union accused the PCE of conspiring to regain its previous control over the organization. A similar process unfolded in *Izquierda Unida* and a group of trade unionists from CC.OO., including Antonio Gutiérrez, abandoned IU, and joined a new political formation called the Party of the New Left (PDNI).

At the end of the 1990s the major labor unions had reached a stage that I have called "problematic autonomy." In both organizations one may find significant groups that would like to reestablish close political ties with the Socialist and the Communist left. These "political unionists" are discontent with the possibility of success of a non-ideological and pragmatic trade unionism that might undermine the political identity of class-based labor organizations.

What is at stake, in last instance, is the role played by trade unions in capitalist society. Which are the best means to gain social and economic benefits for the wage earners? In the European trade union tradition the dilemma has been to pursue political class unionism or to focus on collective bargaining and economic negotiation with employers and in some cases with government (Hyman, 1999). Back in 1982 Spanish unions expected that the coming to power of the political left would satisfy their demands through "politics" independently of their actual bargaining power in the labor market (Serrano del Rosal, 2000). Rapidly organized labor found out that it was not the case. Recent experiences suggest that only by increasing their bargaining power and acting in the unitary way Spanish trade unions may gain the material and symbolic benefits that their constituencies expect. And that may entail less and not more "political unionism."

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## Endnotes for Chapter five

[1] This term is used by Schmitter (1995: 288) to describe the party-union relations in most of the Southern European societies during the transition period and early democratic consolidation.

[2] Maravall (1978) has researched the re-emergence of the students' and workers' movement during the last decade of Franco's regime stressing on how it reacted against social protest and popular mobilizations with increased repressive measures, especially during the early seventies.

[3] I discuss the social pacts in detail in the following chapter.

[4] In the literature on the subject almost everybody agree that widespread political and economic moderation, not only of the working class but of most of the social forces supportive of the left, was a significant factor for the success of the democratic transition (Maravall, 1984; Perez-Díaz, 1993; Fishman, 1990).

[5] Socialist votes have always doubled (and tripled) the percentage of electoral support the PCE (and later IU) has received since the first democratic elections (see Table 1.1, page 6).

[6] Thus, there is a certain overlap between the membership of IU and the PCE, although it is not known to what extent. After joining *Izquierda Unida* the PCE gradually began to open up its organization and diminished its traditional working class-based ideology (see Taibo, 1997;Van Biezen, 1998).

[7] During the 1990s the PCE has stressed on new social support beyond the working class and it has sought to increase its ties with a variety of social movements and citizens' groups like the anti-globalization movement.

[8] The left wing of the PSOE (but not the *Guerristas*) has been the most consistent defender of party democracy. Since the early 1990s groups such as *Izquierda Socialista* have been engaged in internal party politics seeking to change the PSOE from inside (Share, 1989). In the PSOE there have not been significant desertions like the PCE had in the early 1980s. Indeed the PSOE benefited from quite substantial incorporations of former PCE 's factions that had been led by Santiago Carrillo and Enrique Curiel. More recently activists linked to dissenting political currents who have been expelled from *Izquierda Unida* (IU) have joined the PSOE in great numbers like the recent incorporation of the PDNI into the PSOE after the 2000 general election.

[9] See the documents approved by the PSOE (national) Federal Committee, "Estrategia Sindical del PSOE", Madrid 15 de octubre de 1978, and PSOE- Secretary of Formation, "Carpeta del Militante" (1979) the documents grouped under "Política Sindical". All these documents were consulted at the library of the Fundación Pablo Iglesias, a party research and archive institution.

[10] See Appendix for details.

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[11] According to Kerstin Hamann (1994: 154) "In 1978, six CC.OO.'s executive members were also on the Executive Committee of the PCE. Further all but five out the 42 executive members of CC.OO. were Communist party's affiliates. Of the General Secretariat's 26 members, 24 were also PCE members."

[12] These groups were known as the *"Carrillistas"* and the *"Gerardistas."*

[13] Only a few of sociological studies on the parties and the union membership during the transition period exist. Availability of data improved after the 1980s. There is a national survey on the UGT membership done in 1988, and one on the elected UGT works council delegates (Bouza et al., 1989). In addition, the PSOE carried several internal surveys from 1980 to 1989, in which party members were asked their union affiliation. Besides, there are surveys on delegates who attended UGT congresses in 1983, and 1986 (Tezanos et al., 1986). Unfortunately, no similar studies exist regarding CC.OO. or the PCE. In the 1990s the Catalan branch of CC.OO. sponsored two internal surveys to assess the internal structure of the organization (Alós et al., 2000).

[14] Regarding CC.OO. , according to Ruíz (1993), 80 percent of the delegates who attended its first "legal" national congress held in 1978 indicated that they belonged to a political party. Delegates did not specify which one but one can safely assume that a considerable number of them belonged to the PCE.

[15] The so-called "Socialist groups" were composed by UGT members who belonged to the PSOE and were expected to safeguard the "Socialist" identity of UGT *vis-à-vis* non party members who were joining the union in relatively large numbers after the merging with a large segment from USO (Astudillo, 1998: 133-4). Thus, enterprise-level "Socialist groups" were political instruments that sought to influence the political dynamic of the workplaces through its active members in the union.

[16] Gillespie (1990: 55) gives similar data for 1980 and 1986, but without mentioning his source.

[17] When asked to what party they would vote in the future only 63.5 percent decidedly preferred the PSOE (Bouza et al., 1989: 132).

[18] In Tezanos' words; " 2.8% at the (UGT) federal level, 28% a the regional and local, and 14% in the workplaces (1986: 33)."

[19] This information was confirmed in an interview with a national leader of UGT; he was one of the main architects of the new policy defending union autonomy. It seems that Corcuera, who was the second in command behind Redondo, defended the traditional union-party alliance during those years of increasing tensions between these organizations. Later in the 1980s, José Luis Corcuera was chosen by González as Minister of Interior.

[20] I only examined medium-sized and large workplaces where both, UGT and CC.OO., had elected at least 2 delegates (each one) to the works council. My main interest was to study workplaces with local union branches of these organizations and I excluded from the sample workplaces where only one of these unions had some presence in the works council, and a few others where neither one of these unions had elected works council delegates in the 1986 elections.

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[21] As I explained in the previous chapter there are differences in the research design and in the scope of the surveys. However, what he calls "leaders" are also works council delegates. I interviewed both works council and union delegates.

[22] In 1992, two years after the survey was completed, the PTE was disbanded and a large segment of its former members joined the PSOE, including Santiago Carrillo himself who declared his "critical" support for the PSOE, but at the end decided to remain outside the party.

[23] While in the total sample a 34.6 percent did so.

[24] Of the nine UGT leaders I interviewed (1989-90) three believed that it was CC.OO. and not the PCE the stronger "group" inside the Left-Communist political space.

[25] In the case of CC.OO., this union supported wage moderation only in 1977 (*Pacto de la Moncloa)* and in 1981 (ANE). I discuss this question in chapter six.

[26] In 1990 the UGT prepared a document titled: *La Alternativa Social-Democrata* (the social-democratic alternative) that reflected these views.

[27] Since their popular mobilization of 1988, UGT and CC.OO. have shared a common strategy based on the unity of action. This shift was facilitated by the greater political independence of the unions. As I indicated in chapter two, during the 1990s the UGT and the CC.OO. increased their human resources and consolidated their dominance in the works council system.

[28] After the victory of the *Partido Popular* in the 2000 general election, the PSOE underwent a process of internal renewal and elected a new secretary general (Luis Rodríguez Zapatero). It seems that the relationship between the union and the party has improved since then.

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# Chapter Six

## Neo-Corporatism and Social Pacts: from Concertation to Social Dialogue.

Between 1979 and 1986 five national social pacts were agreed to by trade unions and employers' organizations, and in two occasions were endorsed by the government. Previously (in 1977) another "political pact" named —*Pacto de la Moncloa*—[1] was signed by the political parties and the government and only tacitly accepted by the unions and the employers' confederation (CEOE).[2]

One of the main objectives of the pacts was setting up an incomes policy fostering wage moderation and economic restraint and establishing new industrial relations institutions. The pacts were part of the broad consensus politics that characterized the Spanish transition to democracy. Social agreements served as a policy for gradual adjustment to the economic crisis of the late seventies and early eighties, and were grounded on what Pérez-Díaz (1993) has called an "implicit class compromise" between the workers and the ruling economic groups. After 1986 none tripartite social agreement was signed until the coming to power of the Popular Party (PP) in the mid-1990s when a new phase of social bargaining restarted (Royo, 2002).

In this chapter I argue that the relative failure to institutionalize the Spanish model of neo-corporatism was due to the fact that the conditions for effective forms of political exchange that existed between 1977 and 1986 changed after the split between UGT and the PSOE (Royo, 2000). The PSOE hoped to reproduce the equivalent of the Scandinavian social-democratic compromise (Crouch, 1993: 267) but it lacked a suitable economic and political environment. Labor organi-

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zations accepted wage restraint and assumed the social costs of several years of restrictive economic policies as the price to be paid for the consolidation of the democratic regime. But after the-mid eighties a convincing rationale for the continuation of social pacts was absent. Notwithstanding this, as I shall indicate, the "cultural climate" for the workers' acceptance of the logic of neo-corporatism has continued to exist. According to public opinion polls the workers, and the broad civil society, still hold favorable views on the continuation of *concertación social* (social agreement policy).

The first part of the chapter focuses on the period of strong neo-corporatism (1977-1986) seeking to frame the so-called *"concertación social"* in a historical perspective. The section deals with the historical background of corporatism in Spain looking briefly at the experience of authoritarian Francoism and the organist-corporate ideas of the regime that were in part inspired on the previous dictatorial regime of General Miguel Primo de Rivera. Next I discuss the social pacts endorsed during the democratic transition and consolidation of the new regime (1977 to 1986).

In the following section I examine the crisis of concertation policies under the Socialist government and why after 1986 the unions changed their strategies and moved toward a different form of political exchange contrary to the expectations of the Socialist policy-makers. I show that independently of the position taken by the unions' leadership at the level of the workplace there was still a relative strong support for the continuation of such policies. At the end of the chapter I examine briefly the dynamic of social agreements that developed after the PP came to power in 1996.

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## I. Historical roots of Spanish corporatism.

Spain's entrance into modernity was remarkably different from the route followed by most Western European societies. The sharpness of political and class conflicts, the deep cultural and religious cleavages, the regional unevenness and acute socioeconomic differences had a lasting impact upon Spanish social life. Because partisan cleavages were more intense than interest conflicts, as Juan Linz (1981) has pointed out, politics always took precedence over interests. For this scholar, Spain inherited a relatively strong state but a weak civil society (Linz, 1981). Furthermore, Southern European recent history can be characterized by the endurance of paternalistic and clientelistic political networks, restrictive parliamentarism until very late, and traditional corporations (the Church, the army, the state patrimonial bureaucracy) tyrannizing political, economic and socio-cultural life during the first part of the 20th century.

According to Philippe Schmitter (1979: 9), corporatism should be understood as "a system of interest and/or attitude representation, a particular model or ideal/typical institutional arrangement for linking the associationally organized interests of civil society with the decisional structures of the state." This scholar's work focuses on the changing organization and functions of the state in capitalist societies. His theoretical approach suggests that corporatism has been developed under different regime types. Therefore, Schmitter distinguishes between state and social corporatism. While the latter has been a frequent form of governance among capitalist societies under social-democratic rule (called also liberal-corporatism), the former has been a characteristic feature of non-liberal, authoritarian states such as Franco's Spain. Both forms of inter-

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ests' governance (liberal-democratic and state authoritarian) have something in common; the formulation of policies through institutional arrangements that seek to maintain the stability of the social order by lessening political and economic uncertainties.

Spain is a country that during the 20th century experienced both forms of liberal and authoritarian corporatism. Although there is not a logical connection between both, since they emerged under different political and economic circumstances, at the symbolic level there are some affinities. Both forms of corporatism sought to manage social and political conflicts by incorporating Labor and Capital within the terrain of the state.

The origins of corporatism in Spain can be traced back to the early 1920s when Miguel Primo de Rivera took power overthrowing the constitutional monarchy of Alfonso XIII (Martin, 1990: 270-74). The dictatorship established by Primo de Rivera emerged as the consequence of the economic and political turmoil this society had experienced since the first decade of the 20th century (Linz, 1981: 378-9) The constitutional monarchy had been incapable of reassuring economic and political stability and in 1923 General Miguel Primo de Rivera came to power with the intention of restructuring the emerging liberal-capitalist state. His dictatorial regime was supported by dominant conservative groups including the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie, the rich landowners of southern Spain (Andalucia), the aristocratic-monarchist forces, and the Catholic Church.

In many ways, Primo's regime was a modernizing dictatorship. The regime encouraged capitalist economic development by promoting the construction of new roads and infrastructures, and sought to put in place a substantial program of industrialization in a society that was still greatly dominated by big

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landowners and pre-capitalist forms of production. The regime's public discourse stressed on the needs for great national sacrifices on behalf of Spain. Within Primo's regime the working classes integrated throughout a corporate structure of functional representation that sought to limit industrial and class conflicts. [3]

In the early 1930s the political and economic dilemmas of a backward society had not disappeared. At the end of Primo's dictatorship Spain remained a socially, economically and culturally fragmented country, and the social classes and economic strata which opposed each other were not yet predisposed to be "reconciled" under the state corporatist system.

In 1931 a new liberal democratic regime replaced the dictatorship. The Spanish Second Republic lasted until 1939 when it ended with Franco's military victory. The Republic failed to overcome the increasingly intense social, political and economic cleavages that were rifting apart Spanish society. The failure of modern republican democratic institutions to achieve a unifying political regime was reflected in the unwillingness of the social and political actors to seek compromise through parliamentary politics (Linz, 1981).

For some observers, Spain's authoritarian regime that came to be known as *Franquismo* (Francoism) had its political and cultural roots in the dictatorship of General Miguel Primo de Rivera. Differently than during the previous authoritarian regime, in Franco's Spain the *Falange* occupied a central position within the *Movimiento Nacional* (national movement) during the onset of the dictatorship. With the passing of time this neo-fascist institution lost much of its ideological function and it was reduced to play a secondary role in the corporate structure of the vertical unions.

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The Francoist regime never developed a coherent political ideology in order to legitimize it-self (Encarnación, 1997: 396) Yet, the absence of an official state ideology should not lead us into believing that Franco's regime was not inspired by specific political principles. Franco's main obsession always was to maintain a rigid political order and to keep social peace. Within that ideological configuration the authoritarian regime incorporated ideas from corporatist and conservative Catholic thinkers. One should not forget that the regime was established with the explicit intent to erase the legacies of conflict of the civil war, and to abolish class struggle and left-wing political movements. The regime's views of societal integration embodied a project for the organization of society according to the Catholic notion of the organic state. It emphasized that all social and economic relations must conform to the doctrine of social harmony. The regime erected a system which combined state corporatist institutions and "limited pluralism", according to Juan Linz (1981). It allowed for a certain degree of competition among "political families" that played by the rules of the regime (not competitive political parties) by favoring cohesion without consensus (Encarnación, 1997). During the last period of the dictatorship one of these "political families" assumed a greater role within the state apparatus. I am talking of the *Opus Dei*, the Catholic organization that dominated the central economic state's institutions during the second phase of the Franco regime (1959-1975). For José Casanova (1983) the *Opus Dei* brought about nothing short of a bureaucratic-capitalist technocratic revolution within the authoritarian regime.

Under Franco's rule, industrial and labor relations were structured in accordance with the corporatist ideal that "there was no basic conflict between the

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interests of employers and workers (Escobar, 1995: 154)." This doctrine was institutionalized within the *Organización Sindical Española,* a compulsory vertical syndicate that integrated both employers and workers under direct state intervention. [4] The political purpose of the vertical union was to replace the anarchist and socialist trade unions of the Second Republic with a single state-controlled union. For Omar Encarnación, (1997: 399) the vertical union structure "institutionalized tripartism in Spanish industrial and labor relations and policy implementation." A view partially shared by Fishman (1990) and (Foweraker (1987) two observers who have argued that worker participation was encouraged by the official "vertical union structure". At the end of the 1950s Spain had established a system of "works councils without free unionism" that had replaced the more authoritarian structure of state corporatism "without free unions nor works councils" that had characterized the dictatorship between 1939 and 1953 (Escobar, 1995: 153).

## II. Democratization and liberal corporatism (1977-1986).

We have seen that at the end of Franco's dictatorship Labor was politically excluded but incorporated through a state-corporatist system of interests' intermediation grounded on the compulsory membership of workers and employers in the so-called vertical-trade unions. That system ended with the death of the dictator in 1975. The transformation of the state-controlled system of limited bargaining and the legal recognition of the organizational autonomy for both the labor unions and the employers' organizations was the priority of the democratic union movement.

Much of the literature on post-Franco Spain has referred to the country's

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democratic transition as a process that was facilitated by the unfolding of several neo-corporatist social pacts (Maravall, 1984; Encarnación, 1997). The highly praised *Pacto de la Moncloa* of October 1977, in particular, contributed to this interpretation, reinforced by a series of subsequent social agreements endorsed by the principal economic and social actors with the active support of the state (Royo, 2000). [5] It is important to remember that the democratic transition was a process set apart by certain continuity between the old Francoist ruling elite and the new democratic political class led by Adolfo Suárez, a former secretary-general of the *Movimiento Nacional.* Within that context, observers like Maravall (1984) have used the term of *"ruptura pactada"* (negotiated rupture) to characterize this peculiar experience of democratic change.

Spain started its transition to democracy in the second half of the 1970s, in the middle of a serious economic crisis. During the early years of the transition rising expectations encouraged by political changes and the strategic uncertainties of emerging political parties had contributed to deepening the economic crisis with mounting levels of inflation and unemployment. By 1977 the main political actors were well aware of the threat the economic crisis was posing for democratic stability (Royo, 2000: 71). Within that context, the political management of economic uncertainties through social concertation became an essential ingredient for the success of the process (Maravall, 1984; Fishman, 1990; Pérez-Díaz, 1993). [6]

In the aftermath of Franco's death the stabilization of the economy —bringing inflation under control —and the establishment of a clear macroeconomic approach— became a political necessity. At that time, however, economic actors were in the process of setting up their organizations and were not ready

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yet to engage themselves in centralized social bargaining. Thus, the government led by Adolfo Suárez and the opposition parties (PCE and PSOE, and the Basque and Catalan nationalist parties) signed the *Pactos de la Moncloa* that without being officially endorsed by either the UGT, CC.OO. or the employers' organization (CEOE), had their implicit backing.

**Table 6.1 Social pacts endorsed by trade unions, employers and government 1977-86.**

| *Year* | *Signatories* | *Social Pact* | *Rationale for Agreement* | *Stated Objectives* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1977-1978 | Political Parties | *Pacto de la Moncloa* | Political & economic stability needed for new democratic constitution | Control of inflation, wage moderation, employment issues, political reform |
| 1979 | CEOE & UGT | A.B.I. | New labor legislation, collective bargaining, unions' rights | New Industrial Relation system, unions' rights |
| 1980-1981 | CEOE ,UGT, & USO | A.M.I. | Collective bargaining, employment issues | Incomes policy, labor productivity, unions' rights |
| 1981-1982 | CEOE, UGT, CC.OO., & Government | A.N.E. | Political-social stability after failed coup d'état | Employment, social security, incomes policy trade unions' rights |
| 1983 | CEOE, UGT, CC.OO. | A.I. | Rationalization of centralized collective bargaining | Employment issues, incomes policy |
| 1985-1986 | CEOE, UGT & Government | A.E.S. | Labor market reform, employment, social and economic policy | Incomes policy, job creation, pensions |

In the *Pacto de la Moncloa*, —as in subsequent agreements— there was the unambiguous intention of assisting in the consolidation of democracy by making and implementing economic and incomes policy (wage-setting process) in an appeasing way. Given the relative fragility of the new regime the political and economic actors agreed on the need to limit social conflicts. Besides, the policy of social pacts has been recognized as an essential tool for unifying a fragmented

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political elite and assisting in the construction of democratic institutions by facilitating the cross-class consensus embodied in the Constitution of 1978 (Encarnación, 1997: 389). This pact was predominantly a political agreement that sought to establish new parameters to foster mutual trust and shared understandings between the left-wing parties and the former Francoist ruling elite led by Adolfo Suárez. The PSOE and the PCE were not convinced yet of the democratic intentions of the new Suárez's government and needed some reassurance that the new King Juan Carlos I was committed to the inner-transformation of the old regime.

This first national pact signed by the parties —and not the economic actors— was concerned with the most urgent political and economic problems (Perez-Yruela, 1997). Regarding wage policy the most significant aspect included in the pact was the specification to calculate wage increases on the basis of expected inflation and not on the basis of past inflation. This indexation of wages according to forecasted inflation would be at the core of subsequent social agreements. Other social and economic aspects were the promotion of jobs and unemployment security as well as a reform of the social security system that the government, at the end, did not fully implement. However, the main objective of reducing inflation was achieved. Inflation went down from close to 25 percent in 1977 to less than 20 percent in 1978. Observers have stated that the incomes policy articulated in these social pacts served to limit inflation by establishing a model of non-inflationary collective bargaining. For instance Sebastián Royo (2000: 69) points out that:

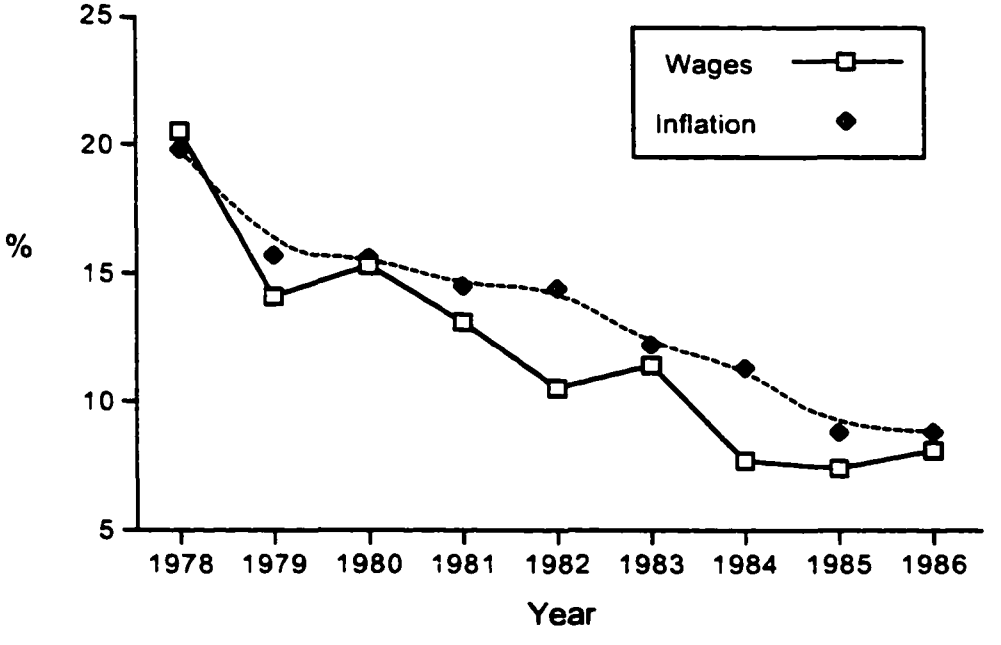
> "Despite the fact that government's inflation forecasts were invariably unrealistic, these agreements were quite successful at reducing inflation

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and proved to be effective instruments to tie wages to forecasted inflation while safeguarding worker incomes."

Between 1978 and 1986 a pattern of wage increases below final inflation unfolded, and with it a relative lost in the purchasing power of workers' salaries (see Figure 6.1 next page). After 1986, when centralized national bargaining ended, union's demands intensified and wages increased above inflation.

**Figure 6.1 Wage increases versus inflation (1977-1987).**




Source: Royo, (2000: 101)

In chapter two I had indicated that Spain experienced a high level of strikes between 1975 and 1977. One of the major issues behind the policy of social pacts was the reduction of industrial disputes and labor unrest. Between 1977 and 1986 data on strikes reveal a distinctive pattern. With the exception of the wave of strikes of 1978-9, industrial conflicts declined during the years when a

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national social pact framed collective bargaining. According to Royo (2000: 103) the drastic reduction of inflation helped by wage moderation, plus the decrease of industrial conflicts were the major achievements of the policy of social pacts implemented during this period.

In 1979, the Socialist union (UGT), encouraged by the POSE, supported a policy of social concertation with the business organization (CEOE), opening an era of bipartite or tripartite national agreements in Spain. The *Acuerdo Básico Interconfederal* (ABI), signed by UGT and the CEOE in 1979, was followed by the *Acuerdo Marco Interconfederal* (AMI) endorsed in 1980 by the employers' organization and two labor unions, UGT and USO.

In 1982, after a group of militarized *guardias civiles* (civil guards) attempted to overthrow the democratic regime, the larger labor organizations UGT and CC.OO., joined the employers' confederation (CEOE), and signed the *Acuerdo Nacional de Empleo* (ANE). The fragile political situation rather than just economic factors motivated this national agreement (Maravall, 1984). It was popularly known as the *pacto del miedo* (the pact of fear) since it was signed under high political uncertainty.

In 1983, with the PSOE in government, the same two trade unions and the employers' confederation signed the *Acuerdo Interconfederal* (AI). Finally, this process of national social agreements ended with the *Acuerdo Económico Social* (AES) signed by the government, UGT and CEOE, for the period 1984-86. Most of these social pacts shared a similar policy format. Their objective was an incomes policy based on the moderation of wage increases and the accommodation of collective bargaining to expectations of a lower rate of future inflation. In addition, the pacts created the conditions for the setting up of an institutional

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framework for democratic labor relations, including the rights for trade union action in the workplace (Royo, 2000, 2002).

In 1986 the last national social pact between the UGT, the CEOE, and the government ended. As part of the *Economic and Social Accord* (AES) the government had agreed to extend the unemployment benefits, at least, up to 50 percent of the unemployed population. As I have said in chapter five, during the mid-1980s this unfulfilled compromise was one of the causes for mayor disagreements between the UGT and the PSOE.

