



# DemoSoc Working Paper

Paper Number 2010--38

## Why Do Workers Leave Unions? – Group Differences in a Spanish Union Federation

*Pere Jódar*

E-mail: [pere.jodar@upf.edu](mailto:pere.jodar@upf.edu)

*Ramon Alós*

E-mail: [ramon.dealos@uab.cat](mailto:ramon.dealos@uab.cat)

*Sergi Vidal*

E-mail: [svidal@bigsss.uni-bremen.de](mailto:svidal@bigsss.uni-bremen.de)

*October, 2010*

*Department of Political & Social Sciences*

Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27

08005 Barcelona

<http://www.upf.edu/dcpis/>



## Abstract

This study analyses the characteristics of members leaving a Spanish union federation – Catalonia branch of Workers’ Commissions (CCOO-Catalonia), together with their reasons for leaving using a variety of data sources. Our findings indicate that higher union attrition among members in instable employment (i.e. casual employment and low seniority). In general, union leavers confirm that their job situation is an important reason for leaving the union. We therefore conclude that efforts made by the union to retain members in vulnerable labor market positions are important in reducing high rates of union attrition in Spain.

## Keywords

Union membership; leaving the union federation; reasons to leave; job instability

## Introduction

While recent empirical studies have reported a decline in union membership (Riley, 1997; Hyman, 1997; Visser, 2002; Machin, 2004; Chechi & Visser, 2005), in Spain - whether due to low initial membership, the economic cycle or effective trade union activity - union membership has continued to grow in the last two decades (Martinez Lucio 1998; Miguélez 2000; Frege and Kelly 2004). Conversely, this increase in union membership has been coupled with an increase in the overall workforce such that the increased union membership has not led to an increase in union density<sup>1</sup>. This is also true of the Spanish Workers' Commissions, or CCOO – Spain's largest union federation.

Focusing on the regional branch in Catalonia<sup>ii</sup>, a look at the membership figures reveals a dynamic picture. In 2005 19,325 members left the union federation while 24,265 joined, leading to a net gain of 4,940 members to the existing 165,536 registered at the end of 2004. In other words, 11.3% of members left but those joining amounted to 14.5%. These high levels of rotation reflect a situation where the majority of new members leave the union during the first two years<sup>iii</sup>. Given similarly volatile union membership in Britain, Waddington and Whitston (1997) suggest that recruitment strategy take into account such high rates of attrition and concluded that an understanding of the reasons behind leaving was essential for any attempt at consolidating membership.

Therefore, the aim of our study is twofold: first we analyze characteristics of individuals who leave unions in order to target vulnerable membership sub-groups. Second, we research the reasons behind the decision to leave the union. Are the causes rooted in the nature and functioning of the union – the services offered, the channels for participation, the strategies for action adopted, the attitude of the leaders – or are they rooted in other factors unrelated to the union such as work related changes (job, type of work or contract, retirement...) or changes in the personal or family situation.

Our main hypotheses link occupational status to probability of leaving and to reasons for leaving. We are particularly interested in the theory of labor market segmentation which distinguishes between core workers (i.e. secure jobs) and peripheral workers (i.e. insecure jobs, atypical work and unconsolidated careers). The distinction is of special interest to the Spanish institutional setting, in general, and for our case study, in particular given that the dual nature of the Spanish labor market. Defining briefly some characteristics of the Spanish industrial relations system will help to clarify the association between labor market segmentation and union attrition in Spain.

Despite the multitude of unions in Spain, two union organizations stand out as the most important and prominent. These two collectivist unions – along with the majority of existing unions – voluntarily accept workers irrespective of the industry or company in which the workers are contracted. Second, the law in Spain recognizes the right of workers in companies with six or more employees to vote on a union representative – whether or not the workers are affiliated with a union. Normally in these elections unions compete, presenting candidates who must be company employees; the results of the votes permit to measure relative power among unions. Third, the law guarantees each union local or national representation proportional to the number of representatives obtained in the refereed elections of union representatives of company workers of the field in question. Finally, a union which, alone or together with other unions, obtains a representation higher than 50% in a particular field has the legal right to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the company counterpart in that particular sector; this agreement will affect all workers in the sector equally, whether or not they are union affiliates<sup>iv</sup>. The Spanish system of representation takes on an 'open-shop' form, where due to the

inclusive system of negotiations, all workers benefit from the improved working conditions negotiated by the union. Therefore, as observed by many others (Hamann, 2001; Fernandez Macias, 2003), the Spanish union has a capacity for intervention which stands in opposition with its low levels of affiliation.

We will comment Spanish union characteristics and their effects on union attrition, contrasting these with British union characteristics using the work of Waddington (2006). Like in Spain, British workers may decide whether or not to join a union (i.e. open-shop), as closed shops were abolished in the early 1990's. British employers may choose to extend the negotiated outcome to non-union workers, but extension requirements are not based in law or in employer association rules. Furthermore, the British unions constituting the majority of union membership in Britain are part of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the main federation of unions in Britain. Unlike in Spain, British trade unions affiliated with the TUC are still independent and consequently, membership registries are managed separately. As a result, a worker who leaves one firm to work for another may constitute a "union leave" in Britain given that the worker is likely to join the trade union of the new firm. This is very unlikely to happen in the CCOO whose branches extend over an entire industry and are based in a broader regional federation. Changing firms or sectors, therefore does not imply leaving the union federation, because registers are maintained regionally. As negotiations take place more broadly - normally at the sector level in a given territory - a change of firm is less likely to affect union branch membership.

Peripheral workers' membership is especially vulnerable in Spain. Peripheral workers have lower job security prospects and may be fearful of layoffs, lack of peer support for participating in unions activities or feel that union participation does not help to improve working conditions. Peripheral workers may respond to lack of individualist incentives to remain in the union, given that the outcome of union bargaining is extended to the entire workforce, or to a lack of collectivist incentives, as workers tend to be embedded in sectors and occupations with no tradition of union representation. In contrast, core workers' central position in the labor market with better labor conditions are expected to show lower rates of union attrition due to more stable job trajectories in sectors with higher unionization levels. Among core workers we expect retirement, union functioning or union characteristics to have the greatest impact motivations to leave a union, as we will discuss in detail below.

To test our hypotheses we conduct our analyses using a combination of survey data and registry data from a regional branch of one of the two main union federations in Spain, the CCOO-Catalonia. As commented, these union federations represent the majority of employment sectors and occupations in Spain. We suggest with some caution that our findings using Catalan data might be generalized to the Spanish context, as a whole. In fact, scholarship which has criticized use of Catalan data on the basis that it is not representative of the country as a whole are not based on substantive institutional differences, but on slight labor market differences. The Catalan region tends to have a slightly more dynamic labor market, with a relatively large industrial employment sector. Nevertheless, the institutions that regulate the labor market are common to all regions in Spain. Therefore, we will set forth general conclusions, but with caution.

