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Our comparative understanding of working-class political activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is highly skewed to comparison at the national level. Variations in the mass support, strategies, and political orientation of working-class political parties across societies have been explained in terms of equally macro variables, including the timing and character of industrialization, social structure, the openness of the political system, and the duration and intensity of state repression of working-class economic and political rights. But in so far as we widen our view of working-class political activity beyond the political party to include trade unions, a complementary set of questions having to do with variations within, as well as between, societies come sharply into view.

In all western societies, unions have formed national organizations that mediate their interests directly in national politics. Thus the AFL-CIO, the British Trades Union Congress, and the West German Union Federation *(Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund)* represent contemporary unions on broad questions of national policy. But such federations are only one channel of union political activity. In each of these countries, as in other western societies, individual unions themselves pursue policies on a variety of political issues from worker participation and industrial relations legislation to questions of incomes policy, unemployment, and industrial policy. To the extent that we restrict our view of union political activity to union federations, we ignore a vital and fascinating source of diversity, that among individual unions themselves.

This concern is all the more important because union federations have rarely been able to compromise the self-determination of their individual union constituents. The American Federation of Labor and the Trades Union Congress were successful precisely because they offered unions the opportunity to join with others to pursue limited but common goals in a way that left their autonomy substantially intact. The first national association of socialist unions in Germany, the *Generalkommission,* was weakly centralized and had to tread warily in order to avoid committing constituent unions to policies that some of them opposed.

In this respect, unions are very different from political parties. Political parties aggregate support, contest elections, and strive for governmental power, and this has led them to create broad-based, usually national, organizations. Their organizational structure is determined largely by the structure of the political system in which they operate. Union organization, in contrast, reflects the structure of labor markets, because it is the labor market that defines the potential membership of a union and provides it with the most direct channel to improve its members' welfare and job control. The existence of numerous segmented labor markets has fostered an extraordinary degree of diversity and sectionalism within union movements.

Despite repeated attempts to encompass all workers, regardless of occupation or industry, into a single union, the configuration of union organization in every western society has more nearly resembled a patchwork of segmented pieces than a unitary bloc. This is the most fundamental shared characteristic of western trade unions, and it underlies the analysis developed in this paper.

When political scientists have analyzed union political activity, they have treated unions as a kind of parallel to political parties, and this has led them to aggregate union political activity to the national level as a basis for making comparisons across societies.[1] In other words, they have carried the methodological baggage of party-political analysis over to the study of unions. The problem with this approach is that it ignores the decentralized structure of most union movements, the fact that union movements are made up of a variety of more or less autonomous organizations having a variety of political orientations. The real locus of decision making within union movements has not been at the national level, but on the level of the individual union.

When we examine the experience of union political activity in the United States, Britain, and Germany, we find a remarkable diversity within each society. It is no exaggeration to say that this internal diversity is as impressive as the difference in the general tenor of union orientation from country to country. In the United States there was, for example, a sharp difference between the antipolitical business unionism of many unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the politicized orientation of unions linked to the Knights of Labor. Later, unions in the AFL were locked in an intense ideological conflict with the revolutionary syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World. The AFL was, itself, far from homogeneous. The doctrine of voluntarism, which was supported by a majority of craft unions, was continually subject to attack by socialists entrenched in some of the largest affiliates of the AFL, including the International Association of Machinists, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and the United Mine Workers of America. In the decade before the first world war about one-third of the delegates to AFL conventions consistently gave their support to socialist resolutions calling for an independent party strategy and socialization of the means of production.

In Britain from the early nineteenth century we can find some unions, notably those formed by textile workers, demanding fundamental political change and extensive legislation of employment conditions, alongside unions that were generally content to focus their strategy on the labor market. The range of goals narrows as we move into the twentieth century, but our notions of British unionism must still encompass the radicalism—some have called it potential revolutionism—of the syndicalist movement in the years leading up to the first world war.[2]

In Germany, one source of diversity lay in the establishment of competing union movements representing rival political parties. Two union movements existed alongside the dominant socialist free union movement, the Catholic Christian unions and the smaller liberal Hirsch-Duncker unions. But there were also significant differences within the union movements. Some free unions, including the printers and cigarworkers, were oriented more to collective bargaining than radical socialism.[3] From the 1890s, national congresses of the free union movement were the arena of heated debates about the desirability of bargaining with employers and political neutrality toward the SPD.[4]