After 1988, when the UGT assessed its active participation in social pacts it found that it had been positive for the economy and the political stability of the country. However, this union recognized that neither the government nor the CEOE had carried out all the aspects of the accords subscribed (Dominguez, 1988: 98). The policy of social concertation based on national social pacts ended with the AES. Then, the Socialist government had to confront a more aggressive labor movement reluctant to continue with the previous approach. While some authors (Pérez-Díaz, 1993) argue that the political and economic context had changed, making the continuation of neo-corporatist pacts too difficult, others (like Royo, 2000) believe that the most significant factor that might explain the end of social concertation was the crisis between UGT and the PSOE.

Let us reexamine each one of the social agreements signed after the *Pactos de la Moncloa.*

*The Inter-Confederal Basic Agreement* (ABI)

The ABI was signed only by the employers' organization (CEOE) and the UGT and it dealt with a larger range of labor and economic issues. Through this

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agreement the employers recognized the rights of the trade unions to set up local organization structures in the workplace (Royo, 2002: 47). The agreement outlined the basis for the future labor legislation included in the Workers' Statute of 1980. It specified, therefore, that collective bargaining should be based on the recognized autonomy of the negotiating agents with little or none interference of the state. It also proposed the centralization of the collective bargaining structure in order to simplify and rationalize the negotiation process. As Pérez-Yruela (1997: 16) indicates: "If the Moncloa Pacts were mainly a political agreement, this one (the ABI) could qualify as a political-professional pact."

The CC.OO. did not join other social agents and it refused to endorse the agreement. In part this was the result of its ties with the PCE. Let us explain why. The results of the 1977 general election indicated that the stronger party of the left was the PSOE and not the Communist party (PCE). That meant that the Suárez's government needed to negotiate mostly with the Socialists (and not with the PCE) the scope of the constitutional changes that were going to be included into the new democratic constitution. Up to that point the PCE had enjoyed a privileged position *vis-à-vis* the center-right government led by Adolfo Suárez. After 1978 the situation did change and the PSOE was given greater access than the PCE to the spheres of state power. Within that context, the pro-Communist *Comisiones Obreras* defended the continuation of "political pacts" in which parties could play a greater role in the democratization process.

In addition, the refusal of the CC.OO. to sign the ABI was justified on the basis that the government had not completely fulfilled all the compromises it had assumed in the *Pacto de la Moncloa*. Afterward, this union would oppose the AMI using similar arguments.

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Even if the signatories did not consider the ABI a "social pact", but a general framework for future social agreements (Domínguez, 1988: 82; Royo: 2000: 77), most observers say that it was the first bipartite social pact between organized labor and capital representatives. It initiated a process of social concertation between economic agents that created a new dynamic of common understandings between labor unions and employers. Although the ABI did not include explicit incomes policies it made general recommendations on wages and productivity that had some effect on collective bargaining since wages increased below final inflation (see Figure 6.1).

*Inter-Confederal Agreement* (AMI)

After 1980 all social agreements contained explicit incomes policies fixing wage increases for the concerted period of time (AMI, 1980-81: 13 -16%; ANE, 1982: 9 - 11%; AI, 1983: 9.5 - 12.5%; AES, 1985/86: 5.5-7.5%). In the AMI, besides wage increases, the social agents that endorsed the agreement (CEOE, UGT, and USO) dealt with specific aspects of the emerging industrial relation system. Some of the themes were already outlined in the ABI and that were under consideration as part of new labor legislation that was being debated in Parliament.

This accord dealt with a variety of questions that included; the individual rights of workers, the rationalization of collective bargaining, the legitimacy of the economic agents to undertake negotiations, issues related to workers' productivity, absenteeism, job security, and some of the basic trade union rights that were going to become law later in 1984 with the approval of the *Ley Organica de la Libertad Sindical* (LOLS).

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The immediate effect of the agreement was reflected in a notable reduction of industrial conflicts (to a quarter of the strikes called the previous year according to Domínguez, 1988: 83) and in an advancement of UGT in the works council elections held later in 1980. According to Domínguez (1988) the vote increase in works council elections for the UGT was associated to the role it had played in the negotiation with the employers organization that led to the two national agreements of 1979 and 1980 (the ABI and the AMI).

By the contrary, the CC.OO. had been opposing the agreements in the workplaces and favoring a policy of confrontation versus negotiation. Yet that strategy did backfire at the end. In the works council elections held in 1980 the CC.OO. lost almost five percent of its previous share of elected delegates while UGT increased its number of seats from twenty-one to almost thirty percent.[7]

According to Pérez-Díaz (1993) the Spanish working class accepted both liberal capitalism and the capitalist enterprise as bearable legitimate economic systems. Furthermore, the wage earners were aware of the necessity to make sacrifices to solve the economic crisis and save their jobs. In Fishman's opinion (1990: 242) union and works council leaders at the workplace accepted the strategy of social pacts in part because they knew that their fellow workers would not back a more radical strategy. That was the reason why the policy of social pacts did work. It was not a strategy imposed from above upon a "radicalized" working class but a policy that reflected the social and economic moderation of the majority of Spanish workers (Encarnación, 1997: 412).

For some observers both pacts (ABI and AMI) must be interpreted as an attempt to overcome the initial organizational weakness of the UGT and the CEOE as economic and social agents in a context where the union movement

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was too fragmented and in which the interest organizations had not developed trustful relations (Moulins, 1999; Pérez-Yruela, 1997). The ABI and the AMI established the foundations for the elaboration of the Workers' Statute that became the legal framework for industrial and employment relations in 1980. [8]

*National Employment Accord* (ANE)

The third national pact in the process of social concertation (ANE) arose from the "political consensus" which followed the attempted military coup of 23 February 1981 and CC.OO., UGT, CEOE and the government signed it. The political context for the ANE was one characterized by a high degree of political uncertainty, the weakening of the centrist government due to the increase of Basque terrorism, the progressive internal splitting of UCD in competing factions and the worsening of the economic crisis. In addition, this tripartite social pact sought to alleviate Spain's chronic unemployment problems.

According to Royo (2000: 79-80) the fragile political situation plus the relative success ot the previous social pacts, signed by UGT forced *Comisiones Obreras* this time to endorse the ANE. [9]

In part the shift in the position of CC.OO. was due to a change in the strategy of the PCE after 1981. That year the party organized a conference to discuss trade union policy in which most of the Communist trade unionists of CC.OO. did participate. One of the reasons the PCE used in this meeting to justify the new strategy was that the involvement of the government in the concertation process was necessary and it provided the political dimension absent in previous pacts.

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Regarding the pact's scope and content, the ANE was an ambitious social agreement covering social, economic and (indirectly) political questions. It had a proposal to create employment (joblessness had increased since 1978), a blueprint for a fiscal reform and it promised substantial increase in public spending to expand welfare and social security benefits. The pact proposed policies to cope with an expanding underground economy and it gave to the trade unions direct participation in public agencies. [10] In a general sense, unions appeared satisfied with what was agreed in the ANE (Royo, 2000) since their role as public institutions had been enhanced. According to this observer:

> "The ANE gave real power to the social actors through membership on commissions that were created to follow up on the implementation of the agreement. It confirmed the participation of the social actors in economic policymaking, and their institutional role in the political system (Ibid., 2000: 80)."

The works council elections held in 1982 confirmed the decline of CC.OO. and the advancement of the UGT corroborating that the workers supported its moderate strategy. The pro-Socialist union obtained more delegates than the pro-Communist CC.OO. while the PSOE had become the dominant force to replace the decaying UCD that was still struggling to hold itself in power.

*The Inter-Confederate Accord* (AI)

After the election of a Socialist majority government in 1982, the AI was signed in 1983 as a kind of "collective statutory agreement" between the CC.OO., the UGT, and the CEOE (Moulins, 1999).

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The Socialist government's priority was to complete the unfinished tasks of economic and social modernization of Spain *vis-à-vis* its near European integration (Kennedy, 2001). The PSOE moved away from its original radical positions to a more moderate orientation after 1979. Within this context, the party promised to uphold the general interest of the country over particular interests of specific groups or social classes. The party's economic program intended to reduce inflation and the public deficit, as well as to pursue the improvement of the competitiveness of Spanish capitalism.

Both labor organizations, UGT and CC.OO. supported the Socialist program when the PSOE came to power. The UGT because it was ideologically convinced by it and the CC.OO. because it did not have other choice. The majority (more than 70%) of its members had vote for the PSOE in 1982 and the PCE was in complete disarray after its tremendous lost of votes in the elections (Maravall, 1984).

Though the Socialist government was not a signatory of the AI, encouraging instead that only the economic agents signed the agreement, it participated actively in the negotiation process (Royo, 2000: 82). At first the employers were reluctant to be part of the agreement arguing that the Socialist government had not signed it, but after a difficult negotiation the CEOE endorsed the AI jointly with the trade unions.

The AI covered a number of issues and questions that had been addressed by previous pacts. For instance, it dealt with employment and workers productivity and it included unsolved questions regarding the institutional power of labor unions. The AI proposed improvements in the system of collective bargaining, specifically addressing the question of the articulation between central

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negotiations and bargaining at the sectoral and the firm levels. The key question, however, was an incomes policy since for the Socialist government the control of inflation was the real priority.

The AI had a short duration (one-year) and it covered all employers and workers regardless of their membership in the organizations that endorsed the agreement. It was supported by CC.OO. given the situation in which the union found itself after the Socialist victory of 1982. At that point the union was re-valuing its previous confrontational strategy that had negatively affected its performance in the works council elections.

In 1984 the CC.OO. after having endorsed the AI, —strained by its strategic uncertainties associated with the crisis of Spanish Communism— returned to militancy against the government. The program of industrial restructuring that the Socialist government undertook after 1983 became a battlefield where it sought to reinforce its "radical" identity seeking to regain the lost hegemony among the workers.

For the first time since 1979, but in a new context of growing workers' mobilization against the Socialist government's policies for industrial restructuring, no social pact was signed in 1984. Nevertheless, the UGT followed the government recommendation for an increase in salaries below the expected level of inflation. Average wages grew 8 percent while inflation rate was 9 percent. The behavior of most works council leaders and trade union representatives in the collective bargaining tables showed that they were well aware of the need for wage moderation in order to overcome the economic difficulties of the country (Royo, 2000: 85).

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*The Economic and Social Accord* (AES)

At the end of 1984, the government, CEOE and UGT signed the last social pact of the 1980s, the *Acuerdo Económico y Social* (AES) that was designed to cover the following years. The agreement was in the line of the previous pacts, it sought to protect wage levels —that had fallen the previous year— and it contained new schemes for job creation, as well as the promise to extend unemployment benefits. This time the CC.OO. refused to participate in the social concertation process unless the government reconsidered key policy questions. *Comisiones Obreras* demanded from the Socialist government the creation of an special solidarity fund for the increasing unemployed population and a reindustrialization plan for the regions affected by the industrial restructuring policies. At the end of 1984 the government presented a restrictive budget for 1985 reducing public expenditures and the CC.OO. decided to withdraw from the negotiations (Domínguez, 1988: 93).

The AES dealt with fiscal policy, public investment, professional training and trade union and employers participation in the management of certain public agencies. Moreover it aimed at reforming the labor market in anticipation for Spain's entry into the European Community (1986). The UGT had accepted many of the demands of the CEOE and the new social agreement contained a number of clauses dealing with the deregulation of the labor market that sought more flexibility on the procedures for dismissal and hiring of workers. [11]

At the end of 1986, when the AES was finally over, problems arose about the signing of other social pact. Since 1985 the Socialist government's economic priorities coincided less and less with the demands of the UGT.

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Whereas the PSOE government had sought to assure a favorable economic environment, that helped business to recover lost profits by keeping wages down, the UGT was demanding a greater social spending on the grounds that the economic boom after 1986 had not resolved the serious unemployment problem. Joblessness had increased from 7 percent in 1978 to 21 percent in 1986.

In the general election of 1986 the PSOE won enough electoral support to return to power with an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. For some leaders of the PSOE the victory demonstrated that a government with a strong popular mandate had little need of social pacts. The Socialist government's agenda also changed significantly in the middle of the decade. Following its re-election in 1986, "the political dimensions of the national agreements no longer loomed so large (Rigby and Lawlor, 1994: 259)." The key policy-makers of the Socialist government increasingly embraced a neo-liberal economic perspective stressing on the need to modernize enterprises and to restructure a relative rigid labor market. Within that context, the Socialist government's focus of interest shifted away from macro level concertation to market-oriented policies favoring a deregulated flexible market economy.

## III. The end of social concertation (1986-90).

For some observers the policy of social agreements was highly positive for Spain (Royo, 2000, 2002). Social concertation contributed to the consolidation of the new democratic regime by encouraging a political consensus that facilitated the process of drafting the new constitution (Encarnación, 1997). In addition, concertation established the framework for the development of new labor laws that regulate the system of the industrial relations under the new democracy

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(Royo, 2002). And it had a positive effect on the reduction of industrial conflict and it was one significant factor in the process of institutional consolidation of the trade unions (Pérez-Yruela, 1997).

According to Sebastián Royo (2000) from a macroeconomic perspective social concertation had a positive effect on Spain's economy since it introduced macroeconomic considerations into collective bargaining allowing that wages increased less than inflationary objectives. In brief, Spain's inflation rate was reduced from 26 percent in 1977 to less than 9 percent in 1986.

On the other hand, Pérez-Díaz (1993) suggests that the policy of social pacts reduced social uncertainty and it contributed to the legitimization of capitalism in Spain. In addition, social concertation made possible the gradual liberalization of the financial system, which was a necessary condition to shape a monetary policy to fight inflation, as well as a fiscal reform and a significant increase in public spending. Victor Pérez-Díaz (1993) argues, however, that the pacts served to maintain the labor market rigidities that the country had inherited from Francoism. For this observer the dramatic growth of unemployment during the period was due not only to the poor performance of the Spanish industry but to the preservation of those labor market rigidities.

Regardless of Pérez-Díaz's criticism —on the negative effect of the concertation process— the truth is that without neo-corporatist policies the consolidation of democracy would had been more problematic. In that sense I agree with Omar G. Encarnación (1997: 403) when he says that:

> "At both the political and economic levels, concertation in Spain can be regarded as a success. The greatest political achievement of concertation was the integration of the social forces most concerned with the consoli-

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> dation of democracy— capital, labor, and the state— and the isolation of those most disruptive to that process —extreme and peripheral nationalism, terrorist groups from the Left and the Right, and the military. This was possible because the process of concertation provided the forces working for democracy with the rhetoric and the tools for the recreation (....) of the "political ritualization" of social conflict."

Within this context, the question that one need to address is why despite its success during the transition and consolidation of democracy the concertation process broke down after 1986. To answer this question one need to consider several hypotheses that have been discussed in the academic literature.

Spain never developed the "typical" neo-corporatist model [12] like the one European social democracy had established in other advanced capitalist societies. According to this perspective neo-corporatism implies an interaction between the state and broad-based peak interest groups and it is based on a policy making process that emphasizes the institutionalization of consultation, cooperation, and consensus on macroeconomic policy involving peak representation from organized capital, trade unions and the government (Korpi, 1983). In Spain the labor unions were too fragmented and in open competition against each other. The labor movement, therefore, had no single peak association able to speak with one voice during pact-making negotiations. Government, employers and major union confederations signed only one of these pacts, the ANE. Furthermore, one of the unions (CC.OO.) justified its involvement because of increasing political uncertainty, which followed the attempted military coup of February 1981. From the point of view of *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.), at least, adopting the ANE represented a pragmatic attempt to protect political freedoms rather than an exercise in corporatist consultation. Contrary to what might be

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expected, given the extended policy of social pacts, post-Franco Spain did not fit the model of a coordinated or organized capitalism in which a dense network of associations makes possible stable forms of policy coordination. [13]

Needless to say that the Spanish experience of social pacts (1977 to 1986) and the institutionalized process of social concertation in the neo-corporatist democracies of Northern Europe, belong to two different kinds of phenomena. [14] In Spain social concertation was the vehicle through which the broader democratic political regime was established and consolidated while concertation in Northern Europe had been at the core of the industrial relations regime for decades. Although social concertation in Spain emerged under a different set of political and economic circumstances, Schmitter (1995) has pointed out that the experience made this country an "impressive" example of corporatist cooperation among newly democratic societies of Southern Europe.

Within that context, the failure of social concertation was due to the absence of institutional preconditions distinctive of the social-democratic "organized economies", plus the negative on the part of the unions to continue supporting an incomes policy in an environment marked by competition and fragmentation of the labor movement. Moreover, the UGT, the union that had been the backbone of the policy of social concertation, shifted its position *vis-à-vis* such approach as part of its disengagement from the PSOE (Royo, 2000; Espina, 1999).

The relations between the Socialist government and the UGT deteriorated after 1985. After this point, neither the government nor the UGT was really interested in prolonging the experience of national social pacts. In that context, centralized concertation vanished and it was replaced by a dynamic of confrontation between the two main unions and the Socialist government, which culminated

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with the general strike of December 1988. From the perspective of the unions, the agreements had a negative effect over wages and it was time for a change since the economic situation had improved and the democratic regime was already consolidated. [15]

At the beginning of the 1990s, with the economic expansion over, the positions of the social agents regarding the possibility of a new round of centralized social concertation remained as far apart as ever. While the unions continued to resist the deregulation of the labor market, the employer representatives continued to demand greater labor flexibility. During the economic recovery (1987-91) the unions had pursued two goals: to keep wage increases one or two points above the inflation rate, and to push the government to change its social and economic policy. The argument defended by the unions was that the gap in the "social wage" between Spain and the rest of the European Union (EU) was too high. The basic position of UGT from 1987 to 1991 was that the workers had already made too many sacrifices and that the government did not fulfill its past commitments with the unions. [16]

Unsolved economic problems associated with its membership in the European Monetary System (EMS), became a major issue for the PSOE government after 1991. In order to deal with the economic pressure emanating from the political economic regime of the European Union (EU) the Socialist government initiated tripartite discussions for what it called the *pacto de competitividad* (agreement for competitiveness). The pact sought to maintain wage moderation and to strengthen the economy *vis-à-vis* the EU without triggering another inflationary spiral. However, the unions rejected the offer and during that period only signed partial or sectoral bipartite agreements with the government, the

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autonomous communities, or with the CEOE, rather than signing another national tripartite agreement (Royo, 2000).

In summary, the policy of social pacts characterized the transition and the consolidation period of the new democratic regime. It was abandoned after 1986 since the rationale that supported it had changed. When the economy showed signs of recovery and entered an expansive phase, organized labor expected a change in the economic policy of the government. The priorities of the Socialist government, however, remained a tight control of the inflation and to maintain Spain's comparative advantages in labor costs *vis-à-vis* the rest of the EU. Those policy priorities plus the crisis of the UGT-PSOE historical relation contributed to the collapse of social concertation (Royo, 2000). Under new economic and political conditions the neo-corporatist compromises of the past could not longer held (Espina, 1999).

## IV. Social concertation viewed from the workplace.

In the early 1990s there were several attempts by the Socialist government to revive the already dead national tripartite agreements. Given the negative effects of neo-corporatism on employment and wages, top leadership of the labor confederations was reluctant to sign a new national tripartite pact. Part of the problem for union leaders was that they had lost trust *vis-à-vis* the government and the employers after their experience with unfulfilled commitments stated in the AES.

On the other hand, the possibility of success of the proposed tripartite pact would depend not only of the behavior of the national labor and employers organizations but on how the workers and the employers in the firms would react

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to it. As I have pointed out, a relatively high degree of social support for the returning to neo-corporatist policies existed in the workplaces that I visited in 1990. For example, when I surveyed workplace-level leaders about their opinion on the continuation of the national policy of social pacts almost 66 percent of them said that they supported it.

**Table 6.2 Workplace leaders' opinion on the continuation of social pacts (%).**

| *Do you favor or not, the continuation of the policy of centralized (tripartite) social concertation (social pacts)?* | *Workplace Leaders 1990* | | | **EDIS** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *1988* |
| Favorable to centralized concertation | 76.5 | 54.1 | 65.4 | 50.0 |
| Opposed to centralized concertation | 19.1 | 42.1 | 30.5 | 16.8 |
| Indifferent to centralized concertation | 4.4 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 33.1 |
| No answer/ Don't know | – | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (2014) |

Data on table 6.2 show how informants felt regarding the question of centralized tripartite agreements after the failure of social concertation in the mid-1980s. I asked the same question that had been posed to a large sample of wage earners in 1988, two years after the end of the last social pact of the decade (AES).

Evidence suggests that the policy of social concertation was still "popular" among workers and union leaders in the workplaces. Approximately 75 percent of the UGT delegates agreed to a continuation of the social pacts while 54 percent of the informants from CC.OO. shared that opinion. A smaller number (19%) of workplace leaders from UGT did not want the tripartite social pacts policy to continue. These responses were not surprising since UGT had supported all the social pacts signed up to 1986. Rather I expected to find a lower support for the pacts among informants from *Comisiones Obreras*. Opposition to the neo-corporatist experience of national pacts had been stronger in the case of this labor

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organization. We already know that CC.OO. had participated only in two of the national agreements, and it did so reluctantly.

Data indicate that among workplace-level leaders the prospect for a return to a neo-corporatist model of interest intermediation had strong support. Figures on the table (6.2) show a similar pattern of favorable opinions. In a national study carried out by the EDIS in 1988, fifty percent responded positively regarding the return of centralized social concertation while only 17 percent of the surveyed workers were opposed to it. The rest, (33%) did not have an opinion or were indifferent.

Public opinion polls have confirmed widespread support for social concertation among Spanish citizens. These findings suggest: "a high level of public awareness about the process of concertation as well as a significant public support for the role of pacts in the management of the national economy (Encarnación, 1997: 411). "

**Table 6.3 Workplace leaders' opinion on pact for competitiveness (%).**

| *Do you agree or not, that a new pact for competitiveness —based on wage moderation and greater public control of company profits— should be endorsed by labor unions, employers' representatives and government?* | *Workplace Leaders 1990* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO.* | *Total* |
| Yes (in favor) | 62.5 | 45.1 | 53.9 |
| No (against it) | 21.3 | 39.8 | 30.5 |
| Undecided | 16.2 | 15.0 | 15.6 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

During 1990-91 the government tried to reach a tripartite agreement with the trade unions and the employers' representatives. First it was called a "pact for competitiveness" and later it became the "pact for the employment". Within

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this context, I asked workplace-level leaders how favorable (or unfavorable) they were *vis-à-vis* the proposed new social pact (see Table 6.3). Nearly 54 percent of the informants were in favor of signing the new social pact. Sixty-three percent of workplace-level leaders linked to UGT and 45 percent of those from CC.OO. agreed that the labor unions, the CEOE and the government should endorse a new social pact (based on wage moderation and the reinvestment of part of the company profits in the creation of new jobs). Fifteen percent of the UGT works council and union delegates and sixteen percent of informants from the CC.OO. were undecided. About 30 percent of the interviewees said that they were opposed to the new social pact. Twenty percent of informants in UGT and almost 4 percent in CC.OO. disagreed with the proposed *pacto de competitividad.*

The proposed pact did not prosper. The national labor organizations could not accept a social agreement that sought to further deregulate the labor market and in the unions' perspective, to undermine their institutional power. By the contrary, the Socialist government accused the trade unions of not understanding the structural demands associated with Spain's status in the European Union (EU) and of defending narrow "class interests" instead of the general interest of the country (Paramio, 1992).

One of the key differences between the unions and the government regarding the content of the proposed pact was on the issue of "incomes policy." After 1988 the trade unions had rejected the return to a negotiated policy of wage restraint through centralized collective bargaining. The economic improvements experienced during the last years of 1980s had encouraged the decentralization of collective bargaining. Those industries and firms that were benefiting from the economic up-turn could afford higher than average wage increases. Within

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that context, trade unions were not interested in hearing the government warnings regarding the impact of unrestrained wage increases on the inflation rate.

For the unions the main source of Spain's high rate of inflation was the services sector. From the unions' perspective the increases in prices in the mentioned sector would continue to push upward inflation even if industrial wages were restrained. Under those conditions unions were opposed to any form of social concertation based on incomes policy.

**Table 6.4 Workplace leaders' opinion on incomes policy and social pacts (%).**

| *In a period of economic growth social pacts should not determine fixed wage increases.* | *Workplace Leaders 1990* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Strong agreement | 30.1 | 34.6 | 32.3 |
| Enough agreement | 32.4 | 30.8 | 31.6 |
| Some agreement | 14.0 | 16.5 | 15.2 |
| Little agreement | 12.5 | 12.0 | 12.3 |
| None agreement | 8.8 | 4.5 | 6.7 |
| No Answer | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

The question I asked my informants was, should the unions endorse a social pact that pursue to restraint wage increases in a period of economic growth? For a majority of workplace-level leaders interviewed their answer was negative. Around 64 percent from both organizations unambiguously agreed with the position of UGT and CC.OO. at that time (see table 6.4 above). Like their organizations they did not believe that incomes policy needed to be the key piece of any future social concertation. On this question, there were not significant differences of opinion among the informants. Workplace-level leaders from both unions shared similar views.

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For the unions —by the mid-1980s— the disadvantages associated with centralized political exchange were seen to be outweighing the benefits. The economic crisis, the effects of industrial restructuring, and the high unemployment had eroded the social base of the workers' organizations. For most observers these organizational difficulties had weakened the union movement during the 1980s (Jordana, 1996).

The unions had initially supported social concertation, first as a policy for consolidating democracy, and second as an institutional process through which they could gain legitimacy as collective actors within the new regime and achieving their own consolidation as workers' organizations.

Some analyzes have suggested that centralized concertation had resulted in the reinforcement of the national organizational structure of the unions in detriment to their workplace organizations (Rigby and Lawlor, 1994: 263). During the neo-corporatist interregnum (1977-86), unions followed a centralized action strategy directed mainly towards political exchange with government and employers' organizations through institutional pacts (Martinez-Lucio and Blyton, 1995: 356-7). Most of the unions' resources were used on this strategy centered at the macro level; therefore, organized labor was unable to strengthen its position on the shop floor. Accordingly, centralized political exchange moved the unions away from the workers, weakening the unions' capability to organize and get the support of workers in the firm.