The present paper represents an explorative study. The dearth of previous studies - particularly in Spain - restricts precedent and the ability to make comparisons. Furthermore, there is a lack of theoretical referents to serve as conceptual, descriptive and explanatory guides for the analysis of

leaving the union. For example, Guest and Conway (2004) state that, “While there is sufficient theory about joining the unions, there are fewer explanations when it comes to continuity or the permanence of these members and even less when it comes to leaving”<sup>v</sup>. Finally, the study faced methodological difficulties in defining a sample population. To overcome this, we made use of a representative sample of former union members with unpaid dues in order to select those who expressed the desire to withdraw from the union. This represented the treatment group designed to provide a better understanding of the causes of union withdrawal and the characteristics associated with such causes. The representativeness of this sample will be discussed in the data sources section, below.

### **Constructing a theoretical framework**

Previous studies have suggested that motives for union withdrawal represent the opposite end of a spectrum of motives for union affiliation and participation in union activities. In keeping with the classification of incentives for union affiliation by Lange, et al. (1982), we describe the parallel theoretical frameworks explaining union affiliation (Guest & Conway, 2004) and disaffiliation (Levesque, et al., 2005). According to Lange, et al. (1982), incentives for participation can be either instrumental, functional, sociability or adversarial identification (them versus us).

After reviewing theories of trade union membership, Guest and Conway (2004) group theories into four separate, though not mutually exclusive, categories. One category prioritizes adversarial identities in the company (them versus us) such that membership would be a result of power relations in the workplace. Another category centers on rational instrumental motives, where membership benefits exceed membership costs. A third category (functional incentive) prioritizes union effectiveness in offering protection and job security. Finally, union membership can be a product of the social interaction derived from a collectivist and professional group identities (sociability incentive). These theories of union membership bear a strong resemblance to the theories of Levesque, et al., (2005) constructed to explain union dissatisfaction and the withdrawal of union members. With respect to adversarial identity (them versus us), Levesque highlights a problem with relation to differences in work type and working conditions. Individualization of labor relations, praised by managers, renders collective action difficult. It is expected that the decline in union membership will be caused by the union’s inability to promote adversarial identities among workers which translate into collective action. Similarly, instrumental incentives for union membership may be offset by a loss in negotiation power. This can occur with an increase in unemployment, proliferation of atypical (unsecure) contracts, or from a rise in subcontracting and outsourcing. Finally, functional and social incentives for union membership may be depleted by aggressive managerial strategies and by worker differentiation. Weakening the relationship between organizations and union members renders the formation of collective, professional identities difficult, and depletes the protection offered by the union.

In short, a clear correspondence exists between Guest and Conway’s explanatory approaches to joining a union and Levesque’s approaches to union withdrawal. The incentives mentioned in both approaches may be grounded in union efforts to increase and maintain membership, or in the personal or labor situation of the worker. Seeking differences on these grounds, we may be better able to understand union withdrawal. We have categorized reasons for leaving into three main groups. They are:

1) Union Related. This category includes union withdrawal for reasons related to the union itself, and generally includes instrumental reasons and disagreement with the union. Instrumental grounds for leaving a union may occur in the event that the bargains for conditions that are not valued, or in the event that union services are seen as deficient. Members motivated by instrumentalism will also take into account union dues, and are more likely to withdraw if dues are seen as too high. Conversely, disagreement with union policy may induce members with adversarial identification incentives to withdraw as well as those members for whom collective commitment to the job and workmates (i.e. sociability incentive) initially motivated the workers to join the union.

2) Personal and Family Motives. This category includes such things as the birth of a child, major illnesses or divorce, each of which can affect the decision to leave a union. Personal and family motives are linked with work-related changes in many cases. For instance, caring from dependent relatives or major illness may be also a cause for quitting employment. In contrast they are not necessarily related to dissatisfaction with the union and its functioning. As such, for analysis purposes “Personal and Family Motives” will encompass changes to both personal as well as professional situation and will include all non-union related reasons for leaving, in opposition to the first category.

3) Work Related. Work related motives include changes to work situation, job satisfaction and treatment by the employer. In these cases, the member does not blame the union or its inability to function. Work related issues might include motives involving sociability incentives (i.e. collective or professional identities) and adversarial identification. A job change necessarily involves a new work environment, and likely different conditions that shape such collective or professional identities. It should be noted that rational cost/benefit calculations, clearly instrumental in nature, play a part in work related reasons for leaving. For instance, the benefit of membership may be almost completely offset when becoming unemployed.

The work-related reasons for leaving the union are particularly harmful to union membership in Spain. High rates of union attrition generally have to do with such reasons. Job security and job instability might then be an interesting distinction in order to better understand the dynamics and causes of union withdrawal among members, at least in the Spanish context. To that end, we make a distinction between secure and insecure employment in order to distinguish between core and peripheral segments of the labor market. We adopt the distinction made in studies on labor market segmentation (Doeringer and Piore 1971; Edwards et al. 1975; Gordon et al. 1982; Osterman 1984; Rubery and Wilkinson 1994) which divide the workforce into categories which shape a continuum along axes of centrality and periphery on labor conditions given by employers. For the sake of simplicity we make the distinction between core and peripheral workers. Core workers hold more desirable positions in the workforce such as permanent, full-time positions. Core workers are valuable to employers given their relatively high-skill positions and seniority (which is also taken as an indicator of attachment). By contrast, peripheral workers are not necessarily less skilled, but given their relatively low seniority or the volatile demand for the product produced by their employer (mainly as a result of outsourcing of non-added value part of the production by bigger companies), they face more unstable labor conditions. As a result, peripheral workers are more likely to hold temporary contracts, part-time positions or short work seniority. Firm size may also be an indicator of higher than average probability of work rotation. Research on Spain finds that collectivities such as female labor, transitions from school to work, foreign labor and lower educated workforces are more likely to hold peripheral positions<sup>vi</sup>. These collectivities do not only have higher rates of unstable work, but they also have higher rates of unemployment - the latter being due in large part to work instability.

Labor market segmentation is useful to set hypotheses that clearly link occupational situation to union attrition rates and causes for leaving. Insecure positions induce union withdrawal due to disrupted and unstable job trajectories that do not allow for long term exposure to collective identities, along with scant instrumental benefit from remaining unionized<sup>vii</sup>. Secure positions are likely to have a work environment conducive to the formation of collective identities and the promotion of collective action. From a labor segmentation framework two research hypotheses emerge. They aim to contrast characteristics of the members who leave a union with characteristics of the membership as a whole in a segmented working environment.