These contrasts do not invalidate conventional countrywide comparisons. However, the

recognition of diversity among unions complicates our attempts to generalize at the national level. Comparison at the national level begins with the aggregation of numerous disparate political tendencies into national characterizations. Laborism in Britain, voluntarism in the United States, and socialism in Germany are short-hand descriptions that hide almost as much as they reveal about the character of union political orientation in these societies. This is not to say that national differences do not exist. Of course they do, but such differences should be interpreted as aggregate tendencies that are themselves generalizations of a rather high order. To treat national characterizations of union political activity as "real life" descriptions is to reify what is actually a far more complex and, I would add, interesting set of conditions. To the extent that we are left with a picture of national differences, it is one interlaced with considerable diversity within each society. At some point, cross-national comparison of trade union movements at the macro level must confront union political activity at the level of the individual union, for we can not reduce the comparative study of union political activity to the comparison of union movements.

Recognizing the diversity of union political orientation within western societies serves to open up an important field of comparative inquiry, raising fundamental questions that can not be answered at the national level.[5] How can the extraordinary diversity of working-class political activity be explained? Are variations within societies patterned in some explicable fashion, and do these patterns have a common logic that can itself be generalized across societies?

This paper grapples with these questions and develops a line of inquiry designed to yield hypotheses that can travel both through time and across western societies. My analysis draws on union experiences in the United States, Britain, and Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the typology set out here is pitched in terms general enough to apply to all societies in which workers have created unions to pursue their goals.

In this paper I analyze two basic sources of variation in union political strategy. The first is the organizational strength of the union, indicated most tellingly by the extent to which the union encompasses its potential membership. Groups of workers who could form stable unions had an organizational lever for pressing a variety of demands on employers, political parties, the state, and the public. In short, organization provided workers with the most basic precondition of gaining some control over their working lives, a capacity for strategy. Unorganized workers, by contrast, were forced back on uninstitutionalized collective protest, from spontaneous strikes to political riots, or had to seek their own individual remedies, from absenteeism to self-improvement. But most common of all was apathy, perhaps grounded in the rational belief that working conditions, in their broadest sense, were largely beyond their control.

Union organization opened up new channels for workers to defend or improve their working conditions. But even a strong organization could not guarantee the effective defense of its members' working conditions in the labor market if it had to cope with decisive changes in the division of labor or particularly powerful and intransigent employers. The second set of factors that I examine in this paper thus has to do with the economic and political context of union organization in the labor market.

Some fortunate groups of workers could adapt their organizations to the challenge of economic change and employer opposition, if these were not too severe. But others were faced by the prospect of industrial reorganization and the wholesale introduction of

labor-saving innovations, which threatened to devalue their skills, multiply the potential supply of labor in their occupation, and eventually undermine their organization. Such a situation was politically combustible. Organization gave such workers the capacity for collective resistance, but economic changes beyond their control could condemn all their efforts to defend themselves in the labor market. Here I hypothesize that one important source of radical political activity on the part of workers lies in this combination of power and impotence, in the collective ability to act and inability to act effectively in the labor market. Figure I sets out a typology of political response derived by dichotomizing union organization and union market power.

The form such political activity took depended on the local and national political context, particularly the character of union-party relations, the extent of state repression or toleration of workers' economic and political rights, the status system, and the political channels available to workers to express their grievances.[6] The supposition of this paper is that, if these factors are held constant for unions within a society, variations in union political orientation will reflect the constraints on union strategy in the labor market.

In the following pages I analyze the requisites of union organization and market power and examine their consequences for working-class political orientation. My illustrations are drawn from the experiences of groups of industrial workers and artisans in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, societies that provide diverse political contexts in which to gauge the influence of organizational and market constraints on working-class political activity.