In the literature on the breakdown of social concertation it has been argued that one of the possible reasons for its dismissal was the realization by the unions that this policy had weakened the labor organizations' basic structures. To assess the validity of this hypothesis I did inquiry my informants on this

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question. Data presented on table 6.5 reflect workplace-level leaders' views regarding the potential relation between social concertation and the weakening of the trade unions.

**Table 6.5 Workplace leaders' opinion on the potential relation between the weakening of trade unions and the policy of social pacts (%).**

| *Trade unions have been weakened as a result of the strategy of social pacts.* | *Workplace Leaders 1990* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Strong agreement | 11.0 | 11.3 | 11.2 |
| Enough agreement | 20.6 | 24.8 | 22.7 |
| Some agreement | 21.3 | 27.8 | 24.5 |
| Little agreement | 26.5 | 26.3 | 26.4 |
| None agreement | 19.1 | 9.0 | 14.1 |
| No Answer | 1.5 | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

On the whole, workplace-level leaders from UGT and CC.OO. did not share the view that neo-corporatism has been a significant factor undermining the initial strength of the labor organizations. Only a third of the informants believed that the strategy of social pacts did weaken the trade unions while the majority was not so strongly convinced. In general, there was not a big difference of opinion between the works council and union delegates from UGT or CC.OO.. The exception was that among UGT informants the disagreement *vis-à-vis* this statement was relatively higher than among those from *Comisiones Obreras*.

The conclusion of neo-corporatist pacts coincided with an organizational crisis of the labor unions. The roots of the problem, however, were beyond the policy of social concertation. For Hamann (1998: 427) the difficulties that trade unions were experiencing in the mid-1980s were a consequence of an institutional framework that had undermined the capacity of organized labor to react to

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ongoing economic, political and social changes in its environment. The end of neo-corporatism was one factor among several others in the process of unions' adjustment *vis-à-vis* new challenges in the 1980s. Other significant factors were the diminishing political ties with left-wing parties, the decentralization of collective bargaining, and declining affiliation at least until 1988. At the end of national social concertation Spain remained without an institutionalized system of neo-corporatist bargaining . Thus, the "demise of corporatism" forced unions to search for alternative modes of interest representation (Hamann (1998: 430).

While most observers held a positive view on the economic and political objectives achieved through social concertation, others have questioned the effectiveness of the pacts. Specifically on the scope of what had been negotiated in the pacts several clauses were never fully implemented (Estivill and de la Hoz 1991:291-93).

**Table 6.6 Workplace leaders' opinion on fulfillment of compromises undertaken by the government and employers in the social pacts (%).**

| *Did not fulfill all the compromises endorsed in Social Pacts:* | *Employers (CEOE)* | | | *Government* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* | *UGT* | *CC.OO* | *Total* |
| Strong agreement | 46.3 | 57.9 | 52.0 | 33.1 | 41.4 | 37.2 |
| Enough agreement | 31.6 | 39.8 | 35.7 | 33.8 | 48.1 | 40.9 |
| Some agreement | 16.9 | 2.3 | 9.7 | 25.7 | 10.5 | 18.2 |
| Little agreement | 3.7 | – | 1.9 | 5.1 | – | 2.6 |
| None agreement | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| No Answer | 1.5 | – | 0.7 | 2.2 | – | 1.5 |
| (N) | (136) | (133) | (269) | (136) | (133) | (269) |

Within that context, I posed the question of "unfulfilled agreements" to my informants (see Table 6.6, above). For most of them neither the government nor the employers had been completely truthful *vis-à-vis* the compromises as-

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sumed in the process of social concertation. Regarding employers' behavior close to 88 percent of the informants believed that they had not fulfilled all their deals while 78 percent of workplace-level leaders indicated that the government had not fully complied with the accords.

Overall, informants from UGT were less critical on the government's role in the process of social concertation than the ones from CC.OO.. As I showed in the previous chapter, informants from UGT were more ambivalent when they had to criticize the Socialist government and because of this reason they tended to be less disapproving of the unfilled compromises of this government. Furthermore, there was more "consensus" among informants on their assessment of the employers' organization (CEOE) that apparently did not fully comply with what was agreed in the social pacts.

For example, Royo (2000: 91) points out that one of the unfulfilled clauses by employers was the issue of the mechanisms that they promised to set up to link wage increases to productivity gains. The reluctance of employers to implement these clauses had resulted in a lost of purchasing power of wages during the period covered by the AES (1985-86). Furthermore, the unions did criticize the government "arguing that it had failed to deliver on its promises (Royo, 2000: 92)." According to this observer:

> "The government backed off almost immediately from some of its 1982 compromises (...). It also refused to consider union demands that it had promised to follow during the reforms of the industrial sector and the pension system. The government also failed to carry out the compromises that it had signed in the last concertation agreement, the AES, such as the productivity clauses, or the commitments to social expenditures and unemployment benefits when the economy picked up (Ibid. 2000: 190)."

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Given the failure of the government and the employer confederation to fully comply with all the clauses that had been agreed to in previous macro social pacts it was not a surprise that the trade unions refused to sign a new neo-corporatist agreement between 1987 and 1990.

The failure of centralized negotiations at the highest level between the Socialist government, the employer confederation and the trade unions did not prevent the unfolding of *micro* and *messo* forms of social concertation between 1990 and 1994. During the last period of Socialist rule specific agreements on concrete matters were reached, demonstrating that what I call the "culture of social concertation" had not disappeared despite the absence of centralized social pacts between 1986 and 1996.

One example of the new forms of "partial" concertation was the agreement on workers' training signed by the CEOE, and the two larger unions (CC.OO., UGT), at the end of 1992. In addition, the Socialist government signed another agreement with the social agents (CEOE, UGT and CC.OO.) establishing a public fund endowed with contributions made by workers and employers to the administration to finance a new workers' training program. Following the relative failure of the last general strike called by the unions against the unilateral labor market reform imposed by the Socialist government in 1994; a new phase in the labor relation arena started to take shape (Espina, 1999). Thus, the employer confederation, (CEOE) and the two major unions (CC.OO. and UGT) signed the *"Interconfederal Agreement to Regulate Labor Ordinances and Labor Regulations."* The agreement sought to regulate new competencies related to the proc-

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ess of collective bargaining. It was designed to facilitate the decentralization of wage negotiations toward the firm and the region (Royo, 2000: 231).

After the last year of Socialist rule (1996) the CEOE, the main trade unions and the government signed the *"Agreement for the Extra-Judicial Resolution of Labor Conflicts"* that sought to establish a new legal framework to solve industrial disputes by establishing institutional mechanisms for mandatory mediation and arbitration of collective bargaining conflicts. It also established the framework to determine minimum services before calling a strike (Fraile, 1999: 300).

Around the mid-1990s a process leading to the "reemergence of national social bargaining" unfolded. However, there has not been a return to incomes policy negotiated centrally as part of the new agreements (Royo, 2002: 231-2). Ironically, the defeat of the Socialist Party (PSOE) in the 1996 general election (and the victory of the center-right *Partido Popular*) contributed to the resurgence of national-level bargaining between the government, the employers, and labor unions. This time, however, it would be called "social dialogue" instead of " social concertation."

## V. Social dialogue and the return of social pacts

Spain has recently experienced a renaissance of neo-corporatist policy-making (Royo, 2002). In 1997, an agreement between unions and employers increased the degree of coordination across bargaining levels and introduced important changes in labor market regulation. Previously, a peak-level agreement signed in 1996 between government and the unions (translated into law in 1997) introduced important modifications in the pension system (Fraile, 1999).

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Since the coming to power of the *Partido Popular* (PP) national negotiations between business and labor organizations have produced a series of new social agreements. For example, in May 1996 representatives of labor and capital signed a joint declaration stating their dissatisfaction with the functioning of the labor market [17] and asked for a profound reform in order rationalize the structure of collective bargaining.

In the mid-1990s the economic and political context had changed. The PP did not enjoy the parliamentary majority that the PSOE had when it came to power. Thus, it needed to seek compromises with political and social actors in order to achieve the necessary reforms to cope with the challenges posed by monetary convergence with the rest of Europe. During the last period of Socialist rule social agents had concluded specific agreements, each one separate from the other. This new model of "partial concertation" involved a continuous process of negotiation of a multiplicity of agreements instead of discussions aimed at a single overreaching social pact (Royo, 2000). Within a new political context, social agents were talking again about national agreements on specific areas seeking more effective regulation of the labor market (Fraile, 1999).

For trade unions the main question to be solved through a new series of social pacts has been the reduction of the excessive increase in work flexibility based exclusively on temporary employment. For the employers, nevertheless, the major issue is how to enhance the competitiveness of Spanish firms *vis-à-vis* competing European economies by increasing economic and labor "flexibility". While the government's main interest in promoting the so-called *dialogo social* since1996 has been to ensure cooperation from the social agents to comply with the monetary convergence parameters demanded by the EMU.

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Subsequently to the labor reforms of 1994, that left many areas unregulated after the old Francoist *Ordenanzas Laborales* (labor ordinances) were abolished, the return of the social pacts has attempted to create a new framework for collective bargaining and the governance of industrial relations (Royo, 2000: 231; Fraile, 1999: 297-300).

For Sofia Pérez (1998) the reasons for the return to a policy of social pacts must be sought in the dynamics of Spain's political economy. For this scholar "it reflects the inability of employers to control costs, and the failure of governments to achieve macro-economic policy objectives in the absence of some structure of wage coordination that might serve as an alternative to framework bargaining, during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Ibid. 1998: 2)." After the end of macro social concertation in Spain (mid-1980s) the Socialist government sought to impose macro-economic stability without the benefit of national agreements grounded on incomes policy. The Socialist policy-makers believed that wage-moderation could be achieved without centralized pacts by relying on a tight monetary policy and a strong currency. However, the employers found it difficult to control labor costs in a fragmented and decentralized bargaining system. Given the success of the policy of national social concertation in keeping wages below inflation (see figure 6.1) the governments (and the employers) wanted to return to a model of social concertation that could control inflation by keeping competitive labor costs down (Perez, 1998).

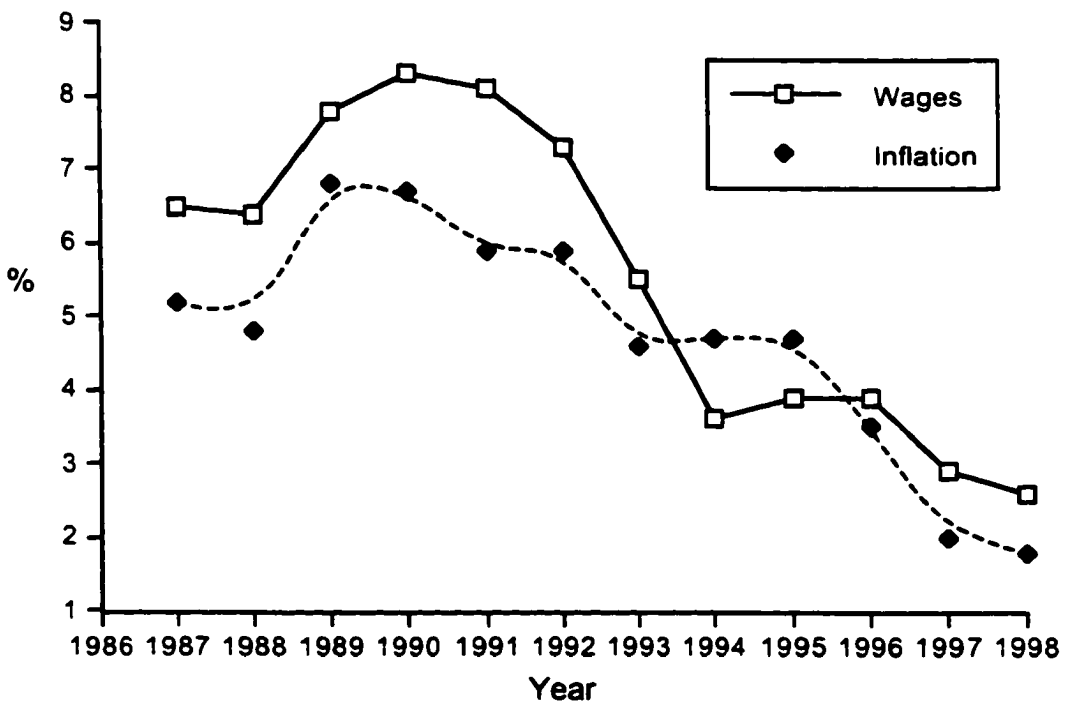
Evidence suggests that even during the period in which Spain did not have national social agreements the unions tried hard to keep inflation down by following a moderate approach in setting wages' increases. The main difference between the unions' policies and those of the government, or the employers, has

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been that for organized labor low inflation cannot be separated from other economic variables such as employment and job security or the structural weakness of Spanish capitalism. On the other hand, for the Socialist government price stability became an obsession that only could be kept in line by controlling wages and reducing social expenditures.

As Royo (2000: 221) suggests the tight monetary policy that the Socialist government implemented after 1987 did not keep inflation down even when the unions were behaving in a responsible way and were willing to accept wage moderation. It is true, nevertheless, that after 1988 the unions asked for wage increases that were one or two points above the expected inflation for the year.

**Figure 6.2 Wage increases versus inflation (1987-1998).**




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Data plotted on the graph above show that after 1987 a trend toward wage increases above final inflation unfolded. Nevertheless, the unions did not seek to brake wage ceilings beyond reasonable limits. Even if wages increases were comparatively higher after the breakdown of macro social agreements the truth is that an implicit form of "wage moderation" continued to frame unions' strategies. After all unions only sought to regain lost purchasing power after many years of economic sacrifices. [18]

After a period (1990-95) characterized by partial agreements a significant change occurred in 1997. That year three national agreements, —between the trade unions (UGT and CC.OO.) the employers confederation (CEOE) and with the government— were endorsed as part of a new labor market reform. These social pacts focused on one big question; the management and regulation of the effects of the reforms of the Workers' Statute set in motion by the Socialist government in 1994. This time, contrary to the previous experience with the PSOE, the conservative government of the PP was able to reach compromises with organized labor and organized business on the content and the scope of the new reform (Royo, 2002; Fraile, 1999).

Among the new agreements, the *Acuerdo Interconfederal para la Estabilidad del Empleo* (Interconfederal Accord for Employment Stability) has been typical tripartite social pact signed by all the relevant actors involved in the new "social dialogue." Another significant agreement, the *Acuerdo Interconfederal para la Negociación Colectiva* (Interconfederal Agreement on Collective Bargaining), has sought to articulate the various levels of bargaining, from the top (national level) to the bottom (firm), in each economic sector in the direction of a more centralized wage negotiation.

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In 1999, two year after these pacts had been endorsed, the social agents' assessments on their general results were positive. Essentially, an increase in employment and a reduction in unemployment were recorded for this period. Some unsolved issues for the trade unions, such as the high number of temporary jobs, remain over the table. Although a number of permanent jobs had been created unstable temporary jobs remained around 30 percent of total employment.

Another important variable in the dynamic of social dialogue is that this time both trade unions (UGT and CC.OO.) had been involved in the concertation process from the beginning. Different from the period of centralized agreements (1977-86) during the 1990s CC.OO. had become a full partner supporting all the social pacts that have been signed.

The fact that both labor organizations have been involved in the process does not mean that they have agreed all the time regarding the content of the new social pacts. There have been disagreements between the unions and other actors (government or employers) as well as between UGT and *Comisiones Obreras*. Disagreements that came to light, —despite the common union strategy of unity of action— were sharpened by competition between unions in the period of works council elections. In addition, some of those disagreements reflected internal politics in the organizations. In a certain way some ideological differences between UGT and CC.OO. are still associated with political conflicts linked to the political dynamic of the PCE-IU and the PSOE. [19]

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## Endnotes for Chapter Six

[1] Technically, the Moncloa Pacts are not a corporatist agreement because their principal participants were the political parties rather than the direct representatives of capital and labor. When the agreement was negotiated and implemented trade unions and employers were barely legal and not well organized yet.

[2] In Spain there are several business organizations, other than the CEOE. Some of the pacts were also signed by the CEPYME (Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium sized Enterprises). The CEPYME has merged with the CEOE and because of this fact I will only refer to the CEOE as the employers' representative organization.

[3] The Primo de Rivera's dictatorship established the National Corporatist Organization *(Organización Corporativa Nacional)* in 1926 designed to incorporate workers' interest into the corporatist state structure.

[4] According to Linz (1981: 387), the Spanish Syndicate Organization, a state-controlled corporatist organization uniting employers and employees in a single body, was founded at the end of the Spanish Civil War with the goal of harmonizing class conflict and integrating "the defeated working class, disciplining it and at the same time giving it more symbolic than real participation in the new state."

[5] The Moncloa Pacts did embody the spirit of liberal corporatism, a point emphasized by many accounts on policy-making in the post-Franco era.

[6] If political democracy was to be consolidated, and Spain was to avoid the tragic fate of the Second Republic, economic uncertainties had to be concerted (Perez-Díaz, 1993).

[7] The electoral success of UGT forced CC.OO. to change strategy, shifting from an open rejection of the social pacts to accepting them reluctantly in 1981-82.

[8] The law was passed in Parliament with the support of almost all the political parties and the opposition of the PCE that reflected the strategy followed by CC.OO. on this issue. The new labor legislation restricted national negotiating rights to unions with a minimum of 10 per cent of the national vote in the works council elections, a setback for small unions often of a regional character (see Köhler, 1995; Führer-Ries, 1996).

[9] This pact was signed in July, 1981 a few months after the failed military coup. Though the ANE was subscribed in the summer of 1981 it covered a time period ending in December 1982.

[10] During the negotiations of the ANE, the two larger unions (UGT and CC.OO.) were successful in extracting an allocation of 800 million pesetas for direct financing of trade union activities. This allocation, adjusted for inflation, would remain an institutionalized feature of the state budget.

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[11] For its behavior the UGT was rewarded with a very favorable treatment when the government compensated the unions for the property and assets that the Franco's regime had deprived the unions after 1939. Another important union gain for the support that UGT had given to the AES was the new labor law approved in 1984. The Organic Law of Trade Union Freedom (LOLS) that established the framework for trade unions action in the workplace, emulated many of the proposals that UGT had defended since the late 1970s.

[12] "Even though between 1977 and 1986 several agreements were signed by one or both of the major unions (the socialist UGT and the communist CC.OO.) and the main employer organization (CEOE) or the government or both, these pacts bore little resemblance to the typical neo-corporatist structures (Hamann, 1998)."

[13] Indeed, it may be argued that the success of neo-corporatism as a governmental strategy in Spain has resided precisely in its contingent, non-institutionalized character, and on the way decision-making was strategically displaced by the government from weak neo-corporatist forums when problems were seen to be emerging (Martinez-Lucio, 1998).

[14] In Spain the social content and political meaning of the pacts, the economic circumstances in which they were signed, and the organizational strength of the social agents were quite different to the ones that characterize northern European neo-corporatist arrangements.

[15] Those were the arguments I heard from many of my informants of UGT and CC.OO..

[16] These are comments that I heard from several of the UGT leaders interviewed by me.

[17] As a consequence of the labor reforms sponsored by the Socialist government (starting in 1984 and ending in 1994) the number of workers appointed on fixed term (temporary) contracts increased from 15 percent in 1987 to almost 35 percent in the mid-1990s. For the unions this situation had become unbearable particularly after the labor marker reform of 1994.

[18] Between 1988 and 1992 (a period of relative high economic growth) wages increases compensated for the previous loses. When the economic situation worsened around 1993, wage increased reversed to the previous pattern of the early 1980s.

[19] Although I don't thinks that UGT neither CC.OO. are going to return to uncritical support for the political Left, the approaching of the general election in 2000 aggravated some of the public differences between UGT and CC.OO.. Each time disagreements arise, all the same, the leaders of both union confederations have stated repeatedly that the unity of action is not in danger.

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# Chapter Seven

## Globalization and European Integration: Labor Strategies in a Changing Political- Economy.

Globalization is a contested concept. On one side of the controversy there are people claiming that we live in an integrated global order that constraints the political and economic choices available to us. Meanwhile, others believe that the nation-state is still in command and that globalization has not eroded state power so much.

The central focus of the idea of globalization is that many contemporary social processes cannot be analyzed any longer at the level of nation-state, or bounded by the traditional notion of political sovereignty. Instead, they need to be conceptualized in terms of global processes being shaped by transnational corporations and other international economic and political forces, as well as by the spreading of a global culture that is transforming our social life and the ways in which we relate to the world as a global entity (Castells, 1996; Giddens 2000). [1]

While for some observers "globalization" is a relatively new idea, others claim that its philosophical roots were already present in the works of classic social theorists such as Karl Marx. In sociology, more specifically, the study of globalization has focused on two main types of phenomena, which have become increasingly significant in the last decade. These are the emergence of a globalized political economy based on new systems of production, finance and mass consumption and the idea of a global culture (Robertson, 1992).

One can speak of economic and cultural globalization as processes that have been facilitated by the informational and technological revolution that has

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transformed postindustrial capitalism and the dynamic of industrial production from "Fordism" to "post-Fordism." One need to remember that most theories on globalization emerged in the early 1990s after a period of intellectual debates concerning the transformation of regimes of production and capitalist accumulation in advanced postindustrial societies. This new regime called "post-Fordism" is characterized by flexible manufacturing systems based on computerized technologies and the cultural diversification of consumer demand and "social tastes".

A book published in the late 1980s— David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989)— linked the emergence of post-Fordism to the broader critical reexamination of capitalist modernity. Harvey questions whether one should reject modernity in favor of a postmodern perspective that focuses primarily on symbolic productions instead of on economic and material life. However, one should not dismiss the cultural insights of the postmodern view. What this scholar proposes is a multidimensional approach combining the cultural and symbolic dimensions of social life with the economic understanding of the so-called "postmodern" world.

This chapter focuses on specific dimensions of globalization processes. How globalization is reshaping labor strategies in late modernity? What are its effects on the social, economic and cultural aspects of the labor movement in advanced postindustrial capitalism? These are the issues examined.

The complex relationship between globalization and Europeanization is the focus of the first part. Next, I examine the situation of European trade unions during the 1990s and specifically how the process of European integration has impacted on union strategies. The last section of the chapter deals with cultural

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challenges posed by the dynamic of globalization to organized labor in Spain and in other advanced postindustrial societies.

## I. Globalization and Europeanization.

In academic discourses on the subject, Europeanization and globalization are presented as a set of economic and political processes and institutional practices that are transforming contemporary European societies. The emphasis is on how external economic and political constraints frame the domestic societal dynamics of those countries that belong to the European Union (EU). Let us stress that from a semantic point of view globalization and Europeanization are not synonymous. According to Risse, Cowles and Caporaso (2001) it is necessary to differentiate between both in order to understand their complex relationship. For these analysts:

> "Europeanization itself might respond to "globalization" processes by reinforcing their trends or by shielding EU members states against their undesired effects. (...) we distinguish between Europeanization and globalization trends to the extend possible in order to identify their independent effects (Ibid. 2001: 4)."

The most obvious difference between both macro dynamics is that Europeanization is not just an economic process but also a political one leading towards the construction of a transnational community composed of nation states that have transferred part of their "national sovereignty" to a supranational body that now regulates specific dimensions of their social, economic and political life.

Another important question that I need to clarify: what is the relationship between European integration and Europeanization? Although both are closely

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related, Europeanization must be understood as a broader process than just economic and political integration, since it involves cultural dynamics of interaction and diffusion of knowledge, values, ideas and social practices among European societies, whether or not they are members of the European Union.

Regarding Europeanization and globalization there are two opposite views on the "articulation" between both. One view postulates that Europeanization may coincide with globalization and actually drives it faster. In that context, economic globalization becomes more significant because Europeanization processes —and the European integration component within it— are moving European societies in the same direction by promoting the same structural changes but more intensively than mere globalization would do. However, other observers claim that Europeanization may work in the opposite direction from the dominant logic of globalization. Thus, political decisions made by the EU can reshape the economic imperatives associated with globalization creating a distinctively European way to deal with the negative effects of financial and economic global processes. For many of the proponents of the second view globalization is seen as a form of economic and cultural Americanization that Europeans should oppose by regulating its economic impact on the EU.

It seems that there are some areas in which convergence between those processes can be set apart. For instance, regarding trade, financial liberalization, and telecommunications, evidence suggests that globalization and Europeanization may have accelerated and reinforced each other (Cowles and Rise, 2001: 220). On the other hand, the process of Europeanization has impacted on the way social, political and economic actors do respond *vis-à-vis* the logic of globalization. Clearly, the main challenge *vis-à-vis* the logic of globalization in Europe

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comes from political and social actors, particularly the organized labor movement. For the transnational European labor movement what is at stake is the social and economic nature of the new integrated Europe. From this perspective the issue is: what kind of Europe do citizens want? A transnational community dominated by international capital and narrow private economic interests or a social Europe based on solidarity and a progressive social and economic citizenship.

My own interpretation on these complex phenomena is that there is an overlapping logic between specific political, economic and cultural dynamics associated with Europeanization and the more general dimension of the so-called globalization forces. Without denying the specificity behind each one, I would propose to conceptualize the processes leading toward Europeanization as being facilitated by the latter. Let us now focus on globalization as a cultural and economic force that has been reshaping modern societies for some time even if its effects have become more obvious recently.

What distinguishes the so-called "global postmodern world" is the tremendous anxiety produced by new risks and new cultural challenges. We live in a world of fast changes, increasing unpredictability and uncertainty. The same forces that have stimulated globalization and internationalization of economic processes pose new dilemmas for postindustrial societies that are unable to master the global effects of the ongoing changes. As Anthony Giddens points out "globalization became the *motto* for the new times." From politicians to social scientists, everybody have started using the concept to signify that something profound is happening to our societies, that a new economic, political, and cultural world order has emerged (Giddens, 2000).

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The emergence of the idea of globalization and the development of post-modern social theories seem to be related. In ongoing debates on the subject some observers see globalization as generating increasing economic homogeneity, while others see it producing social diversity and heterogeneity through increased cultural hybridization (García-Canclini, 1999). There is an emerging consensus around the idea that globalization is a distinguishing feature of the present historical moment. Within that context, proponents of the postmodern interpretation argue that developments in global capitalism are producing a new global social and economic arrangement named post-Fordism that generates "postmodernism' understood as the cultural logic of late capitalism (Harvey, 1989).