*H1a: Labor insecurity and worker characteristics associated with peripheral employment are likely to raise union attrition rates.*

*H1b: Grounds for union withdrawal among peripheral employees are more likely to be work-related.*

Labor insecurity refers to any fixed-term or part-time positions with high job turnover (i.e. unconsolidated careers). Vulnerable employees may also be found in small companies or in employment sectors with lower union presence. Defense and protection incentives (i.e. functional incentive) for union membership are often the most effective predictor of union withdraw. For example, a person may join a union when faced with a problem (e.g. legal representation); we can therefore expect that this type of member signed up recently in order to have a voice, will show little loyalty and is likely to withdraw soon. The departure from the union will likely coincide with a change in employment situation or a solution to the problem for which he or she joined the union to begin with. Work changes – changing company, job, or working conditions – are expected to have a significant impact on such workers. These workers may also withdrawal from the union due to union dissatisfaction if union membership fails to improve working conditions. Thus, workers may blame the union for long-term job insecurity. We think, however, that the latter case might be less important, as we expect individuals belonging to this group are more likely to face a job-change.

*H2a: Secure positions and worker characteristics associated with secure positions in the labor market, are likely to show low rates of union withdrawal.*

*H2b: Grounds for union withdrawal among secure employees are more likely to be union-related.*

Job security refers to core workers and is characterized by higher seniority and non-fixed-term contracts. Given the trade union pluralism of the Spanish industrial relations system and the wide coverage of collective bargaining (van der Meer 1997; Hamann and Martinez Lucio 2003), union members with instrumental motives for membership may switch unions according to which union bargains best or offers the best balance between membership costs and benefits. If no such switch occurs then there is evidence of other incentives for union membership. On the other hand, those with identity-based membership incentives may remain until retirement, when union membership ends naturally. Members who disagree with union decisions will leave it for these reasons, while those who are not significantly at odds with union policies or ideologies will leave at retirement. In other words, barring any significant disagreements with union decisions, members leave at retirement and do not withdraw due to union-based reasons.

In this section we will summarize empirical studies of union withdrawal and reasons for withdrawal in other non-Spanish contexts. Gallie (1996) argues that in Britain, “The membership crisis of the 80s can be seen as a sharp decline in workers’ commitment to trade unionism at a moment when

the coercive power of the unions was being reduced” (due to conservative government’s anti-union legislation). However, Gallie does not find sufficient empirical evidence in his research to support the notion of a general breakdown in British workers’ commitment to unions given that only 25% of employed members withdraw for reasons having to do with the union itself. Rather, he notes that the reasons put forward stem mainly from changes in the work situation. 45% of members who withdrew but remained employed cited change of job as the reason and noted that in their new employment there are no unions. Of members who withdrew and became unemployed, 75% cited job loss as the reason for withdrawal. Gallie (1996) also finds that different levels of female membership are not attributed to individual or demographic factors, nor to trade union characteristics, but rather to the greater likelihood of women in Britain to be working part-time. In their analysis of a public sector union in the UK, Waddington and Kerr (1999) observe that 67.6% of members who withdrew from the union gave job factors as the reason, compared with 25% who mentioned dissatisfaction with the union and its activities. Klandermans (1986) notes that, regardless of the degree of initial commitment to the union, unemployment and job changes lead to disaffection - in other words members’ job and personal situation also have an impact. In examining the case of the Netherlands, Visser (2002) also notes that the strongest influences in joining or leaving a union come from factors outside of members’ professional characteristics (e.g. unemployment or retirement), or from personal factors such as the birth of a child, divorce, etc<sup>viii</sup>.

Summarizing the literature on reasons for union withdrawal (see also Labbe and Croisat 1992) shows different clusters of reasons affecting the decision to leave the union. Labbe and Croisat also suggest that apart from a context favoring commitment to either the company or to the union, workers’ individual characteristics and motives also play a part in the decision-making process. Notably, in the empirical literature on union attrition, we find that job instability predicts a great deal of withdrawals and that members who leave the union tend to cite change in job situation as their grounds for leaving.

## **Data sources and methods**

Up to three data sources were used to respond to the abovementioned research questions. Membership registries of the CCOO-Catalonia union federation were used to indicate the main trends in union withdrawal, and were supplemented with responses to two survey questionnaires to provide in depth information on reasons for leaving.

We analyzed the information contained in the union membership registries for recent years. The register contains basic information on sex, age, nationality, employment situation, type of contract, firm size, and sector of economic activity for each member of the CCOO-Catalonia (around 180,000 members in 2008)<sup>ix</sup>. The register allows us to monitor yearly variation of characteristics of the membership, and we were thus able to establish a profile of union leavers.

The membership register is helpful in describing turnover rates among different groups, but offers limited insight into specific reasons for leaving. Therefore, in order to establish the reasons and motivations for union withdrawal, we decided to distribute a questionnaire. Drawing a representative sample of ex-union members was problematic given data protection regulations which prevented us from contacting members who resigned from the union. To circumvent this problem, we obtained a sample of ex-union members by asking members on the registry who failed to pay union dues, but had not formally resigned, whether they had intended to withdraw from the union federation. We obtained access to the register of CCOO-Catalonia members who had not paid their dues between October 2005



and September 2006. The register of unpaid dues contained 12,371 members, from which we drew a random, non-stratified sample of 798 (for a confidence level of 95.5% and in situations of supposed maximum uncertainty, included a tolerance of 3.4%). We were able to conduct a survey as the union federation regularly contacts the members who have not paid dues in order to inquire about payment. The call center of the union federation kindly agreed to distribute a short survey to the sample that we extracted. These members were contacted via telephone in November 2006.

The telephone call starts as usual, reminding the member of the outstanding union dues. The caller then begins the survey by asking the member to state their reason for not paying the union dues. The primary motivation for not paying union dues was a lack of money in the bank account (51%). Change in dues, change in bank information or error were also expressed as reasons, but they were comparatively minor (15%). A change in the type of dues is not necessarily due to a firm change, as dues are generally paid directly by members and not by firms<sup>x</sup>. A change in dues is also not necessarily related to employment sector change, which would imply a sector change in the federation, as the membership registry and dues are centralized in CCOO-Catalonia.

The second question was whether the member intended to pay dues or whether he or she wanted to withdraw from the union. In total, 251 individuals (31,5%) expressed the desire to leave the union federation. These 251 individuals represent our treatment group for analysis and are the only individuals to answer any further survey questions. We inquired as to their reason for leaving the union and later grouped these reasons into eight categories<sup>xi</sup>, which were then scaled into three categories (i.e. personal, work-related and union-related) and subsequently into two main categories (i.e. union-related and non-union-related) in order to fit our analyses. We also asked for socio-demographic data (age, sex and educational attainment), labor variables (employment status, job seniority, number of companies worked for, occupational category, and firm size) and union variables (federation, length of service and use of union services for legal advice and training).