The Requisites of Unionism

A particularly striking observation of unions in western societies in the nineteenth century is that, relatively speaking, so few workers joined them. Reliable data on membership until the last decade of the nineteenth century are hard to come by, but we can be quite certain that, even in the best of times, unions encompassed no more than about 12 percent of the nonagricultural work force in any society of western Europe or North America. This figure

Figure 1 Typology of Union Political Orientation

MARKET POWER

		high	low
ORGANIZATION	high	ADAPTIVE	CONDEMNED
	low	SURGENT	VOICELESS

was reached in Britain near the turn of the century.[7] In the United States and Germany the level of unionization was considerably lower. Even when we exclude the vast number of agricultural laborers from the calculation of potential union membership, the level of unionization in the United States and Germany at the turn of the century was little more than 5 percent.[8]

At various times, these figures were temporarily inflated by the inrush of unskilled workers into broad union movements. In Britain, the Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union, formed by Robert Owen in the early 1830s, had a membership that might have reached 100,000, while in the United States the membership of the Knights of Labor peaked at about 700,000 in 1886 and propelled the proportion of unionized workers to almost 10 percent. But such movements were extremely unstable. The Grand National collapsed only two years after it was formed, and the membership of the Knights of Labor was reduced by more than half by 1888 and virtually disappeared by 1891.[9]

When we take into account the immense difficulty in creating viable union organizations, perhaps the remarkable thing is that they were established at all. The act of joining a union had clear and present costs: membership fees had to be paid; in many occupations there was the possibility of being fired by an intransigent employer and in some countries of attracting the attention of the police as a potential subversive. According to the theory of collective goods, moreover, many of the benefits secured by the union are appropriated by nonmembers as well as members. If the union succeeds in restricting the entry of labor into the occupation, bargaining higher wages, or improving some other aspect of working conditions, all workers in the occupation are likely to gain, irrespective of whether they are union members or not. From this standpoint, then, the rational worker has no material incentive to join the union. He or she may "free-ride," that is, gain the economic advantages secured by the union without paying the costs of membership.

This insight about the difficulty of providing collective goods, developed by Mancur Olson and elaborated in the literature on collective mobilization, provides an elegant explanation of the paradox that many workers who were in greatest need of organized defense in the labor market were unable to provide themselves with it.[10] At the same time, this approach alerts us to the ways in which union organization can be sustained. The challenge of inducing potential members to join can be met in two ways, both of which were pursued by unions. First, a union may offer selective incentives to its members, that is, it may provide private benefits that are available only to those who pay the costs of membership. Second, a union may create and sustain the bond of membership on noneconomic grounds, because potential members feel themselves committed, or compelled, to join. The study of union political activity necessarily focuses on those atypical groups of workers who could effectively adopt these methods of organization. Let us analyze them in turn.

The selective incentives that unions have offered their members are diverse. They include seniority rights, procedures for handling individual grievances, opportunities for companionship and social recreation, and, most important of all, individual economic benefits ranging from sickness, old age, accident, and funeral benefits to traveling and various forms of out-of-work benefits. Many unions began by emphasizing these benefits to the virtual exclusion of collective bargaining with employers. The role of such private economic benefits was so large that some unions continued to refer to themselves as a

"friendly society," "mutual association," or "protective society" in Britain, "benevolent society" in the United States, and *Unterstützungsverein* in Germany.[11]

In addition to such noncollective economic incentives, union strength and stability have always depended on some mixture of loyalty, social norms, and compulsion that transcend economic considerations. Such pressures were particularly strong in stabilizing unions when there were strong social ties among workers in the occupation or industry. The simplest and at the same time perhaps most profound answer to the question of why workers joined unions is that the alternative was never much considered, least of all from the perspective of the rational economic actor. When we read what literate artisans and workers themselves had to say, we often hear that they joined unions because their fellows did so, because this was regarded as the right and socially accepted thing to do.[12] Not to join would have flouted norms of behavior that were shared by friends and workmates, by the very people with whom they spent their working hours and in most cases much of their leisure time.

The ability of groups of workers to enforce unionism through social norms varied through time as changes in the division of labor and industrial structure facilitated worker solidarity in some labor markets and undermined it in others. Such norms were potentially strongest where workers had job stability and regular employment and were hived off from others by distinctive skills, work habits, or industrial location.[13] Social norms conducive to unionism also resulted from the efforts of workers themselves in their conflicts with employers or the state. Industrial conflict could provide a valuable learning experience in the benefits of labor solidarity and could instill among previously isolated workers a notion of the occupation as a community with its own history and myths.