While for international capital globalization is a strategy for increasing corporate profits and market power, for political actors it may mean something else. There are new transnational social movements conceiving globalization as a new public arena to invent a worldwide civil society committed to environmental and ecological action, the democratization of world resources and the creation of a new global citizenship (Tarrow, 2002).

The truth is that globalization can be understood as all the above things depending of the perspective chosen. The question, however, is how to grasp its simultaneous and paradoxical effects upon human societies. To a certain extend I share Anthony Giddens' interpretation on this multidimensional phenomenon that constraints and enables possibilities for social change and political action. This leading social theorist points out that:

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> "A healthy global order would achieve a balance between government, the economy and civil society. As long as these are out of kilter, world society will remain unstable. We don not have an effective balance at the moment. The global economy, and the accompanying processes of technological change, is swamping nascent forms of governance, which need to be much strengthened. In many countries, and some regions, there is not yet no developed civil society, and hence little democracy; without these there is little chance of effective economic development either (Ibid. 2000: 123)."

Paraphrasing Giddens (2000), one needs to take globalization seriously but without falling into a blind apology for economic determinism. In that context, this scholar criticizes a group of social scientists that he calls the "globalization skeptics" for whom all this new discourse about globalization is basically an ideological myth and what is really behind it has been largely motivated by conservative neo-liberal ideas. One cannot deny that right-wing social scientists and politicians have manipulated the discourse on globalization as a way of saying that advanced capitalist societies must restructure welfare states and reduce social rights to workers because everyone has to abide by the logic of the so-called global market.

Finally, I would propose to conceptualize globalization as complex set of contradictory forces. In that sense it is not a single force pulling in one direction but several processes that create simultaneous economic, political and cultural dynamics that not always move in the same direction or at the same pace. Furthermore, even if the economic logic behind globalization processes appear to be the dominant one that does not mean that the state cannot intervene in the market seeking to protect workers and other disadvantageous groups from the

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negative social effects of transnational capitalism. In that sense Garrett (1998: 38-45) challenges those who believe that globalization has made virtually impossible for left-wing governments to pursue economic policies that depart from free market principles. For this scholar there is still room to defend a genuine social democratic alternative in the age of globalization. Without denying that globalization processes establish new parameters for political action and that it affects the monetary policy of governments in a time of full capital mobility and fixed exchange rate regimes, Garrett (1998: 45) points out that:

> "The central notion of the globalization perspective that market integration systematically constraints the policy autonomy of national government, and the left in particular, should not be taken as gospel."

Giddens (2000: 29-30) attempts to defend a similar point of view but he remains skeptical regarding the possibilities of "traditional" social democratic politics today. Following part of this author's ideas on the so-called "third way" the new social democrats are defending less state intervention and a new balance between government and global capital. They have abandoned traditional social democratic policies as their best strategy to cope with the effects of globalization (Allen, 2000).

Ironically, the two leading European social-democrat governments inspired by the so-called "third way" philosophy, —those of Tony Blair in Great Britain and Gerhard Schröder in Germany— have "accommodated" to global market logic rather than seeking to reshape the so-called "economic imperatives" via political decisions. During the 1990s all four major EU countries (Britain, France, Germany, and Italy) were governed by left of center coalitions. Despite this left-wing political alignment, there have been very few systematic attempts

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—either at the national level or at the European Union— to challenge the hegemony of globalizing market tendencies. Thus far, the so-called new social democracy has not been very successful in creating effective institutional mechanisms to protect society from the logic of global capitalism (Allen, 2000).

## II. Labor unions within the context of European globalization.

To face current challenges posed by globalization forces some analysts argue that organized labor must become a global actor itself (Moody, 1997; Waterman, 1999).[2] From the trade unions' perspective increasing capital globalization could wear down their bargaining power given that this process is leading towards an unprecedented global mobility of capital and the reordering of post-war structures based on Fordist regimes of accumulation that had characterized the so-called "Golden Age" of industrial capitalism. According to this view globalization is eroding the foundations of organized labor's post-war strength, which did join national capitals into a "class-compromise" that became institutionalized in the so-called advanced welfare states governed by social-democratic parties (Korpi, 1983; Esping-Andersen, 1985).

For a significant part of the European labor movement economic globalization has been closely associated with the neo-liberal market model based on deregulation, workplace flexibility and multinational capital's anti-union strategies. European trade unions are seriously concerned in defending basic labor standards and state regulations in a global context dominated by the neo-liberal ideologies that glorify the unfettered logic of the market. For the European and the international trade union movement the only acceptable globalization is one accompanied with the institutionalization of enforceable labor standards and

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clear safeguards for acceptable working conditions and worker rights (Anner, 2001).

Inspired on the ILO *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* —adopted at the International Labor Conference in June 1998— the world's trade union movement is building a common strategy for transnational collective action (Taylor, 1998). Both American and European trade unionists seem to be moving in the same direction regarding the need for a common global union strategy to face ongoing structural changes and new political challenges. In addition, some European union leaders are defending —besides the strategy proposed by the ILO— an alternative global economic model to be developed by the international labor movement itself. As Dieter Schulte, President of the DGB German trade union federation has stated:

> "The international trade union movement must stop the worldwide trend towards wage cuts and dismantling social protection and turn this downward spiral upwards again. The free trade union movement must develop its own concepts as to the direction which global development processes should take and work in support of these ideas in cross-border cooperation (quoted by Taylor, 1998)."

In its present form the world's trade union movement is fragmented in three major world organizations. Worldwide, the largest labor structure is the *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions* (ICFTU). The others that are relevant in their respective domains are: the *European Trade Union Confederation* (ETUC) and the *International Trade Secretariats* (ITSs), or international trade union federations by industrial sectors. [3]

The ICFTU is a confederation of national trade union organizations that are still acting within the boundaries of the nation-state. [4] During the 1990s the

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ICFTU increased considerably its coverage. Today it is has more than two hundred affiliated organizations with 125 million members and is by far the largest international trade union organization in the world. In the opinion of a labor analyst the ICFTU does not possess yet a clear global strategy on how to cope with the new demands of the international capitalist order (Moody, 1997). The *International Trade Secretariats* (ITSs) are a group of international trade union organizations that represent specific industrial sectors. Although formally independent from the ICFTU, the general secretaries of the federations grouped under the ITC attend the annual ICFTU Executive Board as observers.[5] The ETUC is a supranational body linked to the Commission of the European Union, which finances part of its budget. Thus, the EU provides organizational legitimacy to the ETUC framing its institutional role within the supranational structure of the EU. In that sense the ETUC functions as a trade union supranational organization within the EU with authority to engage in "social dialogue" with European employers' organizations that are recognized by the EU (Magone, 2001). [6]

During the 1990s the ETUC has considerably enlarged its organizational coverage. After the affiliation of the French *Confédération Générale du Travail* in 2000 its coverage is virtually complete in Western Europe (Waddington, 2000). Only a few relatively small European confederations representing white-collar employees (civil servants and managerial staff) have remained outside of the ETUC. In addition, many union confederations from Central and Eastern Europe are in the process of joining it. Different from other international labor organizations the ETUC (that was founded in 1973) has been more flexible regarding its membership and it has sought to integrate national unions from all ideological orientations (including neo-communist unions) and labor cultures. During the

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1990s the ETUC has been consolidated and its membership of national confederations increased to its present number of 65 national unions. The number of countries covered has grown from twenty to thirty, and the number of workers represented has increased to almost 60 million (Waddington, 2000). [7]

Within the ETUC there are several competing perspectives regarding European issues and these disagreements occasionally have undermined the effectiveness of the confederation (as the collective representative of organized labor) at the level of the EU. In addition to those differences, institutional variations of national industrial relations systems —in which member confederations operated— have not always facilitated the implementation of coherent policies based on strong support built on common supranational strategies and long term objectives. Yet, during the past decade the European confederation has pursued a more coherent strategy regarding important issues such as employment, European collective bargaining and workers' participation (Waddington, 2000).

Needless to say that both Spain's major unions (UGT and CC.OO.) have held a pro-European policy since the years of the democratic transition. Faced with the rapid economic and political integration of Spain into the EU, both class-based labor unions became more involved with the ETUC as the principal arena where the idea of a "Social Europe" versus the "Europe of Capital" germinated during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Magone, 2001).

Since 1993, —after the ratification of the Treaty of European Union, *(Maastricht Treaty)*— national actors are reconsidering traditional strategies based exclusively on domestic political action. Spanish unions (members of the ETUC) have realized that they need to pursue a different kind of policies seeking to articulate their national labor agendas with the supranational level of collective ac-

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tion (Moreno, 2001). Within this context, both UGT and CC.OO. have brought more social and economic issues —related to the underdevelopment of the Spanish system of industrial relations— into European forums (Magone, 2001). However, despite this shift towards a European policy, Spanish trade unions remain more involved in the national arena than at the supra-national level of action (Ojeda-Aviles, 2002). In a certain way their involvement at the supra-national European level of collective action is a reflection of a domestic strategy aimed to protect and to consolidate the unions' national "embeddedness" from potential damaging effects of economic globalization and political Europeanization. The same dilemma is common among other Western European labor unions that participate in the ETUC. According to Waddington:

> "Trade union activity at supra-national level is required to protect what remains of national trade union embeddedness from the damaging effects of internationalization. The objective of trade union activity at European level is thus to influence the form and content of the European regulatory regime; to defend, improve and enforce social and labour standards; and to act as a counter to the internationalization of capital (Ibid.325: 2000)."

Magone's interpretation (2001: 302) on the current situation of the European system of labor relations conceptualizes it as one of transition from uneven national systems to an emerging transnational system that seeks to "harmonize" national differences. In that context, it is necessary to stress that the Spanish system of labor relations is among the less developed (Köhler, 1999). For most Spanish trade unionists the opening of the European arena offers a valuable opportunity to enhance workers' social rights and to expand the limited institutional resources available to their organizations. The implementation in Spain of the European labor legislation and the EU directives concerning the construction

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of a Social Europe represent significant positive steps in the direction of more effective institutional mechanisms to guarantee essential social citizenship rights for Spanish workers.

As part of the ETUC, Spain's class-based unions have sought to enhance the social dialogue between employers and the wage earners' organizations. Jointly with the rest of the ETUC, trade unions have invested time and resources pursuing new channels for employees' participation in European (and Spanish) firms and the establishment of a supranational framework for collective bargaining. The following section examines some issues, like to the so-called European Works Councils, that for the unions are essential pieces in the process of constructing a Social Europe.

*European Works Councils*

In September 1994 the European Council approved the Directive 94/45-EC for the establishment of *European Works Councils* (EWCs) for the purposes of improving workers' information and consultation rights in multinational groups and corporations operating in the European Union (EU). [8] The directive was designed as part of procedures seeking to institutionalize the dialogue between social agents adopted under the *Agreement on Social Policy* annexed to the *Maastricht Treaty* of 1993. It has been estimated that the Directive potentially affects over 1,200 multinational corporations (Magone, 2001: 300) that employ some 15 million workers (according to European Trade Union Institute figures).

According to the EWC-Directive the EU Member States are required to enact legislation establishing procedures to set up transnational employee representation in all companies with more than 1,000 employees within the member

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states and at least 150 workers in each of two of the countries covered. Only six of all the countries covered succeeded in implementing national measures to transpose the EWC -Directive by the deadline of September 22, 1996. [9] Between then and 2000 most of the remaining EU member-states did pass labor legislation to create EWCs.

*Table 7.1 - Number of EWC agreements signed by year.*

| Before 1992 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 8 | 10 | 20 | 60 | 322 | 38 | 60 | 70 |

Source: European Trade Union Institute

Before the adoption of the directive in September 1994, there were around 40 European works councils (EWCs) based on voluntary agreements. The directive triggered a process of signing of new agreements setting up EWCs in 400 new companies up to September 1996. This EU directive establishing supranational bodies for employee participation has been interpreted by the ETUC as an indication that the European Union is capable of adopting mandatory rules for the creation of a European industrial relations area.

In Spain the transposition of the EWC-Directive was achieved with the *Law on the right of employees in Community-scale undertakings and groups of undertakings to information and consultation,* passed in April 1997. The process of negotiation of the law took place through joint consultations between the government, the trade unions and the employers' representatives (Magone, 2001). At the end of the process, an agreement on the proposed law was reached within the *Consejo Económico y Social* (Economic and Social Committee). In comparison to

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other European countries, —where the process was overtly contentious— in Spain the social agents were able to reach a consensus on the content and scope of the law without too much disagreements. Like in other European countries, the transposition in Spain of the EWC-Directive and the creation of statutory EWCs (based on the subsidiary requirements) was done in accordance to established national industrial relations practices and legal norms. In 2000 (the most recent information that I have found) there were 28 Spanish multinational firms covered by the EWC Directive, but only three on them had set up EWCs. [10]

Spain's short experience with the European Works Councils, both as a legal institution and as a representative body, is considered by the trade unions as positive. [11] Likewise, the EWCs mirror in many aspects the institutional role of the national system of works councils that has been in place since 1978. [12] Thus far, the EWCs have had two major effects on Spanish labor relations. First, they have highlighted the importance of the European dimension in trade unions' strategy (Magone, 2001). Second, the establishment of EWCs has encouraged the formation of group-level union committees in multinational companies where previously these bodies did not exist. In addition, these new supra-national networks are creating communication channels between workers from different plants across the country and the EU. In the long run the EWCs might offer a supranational platform for establishing a European trade union strategy within the same company, to exchange information among trade unionists from different countries, and to learn from one another's different industrial relations cultures.

Until the year 2000 around 700 agreements to set up EWCs had been signed in multinational firms across Europe (Moreno, 2001: 293). Each EWC is expected to meet at least once a year to discuss issues related to the firm per-

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formance, changes in employment policies and other company issues. [13] Given that the EWCs have been functioning for less than a decade we possess only partial information about them. Findings reported by some of the few studies completed on the effects of EWCs on industrial relations in multinationals operating in the EU suggest that it is too early to fully assess how the new representative bodies are changing the employee-management dynamic (Kerckhofs, 2001).

Members of EWCs are entitled to be informed about any exceptional circumstances, such as closures, relocations or restructuring of the workforce. Attempting to examine these issues Wills (2001) undertook research on the functioning of a EWC in a large Anglo-French-American multinational group with a number of relatively large plants in the UK, France and Belgium, plus an smaller number of employees in production and distribution centers in another 11 countries in the EU. In this case the national interests of specific groups of employees made very difficult to develop the transnational labor solidarity needed to cope with the challenges posed by the firm economic strategy and organizational restructuring. [14] Other studies also report employees' dissatisfaction and negative experiences with the functioning of the EWCs. In several instances employee representatives have sought to expand their field of action beyond mere information and consultation by demanding voice over corporate policy and labor practices. Only in relatively few cases does it appear that EWCs are known to have actually been involved in genuine decision-making processes over sensitive topics such as company reorganization and restructuring while in many cases relevant information appear to have been provided only after the decisions had been taken (Kerckhofs, 2001).

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In connection with the EWCs Wolfgang Streeck (1997) has argued that the way this system of representation has been set up makes it inadequate to deal with the challenges facing workers in Europe today. By adopting a weak directive, without European-level employee rights to full co-determination and real consultation, this scholar suggests that the European Commission has failed to stop ongoing regime competition and the associated lowering of social standards within the EU. Regarding labor rights for participation throughout the EWCs, this sociologist has written:

> "Participation rights under the Directive amount to no more than the provision of *information* on a yearly basis and in exceptional emergencies. There is no obligation for management to consult, if the concept means that management can act only after workforce representatives had an opportunity to present a considered opinion. There are also no rights to co-determination, under which works council consent would be a condition of management going ahead with a decision (Ibid. 28: 1997)."

From this perspective the system of EWCs cannot do much *vis-à-vis* capital mobility across an uneven landscape of labor regulation that might turn them useless for employees who are trying to defend their wages and labor conditions and in many cases their jobs.

The European trade union movement led by the ETUC has actively supported the EWC-Directive expecting to expand its power resources and is asking for increasing employee participation in multinational companies. Perhaps in the long run the EWCs might provide additional resources to advance labor's agenda. At this point the priority for the union movement is to improve these European representative bodies and to encourage real workers' solidarity beyond the narrow confines of the nation-state.

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*European Collective Bargaining*

Another important dimension for the development of a supranational industrial relation system is the creation of a legal framework to regulate employment relations at the level of the EU. The full establishment of the Euro poses new challenges to the trade unions that now need to conduct wage negotiations in a multidimensional (national-supranational) economic environment. In that context there has been some attempt for the coordination of collective bargaining at the European level between some of the leading European industry federations that are members of the ETUC. However, we are still far away from real supranational bargaining (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002).

Since the early 1990s the ETUC's strategy on European collective bargaining has stressed that "the internationalization of the economy, coupled with European Economic and Monetary Union (...) will bring changes to the national and European roles and responsibilities of the social partners". In addition, "the goals and strategies of national union organizations needed to be harmonized in the context of the European industry committees." [15]

Within the European Monetary Union (EMU) new constraints are framing wage negotiations in accordance to the inflation target chosen by the European Central Bank that regulates monetary policy within the Euro zone. In this regard, the monetary authorities *de facto* impose a ceiling on wage increases through collective bargaining at national level. In that sense trade unions' national bargaining strategies are shaped by external considerations. To deal with this situation the ETUC has proposed the creation of supra-European trade union network which can coordinate bargaining strategies across Europe and form some kind of

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cross-border counterpart to multinational corporations (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002; Marginson and Sisson, 1996).

The current overall picture of wage bargaining and regulation of employment in the EU is a fluid and unsettled one. As part of their European corporate strategy many multinational companies are coordinating their employment and wage policies at the EU level in order to cope with the demands and differences in national industrial relations systems. Following a variety of criteria that include productivity, labor costs, flexibility in the organization of production and other economic and social variables, multinational firms are putting additional pressure upon national trade unions on the bargaining table (Marginson and Sisson, 1996).

In this changing economic environment the ETUC is concerned with the potential for "social dumping." That is one of the reasons why the European labor confederation has started to put in place procedures for European-wide coordinated bargaining. The 9th Congress of the ETUC, held in Helsinki in June 1999, adopted a specific resolution stressing on the importance to create the needed instruments and procedures to promote coordination of collective bargaining at the level of the EU. Furthermore, collective bargaining coordination at the sector and industry level is necessary to produce a common strategy for ETUC's industry federations.

The construction of a European supranational system that can regulate employment relations with enforceable procedures to negotiate wages and working conditions is a project that, at best, is still in an embryonic stage. However, some advances have been reported. The European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) passed a resolution in December 1998 on the coordination of bar-

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gaining policy and cooperation between its federations across Europe (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002). Since then, the EMF has been engaged in setting up a supra-national system for regular exchange of information and coordination of its member organizations' collective bargaining strategies. Member unions of the EMF will bargain at national level, although within a framework of coordination at European level. In addition to this initiative other plans to coordinate bargaining policies in the textiles industry at the European level have been launched.

## III. Toward global social unionism?

I have indicated that trade unions cannot control the forces at work in the process of globalization. Their power resources remain largely circumscribed by national boundaries and territorial practices, whereas capital increasingly escapes national regulation and conventional state's political mechanisms. To face this new situation, according to Kin Moody's analysis, unions need to operate and bargain internationally and they need to promote strategies that "create unity in action across racial, ethnic and gender lines within the nation and across borders and seas (ibid. 1997: 270)." Sharing this perspective Peter Waterman (1999) states that what is needed is a new form of global social unionism capable to transform the traditional culture of the labor movement in a way that would allow it to become a part of the new social movements that are challenging unreflective cultural practices and rising new political issues in postindustrial capitalism.

In a critical article Charles Tilly has stated "that globalization threatens established rights of labor through its undermining of state capacity to guarantee

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those rights (1995: 4)." The new transnational logic of capital globalization makes highly difficult for labor unions to exert pressure through the national political institutions in which they are embedded seeking to protect workers' rights *vis-à-vis* capital. From this perspective the weakening of the state is the result of its diminishing capacity to control capital flows and the economic dynamics in a global system in which enforcing social and political citizenship rights has become too problematic. In that context this scholar points out that the only alternative for organized labor is to transform itself into a transnational collective actor. In Tilly's words:

> "If workers are to enjoy collective rights in the new world order, they will have to invent new strategies at the scale of international capital (Ibid. 1995: 5)."

When Tilly's article was written (in the early 1990s) the labor movement in advanced postindustrial societies was still in a process of critical reflection about new strategies on how to cope with the challenges posed by increasing economic globalization. Tilly's essay did not sound very optimistic regarding the future of organized labor and he did not think that a transnational labor movement was in the process of emerging in order to face the new global challenges. The truth is that some of the policies pursued by organized labor in countries like the United States at that time were defensive expressions of nationalist economic protectionism rather than genuine forms of international workers' solidarity (Anner and Evans, 2002).

Within the U.S. labor movement, according to Hurd, Milkman and Turner (2002), unions had responded with a variety of strategies to the rapid economic globalization experienced since the 1980s. At first, unions in the most threatened

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manufacturing sectors embraced protectionist policies such as the "Made the USA" and the "Union Made" garment commercials and other forms of public appeals to consumer patriotism. Large unions like the United Auto Workers (UAW) invested significant economic resources in lobbying and campaigning against foreign imports and seeking trade restrictions *vis-à-vis* Japanese cars. However, the antiunion political climate of the 1980s, combined with the rapid spread of neoliberal and free trade ideas, forced organized labor to rethink its defensive strategy. Since the mid-1990s a new approach inspired on workers' transnational solidarity has come out (Hurd, Milkman and Turner 2002), and now it characterizes labor's public discourse.

Imaginative forms of transnational labor solidarity have been emerging thought unions continue to be nationally based and are still constrained in their organizational scope and political possibilities. What are being developed are complex transnational networks between workers' informal and formal organizations some of which are linked through the main international union confederations that are part of the ITSs, or through the larger worldwide ICFTU and the ETUC at the European level.

Most of the analyses and studies that I have seen (Anner and Evans, 2002; Gentile, 2002; Moody, 1997; Tarrow, 2002) stress on the importance of these transnational networks for the organization of collective actions, exchanging information and resources and for the formation of supranational coalitions between unions and other types of social movements. For the new global unionism the transnational networks do play several interrelated roles. According to Hurd, Milkman and Turner:

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> "Through these networks, unions give and receive material assistance, coordinate their political and bargaining agendas and resolve jurisdictional conflicts. They exchange information on employers, working conditions and industry regulations, and seek pressure points to be used in transnational corporate campaigns. The goals of participation in transnational labor networks include: giving and receiving direct support in collective bargaining and organizing; giving and receiving information; and coordinating national political agendas, in particular to influence transnational politics on the global stage (Ibid. 2002: 16)."

Challenging Charles Tilly's views on the feeble prospects for labor in the age of globalization Gentile (2002: 5) has pointed out that in a variety of wide-ranging globalizing industrial sectors —like the stevedoring industry (loading and unloading of ships)— the unions and other workers' organizations have successfully organized effective transnational campaigns and, to a certain extend, have coordinated bargaining and strike actions. Specifically she studied a series of campaigns organized by Australian and British union members in which other workers' organizations such as the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the international Longshoremen Association (ILA) in the United States were involved. [16] This research examines how Liverpool dockers and the port workers in Australia created solidarity networks across the globe linking their struggles with the concerns of other workers and citizens in places like Spain, Japan, Canada and the United States. These British and Australian longshoremen were being displaced by the restructuring of the industry and the abolition of long-established labor rights and statutory prerogatives. Opposed to negotiate their dismissal and the elimination of their unions' rights the port workers initiated a series of actions to coordinate a worldwide strategy against the

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multinational shipping companies which dominate this industry. At the end, through new forms of global unionism, workers were able to accomplish part of their goals because of the effectiveness of their transnational strategies. Based on her findings Gentile (2002) argues that through transnational and domestic coalitions workers and other social actors can reshape the logic of capital and outlast the effects of globalization in a way that Tilly (1995) did not consider feasible.

There have been other examples of global union solidarity in recent years. For instance, North-American unions have organized industrial actions in support of unions in other countries, despite draconian legal restrictions on secondary boycotts that are severely penalized by labor laws in the United States. In 1997, for example, the International Association of Machinists, (IAM) refused to service British Airways (BA) aircraft during a 1997 strike by BA flight attendants. Likewise, in 1996 American unions and the International Chemical, Engineering and Mineworkers Secretariat (part of the ITSs) coordinated a successful international protest campaign to reinstate sacked striking workers against the multinational Bridgstone-Firestone corporation (Hurd, Milkman and Turner, 2002).

More recently North-American, European and Latin American labor unions (jointly with social movements and NGOs) have been engaged in a global campaign against the precarious subhuman labor conditions that characterize the so-called *maquiladora* plants in countries such a Mexico and Guatemala. New transnational solidarity networked groups like the US Labor Education in the Americas Project (US/LEAP), Campaign for Labor Rights, Global Exchange, Sweatshop Watch, the European Clean Clothes Campaign and the Maquila Solidarity Network have coordinated actions with the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to support workers' strikes in countries like Mexico to

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which multinational corporations have shifted labor intensive assembly production attracted by lower wages, diminished union rights and free access to the U.S. market under NAFTA (Anner and Evans, 2002; Moody, 1997).

There have been other attempts to coordinate strikes and industrial actions across the global workforce employed by multinational corporations operating on diverse countries. According to Moody (1997) global campaigns coordinating workers' collective actions that are employed by multinational groups could have a major impact on the global labor market because of the strategic role these giants companies play in the world economy and in setting up "worldwide trends in working conditions (Ibid. 1997: 280)." Hence, the production chains that characterize the global economy make the transnational corporations (TNCs) vulnerable at many points of their cross-border chains and thus local strikes in key locations could "close down international production systems in whole or part [and]...cripple even the largest TNCs in their major markets (Ibid: 282)."