The main shortcoming in sampling ex-union members was that the register of unpaid dues is restricted to companies with fewer than 20 CCOO members and without a recognized trade union organization in the workplace. It is important to note that the Spanish trade union system is based on dual representation within the company: the work council (*comité de empresa*) and the company's union branch (*sección sindical*), both with overlapping functions within companies. More than 75% of work council members belong to one of the two major trade union federations in Spain, CCOO and UGT. This means that despite the fact that the sample excludes ex-union members from companies without a union branch, this does not rule out the possibility of union members who are members of the work councils. The limitation of our study with the greatest implications deals with the exclusion of leavers from companies with more than 20 union members. These are contexts in which social custom or social pressure might exert some influence over membership and non-membership. Only 40% of CCOO membership can be found in companies with up to 20 members and without a union branch. This source of potential bias underscores the exploratory nature of this study due, in good measure, to the need for strong protective measures to safeguard the confidentiality of this type of data<sup>xii</sup>.

As a third source of data we use information on a representative sample of members of CCOO-Catalonia<sup>xiii</sup>. 1067 members were surveyed in 2007 in order to analyze membership dynamics. From this survey we obtained information comparable to the data obtained in our survey of 251 individuals who expressed their intentions to leave the union<sup>xiv</sup>. We then used the information on the 1067 members as a control group which was merged with the aforementioned survey of 251 CCOO leavers

to run regression analysis. This allowed us to compare leavers with members who remained in the union. Nevertheless, between the sample of leavers and the sample of members there is a time difference of approximately one year and the sample of members is fully representative of the membership while the sample of leavers is only partially representative of the leavers. These differences will have implications for results which will be discussed below.

Due to the nature of the hypotheses two types of dependent variables and analysis for binary responses were carried out. First we performed a traditional logistic regression where differences in the odds ratio were estimated for certain member characteristics with respect to the likelihood of leaving the union. For that we lumped the sample of members and the sample of leavers in the analysis. Secondly, in order to understand reasons for leaving (non-union and union-related) we used a logistic regression in order to compare the odds of a covariate on leaving by reasons having to do with the union against the odds of the covariate on leaving by other reasons (mainly work-related). In that case we made use of only the sample of leavers. As this sample contains only 251 subjects, we also calculated bootstrapped standard errors and confidence intervals in order to avoid negative properties of a small sample size<sup>xv</sup>.

### **Which type of members leave?**

We now present the main results of the study. As commented, they arise from different data sources, therefore, whenever possible results from the treatment group are compared with results for the membership as a whole (taken from the union membership registry); where this is not possible the results are compared with results from a study of members from the same union which was carried out in 2007. Table 1 shows the groups which, according to the membership registry, are more likely to join the union as well as to remaining in membership. Paradoxically, however, some of these groups also exhibit the highest levels of union withdrawal.

While membership rates for women, foreigners, temporary workers, part-time workers, and young workers show the highest fluctuation when comparing in vs. outflow, these groups also show higher membership growth and retention during the period of 2002 – 2005, when compared to the rest of the groups.<sup>xvi</sup> Conversely, those aged 61 and over, show the highest rates of union withdrawal. So the groups showing most growth are characterized by highly volatile membership rates, and although their contribution to the membership figures as a whole is still slight, they nevertheless contribute to consolidating a stable membership. This pattern is most often found in sectors such as construction, retail, and hotel & catering, whereas in the manufacturing industry the pace of growth is slower and steadier. It should also be noted that these more dynamic sectors also have a higher proportion of workers with non-standard terms of employment and low job security (Banyuls et al. 2009).

In Table 2 we show reasons for leaving a union and groups of reasons from the interview of ex-union members. We find (see last column in Table 2) that the majority of sampled members who leave (i.e. two thirds) do so for work-related or family and personal (i.e. non-union-related) reasons. Unemployment, retirement - work incapacity and harmed promotion aspects account for an important part of the work related causes while a change in employment circumstances accounts for considerably less. Slightly more than a third of those who leave the union decide to withdraw due to union-related causes such as, differences in opinion, instrumental calculation (the utility of the union measured against the dues paid or the effort involved), or more rarely problems with union services, or to join another union.

Table 1. Variation in total membership according to groups. Period 2002-2005 (%)

	Percent average membership	Average annual membership growth rate	Average annual attrition rate
<b>Total membership</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>11,1</b>
Men	66,2	2,3	11,0
Women	33,8	5,1	12,3
Age ≤ 30 years	13,9	15,8	17,7
Age 31-50 years	55,6	3,9	10,3
Age ≥ 61 years	4,8	-16,8	20,8
Temporary workers	1,3	10,7	13,0
Part-time workers	3,4	10,4	14,4
Unemployed	6,7	-3,6	18,4
Foreign workers	4,8	22,8	30,0
Small firm (1 to 50 employees)	37,9	3,2	14,4
Large firm (300 employees and more)	31,8	1,8	9,5
Up to 1 year of membership duration			20,7
Up to 5 year of membership duration			11,2
Union's legal services user			16,5
Union's training services user			6,0
Union representative			6,6

Source: CCOO-Catalonia membership registry (december 2005: 170.476 members). These figures are courtesy of Daniel Garrell, of CCOO-Catalonia Research Centre.

Comparing the aforementioned findings with Waddington's study of three British trade unions (2006), reasons for leaving the CCOO-Catalonia appear most closely related to those of British union B (see Table 2). This may be due in part to the fact that the CCOO-Catalonia is a union federation representing all types of sectors and occupation, much like union B in the Waddington study. Regarding withdrawal due to union dissatisfaction, we can see substantial agreement between our results and those of the British studies mentioned above (Gallie 1996; Waddington and Kerr 1999), and in particular with those of Waddington's union B. Regarding non-union-related causes, we observe some differences, for instance in the relatively low probability of leaving the CCOO-Catalonia, compared to union B, when changing jobs. As mentioned above, in the Spanish system of union federations it is possible to remain in a union federation when changing jobs or employment sectors. This is less likely to occur in the British system, based on independent unions where collective bargaining takes place mainly at the firm level. However, other non-union related reasons for leaving (including personal and work-related reasons) have a greater impact in Spain, meaning that personal or job situations affect the probability of leaving beyond their affects on the union itself and its functioning. In any case we should go further to associate characteristics of leavers and reasons for leaving in order to see whether union withdrawals and reasons correlate with unstable employment conditions.