Groups of workers who were unable to provide themselves with selective incentives and lacked the ability to enforce the norm of membership through ties of loyalty generally had to wait for the positive reinforcement of unionism by the state or for organization to be brought to them from the outside, by radical activists who could mobilize workers through their own example and exhortation, or by the efforts of already entrenched unions and their financial muscle and organizational experience.[14] The difficulty of these means of consciously introducing organization are amply illustrated by the fact that most unskilled workers in all but a very small handful of western societies remain nonunionized to this day. External aid was particularly useful when the initial organizational impetus could be translated into stability through the closed or union shop. When these were unavailable, the difference between creating and sustaining union organization could be enormous. Thus, where external union creation has been effective, it has usually had the benefit of legislation favorable to the union or closed shop or employers who were prepared to acquiesce in them. Under these circumstances the goal of a union drive from the outside is simply to mobilize workers to vote for the union or pressure employers to recognize it. Once this has been accomplished, the union can coast on its enforced monopoly in the workplace.

But external aid and ideology are likely to be weak as a substitute for selective incentives or incentives exercised through social norms and subtle compulsion. This can be seen very clearly by comparing a union with a political party. Political parties may succeed in gaining a mass membership if they mobilize only a fraction of the total population by emphasizing their ideological distinctiveness. But if a union is to be effective it must try to organize all workers within a particular labor market or markets. Few independent unions have followed workers' political parties in retaining as members just that minority of their constituencies

who are likely to be most receptive to ideological appeals. Unions can not afford to "choose" their members, and this has usually led them to appeal to the lowest common denominator of their target memberships. Thus unions wishing to encompass all workers in a particular industry or occupation have tended to emphasize the virtue of union solidarity as an end in itself, even though this may not be so compelling as the more incisive, but potentially more divisive, ideology of a workers' political party.

Unionism and Occupational Community The previous paragraphs have sketched the chief means by which unions were able to establish themselves as stable organizations. Is it possible to generalize about the social conditions of unionization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? When we examine the historical experience of union formation we find some strikingly similar patterns among western societies. The earliest unions were formed by journeymen in traditional occupations. Alongside printers, who were the first, or among the first, to unionize in several societies, we find shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, and a catalogue of artisans working in much the same way as they did in guild times.

The priority of these groups is open to several interpretations, including those that emphasize the personal characteristics of craft workers, such as their higher level of worldly experience, education, and income. But soon after these craftsmen, workers with less distinguished qualities began to organize. Unions in textiles and coal mining go back to the nineteenth, and in some cases the eighteenth century. The very diversity of workers who could form unions — from artisans to domestic handloom weavers and coal miners — suggests that personal characteristics can not explain the ability to organize. Let us turn from the historical experience back to our discussion of the means available to provide the collective good of unionization. What, then, are the social requisites of the noncollective and noneconomic incentives sketched above?

The provision of extensive benefits rested on rather narrow conditions. In the first place it required that potential members earned enough money to be able to put by a surplus for hard times. The maintenance of out-of-work benefits had to be set at a high enough level not just to provide minimum subsistence, but to reduce the incentive of taking "illegal" employment. This kind of benefit generally cost between three and six times more than a simple strike benefit, and the subscription it demanded was not an inconsiderable part of many workers' incomes in the nineteenth century.

In addition, sickness, accident, old age, and unemployment benefits required that potential members planned to remain in the union long enough to gain a satisfactory return on their "investment." This condition was all the more important because unions were compelled to scale their benefits with respect to length of membership in order to dissuade workers from joining only when they saw the immediate prospect of unemployment or incapacitation. In other words, workers who were occupationally mobile could rarely be induced to join unions that offered benefits providing long-term economic security. The provision of benefits was most effective for workers who, when they looked to the future, saw themselves remaining in the same occupation.

A similar, and in some respects even more unusual, set of social conditions was required by groups of workers if they were to enforce union membership as a social norm. As sociological studies have shown, stable, relatively closed groups or communities provide a

favorable context for powerful social norms governing individual beliefs and actions, especially where those norms involve individual sacrifice.[15] Close-knit communities engender a sense of belonging that, as Craig Calhoun has observed, may "even mobilize people for collective action over long periods of time, in pursuit of highly uncertain goals and at high personal costs."[16]

The degree to which workers or artisans are members of a community is influenced by several factors. Among the most important of these are the collective experience of independence and cooperation in the workplace, cultural homogeneity, and geographical or social isolation.