Collective actions linking employees from the same multinational company demanding workers' in-put in the decision making process leading toward a merging with another firm and to restructure the workforce have taken place in Europe. Recently (in April 2000) workers from Germany, France, Belgium and Italy, demonstrated in Brussels to protest against ABB Alstom Power (AAP) plans to cut a fifth of its workforce after the merging of GEC-Alstom and Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) in 1999. Although this was not the first transnational demonstration of trade unionists at the European level, it was the first time that a nascent European Works Council (EWC), national trade unions and the European Metalworkers Federation (the supranational organization of almost all na-

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tional metalworker trade unions of Europe affiliated to the ETUC) did join forces to mobilize workers across national boundaries (Erne, 2002).

The outcome of this process — that linked trade unions from several European countries including Spain—did not achieve its goals. Between 2000 and 2001 the supranational campaign against the restructuring plans of this European multinational corporation continued and it was based on the articulation of national trade unions' strategies through the EWCs established in the countries where the AAP corporation did have relatively large workplaces. Evidently, the experience was a positive example on how competition to keep jobs and production capacities on certain countries over others did not preclude transnational forms of labor collective action. According to Erne's research on this process:

> "Even if the European demonstration "came too late" to prevent AAP's restructuring plan it underlines the growing awareness that a European trade unionism is slowly emerging, not only on the level of the trade union "etat majors" but also at the level of rank-and-file trade unionists. In fact, the ABB Alstom case is not the only example of increasing rank and file union action at the European level, as demonstrated by the transnational ETUC-demonstrations at the Luxembourg, Porto, Nice, Laeken and Barcelona EU-summits or the transnational solidarity strikes against the closure of the Renault-Vilvoorde (06.03.1997) and GM-Luton (25.01.2001) factories (Ibid. 2002: 25)".

Under the current fragmented European industrial relations system it is unlikely that trade unions engaged in transnational mobilizations will accomplish most of their objectives. One of the main concerns of the ETUC is the construction of a European industrial relations framework upon which national workers' organizations can base their domestic bargaining agendas. Thus, within

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the EU the national industrial relations systems are quite different. The strategy followed by the ETUC, —as the main supranational labor actor at European level— is the design of a European trade union model based on the articulation of national diversities in order to face the unavoidable solidarity dilemmas embedded in the competitive logic of global capitalism (Hoffmann, 2002).

One way to "harmonize" differences in industrial/employment relations systems between countries in which labor organizations are weak and others, in which trade unions enjoy a relatively high degree of institutional power, is the establishment of a minimum edge of enforceable "core labor standards" across the globe.[17] This question, however, is a controversial issue that has been over the table for some time (Moody, 1997; Anner, 2001). [18] The question of core labor standards was brought up by the ICFTU, the ETUC and the AFL-CIO in a series of events related to the Third Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization that took place in Seattle in 1999. These trade union organizations were a major force behind the adoption by the ILO of the *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* in 1998. The core argument has been that labor rights should be given as much importance as intellectual property rights. Nonetheless, there has been a critical assessment of these campaigns' focus. In the opinion of some analysts the global campaign for labor rights needs to be more fully integrated into a broader struggle for equitable and sustainable economic development in which workers in the global South have greater control over the strategy and implementation of the campaign. Moreover, workers on a grassroots level in both the South and North need to become more involved in the supranational movement (Anner, 2001; Moody, 1997).

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Thus far, the campaign for core labor standards has been too northern based and it has been misperceived as another form of northern protectionism. According to Anner (2001: 6): "the international trade system protects industry and agriculture in the North. This forces the South to exploit workers even more in order to compete in a trading system that is unbalanced against it. It is contradictory for the North to require greater respect for labor rights without giving the South the greater market access that would provide the economic conditions conducive to respect for labor rights." Thus, the ultimate success of this campaign may depends of a transnational strategy that could articulate global labor rights and new forms of sustainable economic development in the new world order.

Among the world's labor unions there is a variety of positions and points of view regarding the adoption of core labor standards at this point in time. For instance, the "official" Chinese trade unions have joined forces with their government and disagree with the priorities of the ICFTU. But are not only the quasi-governmental trade unions of some remaining "Communist" regimes the ones against the social clause in WTO agreements. The same happens with India's trade unions and some African labor organizations —in Zimbabwe and Zambia for example— have assumed the same position (Ross and Chan, 2002). On the other hand, there are unions from the global South in countries like Mexico, Chile, Brazil, South Korea and Malaysia that support a linkage between labor standards and exports even if that might undercut the competitiveness of their export-oriented economies *vis-à-vis* other countries.

I must indicate that the current controversy on worldwide enforceable labor standards is a complex issue. The conflicts are not exclusively between the

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poor underdeveloped South and the advanced postindustrial North, but it's as much a South-South issue that reflects the international logic of global capitalism. According to Ross and Chan (2002: 8) the absence of a mechanism establishing international labor standards is propelling the economies of the South in a race to the bottom in wages and labor conditions. One of the reasons that attracts global capital and labor intensive industries to the South exporting economies is precisely the lack of those minimum labor standards.

In the globalized political economy of the early 21st century the governments of countries with large working populations like India and China are strongly opposed to any supranational form of labor regulation. To remain "competitive" these countries assure optimal low cost labor conditions to international capital that exploits their workforces to the fullest. By doing so the low-wage Southern economies do have an impact on the labor conditions of certain industries that have maintained manufacturing operations in advanced postindustrial societies.[19] Obviously, how goods are produced in the global economy affect labor conditions both in the advanced postindustrial world and in the low-wage exporting economies.

The only worldwide set of labor rights and labor standards that exist today are the ones stated in the Labor Convention of the International Labor Organization (ILO), that is linked to the Organization of the United Nations (Moody, 1997: 252). As part of the international campaign of the ICFTU the international trade union movement (with some significant exceptions) has demanded that some of those core labor standards (including basic trade union rights) should be incorporated into the chart of the World Trade Organization (WTO). [20]

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Since the formation of the WTO in 1995 the neo-liberal unregulated market and free trade ideology has overwhelmly become the hegemonic view on how economic, trade and financial exchanges must take place in the global marketplace. The idea of enforcing supranational labor regulations, and to sanction countries that violate basic labor rights, has not found many supporters among WTO member-states.[21] Besides, the issue of the so-called "social clause" in WTO agreements [22] divides trade unionists from the developed North (Europe and the U.S.) and those from the poorer South (the developing world, Latin America, Africa and Asia) in a way that might undermine global labor solidarity in the long run (Anner and Evans, 2002; Ross and Chan, 2002). Although the ICFTU has not achieved its goals, its campaign has increased public awareness on the importance of labor rights in a global scale (Anner, 2001).

Shifting the attention back to Europe, evidence indicates that the question of enforceable core labor standards within the EU is still an unsolved issue (Novitz, 2002). The workers' struggle for a *Social Europe* has been the relying banner of the ETUC for some time. After the implementation of the *Maastricht Treaty* in 1993, the EU started a process to set up the so-called "European Social Charter" to guarantee fundamental labor rights within the European Union. However, this process has not accomplished its stated goal of establishing enforceable labor rights for all workers at the European level (Moody, 1997: 252).

In 2001 the EU-Commission issued a policy document tittle *Promoting Core Labour Standards and Improving Social Governance in the Context of Globalization.* The document stated that "the respect for labour standards is an integral aspect of the European Social Model" and basically endorsed their full applicability

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within the EU and proposed to set up specific mechanisms requiring that other countries (trading partners) do the same (Novitz, 2002: 24).

For Novitz (2002) some EU-member states have not fully complied with the recognized labor standards sated by the ILO. Thus, before seeking to export a phony representation of the so-called "European Social Model" the EU should establish enforceable mechanisms of core labor standards within its own supra-national domain.

A related issue is how wages and working conditions still vary a great deal across Europe (between the countries of Southern and Northern Europe). These differences have been recognized by the ETUC and by other European collective actors. Regarding this question the EU favors stronger institutional forms of "social cohesion" and the reduction of economic disparities among its members. The aim of social cohesion in terms of living and working conditions has been stated in the social chapter of the *Maastricht Treaty*.

Another relevant question being addressed by observers is the relationship between domestic and global political and organizational challenges (Moody, 1997; Waterman, 1999). While Waterman stresses on the cultural and political challenges for labor organizations in a globalized world order, Moody strongly embraces a rank and file-controlled unionism and assumes a more traditionally pro-socialist stand *vis-à-vis* the socioeconomic and political problems created by globalization. Regardless of their differences both analysts think that the appropriate response to neoliberal globalization by workers and their organizations is a development of a new form of social movement unionism. [23] In addition, Moody's book (1997) is both a critique of the American dominant type of "business unionism", in which workers' democracy has been undermined by bu-

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reaucratic union structures, and a political proposal in favor of the radicalization of the American labor movement. [24]

Sociological evidence (Voss and Sherman, 2000) indicates that when traditional unions undergo a process of debureaucratization and cultural change they tend to become more favorable to new forms of global solidarity. While in the American labor movement the "radicalization" of some unions have occurred in many European cases what we have witnessed is the transformation of radical forms of political unionism into a more "moderate" type (Taylor and Mathers, 2002). [25]

In Europe the strategy followed by the ETUC challenges Moody's views against institutional forms of cooperation (the so-called social partnership model) between organized labor and transnational capital. According to Moody, "the ETUC itself is a consensus organization" and it cannot represent a viable alternative to fight neo-liberal globalization (Ibid. 1997: 244). I think, by the contrary, that the question of trade union transformation is more complex than a simple dichotomy between "social partnership" versus "social movement," and that some cases of union renewal simultaneously involve elements from both models. For instance, during the 1990s the ETUC has combined a strategy based on both, social mobilizations and its active involvement in social dialogue with European employers' organizations.

Recent European experiences show that the current dilemma of the emerging global labor movement is not between changing bourgeois society —to go beyond capitalism— or to be limited just to economic improvements within the capitalist system. Maybe the new model of global social unionism would

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need to articulate elements from both, the political and the service-oriented type of business unionism.

Apparently, globalization can have contradictory effects depending of political and cultural factors. On the one hand, it can undermine trade unions' organizational and institutional power while, on the other, it can bring workers into closer contact with each other. Some transnational labor experiences suggest that, in some instances, the changing global political economy poses new opportunities for workers to organize across national boundaries. That is why one should avoid the temptation of falling into pseudo-explanations based on structural determinism in which social actors are scripted as powerless and unable to defend their jobs, communities, and ways of life *vis-à-vis* the logic of globalization.

Evidence indicates that many national trade unions have declined across the postindustrial capitalist world, in part as a result of increasing competition and economic restructuring prompted by the globalization of the world economy (Boeri et al., 2001). There are countless examples of increasing social dumping and conflicts between workers affected by large-scale relocation of capital across the globe. [26] Yet, without overlooking its weaknesses, the world's union movement is still a relevant player in the global political economy. In that context, Dan Gallin, (General Secretary of the *International Union of Food and Allied Workers Associations*) has stated that: "there can no longer be any effective trade union policy, even at the national level, that is not global in concept and international in organization."

The new global order requires from trade unionists to rethink the scale and focus of their organizations. At the beginning of the 21st Century the evi-

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dence does not allow us to predict how far the ongoing transnational trade union tendencies will develop. It is clear, however, that there is an ongoing trend toward the emergence of new forms of global unionism that has been growing unevenly across the planet and inside the labor organizations. The success of this project for a new global labor movement will depend of the development of a transnational union consciousness that should flourish and spreads its roots at the grassroots level of the international labor movement (Wells, 1998; Moody, 1997).

## IV. Spanish labor unions in the globalized European order.

Spanish class-based unions have addressed the issues and questions related to the so-called globalization processes that today stimulate political and cultural debates among trade unionists across the world. In this section of the chapter I focus on how UGT and CC.OO. have sought new strategies to cope with those new challenges and I examine how the external demands posed by the Europeanization of post-Franco Spain have pushed these organization to redesign their discourses and domestic strategies.

Both organizations (UGT and CC.OO.) are active members of the ETUC (Magone, 2001; Moreno, 2001). The UGT joined the supranational trade union confederation in 1973 and with ELA-STV (that joined the following year, March 1974) were the only two Spanish organizations affiliated to the ETUC during the process of transition and consolidation of the democratic regime (1976-1986). *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.) applied for membership for the first time in 1975 and it was turned down because of its pro-Communist orientation and the strong opposition of UGT and ELA-STV to its membership.

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The process leading towards the full incorporation of CC.OO. into the European labor confederation has been well documented by Juan Moreno (2001), for whom the inter-union disagreements between UGT and CC.OO., that I have described previously and that shaped their relations between 1975 and 1987, had a direct effect on the continuous rejection of CC.OO.'s request for admission into the ETUC. [27] Once the CC.OO. and the UGT came closer, as result of the strategy for unity of action embraced in 1987, it was possible for the CC.OO. to be admitted as a full member late in 1990 (Moreno, 2001: 227-243). After joining the European labor confederation all industry federations of CC.OO. started joining the ITSs and in 1996 this labor union was admitted by the ICFTU (Ibid. 285). The *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT) had been a member of the ICFTU for a long time, and its industry federations belonged to the ITSs since the early 1970s.

Regarding international labor relations the main arena for the UGT and CC.OO. realm of action is the European Union. Both organizations have stated in their official documents the importance of creating a European system of industrial relations in which the ETUC and the European industry federations play a prominent role. For instance, the UGT in its 37th Congress in 1998 stressed on the need to "grant the ETUC a sufficient mandate and representation, on behalf of national confederations, so that linking agreements may be formalized at the European level and to provide it with the capacity for mobilization, thereby transferring powers to European Trade Union Federations (quoted by Ojedas-Aviles, 2002: 22)."

To what extend UGT and CC.OO. have "Europeanized" their internal organizational structures during the 1990s? This is still an open question, difficult to answer. [28] Available evidence indicates that there is not enough coordination

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yet between Spanish trade unions in relation to European matters and that their common strategy based on unity of action has incorporated the European dimension only partially (Ojedas-Aviles, 2002). Moreover, the European arena has become an essential part for all the national unions' agendas in the EU. In that sense I agree with Magone's interpretation when he states that:

> "Spanish trade unionism is strongly involved in the European one. Such dedication has increased over time. The strong commitment to Social Europe and other aspects of European integration makes them among the strongest supporters of the ETUC and the European Unions (Ibid. 2001: 227)."

According to this scholar, Spanish unions have advanced much more than the Portuguese organizations in the process of inner-change resulting from their increasing exposure to the European dimension. Magone (2001: 233) states that at the end of the 1990s both labor organizations (UGT and CC.OO.) had adopted a multilevel strategy that reflected their progressive adjustment to the European Union governance system.

Regarding contacts between Spanish and other European unions there is an emerging pattern of trans-border union collaboration between Iberian trade unions (in the northern region between Portugal and Galicia and between local union organizations operating in Andalucia and the Algarve) [29] and some articulation of actions between the French, the Italian and the Spanish labor confederations.

Both UGT and CC.OO. have established rudimentary forms of union coordination with non-European labor organizations in Latin American countries where major Spanish banks are investing heavily. Spanish multinational compa-

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nies in the areas of energy and telecommunications also have been investing in that region. Thus, UGT and CC.OO. have collaborated with the unions representing the workers of these firms in the host countries seeking to organize and coordinate inter-state trade union initiatives. The UGT helped to set up the *Iberoamerican Interunion Group of Telefónica* in 1997, with representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru, where Spanish Telefónica has subsidiaries (Ojeda-Aviles, 2002). [30]

Of the two organizations CC.OO. perhaps is the one with a more structured involvement in the global arena. It has set up transnational bodies to keep close contacts between employees of Spanish banks from different countries and it has been actively involved in global campaigns in favor of the establishment of core labor standards. It has participated in union transnational networks building "alliances with related unions in North Africa (Moody, 1997: 273)" and it has been part of the TIE (transnational information exchange) since its origins in the early 1980s. One of the most important regional branches of CC.OO., the Catalonian *Comisiones Obreras* plays a pivotal role in the European TIE-auto workers' network (Ibid. 263).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, during the time when I was doing my fieldwork, I did pose questions related to the process of European integration to a number of regional and national leaders of UGT and CC.OO. interviewed as part of my research. [31] Informants in those interviews raised a number of issues and concerns. At the time the main question for many trade unionists interviewed was the fear of increasing *social dumping* as a consequence of the socio-economic disparities between Spain and the northern and continental European countries. Closely related to this issue was the informants' expectation that the

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full Europeanization of Spain would create effective mechanisms to guarantee social protection for the workers within the context of what at that time was still an underdeveloped welfare state. For these trade unionists the only way to balance the potential threats and the benefits of the integrated European economy was by expanding social citizenship rights and by institutionalizing what at the time was known as the "Social European Space". [32]

According to the scholarly literature one may find different types of welfare states in Europe. One can distinguish between the Scandinavian social democratic model, the continental (neo-corporatist and liberal versions) and the Southern European or Mediterranean type. Of course, the Spanish welfare state belongs to the last category. While in most Western Europe, the welfare state derived from the political settlement of post World War II and the establishment of class compromises based on what became known as organized capitalism (Lash and Urry, 1987) in Spain the welfare state remained underdeveloped under the Francoist regime (1939-1975). Many of my informants (mostly union leaders from UGT) saw the ongoing European integration as a possibility of lessening the social gap between Spain's less developed welfare policies and the ones of advanced welfare state systems that European social democracy had achieved elsewhere [33]

Though substantial historical divergences between European welfare states exist regarding taxation and funding, levels of coverage and social policies, these welfare states became the building blocks for Europe's social and labor market policies and the establishment of diverse forms of political regulation of the private economy (Therborn, 1995). During the 1960s and 1970s, while the European Community and the common market were developing, a transnational

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European social policy was not an issue and the shared assumption on social protection was that it was going to remain a national question. In the 1980s the basis of what became the "European social model" took form, paradoxically, in the context of growing neo-liberal challenges to the type of social capitalism that had been developed in Western Europe since the 1950s.

After Spain and Portugal's entrance in the European Community, the term *social cohesion* was first used in the Single European Act (1987) at the insistence of the less developed countries. While originally the idea of *social cohesion* referred to regional inequalities, subsequently it acquired a new meaning in connection to socioeconomic inequalities and structural problems within existing European societies. This idea of social cohesion reinvigorated the process of European integration moving in the path towards the establishment of a single European market in 1993 (*Maastricht Treaty).* It became obvious for the trade union movement that if workers were going to be exposed to increasing European-wide competition they also had to be protected from the negative effects of the market at European level. To achieve some form of social protection the so-called *Social Charter* was passed in 1989. Even so, this document did not specify clear mechanisms to coordinate social policies. Most of the social and economic rights of EU citizens have remained at the level of the individual member states; while they have become part of an European transnational economy with a single currency and in which national firms compete. On the other hand, public expenditures and welfare provisions depend almost entirely on national governments. And because these are financed at national level taxation systems of social protection vary widely across the European Union.

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When Spain (like the rest of the EU-member states) began to implement the *Maastricht Treaty* in 1993 both labor unions had already initiated a process of "readjustment" and were fully engaged in a pro-Europeanist discourse. The process of economic and market integration accelerated tremendously during the 1990s. Within this context, trade unionists became more concerned with potential increasing social dumping in Southern Europe where multinational companies could relocate production attracted by lower taxes, underdeveloped welfare systems and weaker labor market's regulations. Inside the UGT the ratification of the *Maastricht Treaty* did not create serious frictions, but in the case of the CC.OO. the story was a different one. In *Comisiones Obreras* the pro-PCE sector confronted the moderate leadership, which had been running the organization since 1987, and joined the PCE and IU in a campaign against the ratification of the new treaty. [34] While the dominant trade unions assumed the critical support for the *Maastricht Treaty* the so-called "critical sector" in CC.OO. joined forces with the Communist left and some of the anti-globalization social movements and blamed the *Maastricht Treaty* for all Spain's and Europe's ills (Moreno, 2001).

In chapter five I pointed out that during the 1990s the PCE attempted to regain control of *Comisiones Obreras*. Therefore, the issue of what kind of strategy to cope with the so-called "neo-liberal" Europeanization became one of the main questions employed by the union's internal opposition *vis-à-vis* the moderate "post-communist" leadership in control of the formerly pro-PCE trade union.

For Magone (2001), the progressive Europeanization of the CC.OO. contributed to reshape internal politics in the organization strengthening the pragmatic orientation of the current leadership. Regarding ideological orientation, both organizations (UGT and CC.OO.) had undergone a process of "institutional

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learning" that has been facilitated by their increasing autonomy from political parties (Royo, 2002: 170). This pragmatic orientation facilitated the adoption of a less confrontational policy *vis-à-vis* the employers and the government. Within that context, Spain witnessed the return to tripartite forms of social bargaining and to a series of centralized agreements that pushed trade unions to "become significantly more involved in state agencies and administration (Hamann and Martinez Lucio, 2003: 75)."

Significant differences exist between the new policy of social pacts and the neo-corporatist pacts signed during the democratic transition. The new national-level social bargaining initiated in Spain after the mid-1990s lacks an income policy like the one included in those pacts signed during the period 1977-1986 (Royo, 2002: 64). Parallel to this process one observe a similar trend of social pacts in a number of European countries designed to face challenges posed by the prospects of monetary union with the imminent full establishment of the EMU in 2002. [35] However, in the Spanish context other domestic political and economic considerations have played a significant part in the reemergence of social pacts during the period 1994–2001 (Royo, 2002: 173).

The resurgence of social pacts in Spain reflects changes in the priorities and strategies of the social actors, specially the trade unions and the employers' organizations (Royo, 2002). In the case of the unions their common strategy based on unity of action between 1987 and 1994 did not produce significant "labor victories". Therefore, their confrontational strategies based on mass mobilizations and several general strikes (1988, 1992,1994) did not achieve the goal of changing domestic economic policy and reshaping the labor market reforms in a more progressive way (Hamann, 1998). At the same time, class-based labor un-

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ions began to lose terrain to "professional" and employer-oriented enterprise unions and they faced difficulties trying to expand their membership and integrate more atypical workers into their ranks (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003: 71).

This new form of social bargaining has been termed "strategic concertation" or "flexible corporatism" by some scholars (Hamann and Martinez-Lucio, 2003: 63) and "competitive corporatism" by others (Royo, 2002: 176). Regardless of the terminology what is remarkable is how in an unfavorable environment for institutionalized corporatist bargaining (absence of encompassing unions and an ideological climate that promotes neo-liberal policies) Spain did return to regulatory practices trough negotiated agreements and coordination by the social agents of issues related to the dynamic of the labor market and the framework for collective bargaining (Royo, 2002; Fraile 1999).

However, there are noticeable differences between new forms of neo-corporatist bargaining and earlier ones. The classic corporatist centralized bargaining model of the late 1960s —up to the early 1980s— was characterized by a fairly well institutionalized political exchange between labor and capital embedded in a class compromise that was nurtured by the Keynesian social state. Basically, the model was based on moderate wage growth, low industrial conflict, full employment and a developed safety net that guaranteed generous welfare provisions for all the citizens.

The new type of social pacts and "competitive corporatism" that reemerged during the 1990s reflects a different political context in a globalized economic environment. Following the typology stated on Table 7.2 these social pacts reflect a different regime of capitalist accumulation (Fordism vs. post-Fordism

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and globalization), tend to coordinate polices to manage the restructuring of the labor market (full employment vs. increasing unemployment and "flexible" unstable jobs), promote changes in wage and economic policies (redistribution vs. competitiveness) and changes in social policy and welfare state's coverage (expansion vs. retrenchment).

**Table. 7.2 Differences between content and context of social pacts signed during "golden age of corporatism 1960s-1970s" and the 1990s.**

| | Social agreements in the 1960s and 1970s | Social agreements in the 1990s |
|---|---|---|
| Context | National regulated economy<br>Baby boom<br>Accommodating monetary regime<br>Fordism | Globalisation<br>Population ageing<br>Economic and monetary union<br>Information society |
| Labour market | Full employment<br>Labour market regulation | Unemployment<br>Security and flexibility |
| Wage policy | Productivity redistribution | Wage restraint, competitiveness |
| Social protection | Welfare state expansion | Welfare state retrenchment |
| Institutional and bargaining framework | Centralisation<br>Social partner-oriented | Coordinated decentralisation<br>State-oriented |

Source: Fajertag and Pochet, 2000

In most European countries involved in national agreements the social pacts' policy has played a major role in the political managing of the process of restructuring welfare systems, the increasing flexibilization of labor markets, and the adoption and implementation of convergence polices in accordance with the *Maastricht* criteria. While in some countries the focus of the tripartite pacts has been on policies designed to achieve socioeconomic conditions needed to reach the EMU, in others the social agents have signed national employment pacts with some orientation on wage policy (Pochet and Fajertag, 2000).

In Spain the resurgence of a social pact policy should be understood as a defensive strategy of class-based unions that were being challenged by compet-

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ing employee organizations (an enterprise-centered kind of business unionism), an increasing managerial tendency to "individualize" employment relations, the relative weakening of the unions in the firms, and the relative failure to overcome the "insider" vs. "outsider" dilemma in an increasing segmented labor market (Royo, 2002: 188-190).

According to Pochet and Fajertag (2000) in the Spanish concertation model of the 1990s the state has played a determinant role by bringing the so-called "social partners" together. The relative success of the social pact policy has been due to a different approach from a government engaged in promoting social dialogue and focusing on specific issues and questions instead of seeking a "broad grand pact" that the unions (because of the previous experience of social pacts during the 1980s) were unwilling to support. The government's pragmatic orientation matched the expectation of unions that had readjusted their strategies to face the issues and problems that I described above.

Besides, in the European setting one should not forget that the social partnership model was incorporated in the Social Protocol of the *Maastricht Treaty*. Therefore, the idea of social dialogue and social partners dominated the public discourse in the domain of European employer-employee relations during the 1990s (Taylor and Mathers, 2002).

The transition to the last phase of EMU (1999-2002) took place in a context in which the *Partido Popular* (PP) had won the 2000 elections with an absolute majority and in which certain macroeconomic variables (inflation, unemployment) deteriorated after a period of relative strong improvement. The government attempted to implement a non-negotiated reform of the unemployment insurance system and the unions called a general strike in June 2002. Later that

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year the PP-led government reopened negotiations with the unions and the employers on the scope of this reform and the social partners returned to the bargaining table. While social pacts have been abandoned in other European countries, in which they were signed during the 1990s, recent evidence from Spain suggests that the unions are still interested in their continuation (Royo, 2002).