Table 2. Reasons for leaving: comparing three British unions (in Waddington, 2006) to the CCOO-Catalonia

		Three British trade unions a			CCOO-Catalonia
		A	B	C	
		N=2.602	N= 1.201	N= 1.842	N= 251
Work-related	Retirement	19,6%	16,0%	33,6%	25,1%
	Redundancy	24,6%	18,5%	6,8%	10,0%
	Harmed promotion prospects	0,5%	0,8%	0,6%	12,7%
	Change of job	21,3%	16,4%	13,3%	5,2%
	Total	66,0%	51,7%	54,3%	53,0%
Dissatisfied with trade union		17,8%	33,8%	29,4%	36,7%
Others		16,2%	14,5%	16,3%	10,4%
Years of membership of those dissatisfied with union		10-11	2,5-3	5,5-6	3-4

Sources: Waddington (2006) and CCOO-Catalonia attrition survey 2006.

a) Waddington (2006): Trade union A: small, homogeneous, private services, non-manual workers, 65% women. Trade union B: manufacturing industry with public and private services, 42% women, more manual workers. Trade union C: mainly public sector.

We will now describe differences among union- and non-union-related grounds for union withdrawal. We begin by describing the two categories, and subsequently show the results of a regression analysis. Regarding demographic variables, no significant differences are observed between men and women's reasons for leaving. To illustrate, 38% of women, and 36% of men withdraw for union-related reasons, a net difference of only 2%. Differences appear, however, when age is considered, because older workers are less likely to withdraw for union-related reasons. For members aged 26 to 45, union-related reasons constitute around 45% of union withdrawals, while for members over 46, union-related reasons were found to comprise less than 30%. Among non-union-related reasons, for those 46 and over, retirement or work incapacity were the main grounds for union withdrawal, while unemployment, financial problems and work situation constituted the principal causes for those 45 and under, especially in the 26 to 35 age-group.

Union-related reasons for leaving are significantly correlated with the work situation. Union-related grounds are more common among those who remain employed after withdrawal (around 50% of leavers from this category withdraw for reasons having to do with the union), especially among those who work in large companies (53% compared to 47% in smaller size companies). However we found no differences among employees with permanent (52,2%) versus temporary contracts (50%) for union-related reasons for leaving. On the other hand, non-union-related reasons appear more frequently among members who are unemployed after withdrawal (67,5% of leavers from this category withdraw for reasons not having to do with the union) and pensioners (89,1%)<sup>xvii</sup>. Non union-related reasons are more common among those with high seniority (54% for those with more than 5 years of seniority); in contrast to those with medium seniority, who show more union-related reasons (44%).

There is no clear relationship between trade union variables and grounds for union withdrawal. Nevertheless, non-union related causes (work-related and family and personal reasons) tend to be more frequent among those who leave before the end of their first year of membership (65% compared to 60% of those remaining in the union longer). This result may go hand-in-hand with the fact that workers joining the trade union within the past year are likely to be peripheral employees.

Among union-related reasons for union withdrawal, members most often reported that the union failed to adequately inform or advise on union-related issues. The second-most common union-related reason for leaving, was that a member had joined the union in order to make use of certain union services that are no longer needed. A third reason is the claim that union services do not work well, and in fourth place members reported that they never needed anything from the union anyway. These results differ somewhat from those of Waddington (2006). In his his analysis, the three British unions under study show three main areas of dissatisfaction leading to union withdrawal: ineffectiveness in improving wages and working conditions, reluctance among union leaders to contact or communicate with members and, insufficient help in resolving member problems.

Another difference is the importance given to the option of switching unions. While the figures vary from 11 to 27% of those leaving for union-related reasons in Waddington's study, in the CCOO the figure is only 9%. In general leavers express no intention of joining another trade union in either the short- or the long-term. Thus, according to the CCOO membership registry between 1992 and 2005, those who had previously left the union and later rejoined constituted only 7.7%. The overwhelming majority of those who left the union never rejoined. The amount of union dues is also not an issue in the CCOO.

### **Regression analysis**

The results of the binary outcome (logit) regression analysis, aimed to test the above-mentioned hypotheses, can be seen in Table 3. The table shows one model-specification for the probability of leaving the union versus staying (Model 1) and one model-specification for the probability of leaving for union-related causes versus leaving for non-union-related causes (i.e. personal-family and work-related) (Models 2). For Model 1 we make use of the sample of 251 leavers along with the sample of members drawn in 2007 in order to compare leavers to non-leavers. For Model 2 we only use information from the sample of leavers. In order to analyze the impact of job security (or core workers) on leaving and causes for leaving, we use permanent work positions and high seniority as proxies to core workers. On the other hand, job instability (or peripheral workers) was compared using temporary contracts, small firm size, employed in personal service sector and low seniority as proxies. Situations of unemployment and retirement are also analyzed, as we proposed that they may be correlated with non-union reasons for leaving.

Model 1 of Table 3 shows that the majority of the associations described above are corroborated, thereby substantiating the proposed hypotheses. As expected, job security is clearly linked to remaining in the union. Occupational status is significantly associated with leaving the union. Peripheral employees are more likely to leave the union than those in permanent positions (reference categories). Those excluded from work are most likely to leave - the unemployed above all, followed by pensioners. Work seniority is also important. Model 1 in Table 3 shows a clear negative correlation between higher seniority and union withdrawal which means that, controlling for occupational status, like temporary contracts, and other variables, employees with more seniority are less likely to leave the union. We also find a significant negative correlation between membership duration and leaving the union. This association may be due to a greater socialization or identification with the union, given that these members represent the core of the organization and of union activity.

Table 3. Logit regression for the probability of (1) leaving the union and (2) leaving the union for union-related reasons. a

	Model 1 <sup>b</sup>		Model 2 <sup>c</sup>	
	Leaving / Staying		Union / non-union reasons	
	Coefficient	Confidence interval	Coefficient	Confidence interval
<b>Socio-Demographic factors</b>				
<b>Age</b>				
< 35	ref		ref	
35 - 49	-0.07	[-0.51,0.38]	-0.03	[-0.81,0.76]
>= 50	-1.03***	[-1.44,-0.61]	0.16	[-0.55,0.86]
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	ref		ref	
Female	0.51***	[0.17,0.85]	-0.08	[-0.69,0.53]
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Low	ref		ref	
Intermediate	0.39*	[-0.01,0.79]	0.32	[-0.38,1.02]
High	-0.25	[-0.77,0.27]	-0.72	[-1.85,0.41]
<b>Work-related factors</b>				
<b>Occupational Status</b>				
Employed (permanent)	ref		ref	
Employed (temporary)	0.56**	[0.02,1.11]	-0.36	[-1.38,0.67]
Unemployed	1.82***	[1.05,2.60]	-1.74**	[-3.18,-0.30]
Retired	1.19***	[0.37,2.00]	-2.98***	[-4.62,-1.35]
<b>Seniority</b>				
< 5 years	ref		ref	
>= 5 years	-0.60**	[-1.06,-0.14]	-0.63	[-1.53,0.27]
<b>Employment Sector</b>				
Industry and Construction	ref		ref	
Private services	0.34	[-0.16,0.84]	0.44	[-0.54,1.43]
Public services	-0.04	[-0.43,0.35]	0.06	[-0.63,0.75]
<b>Occupational category</b>				
Unskilled	ref		ref	
Skilled	-0.44	[-1.01,0.13]	-0.94	[-2.12,0.23]
Technical or managerial	0.10	[-0.51,0.71]	-0.39	[-1.59,0.82]
<b>Size of the company</b>				
< 6 workers	ref		ref	
6 - 49 workers	-0.01	[-0.61,0.59]	-0.29	[-1.40,0.81]
>= 50 workers	-0.30	[-0.89,0.30]	-0.00	[-1.11,1.10]
<b>Union-related factors</b>				
<b>Length of membership</b>				
< 3 years	ref		ref	
3 - 9 years	-0.52***	[-0.87,-0.17]	0.25	[-0.37,0.86]
> 9 years	-2.15***	[-2.73,-1.56]	0.13	[-0.99,1.25]
chi2	300***		38***	
p	0,001		0,001	
N	1318		251	