The first of these, the mutually reinforcing combination of cooperation among workers and independence from employer supervision, was particularly strong among artisans whose traditional methods of production were least disrupted by specialization and compartmentalization. The skills of the journeyman in traditional industry, unwritten and closely guarded against employer intervention, were a source of pride for the occupation as a whole. Contemporary artisans spoke quite frequently of their sense of honor (or *Ehre*) in belonging to a manly, skilled, and independent class of artisans, by which they were referring specifically to those in their occupation.[17]

Compositors, whose craft was to set up matter for printing, are an archetypal example of an occupational group that formed a strong community in the workplace. The institutional expression of their community was the chapel, a fascinating preindustrial organization of printers in the workplace that combined economic, social, and political functions touching on virtually every aspect of the printer's working life. It operated in an age-old and seemingly mysterious way, an amalgam of ancient rites, masonic-like secrecy, and primitive democracy, but the implicit principles which lay behind its operation were those of maintaining the autonomy of the printers' craft from employer supervision, while opposing any possible threat to the printers' occupational solidarity.[18] For the printers, autonomy and solidarity were closely meshed. The printers' influence over the division of labor restricted the freedom of employers to compartmentalize and divide the work force; their insistence on maintaining strict apprenticeship regulations limited the ability of employers to introduce less skilled workers into the composing room; and long-standing customs concerning the acceptable pace of work made it difficult for employers to reward the most efficient workers through piece rates.

Although traditions of autonomy and solidarity in the workplace were most frequently found among artisans, they were not confined to them. Coal miners and various groups of domestic workers shared self-reliance, freedom from managerial control, and acute mutual dependence which fostered intense group loyalty.

A second important influence on the strength of occupational community is the degree to which a group of workers is culturally homogeneous. This was not an issue for artisans whose occupations were effectively guarded by apprenticeship regulations against the influx of unskilled labor. Although journeymen were highly mobile geographically, especially in their *Wanderjahren* (young tramping days), once they had invested their early working years in an apprenticeship they were loath to change occupations. The labor force in such occupations also tended to be ingrown, for apprentices were often recruited from among the families of the artisans themselves. But in many of the newer, rapidly expanding, and less skilled occupations the work force was culturally fragmented, either through the influx of

peasants drawn to the towns or forced off the land or through the immigration of foreign workers — Poles in Germany; Irish, Welsh, and Scots in England; English in Wales; and the successive waves of immigrants in the United States. The process can be seen most acutely in many mining industries which combined rapid growth with highly labor intensive methods of production. In such cases, occupational solidarity had to overcome the intense competition and mutual jealousies of ethnic groups who brought different cultural traditions and expectations to the workplace.[19]

A further decisive influence on the strength of occupational community is the extent to which those who work in the occupation are socially isolated. Although geographical isolation is the most obvious form of social isolation, it can have more subtle forms arising in, for example, a shared perception of social inferiority or unusual working hours which isolate a group of workers from those outside their occupation. Perhaps the most extreme example of social isolation was found among coal miners, whose work made them distinctive in appearance, demanded unusual hours of work, and often enforced crowding and geographical isolation on them. The influence of geographical isolation also appears to be important in the solidarity of English handloom weavers. Handloom weavers often formed close-knit communities, although they did not benefit from the kind of solidary relations in the workplace characteristic of many groups of artisans and miners. They were domestic workers, weaving in their homes and isolated from other workers, save those in their own families. But many of the localities where handloom weaving was carried out were small, homogeneous villages or towns.[20]

The common feature of these influences on the degree to which groups of workers or artisans formed a community is that each is conducive to the creation of dense networks of bonds among individuals. Thus we must look to the shared experiences of a group and the lessons it draws from them, as well as to the determinants of the labor force and work situations. Such a context can provide the social cohesion and moral authority through which group norms, such as union membership, are most easily enforced.

Political Responses

The Unorganized The strength of occupational community distinguishes those groups who had the resources to create for themselves the collective good of organized self-defense from those who did not. This paper is concerned specifically with the former groups of workers. But first let us turn to those who were less fortunate and ask how they defended themselves in the absence of an institutionalized presence in the labor market.