Closely related to this social bargaining agenda, Spanish unions have sought to modernize the labor relations system and the way collective bargaining is conducted (Hamann and Martinez-Lucio, 2003). To what extend the unions' domestic agenda reflect supranational concerns and takes into consideration proposals made by the ETUC for greater coordination of collective bargaining across Europe?

Let us state that UGT and CC.OO. have participated in the *Committee for the Coordination of Collective Bargaining* that the ETUC set up at its 9th Congress, held in Helsinki in the summer of 1999 (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002: 9). This committee was formed to encourage European trade unions to provide information of wage bargaining trends to the ETUC in order to help it in macroeconomic dialogue at European level with employers and other EU-bodies. Regarding European trade union's policy it seeks to coordinate wage bargaining and to promote an "upward convergence" of living standards between less developed countries like Spain and the advanced ones. By attempting to coordinate supranational and national strategies, trade unions expect to avoid social dumping and wage dumping and to narrow wide wage disparities in the European Union.

The creation of a supranational European system of collective bargaining is a project that is still in an early stage.[36] There have been some bargaining policy coordination between unions at sectoral levels, but this trend is still underde-

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veloped in most European countries including Spain (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002).

As indicated above, UGT and CC.OO. signed several social pacts during the last part of the 1990s. In 1997 a tripartite agreement was reached to deal with the reform of the labor market. Some references were made to European issues in that accord but its main focus was the Spanish economy and problems related to unemployment and the quality of employment. The unions had wanted to bring an European perspective to the negotiation of agreements signed during the 1990s and have expected from employers a clear commitment to reduce unemployment and temporary employment to levels closer to the rest of Europe. In 1998 and 1999, in their joint collective bargaining agendas, the trade unions stressed on the need to harmonize wages and working hours with European averages and on the creation of an active employment policy well tuned with the process of Europeanization (Brouwer, 1999).

Responding to ETUC's policy, UGT and CC.OO. endorsed the "European coordination rule" set up by the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) in 1998. In some European multinational corporations located in Spain there have been timid attempts to coordinate bargaining issues especially with regard to wages, working conditions, employment stability and health and safety. Apparently, in some cases workers' representatives have demanded the "harmonization" of wages, working hours and the level of temporary employment in the different European branches of the same company. [37] However, so far Spanish unions have not fully implemented the "European coordination rule" recommended by the ETUC and the EMF, not even in transnational European firms located in Spain. In one of the few studies that have been conducted to evaluate

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the experience of bargaining coordination in the different sectors Pochet (1999) comes to the following conclusion:

> "An assessment of measures actually taken so far to comply with these guidelines [the European coordination rule] reveals somewhat limited results. One group of countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands) is making real efforts to implement the [EMF] recommendations. A second group, the Scandinavian countries, accepts the recommendations but would like to interpret them more flexibly. Finally, Italy, Spain, Greece, Ireland, and the United Kingdom together with France accept the recommendations in principle but have taken no steps to implement them' (Pochet, 1999: 272)".

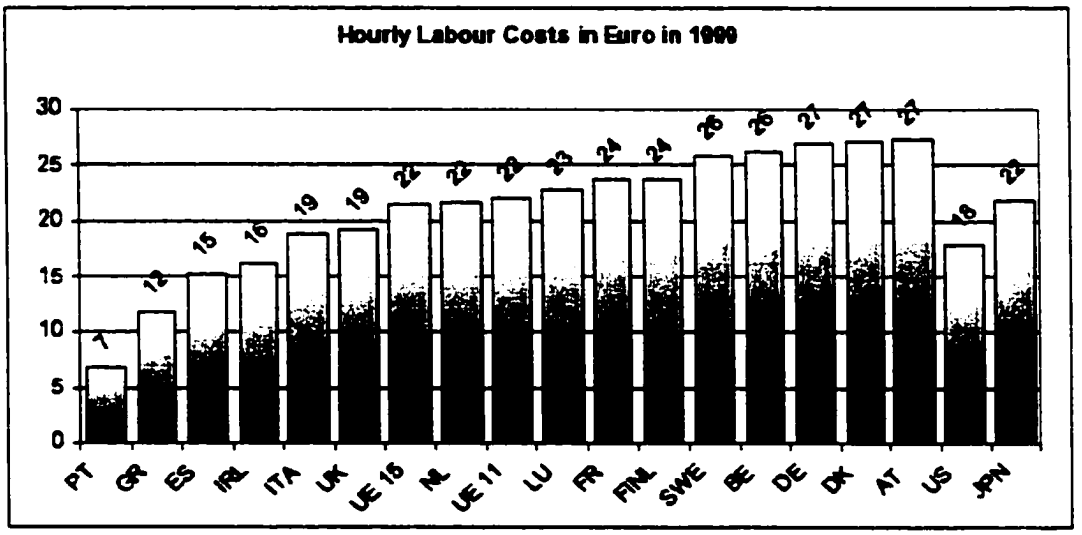
Regarding collective bargaining agenda in national firms, both UGT and CC.OO. have stressed on similar issues. Their official discourse has stressed on the necessity to improve wages and working conditions in a way that makes the workers' socioeconomic condition in Spain closer to the European average. Clearly, from the trade unions' perspective the Europeanization of Spain means the "harmonization" of the working conditions with the rest of Europe and the extension of the same social citizenship rights to all workers (Brouwer, 1999).

The monetary integration achieved with EMU in the context of the European globalized political economy has changed the parameters in which trade unions and employers do engage in collective bargaining. The use of a single currency in 11 of the 15 EU member-states has redefined the general environment within which wage negotiations are conducted. The new situation does constrain even more the framework for labor strategies increasing the risk for unfair competition and social and wage dumping. There are still significant variations in labor regimes and wage levels in the European Union show significant

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discrepancies. According to data gathered by Eurostat in 1999 Austria (AT) (27.2 Euro) had the highest labor costs in the EU, followed by Denmark (DK), Germany (DE) and Belgium (BE), whereas Portugal (PT) (7 Euro) had the lowest level, after Greece (GR), Spain (ES) and Ireland (IRL). The overall European average was 21.5 Euro.

**Figure 7.1 Hourly labor costs in Europe (1999).**




*Source: Eurostat, 2001.*

Taking into consideration wage differences shown on figure 7.1 the ETUC —jointly with the European Industry Federations— issued a series of guidelines for wages' negotiation to be used as reference for collective bargaining policies by national unions (Dufresne and Mermet, 2002). The argument, basically, has been that those guidelines would help low-wage countries to achieve higher wage increases based on productivity differentials avoiding wage dumping. Within that context, low-wage countries such as Portugal, Greece, Ireland and Spain will have an opportunity to catch up without putting pressure on the high-wage countries such as Germany, Belgium, Austria and Sweden.

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To understand Spain's wage structure one must look at the structure of the economy and the dominance of the small firms with little union's presence, in which paternalistic employment relations are the rule. To remain competitive these small enterprises keep lower production costs and wages are much lower than the ones paid in medium sized and large firms.

**Table 7.3 Annual labor costs per worker by firm size (in industry) in PTA. 000's (1996)**

| | Business size | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than 50 employees | 50 to 200 employees | 201 to 500 employees | More than 500 employees | Total |
| Labour cost per worker | 2,510 | 3,306 | 3,843 | 4,336 | 3,121 |

Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Employment relations in micro and small enterprises: Spain (2001).

Under those conditions, Spain's trade unions support the implementation of ETUC-guidelines on convergence in bargaining because in the long run it would benefit all the wage earners. The employers, particularly the CEPYME, are mistrustful of coordinated European bargaining for reasons analogous to their opposition to centralized national collective bargaining. From their perspective, wage differences across sectors and domestic labor markets, and between Spain and the EU, strengthen the competitiveness of their firms in the globalized European economy. In a system characterized by a high fragmentation of collective bargaining structures and weak articulation of the unions' bargaining agendas (Martínez Lucio, 1998) the unions have focused more on the reform of the national collective bargaining system than in developing a supranational strategy within their domestic priorities (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003; Magone, 2001).

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Other issues closely related to the potential emergence of new forms of collective bargaining at the European level are the question of employment and labor market policies. Given the high fragmentation of the labor market, the employment question has become a major unions' priority in the context of European integration (Brouwer, 1999).

**Table 7.4 Differences between Spain and the EU of major labor market variables (in percentages) 2002.**

| | *EU (15)* | *Spain* | *Differences between EU (15) and Spain* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employment Rate | 63.2 | 54.8 | 8.4 |
| Men | 77.6 | 69.7 | 2.9 |
| Women | 54.0 | 40.3 | 13.7 |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.4 | 14.1 | -5.7 |
| Men | 7.3 | 9.7 | -2.4 |
| Women | 9.9 | 20.5 | -10.6 |
| Unemployment Youths | 16.1 | 25.5 | -9.4 |
| Men | 15.0 | 19.7 | -4.7 |
| Women | 17.3 | 32.4 | -15.1 |
| Temporary Workers | 13.4 | 32.1 | -18.7 |
| Men | 12.6 | 30.6 | -18.0 |
| Women | 14.5 | 34.6 | -20.1 |
| Part-time Workers | 18.0 | 8.2 | 9.8 |
| Men | 6.3 | 2.9 | 3.4 |
| Women | 33.7 | 17.2 | 16.5 |

Source: *Eurostat*

In comparison to the rest of Europe (EU-members) the situation of Spain's labor market is characterized by higher unemployment, a huge difference in the number of temporary workers and a lower participation rate of Spaniards in the labor force. According to data on Table 7.4 the most affected by those negative variables are women and the youth. Poor conditions in the labor market have made the unions more aware of the importance of a proactive employment policy. Thus, they have readjusted their strategies and have negotiated job flexibility

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and other structural reforms in exchange for a reduction of temporary contracts and less instability in employment (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003; Fraile, 1999). At the same time UGT and CC.OO. have criticized the PP-led government for not following the guidelines that the European Commission issued in 1998 on the subject of employment (Brouwer, 1999: 60). Spanish labor organizations have been trying to reduce the working time per week to 35 hours —as a way to promote new jobs— but so far they have not advanced in that direction (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003). [38]

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 added a chapter on the need to develop a European employment policy as part of the idea of a common social policy. Though national governments remain the entities responsible for employment issues, the EU has put in place a supranational structure to deal with the coordination of employment policies. For the ETUC , promoting a common employment and social policy is a question that cannot be separated from monetary and economic integration. In the opinion of some observers "the ETUC systematically called for more attention to employment, less to mechanical application of the convergence criteria, and the recognition of the real economic difficulties that the European economies faced in the mid to the late 1990s (Jenson and Pochet, 2002: 7)." After 1995, Sweden and Finland's entrance in the EU has contributed to reshape the debate on employment and social policy and the importance of a "Social Europe". The incorporation of the Scandinavian countries has refocused the attention on the social implications of the EMU and, in that context, trade unions have pursued policies designed to reshape economic and social policies in the European arena.

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The UGT and the CC.OO. voiced loud criticisms of the monetary adjustment program in connection with EMU but at the end both unions supported it. Apparently, both class-based organizations followed closely the policy of the ETUC on the EMU (Magone, 2001) and this issue did exacerbate internal conflicts in *Comisiones Obreras* (Moreno, 2001).

The ETUC supported the EMU as part of its Europeanist project, on the assumption that an united Europe would create more employment and, in the long run, greater economic and social cohesion. The main European labor confederation states that the workers' movement should "democratize" the process of political and economic integration by emphasizing on its social dimension (Jenson and Pochet, 2002).

On the social impact of the EMU, observers suggest that its effect in Spain has varied depending of the sector in question. A comparative research has found that in banking and finances the socioeconomic and employment repercussions of the EMU were quite noticeable. Meanwhile, in others —like road transportation— its impact was relatively less significant; in the case of automotive sector its implication was, to a certain extend, undistinguishable from the ones produced by globalization (Alonso et al., 2000). These findings confirm part of the evidence generated by a team of researchers for whom the process of Europeanization and globalization create strong trends toward convergence in industrial relations, particularly in sectors more exposed to these dynamics (like in the banking sector), but less in relatively protected employment (like in public administration). According to this comparative study of five European countries (Rigby, Smith and Lawlor, 1999), regardless of the national differences and cul-

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tural traditions, trade unions face similar problems and there is a tendency to converge in the way they design strategy *vis-à-vis* those challenges.

On the other hand, there is disagreement among scholars on how Europeanization has impacted upon Spanish labor relations. Some observers argue that the structural constraints reinforced by the monetary and economic integration have not reshaped the Spanish system toward increasing convergence (see Köhler, 1999) while others (see Serrano del Rosal, 2000) affirm the contrary.

However, Spanish unions, —without abandoning their cultural traditions— have moved in a convergent direction with the rest of the European union movement. Like in other post-industrial societies the Spanish class-based unions have experienced a process of organizational and ideological readjustment that started in the 1980s and accelerated during the 1990s. Serrano del Rosal (2000: 209) states that unions' strategies during the 1990s resembled the ones put in place by other European unions. For instance, there was a progressive decrease in industrial disputes and greater collaboration with management at the level of the firm. This trend has been associated with a process of modernization and professionalization of unions' organizational structures and the emphasis on unions' service function but without giving up the proactive organizing approach (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003: 70; Miguélez, 1995: 91-2).

## V. **Trade unions in a new century.**

At the beginning of the 21st century European trade unions offer a mixed picture. Since the 1980s wage earners' organizations have been coping with increasing unemployment, restructuring of labor markets, increasing globalization

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that has intensified international competition and a brand of free market neo-liberalism that favors deregulation, labor flexibility and the retrenchment of the welfare state (Boeri et al. 2001). During this period one witnessed a progressive decline in unionization in most advanced postindustrial economies (Western, 1997). Jointly with the erosion of unions' membership base, employers have sought to diminish collective bargaining power, limiting workers' social rights and in countries like the United States (U.S.) the government has encouraged unions' busting policies pursued by employers.

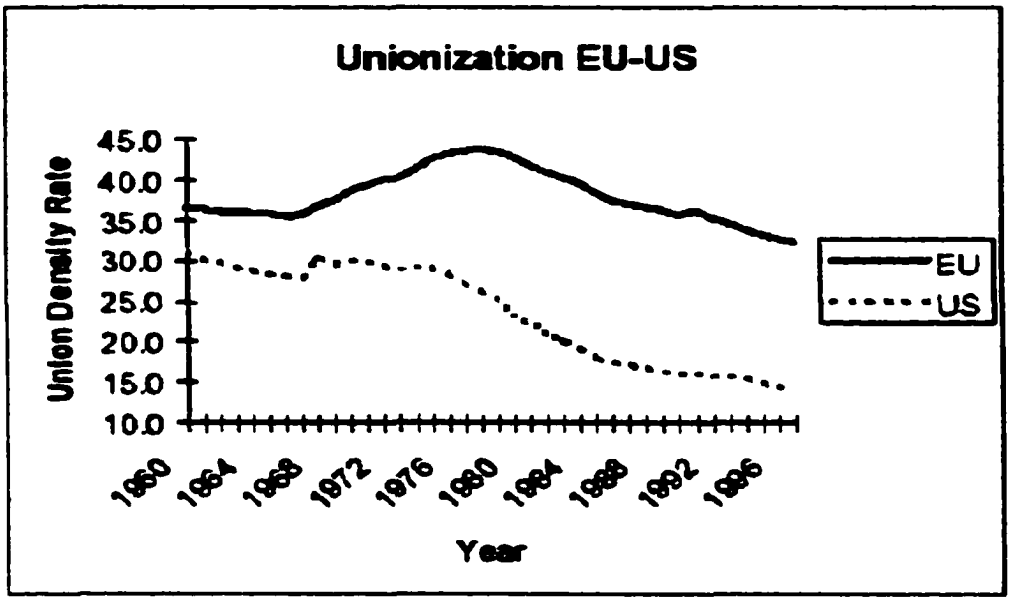
While the 1960s and the early 1970s were periods characterized by increasing workers' militancy and the "radicalization" of unions that through mobilization and collective action contributed to the formation of a new identity among workers (Pizzorno, 1980) the 1990s has been a time of "changing of social values and expectations of workers toward unions (Boeri et al., 2001: 30)."

Thought levels of unionization are still higher in Western Europe than in the U.S., where union density was around 15 percent in the mid-1990s, convergent tendencies toward desunionization have developed in both areas of the world. Summarizing averages in union density since 1960 data plotted on Figure 7.2 show the trend reversal in European unionization since the early 1980s. However, union decline began in the U.S. two decades earlier (since the 1960s). The process of union decline has continued in the 1990s in both the European Union and the United States (and in Japan). Unionization in Western Europe is now 12 percentage points below its post-war peak of 44 percent in 1979, and is now lower than at any time since 1960. Yet, average union density in the European

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Union is still more than twice the level of unionization in the United States (Boeri et al., 2001: 14-15).

**Figure 7.2 Unionization trends in the European Union (EU) and in the United States (US) 1960-1996.**




Source: Boeri et al. (2001: 17)

One must place the decline of union membership in its broad socioeconomic and cultural context. In addition, one should keep in mind that not all West European unions have been affected by this decline in the same way. According to Western (1997), Boeri et al. (2001) and Waddington and Hoffmann (2000) social-democratic Scandinavian and Belgian unions were not weakened by the desunionization trend while in Spain the UGT and the CC.OO. recuperated part of the losses of the early 1980s (Jordana, 1996; Miguélez, 1998, 1999).

At the European level Waddington and Hoffmann (2000: 77) state that unions are facing common problems and challenges resulting from shifts in the composition of employment, high levels of unemployment, the decline in mem-

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bership and labor reforms implemented by employers in the context of state-led restructuring of national regulatory regimes. In this changing context, unions must adapt their structures in order to survive as wage earners' organizations. Comparative research indicates that on several levels, similar patterns and trends emerged regarding the way labor organizations have coped with those demands.

Researchers point out that while a process of restructuring and organizational change was in its way across Western Europe, trade unions were experiencing with new policies and strategies under a new set of political, social and economic circumstances. Accordingly, a trend toward the rationalization of organizations has been encouraged by increasing merging between industry federations and the search for more inclusive recruitment policies seeking to attract non traditional categories of workers such as women, youth and white-collar employees has been identified. Focusing on the question of how unions could increase their membership, Waddington and Hoffmann (2000: 65) suggest that there is a tendency among unions to combine elements from the servicing and the organizing model. While the former relies on union activity external to the workplace, in contrast, the organizing model is centered on the active presence of unions in the workplace and in the active involvement of members in union affairs.

The same phenomena, described above, have been taking place within UGT and CC.OO. for some time. Both organizations have undergone a process of organizational rationalization and have pursued innovative policies to attract wage earners that are reluctant to join unions because of a complex number of social or structural factors. As I have pointed out, these class-based unions have undergone a process of ideological readjustment and have sought a more prag-

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matic approach to represent wage earners' interests. As part of their institutionalization as workers' organizations Spanish unions have been reformed and restructured.

While the 1980s was a period of transition from a model of "political unionism" to one based on institutional autonomy and pragmatism (Serrano del Rosal, 2000), the 1990s has been a time of union revitalization in Spain (Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003). To what extend Spanish class-based unions have consolidated their structures at the level of the workplace? How successful the organizations have been in attracting new union members? Have the unions' strategies softened the negative effects of globalization? The answers for these questions would need additional research. In the remaining part of the chapter I offer some partial answers.

On the subject of union density and consolidation of unions' organization in the firm very little research has been done. In 2000 the Metalworkers Federation of CC.OO. sponsored a survey of works council delegates elected under the union's banner. According to this study the old problem of low union presence in small firms had not been overcome and the unions' main social base were still the blue-collar workers and employees of large firms.

At the end of the 1990s in Spain, union density was around 15-16 percent of the dependent labor force (Boeri et al, 2001: 13; Waddington and Hoffmann, 2000: 54) After a period of relative increase (1987-1995) it remained around fifteen to sixteen percent being among the lowest in Europe.

Works council delegates from CC.OO. assessed the evolution of union membership for UGT and their organization during the late 1990s. Table 7.5 il-

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lustrates how delegates perceived changes in union membership for both organizations.

**Table 7.5 CCOO Delegates' opinion on the evolution of union membership for UGT and CC.OO. during the late 1990s (%).**

| | *CC.OO.* | *UGT* |
|---|---|---|
| Has increased | 57.8 | 10.4 |
| Stayed the same | 21.5 | 31.5 |
| Has decreased | 6.3 | 21.5 |
| Don't Know/NA | 14.4 | 36.6 |
| (N) | 651 | 651 |

Source: Federación Minerometalúrgica de CC.OO. *Encuesta a los representates sindicales por la FM de CC.OO. (2000b).*

The dominant delegates' view was that CC.OO. had experienced an increase in membership. Regarding UGT, the responses were ambiguous and more than a third of the respondents selected "don't know" or "no answer" as their choice. These opinions may reflect the official discourse of the organization that has claimed growth in its affiliation during the 1990s, or may respond to the situation in the industrial sector where traditionally CC.OO. has been the dominant organization. Based on my fieldwork experience when I asked informants about how affiliation and support for unions had changed during the late 1980s, I got similar answers.

Why workers and wage earners have not joined CC.OO. or UGT in larger numbers? For my surprise the works council delegates surveyed in 2000 gave similar reasons to the ones that my informants reported in 1990. Table 7.6 is based on a question posed to the CC.OO. delegates: For what reason or motive workers don't join unions?

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**Table 7.6 CC.OO. delegates' views on workers' motives not to join unions stratified by firm size (%).**

| | *Small Firms (6 to 49 workers)* | *Medium Size Firms (50 to 250 workers)* | *Large Firms (more than 250 workers)* | *TOTAL* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workers' individualism, lack of solidarity | 33.0 | 35.5 | 30.3 | 33.3 |
| Collective bargaining covers all workers, including non-union members | 31.1 | 28.1 | 46.7 | 33.0 |
| Fear of employer's reprisals against worker | 16.7 | 14.7 | 10.7 | 14.9 |
| Weak unions' presence in the workplace | 4.2 | 4.6 | 2.5 | 4.0 |
| Unions are politicized & ideological reasons | 4.5 | 4.2 | 2.4 | 4.0 |
| Reasons related to union's poor services, dues, etc. | 5.8 | 7.3 | 5.7 | 6.2 |
| Other reason | 0.3 | 0.9 | – | 0.5 |
| Don't know / Don't answer | 4.4 | 4.6 | 1.6 | 4.0 |
| (N) | (312) | (217) | (122) | (651) |

Source: Federación Minerometalúrgica de CC.OO. *Encuesta a los representates sindicales por la FM de CC.OO. (2000b).*

Workplace delegates' views from small, medium and large firms confirm what I have stated in chapter four (see Table 4.31, page 209) regarding workers' reasons for not joining unions. Wage earners don't have to be union members to share the social benefits and economic gains obtained through collective bargaining (in 2001 the coverage was 81% of the workforce) and they are less motivated by collectivist values or, as Perez-Díaz (1993) suggests, the weakening in class consciousness among workers is reflected in the way they relate to unions.

Around 66 percent of the entire respondents selected either "workers' individualism' or that collective bargaining coverage is independent of union membership as the two principal reasons why so many workers don't affiliate.

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Fear of reprisals was mentioned by about 17 percent of informants from small firms while only 11 percent of the delegates surveyed in large workplaces shared that view. Ideological and political reasons were of less importance to explain low union membership.

Since the mid 1980s the class-based unions have been struggling to adjust to the type of society that Spain has become since the end of Franco's dictatorship. The phrase "Spain is different" has lost its appeal and the country has evolved in a similar path with the rest of European postindustrial societies.

Facing new challenges and seeking to represent an increasing heterogeneous group of wage earners the trade unions have struggled to adapt their structures to a changing society. To what extend have the unions succeeded? In the mid-1990s, for a considerable number of Spaniards surveyed by a national poll, labor unions had failed to "modernize," And many of the interviewed were still expecting real social and cultural changes from the workers' organizations.

**Table 7.7 Public opinion on the modernization of Spanish labor unions.**

| *With which one of these statements do you agree?* | (%) |
|---|---|
| Spanish trade unions are modern organizations well adapted to social realty. | 30.2 |
| Spanish trade unions are outdated organizations that must change. | 54.0 |
| Don't know / Not answer | 15.6 |
| (N) | 5959 |

Source: Serrano del Rosal (2000)

In the opinion of more than 50 percent of the citizens surveyed the major problem with organized labor was one of social and cultural misadjustment (see data on Table 7.7). From that perspective unions had become outdated institutions unable to cope with the new social realities of postindustrial capitalism.

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This view is shared by observers for whom unions are becoming obsolete organizations unable to represent the new salaried groups whose plural social and economic interests cannot be aggregated under encompassing categorizations such as that of the "working class" (Rosanvallon, 1988).

In this work I have tried to show how Spanish unions have undergone a process of identity change and organizational restructuring and for some time now they have been searching for solutions to new and old problems. As is happening in most of the postindustrial world, in Spain class-based unions have abandoned narrow conceptions of industrial and politically oriented unionism and are giving more importance to new forms of social representation seeking to incorporate an increasingly diverse labor force (Miguélez 1995; Hamann and Martínez Lucio, 2003).

In the context of a highly competitive global economy, sociologists have questioned the relevance of the labor movement and its capacity to be a major source of social cohesion and workers' representation. Observers like Alain Touraine et al. (1984) state that the traditional class-based union movement has become historically unfit to fulfil the contesting role it had played under industrial capitalism. Unions may had lost their solidaristic identity by becoming "instrumental organizations" abandoning their moral discourses based on strong egalitarian values (Antoniazzi, 1985). Meanwhile others affirm that this is a "time of new uncertainties regarding the trade union mission (Hyman, 1999: 121)."

While some still celebrate radicalism and see "trade union rebellion against capitalist globalization" spanning both sides of the North-South divide (Moody, 1997) others claim that the role the transnational union movement is to

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democratize the process of globalization (Giddens, 2000). In Europe that is the position defended by the ETUC and the majority of the national trade unions. Since the classic assessment by the Webs who "proclaimed their conception of unions as agencies for the gradualist democratization of industry (Hyman, 1999: 123)" the major political role of workers' organizations has been to democratize capitalism. Perhaps that has been the most significant contribution of the European labor movement. In the U.S. where a business union ideology inspired on Perlman's *Theory of the Labor Movement* (1928) historically dominated organized labor, trade unions have focused more on economic gains and less on political unionism. However, American unions have been essential for democracy and the defense of workers' rights.