a) Results of the logit regression are presented in the form of regression coefficients (left column for every model) and 95% confidence intervals for the regression coefficient (right column for every model). Confidence intervals are calculated with bootstrapped standard errors.

b) Model 1 calculates probability of leaving the union, where the reference category is staying. The sample for Model 1 contains 1067 individuals of the membership survey 2007 (i.e. stayers) and 251 individuals of the CCOO-Catalonia attrition survey 2007.

c) Model 2 calculates probability of leaving for reasons to do with the union, where the reference category is leaving for reasons not to do with the union (i.e. work-related and family or personal-related). We use the CCOO-Catalonia attrition survey 2007 where 93 observations are Y=1.

Women's greater probability of leaving, irrespective of the cause and controlling for occupational status, should be stressed. This could be due to a lack of gender sensitivity on the part of the union (Kirton 1999; Kirton and Healy 1999; Tomlinson 2005), especially when taking into account that it is women who are disproportionately burdened with home and family responsibilities. However, this result might be attenuated by the above commented female bias of the sample of leavers with respect to the real proportion of leavers calculated with the membership registry<sup>xviii</sup>. However, the description of the registry already shows a higher proportion of women leaving the union. Workers in public administration and social services, on the other hand, show a greater tendency to leave for reasons having to do with the union. The other variables have limited to no significance in explaining union withdrawal. We find educational level or age among the weakly associated variables, while employment sector, size of company and occupational category are found to have no significant impact on union withdrawal.

Looking at Model 2 where the analysis is limited to the reasons for leaving, we only find differences for those out of the workforce. Unemployed or retired from employment union members are more likely to leave the union federation for non-union-related reasons. However, in the case of retired employees, this finding is unsurprising given the lack of incentive for being union member. In the case unemployment, this may be due to the lack of protection offered by Spanish unions to members most likely to face job-loss. We would have expected that people in temporary jobs or with less seniority would be more likely to leave for reasons having to do with working conditions. However, these coefficients were not significant, meaning that it is also plausible that many members with temporary positions or low seniority may leave the union federation due to a perception that the union is not able to improve their working conditions. We were not able to interact job instability with length of membership in order to see whether dissatisfaction with the union is related to duration of membership, as few cases satisfied both conditions. We confirmed that the significance of the coefficients using bootstrapped standard errors remained unchanged.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

First, we would like to reiterate the exploratory nature of our results due to the novelty of the subject under study both at the theoretical and conceptual levels and in comparable results. Our initial interest was to determine reasons for union withdrawal. We studied the quantity of members who leave, the identification of groupings or types of member displaying a greater tendency toward union withdrawal and the reasons for their decisions. We have taken into account Visser (2002) who identifies some subgroups who are more likely to leave the union and others who are less; and on Labbe and Croisat (1992:91) who claim that "leaving the union in the case of France affects practically all the categories of the active population independently of their occupational status, sector of employment, age and place of residence". We also take up the distinction made in studies on labor market segmentation (Doeringer and Piore 1971; Edwards et al. 1975; Gordon et al. 1982; Osterman 1984; Rubery and Wilkinson 1994) in order to hypothesize as to which type of employee is more likely to leave and for what reason. We stress that secure versus insecure positions explain a great deal of difference on rates of withdrawal and reasons for doing so.

Among CCOO-Catalonia members who leave the union there are more women than men, more of advanced age and more with low levels of educational attainment. If we look at work related characteristics the tendency to leave is greater among the unemployed, among temporary workers,

among pensioners, among unskilled workers with low seniority, in small workplaces and who have switched jobs, and finally among those with only a short time in union membership.

Beyond these descriptions, in our study we put forth some hypotheses. With regard to hypotheses 1a and 1b, we have seen that for peripheral workers, employees with non-permanent positions, low seniority and more likely to face layoffs; reasons for leaving are primarily centered on the work situation or job change. What is more, the fact that a considerable number of peripheral employees have already joined and left the union previously, coupled with the fact that peripheral employees are most likely to use the union's legal services, leads us to the assumption that the main reasons for joining the union have to do with defense and protection at work.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b refer to core workers, defined as qualified or skilled workers of medium age characterized by permanent, full-time contracts. We hypothesize that core workers generally leave the union for union-related reasons (more adversarial identity than instrumental incentives). Evidence of this trend was shown in the descriptive analysis. Conversely, regression analysis only demonstrated a lower propensity to leave for this group, but showed no significant results for the differences in reasons for leaving. Again, because of data limitations mentioned above we do not state that significant differences exist. We also find that core workers may leave for non-union related reasons when facing retirement or in case of work incapacity.

These results match those of Waddington (2006) who analyzed a British union with similar membership. However, we observed differences in non-union-related reasons for leaving, which showed that dismissal or abrupt changes in work situation are less important in CCOO-Catalonia, but other work reasons and retirement are more important. This may be the result of institutional differences, such as Spanish 'inclusive' collective bargaining (i.e. the labor law dictates that non-unionized workers benefit from collective agreements) which may lead to lower incentives for joining a union among those in unstable employment conditions or in union unfriendly firms. It may also lead to a lower propensity to leave a union when changing job, as union representation is normally region-wide.

To sum up, different groups were observed to have different likelihoods for leaving the union and within these, subgroups identified leaving the union for union-related and non-union-related reasons. The differences between work-related and personal and family reasons for leaving, and between the profiles of those who claimed union-related motives, justify continuing research along this path. It would also be useful to flesh out these profiles with variables like level of involvement in the union, service as a representative, taking part in meetings, etc. Variables such as these would be particularly relevant if a gender perspective was introduced given that, controlling for the other variables, the number of women who leave is always greater than the number of men.