The most frequent answer to this question is that they did virtually nothing. Having no means of collective voice or organized defense, such workers were often resigned to their fate and suffered their conditions as if they were inevitable. Two contrasting examples, explored by Barrington Moore in his book *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt,* illustrate this very clearly.[21] Moore compares the experiences of two groups of workers, coal miners and iron and steel workers, in the German Ruhr during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Coal miners were able to create a reasonably effective organizational presence that could express their sense of injustice as the traditional defenses of the coal mining artisan were beaten down in the last decades of the nineteenth

century. As state regulations on working relations and coal production were removed and coal miners found themselves subject to the arbitrary authority of employers and the labor market, they expressed a range of concrete grievances for decent treatment and more humane working conditions in the largest strikes that had been seen up to that time in Germany.

This is a course of action that iron and steel workers had every reason to take, for they were about as economically insecure and exploited as coal miners. But in the final decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century we hear virtually nothing from this part of the work force. Moore tells us that a detailed account of strike activity put together by the Metalworkers' Union "passes over the Ruhr in silence."[22] In part, this appears to be a reflection of traditional attitudes of submissiveness before figures of authority, attitudes that were never challenged by the experience of unionism. But the reluctance to express grievances was also perhaps the outcome of a rational fear of the consequences in a situation where employers and their foremen held all the aces, from fining insubordinate workers to firing them at a moment's notice.

Moore explains the stark contrast between these groups of workers in terms of the extent to which they could draw on their past experience and their work situations to develop standards of injustice with which they could judge the present. He does not analyze the bases of organization in the labor force, but the conditions that Moore views as crucial for sustaining standards of injustice are remarkably similar to those underlying organization.

Coal miners had rich traditions of collective organization to draw on. The *Knappschaften,* which provided miners with benefits and economic security on the lines of a closed and privileged craft guild, the *Gedinge,* a form of collective bargaining predating unions that expressed the solidarity of face-to-face work groups, the *Berggesetz,* the framework of legislation that ordered productive relations in mining, each of these expressed and at the same time buttressed the sense of collective identity among coal miners and provided them with concrete standards against which they could judge their fate. The influence of these traditions was all the greater because the miners' situation in the workplace did not change greatly in the tremendous expansion of coal production in these years. The absence of dramatic technological innovation protected the coal miners' strong occupational community. Their traditional skills, shared sense of danger, and enforced mutual dependence continued as the scale of production grew.

Iron and steelworkers were in a vastly different position. They were almost wholly bereft of collective traditions, and those that they did have were obliterated with the introduction of mass production in new plants from the 1880s. The resulting labor force was closely supervised, split, and isolated in different parts of the plant and fragmented by a wide range of skills, pay scales, and prospects for promotion, all of which, according to Moore, "must have rendered very difficult any sense of common fate as the basis for collective action."[23]

The social isolation and rootlessness of groups such as iron and steel workers has been regarded as a recipe for political radicalism by scholars writing in the tradition of Emile Durkheim.[24] According to Durkheim, the advancing division of labor strains traditional social institutions and shared social consciousness, creating anomie, antisocial forms of behavior, and extensive conflict.[25] In the words of one much quoted study that develops this theme:

> The wrenching from the old and the groping for the new in the industrializing communities create a variety of frustrations, fears, uncertainties, resentments, aggressions, pressures, new threats and risks, new problems, demands and expectations upon workers-in-process, their families and work groups. . . . The surface may be quiet by virtue of strong controls, dedication to a national dream or an ideology, a sense of futility or resignation, or on account of hopes spurred by small tangible evidences of improvements. But beneath the exterior is always latent protest, seething and simmering, to erupt in violence or to overflow in indolence in times of crisis or tension.[26]

In recent years this view of working-class radicalism has born the brunt of substantial criticism from political scientists, sociologists and social historians. A variety of studies have revealed that it was not the isolated and uprooted proletarian who was the archetypal radical, but rather the artisan or handworker, rooted in a close-knit community, who desperately sought to defend himself against the threat of being reduced to the proletarian.[27]

This conception of the sources of radicalism has carried the day too completely. There can be little doubt that the depressed artisan and handworker provided a core of political protest, particularly in the early stages of industrialization. But there is much evidence that workers who lacked communitarian roots were also present in revolts against established authority. An open-textured approach to working-class political activity must try to find room for both types of radical orientation.