In post-Franco Spain, trade unions played a significant role in the transformation of the previous authoritarian regime and contributed strongly to the consolidation of democracy (Fishman, 1990). During the 1980s and 1990s class-based unions continued playing a role in the economic and cultural democratization the country. During this period both the political left and the union movement underwent ideological de-radicalization. Unions like UGT and CC.OO., that had embraced left-wing political projects whether radical or reformist, became increasingly preoccupied with issues such as collective bargaining and how to consolidate weak organizational structures. While for a while they sought to maintain their "Communist" or "Socialist" orientation, these political identities became increasingly rhetorical.

In the post World War II system of industrial relations a social democratic union identity developed in most countries of Western Europe, an identity that

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Hyman (1999) has characterized as a form of "political economism". Under that system trade unions had to focus simultaneously on collective negotiations with employers, and on influencing the broader legal and economic framework of collective bargaining by participating as interlocutors in state-led negotiations with other interest groups. In general, the 1950-1970 were two decades of post-war economic growth and expansion of a favorable environment for trade union action and bargaining with employers. Today the terrain of collective bargaining has been transformed, the margin for economic improvements has diminished and the post-war mode of trade union representation has been challenged.

Within a shifting landscape, trade unions are searching for new identities and strategies in tune with these uncertain times. Exactly, these are the organizational aims pursued by Spanish class-based unions. While UGT and CC.OO. are still embracing at least some elements of the social movement union model, increasingly the unions are behaving as professional organizations engaged in the economic representation of wage earners' interests. Paraphrasing Boeri et al. (2001: 133) I would say that the future of trade unions as political organizations is uncertain. Based on recent trends of identity change I would suggest that Spanish class-based unions might continue in a path toward greater ideological moderation that would contribute to build a hybrid trade union model combining elements from both, the service-oriented business type and social movement unionism.

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## Endnotes for Chapter Seven

[1] In the new global environment social actors (movements, NGOs and trade unions) would need to act globally, as part of global networks facilitated by the new information technology according to Castells (1996).

[2] Calling for an international social-movement unionism, which looks beyond the work-place for its constituents, Moody (1997) argues that new ways of organizing are needed to counter capital at a transnational scale. Trade unionists in multi-national companies are given a key role in this agenda as they can potentially reach to "the heart of the world economy (op. cit., 280)".

[3] There are other marginal international confederations like the formerly communist *World Federation of Trade Unions* (WFTU) and the *World Confederation of Labor* (ex-Christian) that is a small supranational organization with a small number of affiliates.

[4] The so-called international labor movement has been deeply affected by the ideological divisions and political rivalries that characterized the 20th century. First, during the Cold War (1947-1989), the international trade union movement did split into two rival factions. This split sharpened divisions between communist and non-communist unions in Western European countries until very recently (early 1990s) when the ETUC changed its admission policy allowing some of the former "pro-communist" unions (like CC.OO.) to join the European confederation. For more information on this issue see Moreno (2001: 95-114).

[5] According to Wells (1998) The *International Trade Secretariats* (ITSs) are in the process of achieving formal affiliation within the *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions* and are an increasingly important component of transnational unionism. For instance some supranational union confederations affiliated to the ITSs like "the *International Metal-workers Federation* has set up World Auto Councils to exchange information on working conditions and contracts at each of the major auto firms in order to present a more united front against corporate whipsawing. The Councils are campaigning to harmonize transnational contracts in areas such as union rights, work time, rest periods, wages, etc. Moreover, several ITSs have created data bases to track various operations and bargaining practices of multinational firms (Wells, 1998: 9)."

[6] The Treaty on European Union, also called the *Maastricht Treaty*, established the ETUC as an official social partner alongside the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE).

[7] The ETUC is the largest supranational European organization. It represents more than 25% of the active population of the EU. Its main decision-making body is the ETUC conference held every 4 years.

[8] Despite this legal framework, in practice there have been a number of incidences where members of an EWC have not been given prior notice of company restructuring plans like, for example, Renault's decision to close its factory at Vilvoorde in February 1997 without prior information and consultation of employee representatives.
[9] Only Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden met the Commission deadline and passed the required legislation.

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[10] In addition, there were 695 multinational companies with a subsidiary in Spain covered by the same directive.

[11] With regard to the social agents' views on the operation and impact of the EWCs in Spain, for CC.OO is mostly positive. The CCOO attaches great importance to the development of EWCs as it sees them as having great potential in helping to build a genuinely European dimension to industrial relations (information provided by the Secretary of International Relations of *Comisiones Obreras*.

[12] The EWC, both as a legal institution and as a trade union body, fits very easily and "naturally" into the Spanish industrial relations system, mirroring quite closely the legal position of the Spanish works councils (*comités de empresa*) do have.

[13] By law managers should provide information to employee representatives who are (in theory, at least) consulted over corporate decisions that affect workers in more than one country. In addition, most EWCs allow employee representatives to hold their own meetings (with translation services, if necessary) before and/or after the main session that includes management representatives, and in some firms the worker representatives.

[14] According to Wills (2000:101) ".... this case has illustrated some real weaknesses on the employee and union side. Despite good intentions, there has been little attempt to foster any transnational communication and coordination between employee representatives. There have been no serious efforts to build a strategy to make the EWC work in the interests of employees, and the representatives remain focused on their own local concerns."

[15] The quotations are from ETUC, "*Guidelines for collective bargaining and prospects for the development of the Social Dialogue*", adopted by the Executive Committee, March 1993.

[16] These unions conducted secondary industrial actions in solidarity and support of locked-out Liverpool dock-workers in 1997, and again in 1998 in support of locked-out Australian dock-workers. The ILWU dockers, at significant legal risk to themselves, refused to unload cargo that had been handled by replacement workers (Hurd, Milkman and Turner, 2002: 17-18).

[17] According to Anner: "In analyzing the core labor standards campaign, South Africa's largest labor confederation, COSATU, notes that the degree and the nature of trade union influence on governments in the South is not the same as trade union influence on governments in the North. There is a different logic and institutional relationship. Moreover, there is variation within the South. While South African unions have a great deal of influence, other unions in the South have very little influence over their governments (bid. 2001: 3)."

[18] According to Moody's book in 1980 the Brand Commission Report suggested the linking between labor rights and trade agreements (Ibid. 1997: 253).

[19] The globalization of the apparel industry and its shift to the South is an example of this phenomenon. Over the past four decades, the U.S. apparel industry has been overwhelmed by this global low-wage competition. Apparel imports rose from about 2 percent of U.S. domestic consumption in the early 1960s to more than 60 percent in the

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1990s. The dramatic growth of apparel exports from *maquiladora* type of factories in places like Mexico and China to North America has created a surge of new jobs in those countries' export-oriented economies. The dynamic of new global order governing the apparel industry does have an impact on the wellbeing of workers who remain in the U.S. garment industry, toiling as sweatshop workers or as underpaid home workers, suffer declining wages that are often below the legal minimum. Even so, the North-South competition is basically over in this industry. The enormous difference in North-South wage levels ensures that those jobs lost will not return to the United States (Ross and Chan, 2002; Moody, 1997).

[20] According to Anner, "Since the nineteenth century, trade unions have sought to link trade and labor standards. Their efforts are reflected in the 1919 Constitution of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the 1947 Charter of the International Trade Organization (ITO). In the 1970s and 1980s, the ICFTU actively lobbied for a working group on labor standards in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The ICFTU also promoted the issue in 1994 in Marrakech, Morocco, at the signing session of the final agreement of the Uruguay Round of the GATT. Yet the 1995 formation of the WTO marked a new phase in the era of international market liberalization and thus a new phase in the campaign for labor rights (Ibid. 2001: 1)".

[21] According to Moody (1997: 251-2), the WTO recognizes in principle the importance of the basic labor rights and it's committed to "respect" them. However, it states that the appropriate forum to deal with the issue is the ILO.

[22] The social clause refers to the proposed insertion of five core labor standards into trade agreements: freedom of association, freedom to organize and to bargain collectively, and freedom from forced labor, child labor, and job discrimination. Many "poorer countries" either lack the laws to protect these rights, which are enshrined in the conventions of the ILO or they simply do not bother to enforce those laws in their export industries (Ross and Chan, 2002).

[23] Many advocates of social unionism are inspired by the new independent unions of the developing world, such as COSATU in South Africa, CUT in Brazil and the KCTU in South Korea. Each of these unions has built broad social coalitions and is actively resisting the neoliberal agenda of global capitalism.

[24] Under the model of business unionism the day-to-day functioning of most unions is geared toward routine grievance-handling rather than toward organizing and mobilization. Even when unions try to push grievance-handling responsibility down to the members, it is difficult – including for social movement unions – to change this dominant cultural orientation toward servicing. The idea of the traditional "business agent" as an expert who solves members' problems is deeply rooted in the culture of the American union movement (Voss and Sherman, 2000).

[25] I don't mean that the European social democratic or proto-communist trade unions have shifted toward the American model. What I would suggest is that the ongoing changes both in Europe and in the U.S. may force us to reconsider Michael Poole's theoretical model (see his *Theories of Trade Unionism*,1986) on unions' action based on two ideal types of labor movements: the one that follows instrumental-rational strategies that are associated with business-service oriented trade unionism; and the one characterized by value-oriented strategies that are associated with politically oriented left-wing labor movements.

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[26] Social dumping means the attraction of capital investment on the basis of low wages, poor working conditions, and weak regulation of labor relations. As such, social dumping has been a matter of serious political concern for the ETUC in the European Union, where there are still large disparities in wages and working conditions between Spain, Greece and Portugal and the advanced Northern economies.

[27] According to Moreno (2001: 173) "the strongest argument advanced by the UGT (against it) was CC.OO.'s Communist nature and its lacks of independence..., stressing the number of CC.OO. leaders who were also leaders of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE)."

[28] According to Hamann and Martinez-Lucio (2003) Spanish union have experienced problems in developing the bureaucratic and administrative structures needed to be able to play an integral role in the institutional processes of the ETUC and the EU.

[29] According to Magone (2001:269) trasnborder cooperation of trade unions between Spain and Portugal unfolded in the 1990s. The four larger labor unions from both countries set up the *Interregional Trade Unions Committees* to coordinate actions in the region.

[30] According to Ojeda-Aviles (2002) the second priority for Spanish trade unions outside the European Union is North Africa. They actively d supported the creation in Helsinki, during the Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation (June 1999) of a Mediterranean Forum including Italian and French unions, and the Workers Union of Arabic speaking North Africa.

[31] As part of my research work I carried out 19 interviews with regional, sectoral and national leaders of UGT and CC.OO. (See endnotes 2 and 3, Chapter Three).

[32] As stated by one of my UGT informants (from the Madrid region) "Without a strong social dimension there cannot be a sustainable economic progress in Europe. Without a new European trade unionism that defends the interests the aspirations of the wage earners, the institutionalization of the European social dimension cannot be accomplished (my translation)."

[33] UGT affirmed these ideas in 1989 in a public document titled *Prioridades del Espacio Social Europeo* (priorities of a European social space).

[34] According to Moreno (2001: 273) "Within CCOO the tendencies closest to the PCE found in Maastricht a banner around which they could rally to criticize the majority tendency and Antonio Gutiérrez in particular."

[35] Besides Spain of the 15 member states of the European Union, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Finland, and Portugal witnessed the emergence or reemergence of social pacts during the period 1992–1998 (Pochet and Fajertag, 2000: 9). The current situation is a complex one given that in some of the above countries centralized agreements have been not signed after 2000.

[36] Evidence indicates that the Europeanization of industrial relations through the coordination of collective bargaining policies remains in its infancy. This is a serious challenge for national trade unions in a context in which demarcations of the national economies

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have largely disintegrated result of economic integration and the establishment of a single currency (EURO).

[37] Information provided by CC.OO. via e-mail (November, 2002).

[38] Both the UGT and CC.OO. have made the reduction of working hours a central issue in their strategies for an alternative approach to employment creation. For a detailed analysis see Brouwer (1999: 61).

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# Methodological Appendix

To accomplish this work I have combined several research methods while employing diverse data sources. Though the dissertation's core is based on a survey of 269 union and works council delegates (identified as workplace-level leaders), I have made some use of qualitative data from 19 semi-structured interviews with regional and national leaders of the *Union General de Trabajadores* (UGT) and *Comisiones Obreras* (CC.OO.). Additionally, I researched union documents and archive materials for the period 1978-1990. During the two years I lived in Spain I benefited from the advice of scholars, trade unionists and friends who contributed directly or indirectly to the success of my research.

The workplaces' survey of union and works council delegates that I described in chapter four was carried out in 1990. The first interview was realized in June 16, while the last one was completed in October 10, of that year. Before doing the survey, early in June, a pre-test of the questionnaire was administered to 10 union delegates from both unions (6 from CC.OO. and 4 from UGT) of the Metalworkers and the Public Services Federations.

The sample of 50 workplaces for the survey was drawn randomly from the universe of workplaces with 200 or more employees that had elected at least 2 delegates from each of the unions (UGT and CC.OO.) to the works council of the firm. Data provided by the Ministry of Labor for the region of Madrid indicated that there were over 500 workplaces with more than 200 workers that had held works council elections in 1986. From that universe, only 322 *centros de trabajo* (workplaces) had the characteristics that I wanted. From those 322 work-

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places, 55 were selected randomly. Of the 55 workplaces only 50 were still functioning in 1990.

I was particularly interested in studying the two larger labor unions, the *Union General de Trabajadores* and the *Comisiones Obreras*. After completing the semi-structured interviews with regional and national leaders of these confederations [1] there were still too many questions unanswered, and I needed additional information to make sense of what was going on at the base of these workers' organizations. As I indicated in chapter four, the local union branch *(sección sindical)* is the trade unions' basic structure in the firm. Workplaces with at least 250 workers are expected to have at least one local union branch organized.

Regional officials from both unions informed me that each one of their organizations had over 500 union local branches organized in the Madrid Autonomous Community. Yet, only the exact number of legally organized *secciones sindicales* for the CC.OO. was available (504 in total). While the UGT supposedly had a similar number of legally organized local branches in this domain, it could not provide me specific information of the workplaces where they functioned.

My original research plan was to do the interviews only in workplaces that had organized local branches for both unions. The technical problem I faced was; how to find the workplaces where both unions had *secciones sindicales* and then, draw a random sample from that universe. At the end I was unable to get reliable information from both unions and I decided to use official statistics for the works council elections of 1986. In the surveyed sample of fifty workplaces I

[1] The interviews were carried out between February 1989 and April 1990. Some were recorded while a number of informants did prefer that I only took notes.

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found forty-eight in which UGT had organized one *sección sindical* and forty-seven others where CC.OO. had organized union local branches.

After selecting the random sample of 50 valid workplaces I sent a standard letter to each one of them. Three copies of the same letter were addressed to the local union branches (UGT and CC.OO.) and to the works council chairperson. The letter informed the unions/works councils' representatives that their workplace had been chosen for a sociological study on trade unions. In the letter I explained the objective of the research, and informed the workplace leaders that the regional federations of the unions had authorized me to carry out the survey. I was specific on my independence from any organization or political party, stating that my interests were exclusively academic.

At the regional level I received support from one member of the executive committee of each union federation. They provided me with names and information on their trade unionists in the workplaces included in the study and, when needed, they informed me about possible difficulties in getting access to some of them. In some cases I contacted trade unionists by phone through the firm. When I could not get in touch with them at the workplace, I called them at home. Around 75 percent of the trade unionists I spoke on the phone to arrange the interviews had received the letter, the rest did not know anything about the study when I spoke to them for the first time. Overall, I got positive reactions from the trade unionists when we spoke on the phone. In a few cases they wanted to contact their union federations to confirm that what I was telling them was true.

Another technical problem that I encountered during the fieldwork was the following: for a number of reasons it was not possible to draw a complete

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random sample from the official list of elected delegates to the works councils. Over 25 percent of the originally elected workers' representatives had resigned their posts at the time of the interviews in 1990. To deal with the problem, helped by a researcher from the University of Madrid, I established certain criteria of representativeness knowing in advance some of the characteristics of the population that I wanted to study. I knew that women represented around 20 percent of the CC.OO. works council representatives while they were around 16 percent in the case of the UGT. I decided that, if possible, at least one woman for each union should be interviewed in each workplace. As to the elected delegates to be interviewed in each workplace for each union I determined that one should belong to the white collars/non-manual staff while the other should be from the blue-collar manual workers. The representational system of the works council establishes that the salaried non-manual employees (the College A) elect a certain number of delegates while other delegates represent the blue collar/manual labor staff (College B).

Besides what I have said above, I wanted to interview the local leaders of both unions in the workplaces. The union leaders are the secretaries of the local union branch *(la sección sindical)*. It is important to know that not all the local union secretaries are elected works council delegates and in some cases they occupy the position of union delegates. In practice there is not too much difference regarding organizational tasks carried out by the elected works council representatives and the union delegates. Workers elect most of the works council delegates from slates of candidates sponsored by the unions. On the other hand, union members choose union delegates to represent their interests at the works council and *vis-à-vis* management. The union delegates participate in the works council

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meetings but only the elected employees' delegates can vote. As I have described in chapter four, depending of the workplace size, one may find between one to four union delegates per union with a local branch organized in each firm.

Knowing the characteristics of the system of workers' representation, I decided to interview two elected works council members of each union (one from each electoral college representing white collar and blue collar employees), plus one union delegate in each workplace from each union for a total of 3 informants per union and six interviews in each workplace. The target sample consisted of 300 informants located in fifty medium-sized and large workplaces.

The sample design was used as a theoretical model but adjustments and compromises were unavoidable. For example, I could not interview all the local union secretaries from UGT and CC.OO., but I was able to interview most of them. Several works councils did not have elected women, or the unions I was researching had not elected any delegate to the works council representing the white collar/non manual staff. Experience taught me that I needed to deal with each case differently. At the end, of the potential 300 interviews only 270 were completed. One questionnaire, from one of the informants, had serious problems with identification data and it was discarded.

For the statistical analysis I have used 269 valid interviews, 133 from CC.OO. and 136 from UGT. Regarding the distribution of the sample, 80 percent were elected members of the works councils and 20 percent were union delegates.[2] Regarding the gender composition of the sample; 80 percent were men while 20 percent were women. Roughly speaking, 45 percent of the informants

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[2] In many cases the local union branch secretary was an elected member of the works council, or even the chairperson. In those cases I did not interview other union delegates.

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belonged to the white-collar staff while 55 percent came from the manual blue-collar workers .

Most of the interviews were done in the workplaces (85%) while a small number (15%) were completed at the regional union locals in Madrid, Alcala and Getafe. My wife, who assisted on the data collection or myself, did all the interviews. In a small number of workplaces (7 of 50) we were not allowed to enter the premises. When we were allowed to enter the workplace we spent several hours inside the plant or the office, depending of the case. Most of the interviews were realized in the morning hours and in several occasions we had lunch with the local union leadership or a group of workers. Other than data gathered through the interviews I kept a fieldwork notebook to keep record of the comments or ideas I did hear from informants.

With a few exceptions, I received a lot of cooperation from the works council and the union delegates of the workplaces surveyed. The interviews took place during a period of pre-electoral campaign, just before the works council elections of 1990. Most of the union activists were busy preparing their campaigns. Even if they were engaged in an electoral process I only got a small refusal rate for the interviews. Perhaps, the fact that I had some backing from the regional union structures was a factor that contributed in getting the informants' cooperation needed at the workplaces.

Each individual interview took between 45 to 60 minutes to be completed. Each one was done privately with the respondent following a system of mostly closed questions and the use of cards containing several items and scales. Complete confidence was assured and no names were used to identify the respondents. In general, I got a very low rate of non-responses probably because the

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interviews were realized in a good climate. A longer interview was done with the chairperson or the secretary of the works council using a second questionnaire that dealt only with issues and questions related to the workplace such as strikes, changes in employment, technological rationalization, and general information needed to classify the workplace. Both questionnaires (enterprise and individual) are included after the Appendix.

We visited each workplace at least one time (even if some interviews were carried out in a different place). In 30 percent of the cases a second visit was necessary to complete the number of interviews assigned to that workplace. In a few occasions we were unable to complete all the expected interviews, even when we had visited the location for a second time. In thirty workplaces we completed the assigned quota of six interviews, in twelve of them five interviews were done, in five firms we only did four interviews, while in the rest at least three interviews were completed. The survey data gathered through the interviews have been used mostly in chapters four, five and six of the dissertation. [3]

[3] In addition, the information and knowledge acquired by doing the survey taught me a lot about the way Spanish trade unions function as complex organizations.

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Nº cuestionario_____
Nº Ficha_____

Fecha de Realización _____ ( HORA)_____

Empresa: _____

Situación sindical: 1 2 3

¿En cuál lista sindical fue usted electo(a) delegado(a)?

Lista de UGT.....1
Lista de CCOO.....2

(delegado sindical No electo) ___(UGT 1 / CCOO 2)

Colegio A..... 1
Colegio B..... 2

Indicar sexo sin preguntar.
Masculino..... 1
Femenino..... 2

1. ¿Cuántos años lleva como delegado en el Comité de Empresa?

Escribir numero. años _____

No Sabe/No Contesta..... 9

2. ¿ Está usted afiliado al sindicato ?

Si..... 1
SI está afiliado}-- > preguntar # 3
No..... 2
NA/NC 9

¿ Es usted el secretario de la sección sindical?_____

3. ¿ En que año se afilió ?

19_____ NS/NC.....9

4. ¿Estuvo Vd. anteriormente afiliado a otro sindicato ?
Si..... 1
No..... 2
NS/NC..... 9

(en caso afirmativo -- > preguntar 5)

5. ¿ A cuál?
UGT..... 1
CC. OO. ..... 2
USO..... 3
CNT..... 4
Otro..... 5
¿Cuál?_____

NC..... 9

6. ¿Qué posición ocupa usted en el Comité de Empresa?

Presidente..... 1
Secretario..... 2
Miembro..... 3
Delegado sindical..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

7. ¿ Presentará su candidatura a delegado en las próximas elecciones sindicales ?
Si..... 1
No..... 2
Indeciso..... 3

NS/NC..... 9

8. ¿ En total cuántas horas semanales dedica usted a su actividad sindical? (leer )
Más de 35 horas..... 1
Entre 25 y 35 Horas..... 2
Entre 15 y 24 horas..... 3
Entre 5 y 14 horas..... 4
Menos de 5 horas..... 5
Ninguna..... 6
NS/NC..... 9

9. ¿Diría usted que la afiliación sindical entre los trabajadores de este centro de trabajo es más bien alta, regular, o es más bien baja?

Más bien alta..... 1
Regular..... 2
Más bien baja..... 3
NS/NC..... 9

10. ¿Y cómo es la afiliación entre los técnicos, y los administrativos; es más bien alta , regular, o es más bien baja?

Más bien alta..... 1
Regular..... 2
Más bien baja..... 3
NS/NC..... 9

11. ¿ En conjunto, qué fuerza tienen los sindicatos en este centro de trabajo?

Leer
Son muy fuertes..... 1
Son bastante fuertes..... 2
No son ni fuertes ni débiles... 3
Son bastante débiles..... 4
Son muy débiles..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

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12. ¿Y en el conjunto de la sociedad española?
(leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| Son muy fuertes..... | 1 |
| Son bastante fuertes..... | 2 |
| No son ni fuertes ni débiles..... | 3 |
| Son bastante débiles..... | 4 |
| Son muy débiles..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

13. Aquí tiene una lista de palabras. Si tuviera que identificar con sólo tres el significado que para usted tiene la identidad sindical; diría que un sindicato es:

(Mostrar tarjeta A )

| | |
|---|---|
| movilizador..... | 1 |
| solidario..... | 2 |
| moderado..... | 3 |
| autónomo..... | 4 |
| participativo..... | 5 |
| radical..... | 6 |
| democrático..... | 7 |
| negociador..... | 8 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

14. Cuando se habla de política se utilizan normalmente las expresiones izquierda y derecha.
En esta tarjeta hay una serie de casillas numeradas que van de izquierda a derecha. ¿En que casilla colocaría usted a los siguientes sindicatos?

Mostrar Tarjeta B

a) CNT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
NS/NC .....99

b) CC.OO.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NS/NC .....99

c) UGT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
NS/NC .....99

d) USO
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
NS/NC .....99

15. ¿Le parece que los trabajadores de este centro de trabajo son más radicales que el conjunto de sus representantes sindicales, más moderados, o de la misma posición política?

| | |
|---|---|
| Más radicales..... | 1 |
| Más moderados..... | 2 |
| Misma posición... | 3 |
| NS/NC.. | 9 |

16. ¿ Cuál de los siguientes debería ser, según usted, el representante principal de los trabajadores ante la dirección de cualquier centro de trabajo?

| | |
|---|---|
| El Comité de Empresa..... | 1 |
| o las Secciones Sindicales..... | 2 |
| No leer (ambos)..... | 3 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

17 . Aquí tiene una serie de frases. ¿Podría indicarme hasta 3 aspectos en que la estrategia/ acción sindical de UGT
haya cambiado en comparación con hace 3 años?
Mostrar tarjeta C

Da más importancia que antes a la acción sindical a nivel de la empresa 1

Utiliza más que antes las medidas de presión para lograr sus objetivos sindicales. 2

En la negociación colectiva enfatiza más en temas no exclusivamente salariales como una mayor participación de los trabajadores en la toma de decisiones empresariales. 3

Al diseñar su estrategia sindical toma más en cuenta los intereses de los técnicos y los administrativos 4

Toma más en cuenta los intereses de los trabajadores con empleos precarios, los parados, los jóvenes y otros colectivos con escaso poder contractual 5

NS/NC..... 9

(Copiar otras)_____

18. Con la mismas frases. ¿Podría indicarme hasta 3 aspectos en que la estrategia /acción sindical de CC.OO. haya cambiado en comparación con hace 3 años?
Mostrar tarjeta c

1 2 3 4 5

Copiar otras_____

NS/NC.....9

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19 . ¿Cuánta influencia tiene UGT entre los trabajadores de este centro de trabajo ?

| | |
|---|---|
| Mucha influencia..... | 1 |
| Bastante influencia..... | 2 |
| Regular influencia..... | 3 |
| Poca influencia..... | 4 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

20. ¿Cuánta influencia tiene CC.OO. entre los trabajadores este centro de trabajo ?

| | |
|---|---|
| Mucha influencia..... | 1 |
| Bastante influencia..... | 2 |
| Regular influencia..... | 3 |
| Poca influencia..... | 4 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

21. ¿Hay mucha, bastante, regular, poca o muy poca unidad de acción entre la UGT y CC.OO. en este centro de trabajo?

| | |
|---|---|
| Mucha unidad..... | 1 |
| Bastante unidad..... | 2 |
| Regular unidad..... | 3 |
| Poca unidad..... | 4 |
| Muy poca unidad..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

22. Está usted muy de acuerdo, bastante de acuerdo, en algo de acuerdo, poco, o nada de acuerdo con la unidad de acción practicada por CC.OO. y UGT a nivel nacional ?