It is important to consider that a trade union has different options for member recruitment and retention (Hyman 1997 and 2004). It can emphasize the exclusive defense of its existing members or it can open its membership to new sectors in an attempt to diversify its membership base (for example from industry to services, from large companies to smaller ones, etc.). However, while the first option (exclusion) maintains the union's internal homogeneity, the second (inclusion) leads to greater heterogeneity and therefore to more organizational and representation difficulties. To this we need to understand the union's strategic decisions regarding demands: are demands basically instrumental and linked to particular working conditions, or are demands based on the defense of particular group



interests, expressed in terms of identity and/or solidarity? And finally, the organizational strategies of the union lead it to forms of administration and governance emphasizing either democracy and participation or efficiency, either favoring inclusion or exclusion, emphasizing the mobilization of its members and of workers in general or concentrating on providing better union services (see Waddington 2006, Cregan 2005). There is a strong likelihood that favoring of one or the other of these approaches will impact on levels of membership and the union's capacity to retain and support its members. It is within this framework that we situate our hypotheses. Along these lines, the union is also faced with the task of preparing its organization to actively engage in worker recruitment and retention and earning worker loyalty, which means training their staff in the skills needed for these organizational tasks.

There is a common thread linking reasons for joining the union to those for leaving (Waddington 2006) which is based on improvements in salary and working conditions and also support given to members by the union. In the case of CCOO-Catalonia it appears that questions related to services and organization (information and advice) are by far the most often cited. Moreover, in this matter the interview results offer some points of interest for the union: more information and advice or better services could be the starting point for finding ways to facilitate identification with the union and avoid answers like "since joining I've never needed anything from the union" being used to justify leaving. This would also be a line to consider for future research, together with a rigorous analysis of the trade union trajectory or career using survival models and techniques and, as mentioned previously, introducing a gender perspective.

## References

Author. Date

- Banyuls, Josep, Fausto Miguélez, Albert Recio, Ernest Cano, and Raul Lorente. 2009. 'The Transformation of the Employment System in Spain: Towards a Mediterranean Neoliberalism?.' In *European Employment Models in Flux. A Comparison of Institutional Change in Nine European Countries*, edited by G. Bosch, S. Lehndorff, and J. Rubery. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cecchi, Daniele, and Jelle Visser. 2005. 'Pattern Persistence in European Trade Union Density. A longitudinal analysis 1950-1996.' *European Sociological Review* 21 (1):1-21.
- Cregan, Christina. 2005. 'Can organizing work? An inductive analysis of individual attitudes toward union membership.' *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 58 (2):282-304.
- Doeringer, Peter B. and Michael J. Piore. 1971. *Internal labor markets and manpower analysis*. Lexington: Heath Lexington Books.
- Edwards, Richard, Reich, Michael and Gordon, David. 1975, eds, *Labor Market Segmentation*. Lexington, MA: Heath.
- Fernández Macías, E. 2003. Job Instability and Political Attitudes Towards Work: Some Lessons from the Spanish Case. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 9 (2): 205–222.
- Frege, Carola M. and John Kelly. 2004. *Varieties of Unionism. Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gallie, Duncan. 1996. Trade Union Allegiance and Decline in British Union Labor Markets. In *Trade Unionism in Recession*, edited by Duncan Gallie, Roger Penn, and Michael Rose. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Goerke, Laszlo, and Markus Pannenberg. 2004. 'Norm-Based Trade Union Membership: Evidence for Germany.' *German Economic Review* 5 (4):481–504.
- Guest, David, and Neil Conway. 2004. 'Exploring the paradox of unionized worker dissatisfaction.' *Industrial Relations Journal* 35 (2):102-120.
- Hamann, Kerstin. 2001. 'The resurgence of national-level bargaining: union strategies in Spain.' *Industrial Relations Journal* 32 (2): 154-172.
- Hamann, Kerstin and Miguel Martinez Lucio. 2003. Strategies of Union Revitalization in Spain: Negotiating Change and Fragmentation. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 9 (1):61-78.
- Hirschman, Albert. 1970. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Hyman, Richard. 1997. 'The Future of Employee Representation.' *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 35: 309-336
- Hyman, Richard. 1997b. 'Trade unions and interest representation in the context of globalisation.' *Transfer* 3 (3):515-533.
- Hyman, Richard. 2004. 'The Future of Trade Unions.' In *Unions in the 21st Century. An Internationale Perspective*, edited by Anil Verma and Thomas A. Kochan. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kirton, Gill. 2005. 'Transforming union women: the role of women trade union officials in union renewal.' *Industrial Relations Journal* 30 (1): 31-45.
- Kirton, Gill and Geraldine Healy. 1999. 'Sustaining and Developing Women's Trade Union Activism: A Gendered Project?' *Gender, Work and Organization* 6 (4): 213-223.
- Klandermans, Bert. 1986. 'Psychology and trade union participation: Joining, acting, quitting.' *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 1986 (59):189-204
- Klandermans, Bert. 1997. *The Social Psychology of Protest*. Oxford. Blackwell Publishers.
- Labbe, Dominique, and Croisat, Maurice. 1992. *La fin des syndicats*. Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Lange, P., Ross, G. and M. Vannicelli. 1982. *Unions, Change and Crisis: French and Italian Union Strategy and the Political Economy, 1945 – 1980*. London, Allen and Unwin.
- Levesque, Christian, Gregor Murray and Stephane Le Queux. 2005. 'Union Disaffection and Social Identity.' *Work and Occupations*. 32 (4):400-422.
- Machin, S. 2004. 'Factors of Convergence and Divergence in Union Membership.' *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 42(3)
- Martinez-Lucio, Miguel. 1998. Spain: Regulating Employment and Social Fragmentation, in A. Ferner and R. Hyman (eds) *Changing Industrial Relations in Europe*, pp. 426–58. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Miguelez Lobo, Faustino. 2000. The Modernization of Trade Unions in Spain, in J. Waddington and R. Hoffman (eds) *Trade Unions in Europe. Facing Challenges and Searching for Solutions*, pp. 499–528. Brussels: ETUI.
- Osterman, Paul. 1984. *Internal Labor Market*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Polavieja, Javier. 2003. 'Temporary Contracts and Labour Market Segmentation in Spain: An Employment-Rent Approach.' *European Sociological Review* 19(5): 501-517.
- Riley, NM. 1997. 'Determinants of Union Membership. A review.' *Labour* 11 (2): 265-301.
- Rubery, Jill and Frank Wilkinson. 1994. *Employer Strategy and the Labour Market*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- STUC. 2004. *The Scottish Membership Challenge. A Summary*. [www.stuc.org.uk/files/import/6/Sum1Challenges.pdf](http://www.stuc.org.uk/files/import/6/Sum1Challenges.pdf).
- Tomlinson, Jenniffer. 2005. Women's attitudes towards trade unions in the UK: a consideration of the distinction between full- and part-time workers. *Industrial Relations Journal* 36 (5): 402-418.
- Van der Meer, Marc. 1997. *Trade Union Development in Spain. Past Legacies and Current Trends*. Mannheimer Zentrum fur Europaische Sozialforschung.