Workers who lacked the capacity to organize were unlikely to be able to mount sustained political opposition over an extended period, but they provided volatile support for a variety of radical political movements. Although political apathy is the most common expression of lack of collective identity and powerlessness, it is far from the only one. The other face of impotence is revolt, the sudden explosion of deep-seated grievances that can not be expressed through less violent channels. There is always an element of unpredictability in such revolt, but it seems most likely in times of social and political dislocation when old inevitabilities, constraints, and threats suddenly disappear.[28] Thus, the previously silent Ruhr iron and steel workers erupted in support of the extreme left and the movement for plant councils as the old order crumbled in the final stages of the first world war.[29]

Under exceptionally favorable circumstances, unorganized workers have sometimes been able to exert leverage in the market and engage in successful strikes for better wages and working conditions. This is a transitory condition, usually arising during an economic boom when the balance of market power is most favorable to workers. Unless they are able to utilize their surgent economic power to build organization, the leverage of such workers lasts only as long as the economic boom. Lacking stable defenses in the labor market, unorganized workers are swept forward and backward by economic conditions over which they have no control.

The participation of unorganized and weakly organized workers provides a key to explaining radical and revolutionary episodes in western societies. The two most revolutionary movements in the societies dealt with in this paper, the works councils movement in Germany from 1916 and the Industrial Workers of the World in the United States from 1905, were movements encompassing previously unorganized workers who fought against established unions and institutionalized channels of bargaining.

The iron and steel workers were typical of several groups of workers who participated in

the revolutionary discontent in Germany after the first world war. The works councils movement was a diverse movement of newly mobilized workers alongside workers whose traditional livelihoods were threatened by wartime change. In these years, the radical left had great success in mobilizing railroad workers, shop clerks, state employees, and workers in the chemical and textile industries.[30] These workers were driven by diverse concrete grievances, but they appear to have had in common the experience of social isolation and division in the workplace and what Peter von Oertzen, in his study of plant councils, observes was "the first condition for penetration of council ideas . . . the absence of trade union organization and the protection that it provided."[31]

In the United States, the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World had their strongest support among workers who were unable to create effective unions to press employers for decent working conditions. The most militant and loyal of the IWW's following worked in the lumber, sawmill, and construction camps and in the metal ore mines and agricultural regions of the West. These were migratory workers without fixed social roots, shifting from place to place in search of work. The unions they formed were fiercely opposed by employers, particularly the national corporations which came to dominate the mining industry from the 1890s. The individualistic resistance to arbitrary authority that had long been a characteristic of such workers was intensified in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century under conditions of rapid economic growth, extreme social dislocation, and the widening gulf between worker and employer. In the East, the IWW found support mainly among new immigrants and blacks. There, as in the West, the IWW stood up for those excluded from the mainstream of American society who, for one reason or another, were unable to create stable organizations to defend themselves in the labor market.[32]

The Condemned   Groups of artisans and workers who formed closely knit occupational communities were strongly placed to express their demands through unions. But that is not to say they could do so effectively. Organization provides the capacity for strategy, but the success of strategy depends upon a variety of conditions, including the power and determination of employers, conditions in the labor market, and the orientation of the state. The heart of the matter is that the organizational strength of a union is a necessary condition for its effectiveness in the labor market but it is not a sufficient condition. Sweeping innovations in the division of labor may render carefully guarded skill and apprenticeship regulations useless; rapidly changing tastes or new products may suddenly shrink the demand for certain skills; the nationalization, or internationalization, of competition may increase the militancy of employers, even to the point where they refuse to deal with unions, or the supply of labor in an occupation may be hopelessly flooded by immigrants or those displaced from other occupations.

The combination of union organization and weakness in the labor market appears important in explaining divergencies from economistic unionism and political reformism in Britain and the United States. Chartism, which was the largest radical working-class movement in nineteenth century Britain and which departed significantly from the later development of reformist unionism, was supported predominantly by unions that were beaten down in the labor market. In the United States the principal opposition among unions

to voluntarism before the first world war—the Knights of Labor and supporters of a third party strategy within the AFL—was rooted among unions that faced particularly stiff opposition from employers or were subject to decisive changes in the division of labor.