(mostrar tarjeta D)

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo..... | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo..... | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo..... | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo..... | 4 |
| Nada de acuerdo..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

23. ¿ Y a nivel de la Comunidad Madrileña ? (mostrar tarjeta D)

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo..... | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo..... | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo..... | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo..... | 4 |
| Nada de acuerdo..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

24. ¿ Y a nivel de su empresa? mostrar tarjeta D

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo..... | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo..... | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo..... | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo..... | 4 |
| Nada de acuerdo..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

25. De los colectivos que voy a leer: ¿Podría decirme a quien beneficia más la unidad de acción entre CC. OO. y UGT ? (leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| A los trabajadores en general..... | 1 |
| A Comisiones Obreras..... | 2 |
| A UGT..... | 3 |
| Ambos sindicatos, UGT y CC OO..... | 4 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

26. ¿ Con cuál de estas frases está usted más de acuerdo? (leer lentamente)

En la sociedad española de la década del 90 los sindicatos tienen que exigir sobre todo la democratización de la empresa. Es decir, más competencias y derechos para los comités de empresa y las secciones sindicales en la toma de decisiones. 1

En la sociedad española de la década del 90, los sindicatos tienen que concentrar sus reivindicaciones en asuntos estrictamente económicos, es decir los salarios, las condiciones laborales y la defensa de los puestos de trabajo. 2

No Sabe/ NC..... 9

27. ¿ Como representante de los trabajadores cuánto usted participa en la toma de decisiones, en la gestión y en otros temas laborales en este centro de trabajo? ( leer) ¿tiene usted?

| | |
|---|---|
| Mucha participación ..... | 1 |
| Bastante participación..... | 2 |
| Alguna participación..... | 3 |
| Poca participación..... | 4 |
| Ninguna participación..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

28. ¿ Cree usted que entre sus reivindicaciones los sindicatos dan mucha, bastante, alguna, poca, o ninguna importancia a la democratización de la empresa?

| | |
|---|---|
| Mucha importancia.... | 1 |
| Bastante importancia.... | 2 |
| Alguna importancia..... | 3 |

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Poca importancia..... 4
Ninguna importancia..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

29. ¿ De entre los siguientes factores, de cuales dos depende más que en España durante los próximos años se pueda avanzar hacia la democracia industrial ? (leer)

a) De la actitud positiva o negativa que asuman los empresarios..... 1

b) De la voluntad política del Gobierno Socialista..... 2

c) De la capacidad para presionar y movilizar de los mismos sindicatos..... 3

d) De lograr un consenso mediante la concertación social entre sindicatos, empresarios, y Gobierno ..... 4

NS/NC..... 9

30 . Hay quiénes creen que los sindicatos deben consultar continuamente a los trabajadores su forma de proceder, a su vez, hay quiénes creen que sólo deben consultarlos en asuntos muy importantes, y hay quiénes piensan que normalmente los sindicatos deben actuar de acuerdo con la confianza que los trabajadores han depositado en ellos al elegir a sus representantes. ¿Con cuál de estas tres posturas está usted más de acuerdo? (leer)

Los sindicatos deben consultar en todo momento..... 1

Los sindicatos solo debe consultar asuntos muy importantes..... 2

Los sindicatos deben actuar de acuerdo con la confianza que los trabajadores han depositado en sus representantes..... 3

No Sabe /NC..... 9

31. ¿ Hoy en España , diria usted que la disposición de los trabajadores a apoyar la acción sindical es? (leer)

Muy alta..... 1
Bastante alta..... 2
Regular..... 3
Bastante baja..... 4
Muy Baja..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

32. ¿ Cuales dos razones, de la expuestas en esta tarjeta , cree usted que mejor explican por qué muchos trabajadores no se afilian a los sindicatos ?

(Mostrar Tarjeta E)

Los sindicatos no logran un numero mayor de afiliados ya que las conquistas sindicales alcanzadas tanto a nivel de la empresa, del sector, e incluso nacional, benefician tanto a los afiliados como a los no afiliados 1

Los trabajadores hoy, tienen una mentalidad más individualista y van primero a lo suyo 2

Las secuelas culturales del régimen franquista, y su sistema de afiliación obligatoria al sindicalismo vertical no contribuyen a que hoy en día más trabajadores se afilien voluntariamente a los sindicatos ..... 3

Los cambios tecnológicos y ocupacionales en la empresa aumentan la división de los trabajadores en grupos muy desiguales, debilitando la unidad social sobre la que se asientan los sindicatos..... 4

Los trabajadores creen menos en los valores fundamentales del sindicalismo, la solidaridad, la igualdad, la justicia ..... 5

No Contesta (NS)..... 9

33 . El gran reto de los sindicatos es saber adaptarse a una economía que está cambiando rápidamente y cómo representar adecuada mente a trabajadores con intereses más diversos. Voy a leerle algunas propuestas que han sido formuladas para ser consideradas por los sindicatos. Por favor dígame si está muy de acuerdo, bastante de acuerdo, en algo de acuerdo, o en nada de acuerdo con estas propuestas.

(Mostrar Tarjeta d )

a) Hace falta una transformación de la cultura sindical tradicional para que los asalariados de sectores no industriales puedan identificarse con el sindicalismo.

Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
En algo de acuerdo..... 3
Poco de acuerdo..... 4
En nada de acuerdo..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

b) Los sindicatos deben ser más sensibles a los problemas específicos de las mujeres, los jóvenes con empleos precarios, y los parados.

Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
En algo de acuerdo..... 3
Poco de acuerdo..... 4

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En nada de acuerdo..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

c) Los sindicatos deben ser menos obreristas.

Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
En algo de acuerdo..... 3
Poco de acuerdo..... 4
En nada de acuerdo..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

d) Las Confederaciones deberían descentralizar sus estructuras fortaleciendo los órganos sindicales a nivel de la empresa.

Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
En algo de acuerdo..... 3
Poco de acuerdo..... 4
En nada de acuerdo..... 5
NS/NC..... 9

34. Muchos economistas plantean que los cambios tecnológicos son inevitables y dado que ahorran trabajo humano estos cambios no permitirán eliminar totalmente el paro. ¿ Cuál de estas frases expresa mejor su opinión sobre qué papel deben asumir los sindicatos al respecto? Mostrar tarjeta F

Frente al cambio tecnológico los sindicatos deben oponerse a toda reducción de puestos de trabajo. La prioridad debe ser la defensa de los trabajadores con empleos estables aunque esto pueda significar una menor creación de nuevos puestos de trabajo y la perdida de competitividad de muchas empresas.

1

Frente al cambio tecnológico los sindicatos deben tratar de negociar alternativas a la destrucción de puestos de trabajo tales como la reducción de la jornada laboral, la jubilación anticipada, unos horario laborales más flexibles, y un nuevo reparto del trabajo disponible en beneficio de los jóvenes que no hayan trabajado nunca, aunque esto afecte a algunos colectivos con empleos estables.

2

NS/NC..... 9

---

35. El surgimiento de sindicatos profesionales en varias entidades públicas como RENFE, IBERIA y los transportes de Madrid, refleja cierto descontento sectorial con el modelo sindical propugnado por CC.OO. y UGT. ¿Frente a este fenómeno de "desbordamiento" sectorial, los sindicatos de clase deben?

a) rechazar sus demandas por ser insolidarias y corporativas 1

b) asumir sus demandas aunque esto signifique debilitar cualquier estrategia de solidaridad salarial 2

c) asumir aquellas demandas que puedan integrarse y rechazar las que sean incompatibles con otros objetivos sindicales 3

NS/NC..... 9

36. Como usted sabe, desde el comienzo de la transición democrática hasta el AES, se firmaron diferentes pactos sociales globales entre el gobierno, algunos sindicatos y los representantes de la patronal. En general ¿es usted partidario de que se repita este tipo de concertación social a nivel global, es contrario a esta política o es simplemente indiferente?

Soy partidario de este tipo de concertación social..... 1

No soy partidario de este tipo la concertación social..... 2

Me es indiferente..... 3

NS/NC..... 9

---

37. Las frases que voy a leerle expresan algunas posibles razones sindicales para objetar hoy los acuerdos marco tripartitas y los pactos sociales globales. ¿Podría decirme en qué medida está de acuerdo, o en desacuerdo, con estas razones para oponerse a este tipo de pactos ?
(mostrar tarjeta d)

a) La patronal (CEOE) no ha cumplido con mucho de acordado en estos pactos

Muy de acuerdo 1
Bastante de acuerdo 2
En algo de acuerdo 3
Poco de acuerdo 4
En nada de acuerdo 5
NS/NC 9

b)El gobierno no ha cumplido con mucho de lo acordado en estos pactos

Muy de acuerdo 1
Bastante de acuerdo 2

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| | |
|---|---|
| En algo de acuerdo | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo | 4 |
| En nada de acuerdo | 5 |
| NS/NC | 9 |

c) En una fase de crecimiento económico es preferible luchar por mejoras en el poder adquisitivo de los trabajadores sin acuerdos que fijen topes salariales

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo | 4 |
| En nada de acuerdo | 5 |
| NS/NC | 9 |

d) Los pactos sociales globales benefician principalmente a los empresarios

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo | 4 |
| En nada de acuerdo | 5 |
| NS/NC | 9 |

e) Los sindicatos se han debilitado a consecuencia de dicha estrategia de pactos

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy de acuerdo | 1 |
| Bastante de acuerdo | 2 |
| En algo de acuerdo | 3 |
| Poco de acuerdo | 4 |
| En nada de acuerdo | 5 |
| NS/NC | 9 |

---

38. ¿ Cree usted que el llamado "pacto social por la competitividad" basado en el crecimiento moderado del poder adquisitivo de los salarios, y de un supuesto mayor control de os beneficios empresariales, debería ser firmado por los empresarios, el gobierno, y los sindicatos?

| | |
|---|---|
| Si..... | 1 |
| No..... | 2 |
| Indeciso..... | 3 |
| NC..... | 9 |

39. ¿Está usted más bien de acuerdo, o más bien en desacuerdo con los que afirman que España está empezando salir de la crisis económica?

| | |
|---|---|
| Acuerdo..... | 1 |
| Desacuerdo..... | 2 |
| Indeciso..... | 3 |
| NC..... | 9 |

40. Aquí tiene una lista de problemas económicos. ¿ Cuales son para usted los 3 problemas más serios que padece la economía española? Mostrar Tarjeta g

| | |
|---|---|
| Baja competitividad..... | 1 |
| Alta tasa de Paro..... | 2 |
| Deficit Comercial..... | 3 |
| Inversiones no productivas..... | 4 |
| Salarios bajos ..... | 5 |
| Alta inflación ..... | 6 |
| Economía sumergida..... | 7 |
| Demasiado empleo inestable..... | 8 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

41. ¿ En general, cómo calificaría usted la política de reconversión industrial llevada a cabo por el Gobierno Socialista? (leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy positiva..... | 1 |
| Positiva..... | 2 |
| Regular..... | 3 |
| Negativa..... | 4 |
| Muy negativa..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

42. ¿Y cómo calificaría usted la política a favor de la flexibilización del mercado de trabajo realizada por el Gobierno Socialista?
(leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| Muy positiva..... | 1 |
| Positiva..... | 2 |
| Regular..... | 3 |
| Negativa..... | 4 |
| Muy negativa..... | 5 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

43. Aquí tiene una lista de adjetivos. ¿Cuales tres mejor describen la política económica del Gobierno Socialista ? (mostrar tarjeta h)

| | |
|---|---|
| Realista..... | 1 |
| Social-democráta..... | 2 |
| Pragmática..... | 3 |
| Insolidaria..... | 4 |
| Progresista..... | 5 |
| Capitalista..... | 6 |
| Conservadora..... | 7 |
| Neo-liberal..... | 8 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

44. El actual Gobierno Socialista; ¿A quien cree usted que procura favorecer más en general?
(leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| A los trabajadores..... | 1 |
| A los empresarios..... | 2 |
| A ambos por igual ..... | 3 |
| Al país en general..... | 4 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

45. ¿Esta usted muy de acuerdo, bastante de acuerdo, poco de acuerdo, o nada de acuerdo con la política económica del Gobierno Socialista?

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Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
Poco de acuerdo..... 3
Nada de acuerdo..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

46. ¿Esta usted muy de acuerdo, bastante de acuerdo, poco de acuerdo, o nada de acuerdo, con la critica que los sindicatos han hecho de la política económica del Gobierno Socialista?

Muy de acuerdo..... 1
Bastante de acuerdo..... 2
Poco de acuerdo..... 3
Nada de acuerdo..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

47. Aquí tiene esta tarjeta. Sobre qué dos asuntos cree usted que se han producido las principales diferencias entre la UGT y el PSOE? Por favor sólo señalar las 2 más importantes en 1er y segundo lugar.

Mostrar Tarjeta i

| | 1er lugar-- | 2do- lugar |
|---|---|---|
| En materia de política de concertación..... | 1 | 1 |
| En materia de política salarial ..... | 2 | 2 |
| En materia de política de reconversión..... | 3 | 3 |
| En que la autonomía del sindicato ha sido amenazada por el PSOE..... | 4 | 4 |
| En que la política económica del PSOE no ha tomado mucho en cuenta lo "social" | 5 | 5 |
| No Sabe/no contesta..... | 9 | 9 |

48. ¿Y sobre cuales dos piensa usted que se han producido las principales diferencias entre CC.OO. y el PSOE? Por favor sólo señalar las 2 más importantes en primer y segundo lugar. Mostrar Tarjeta i

1er lugar

1 2 3 4 5

NS/NC..... 9 ---------->

2do lugar

1 2 3 4 5

NS/NC..... 9

49. En general: ¿considera usted que la política laboral del Gobierno Socialista ha potenciado la consolidación de los sindicatos o al contrario ha buscado debilitarlos?

Consolidar sindicatos..... 1
Debilitar sindicatos..... 2
(no leer) Ni una ni la otra..... 3
NS/NC..... 9

50. ¿ Me podría decir usted si, en líneas generales, la política le interesa mucho, bastante, poco, o no le interesa nada?

Mucho..... 1
Bastante..... 2
Poco..... 3
Nada..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

51. ¿Está usted afiliado a algún partido político?

Si..... 1 (----------> preguntar 52)
No..... 2 (----------> preguntar 53)
NS 9

52. ¿A qué partido?

PSOE..... 1
CDS..... 2
PCE..... 3
PASOC..... 4
PTE..... 5
PP..... 6
IU..... 7
otros..... 8
¿Cuál?_____
NC..... 9

53. Aunque no está afiliado a ningún partido político, y sin compromiso alguno; ¿podría decirme con que partido simpatiza más?

PSOE..... 1
CDS..... 2
PCE..... 3
PASOC..... 4
PTE..... 5
PP..... 6
IU..... 7
otros..... 8
¿Cuál?_____
NC/NS..... 9

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54. ¿Cuál de las siguientes frases expresa mejor la situación actual en España en cuanto a las relaciones entre los sindicatos y los partidos políticos?

(en las próximas 4 preguntas mostrar tarjeta J)

Control de los Partidos sobre los Sindicatos..... 1

Influencia de los Partidos sobre los Sindicatos pero sin llegar al control total..... 2

Una influencia mutua entre Partidos y Sindicatos pero con autonomía para cada uno de ellos ..... 3

Ninguna relación entre Partidos y Sindicatos..... 4

Influencia de los sindicatos sobre los Partidos sin llegar al control total 5

Control de los Sindicatos sobre los Partidos..... 6

NS/NC..... 9

55. Y en especifico: ¿Cuál de esas mismas frases expresa mejor la situación actual en cuanto a las relaciones entre UGT y cualquier partido político?
mostrar tarjeta J

1 2 3 4 5 6

NS/NC..... 9 -------->

56. ¿ Y la situación actual en cuanto a las relaciones entre CC.OO y cualquier partido político?
mostrar tarjeta J

1 2 3 4 5 6

NS/NC..... 9 ------>

57. Y por último : ¿Cuál de esas mismas frases expresaria mejor lo que para usted seria la situación ideal en cuanto a las relaciones entre un sindicato y un partido político?
( mostrar tarjeta J)

1 2 3 4 5 6

NS/NC..... 9

58. En los últimos años han aparecido movimientos sociales como los ecologistas, y las feministas, que reclaman cambios cualitativos en el modo de vida de nuestra sociedad. ¿ Cree usted que el movimiento obrero debería incorporar a su proyecto todas, bastantes, algunas, o ninguna de las demandas formuladas por:

a) El movimiento ecologista

Todas..... 1
Bastantes..... 2
Algunas..... 3
Ningunas..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

55. El movimiento feminista

Todas..... 1
Bastantes..... 2
Algunas..... 3
Ningunas..... 4
NS/NC..... 9

59. Mucha gente cuando piensa en la política utiliza las palabras izquierda y derecha. Aquí tiene una tarjeta con una serie de casillas numeradas que van de izquierda a derecha. De acuerdo a sus opiniones y creencias políticas: ¿En que casilla se colocaría usted?

Mostrar tarjeta B

Izqda. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 dcha.

NS/NS .....99

60. En cuestión de religión, ¿Se considera usted? (leer)

Católico practicante..... 1

Católico no practicante..... 2

indiferente..... 3

No creyente..... 4

Creyente en otra religión..... 5 _____

NC/NS..... 9

61. ¿Podría decirme cuál es su categoría profesional?

Técnico superior..... 1
Técnico medio..... 2
Maestro de taller, encargado, jefe de equipo, capataz, etc. ..... 3
Oficial ($1^{a}$,$2^{a}$,$3^{a}$)..... 4
Administrativo..... 5
Aux. administrativo..... 6
Subalterno..... 7
Otro _____(escribir cuál)_____ 8
NS/NC..... 9

62. ¿ Hace cuántos años que trabaja en esta

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empresa?

N_____

NS/NC..... 9

63. ¿Podría decirme su edad? N _____

NS/NC..... 9

64. ¿Qué estudios tiene usted?

Ningunos..... 1

Primaria incompleta..... 2

Primaria (hasta 6º EGB) ..... 3

Formación Profesional..... 4

Bachiller elemental.( hasta 8º EGB).. 5

Bachillerato superior
(equivale a BUP)..... 6

Estudios de Grado Medio..... 7

Universitarios o técnicos
de grado superior..... 8

Otros: (escribir) _____

NC/NS..... 9

65. ¿A cuál de éstas clases cree usted que pertenece? (leer)

Clase baja..... 1
Clase media ..... 2
Clase obrera..... 3
Clase trabajadora..... 4
Otras..... 5
¿Cuál?_____
NS/NC..... 9

66. ¿Pertenece usted a alguna asociación vecinal, cultural, deportiva o de otro tipo?

Cultural..... 1
Vecinal..... 2
Deportiva..... 3
Otras_____ 4
Ninguna..... 5
NC..... 9

67. ¿Recuerda a que partido votó en las Elecciones Generales de 1989?

No voto..... 1
PP..... 2
CDS..... 3
U..... 4
PSOE..... 5
PTE-UC..... 6
PST..... 7
Verde/ ecologista..... 8
Otro _____ 9
NC/NS..... 99

68. ¿Y en las elecciones Generales de 1986?

No voto..... 1
AP (PP)..... 2
CDS..... 3
IU..... 4
PSOE..... 5
PTE-UC..... 6
PST..... 7
Verde..... 8
Otros_____ 9
NC/NS..... 99

69. Y en caso de que mañana hubieran elecciones generales ¿A que partido votaría?

No votaria..... 1
PP..... 2
CDS..... 3
IU..... 4
PSOE..... 5
PTE..... 6
PST..... 7
Verde..... 8
Estoy indeciso..... 9
Otro _____ 10
No Contesta..... 99

70. ¿Cuales son – aproximadamente– el total de sus ingresos familiares mensuales? (en ptas.)

_____

NS/NC..... 99

70 ¿Cual es su situación matrimonial?

Casado(a)..... 1
Divorciado(a)..... 2
Viudo(a)..... 3
Soltero(a) ..... 4
Otro_____ 5

Especificar:_____

NS/NC..... 9

(IMPORTANTE: dar las gracias al entrevistado(a) por su participación en el estudio)

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Nº Cuestionario _____ Nº Ficha _____
Fecha de Realización _____
Empresa: _____

1. ¿ Cuántos trabajadores hay en este centro de trabajo? _____

2 . ¿ Además de UGT y CC.OO. qué otros sindicatos tienen representación en el Comité de Empresa?

| Numero | Si | No |
|---|---|---|
| CGT..... | 1 | 2 |
| CNT ..... | 1 | 2 |
| USO..... | 1 | 2 |
| CSIF..... | 1 | 2 |
| Sindicato sectorial..... | 1 | 2 |
| ¿Cuál?_____ | | |
| NS/NC..... | | 9 |

3. Cuántos delegados (en total) tiene el Comité de Empresa ? _____

4 . ¿ Que sindicatos tienen organizada una sección sindical en este centro de trabajo?

| | Si | No |
|---|---|---|
| CC.OO. | 1 | 2 |
| UGT | 1 | 2 |
| CGT | 1 | 2 |
| USO | 1 | 2 |
| CNT | 1 | 2 |
| Otros | 1 | 2 |
| ¿Cuales?_____ | | |
| NC/NS..... | | 9 |

5. ¿Sin contar el 14-D, durante los últimos 3 años cuántas huelgas han sido convocadas en este centro de trabajo? (leer)

| | |
|---|---|
| Más de 5..... | 1 |
| 5..... | 2 |
| 4 ..... | 3 |
| 3..... | 4 |
| 2..... | 5 |
| 1..... | 6 |
| Ninguna..... | 7 |
| NS/NC..... | 9 |

( si no han habido huelgas pasar a la pregunta 11)

6. ¿Qué sindicato, o sindicatos las convocaron?

| | Si | No |
|---|---|---|
| Comité de Empresa | 1 | 2 |
| CC.OO. | 1 | 2 |
| UGT | 1 | 2 |
| CGT | 1 | 2 |
| CNT | 1 | 2 |
| USO | 1 | 2 |
| Otros | 1 | 2 |
| ¿ Cuales_____ | | |
| NC/NS..... | 9 | |

7. ¿ Cuál, o cuales fueron los motivos para convocar estas huelgas?

| | Si | No |
|---|---|---|
| Negativa a negociar convenio | 1 | 2 |
| Presión durante negociación del convenio | 1 | 2 |
| Incumplimiento del convenio | 1 | 2 |
| Condiciones de trabajo | 1 | 2 |
| Accidentes, seguridad | 1 | 2 |
| Huelgas de solidaridad | 1 | 2 |
| Despidos injustificados | 1 | 2 |
| Otras causas | 1 | 2 |
| ¿ Cuales ?_____ | | |

8. ¿ En que ámbitos se convocaron esta(s) huelga(s)?

| | Si | No | Numero. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Centro de trabajo | 1 | 2 | _____ |
| Todos los centros de la misma empresa | 1 | 2 | _____ |
| Todo el sector | 1 | 2 | _____ |
| NS/NC..... | | 9 | |

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9. ¿Cuánto tiempo duró la huelga más larga?

Especificar el tiempo: _____

10. ¿Se consiguieron los objetivos de esta huelga?

Si..... 1

No..... 2

En parte..... 3

NS/NC..... 9

11. ¿ Durante los últimos años en este centro de trabajo, la plantilla, ha aumentado, ha sido reducida o no ha ocurrido ningún cambio?

Aumento de la plantilla..... 1

Reducción de la plantilla..... 2

Ningún cambio..... 3

NS/NC..... 9

( Si ha aumentado la plantilla)

12. ¿En general , la mayor parte de este aumento ha sido de puestos de trabajo con carácter fijo, o de empleos temporales, y del tipo eventual?

Puestos de trabajo fijos..... 1

Empleo temporal..... 2

Otro (especificar)_____ 3

NS/NC..... 9

Preguntas 13: (empresas e industria)

13. ¿Podría decirme si durante los últimos años esta empresa ha subcontratado tareas, partes de productos, o servicios relacionados con su actividad económica, a entidades o fabricantes exteriores a este centro de trabajo ?

Si..... 1

No..... 2

No Sabe..... 3

No aplica..... 4

NC..... 9

14. En este centro de trabajo, han sido introducidos cambios en la organización del trabajo debido a la utilización de nuevas tecnologías como robots, ordenadores, sistemas de producción asistidos por ordenador, etc. , durante los últimos años?

Si..... 1

No..... 2

No Sabe..... 3

No aplica..... 4

NC..... 9

(afirmativo en la 14, entonces preguntar 15)

15. ¿Antes de realizar estos cambios, se realizaron consultas con los representantes sindicales sobre los mismos, solo se les informó, o simplemente se llevaron a cabo sin ninguna participación de los representantes de los trabajadores.

Se realizaron consultas..... 1

Se informó..... 2

No hubo participación..... 3

No aplica..... 4

No sabe..... 5

No contesta..... 9

16. ¿Qué tipo de convenio existe en este centro de trabajo?

Convenio de Rama /Sector..... 1

Convenio de Empresa..... 2

Empresa pertenece. Rama: _____

Publica ..... 1 Privada..... 2

Mixta ..... 3

Grupo Multinacional.... 1
Grupo Nacional..... 2

Sector económico:

Servicios..... 1

Industria..... 2

Construcción..... 3

Administración pública..... 4

Servicios para la Industria..... 5

Otro: (especificar) _____

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