- Van Rij, Coen, and Willem Saris. 1993. 'Time dependency of trade union membership. An event-history analysis.' *Quality and Quantity Journal* 27 (1):73-93.
- Visser, Jelle. 2002. 'Why Fewer Workers Join Unions in Europe: A Social Custom Explanation of Membership Trends.' *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 4 (3):403-430.
- Waddington, Jeremy. 2006. 'Why Do Members Leave? The Importance of Retention to Trade Union Growth.' *Labor Studies Journal* 31 (3):15-38.
- Waddington, Jeremy, and Allan Kerr. 1999. 'Trying to stem the flow: Union membership turnover in the public sector.' *Industrial Relations Journal* 30 (3):184-196.
- Waddington, Jeremy, and Colin Whitston. 1997. 'Why do People Join Unions in a Period of Membership Decline?.' *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 35 (4):515-546.

---

#### NOTES

<sup>i</sup> Union density is the overall proportion of employees who are members of a trade union.

<sup>ii</sup> Workers' Commissions of Catalonia or CCOO-Catalonia (Comissions Obreres de Catalunya) is the principal of the two biggest union federation in Catalonia. As with other continental European trade unions, it recruits workers from all activity sectors. Even though its traditional base has been the Fordist worker (manual, male and working in the manufacturing sector), however, like other European trade unions it has recently incorporated service sector workers and women into its ranks. The reader should be warned that we refer to the regional branch CCOO-Catalonia throughout the text interchangeably with the terms "union" or "union-federation".

<sup>iii</sup> The problem, naturally, is not exclusive to the Spanish case studied. Klandermans (1997: 102), in a study of Dutch trade unions, pointed out that approximately half the new members left within five years. Likewise a report by the Scottish trade unions discloses a similar situation resulting in a 2% annual drop in membership over the last 20 year period (STUC 2004).

<sup>iv</sup> The extension of collective bargaining agreements to non-union workers in industries represented by unions is referred to as an inclusive system of negotiation. By contrast, when such an extension does not exist, and only union workers benefit from collective bargaining agreements, the system is referred to as an exclusive system of negotiation.

<sup>v</sup> Some of these studies are quantitative. For example van Rij and Saris (1993) who make use of an event history analysis to observe the growth or decline of membership levels via the time link between these two types of decision. Goerke and Pannenberg (2004) use econometric techniques and show that there are certain habits and social norms which, reinforced by an institutional context, can impact on workers' opportunistic.

<sup>vi</sup> Approximately 30% of the salaried workforce in Spain, with a high incidence of women and young people employment, hold temporary contracts (Banyuls et al. 2009). Hamann and Martinez Lucio (2003) or Polavieja (2003) elucidated the association between high levels of temporary work and the highly regulated labor market in Spain.

<sup>vii</sup> Regarding segmentationist views, peripheral workers, or those holding insecure positions are more likely to be found or end up in non-unionised or union unfriendly sectors. Certainly rates of membership are lower among this group. The incentives to leave may affect both work-related (or generally speaking non union related) and union-related reasons. We think that the work related reason might be the primary factors in their decision, as we suspect that a higher likelihood to change jobs or ending up in an unfriendly work-environment may be a key determinant to resigning membership. To a lesser extent, it is also likely that people in job-unstable position see no improvement in their conditions and leave the union because they feel the union is not doing anything to improve their work situation

<sup>viii</sup> Visser (2002) also notes that leaving is less frequent among men and that it declines with the following characteristics: age, length of the work week, wages, firm size, the level of unionization in the workplace and the frequency of contact with the union. Leaving is most prevalent among young workers, women and part-time or low paid workers.

<sup>ix</sup> The register's information is taken once the individual joins the union and modified when the member declares a change in employment status (i.e. changing job across firms or turning to unemployment).

<sup>x</sup> 77% of union members pay their dues through a financial institution and 22% pay directly through payroll each month; less than 1% pays the union directly.

<sup>xi</sup> The categories are the following: (1) change in employment situation, (2) union unfriendly firm, (3) family reasons, (4) personal reasons, (5) dues are too expensive / union is not useful, (6) union services too expensive / poor functioning, (7) do not agree with union action or union leaders, (8) change to another union.

<sup>xii</sup> As the data on leaves has been described, we cannot ensure that it is representative of the leavers of CCOO for the period analyzed. In fact, members working in a company with less than 20 members and no union branch represent only 40% of the overall CCOO membership but 60% of the membership with unpaid dues. Comparing the characteristics of the leaves based on register information with the sample of 251 leavers we certainly find differences. Among them, as expected those working in small companies (less than 50 workers) are likely to be overestimated in the sample (49%) compared to the registered leaves (39%). Other biases exist regarding sex (51% of the sample were women while the union federation registered 38%). However, we do not find significant differences by age

---

groups. All in all, though we have some elements to presume the direction of the bias, we want to emphasize the exploratory character of the analyses due to the limitations presented here.

<sup>xiii</sup> The 2007 survey of CCOO-Catalonia members consisting of a sample of 1067 interviews stratified by sex, length of membership, employment sector and company size for a population of 180,730 members with a sampling error of 3.06% (see Author, Date).

<sup>xiv</sup> We were not able to use the remaining individuals from the representative sample of unpaid dues who desired to stay in the union as a comparison group, as they were not further surveyed after responding to the question regarding their motivation for unpaid dues and their wish to remain a union member.

<sup>xv</sup> Bootstrapping is a plausible alternative in hypothesis testing when inferences based on parametric assumptions are in doubt. It provides a way to account for distortions caused by a specific sample that may not be representative of the total population. We used up to 1000 bootstrapped samples for the calculation of the standard errors. We found no difference in coefficient significance between the bootstrapped and non-bootstrapped standard errors.

<sup>xvi</sup> Up to 47,3% of the membership was a member for less than two years length in 2005. This is a clear indicator that the membership of CCOO-Catalonia is quite dynamic. As the total membership rate has slightly increased over the last decade but the rate of joining and leaving keeps quite high, we guess that many of the new membership just remain in the union temporarily.

<sup>xvii</sup> Only 3,8% of the membership is retired from work. In that sense, we should bear in mind that in the Spanish system there are no particular incentives for remaining in the union federation after retirement – or pre-retirement – is reached. It should be kept in mind that retired union members pay membership dues - though these are lower when compared to the dues of working employees.

<sup>xviii</sup> Nevertheless, the insertion of observed information noted above which indicates a difference between the sample of leavers and registered withdrawals, weights the sample and partially corrects for the possibly biased results of our main predictors such as employment status and work seniority.