In Britain, handloom weavers, whose conditions deteriorated drastically in the first half of the nineteenth century, provided the core of a series of radical movements from Luddism to Chartism. Their activity was essentially defensive; we do not hear much from them in intervals of relative prosperity.[33] But in recurring depressions they were spurred into action by cut-throat competition which screwed down their wages and forced them to add further to the labor surplus by working longer hours. Their response was typical of threatened handworkers and artisans: they tried to secure the legal enforcement of customary conditions of employment, first at the local level and later by petitioning parliament. When these efforts proved useless, they were forced back on their own resources, to large-scale strikes, demonstrations, and selective machine breaking. Finally, after they had learned the futility of resistance in the labor market, they turned, in sheer desperation, to political radicalism. From the 1830s, after the Reform Act had further shifted the political balance away from workers by enfranchising their employers and when the fate of handloom weavers in the emerging industrial order was sealed, weavers flocked to Chartism and to those of its leaders who advocated the use of physical rather than moral force.[34]

Chartism gained significant support from artisans who had the capacity to organize yet could not defend their jobs, wages, and working conditions. The advantages of sectional unionism were generally unavailable to the "lower" trades, such as tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters, whose occupations were invaded by "dishonorable" (that is, unapprenticed) workers employed by subcontractors, garret masters, and sweaters to produce cheap goods. Once they realized that they could neither look to parliament for protection nor defend themselves adequately in the labor market, they sought remedies through general unionism and a variety of radical political causes, including Chartism. Their unions were in the forefront of attempts to expand organization to all workers in their respective occupations, whether apprenticed or not, and to build federations encompassing several trades for mutual support.[35] These schemes were generally avoided by artisans in the "upper" trades, such as printing and engineering, where sectional unions were reasonably effective. Unions composed of artisans in the "upper" trades distanced themselves from Chartism.[36]

In the United States, the Knights of Labor, which was the most impressive attempt to create a labor movement encompassing individual trades in any western society in the nineteenth century, drew its support mainly from those unions which were under pressure in the labor market. As Leon Fink observes in his study of the Knights:

> the spreading confrontations with national corporate power, beginning in the 1870s, indicated just how much erosion had occurred in the position of those who relied on custom, skill, and moral censure as ultimate weapons. Industrial dilution of craft skills and a direct economic and political attack on union practices provided decisive proof to these culturally conservative workingmen of both the illegitimacy and ruthlessness of the growing power of capital. It was they, according to every recent study of late nineteenth-century laboring communities, who formed the backbone of local labor movements. The Knights were, therefore, first of all a coalition of reactivating, or already organized trade unions.[37]

The hypothesis linking union market power to political activity is confirmed by John

Laslett's analysis of the strength of socialism in six American unions from 1890 to 1918. He argues that the experience of threatening technological change, originating either in the labor market or product market, was a vital and common ingredient in the strength of the left across his cases. The shoe industry and machine industry were transformed by the introduction of labor-saving machinery; the garment industry saw the growth of the sweating system as the market for ready-made clothes rapidly expanded; and both the coal and metal mining industries were subject to greater competitive pressures and the consequent determination on the part of employers and local governments to repress unions. Conversely, Laslett argues that the most decisive influence on the turn of unions in these industries away from political radicalism was the eventual establishment of collective bargaining relationships which gave workers the prospect of greater security of employment and amelioration of their conditions of employment through union activity in the labor market.[38]

The contrast between the ability to organize and weakness in the labor market was particularly acute in the early stages of industrialization, when settled modes of economic and social life were overturned by new methods of capitalist production and exchange. The corresponding political tensions were expressed in the desperate attempts of affected occupational communities to protect their skills and independence, their traditions and culture—in short, their way of life—against economic forces over which they had no control. For some communities that effort was intensified by the most elemental struggle of all, the struggle to avoid starvation.

It is not difficult to understand why groups that were condemned by the changing division of labor were radical. They had to try to recast the society in which they lived because immediate palliatives through labor market activity were hopeless. In many cases depressed handworkers dreamed of panaceas for their ills which appeared, even to many of their contemporaries, to be utopian, but the lack of viable alternatives allows us to see in their radical political activity an essential element of rationality. No complex line of reasoning or political sophistication was necessary to justify radical political activity for such groups. Their political concerns were based squarely on their concrete grievances and acute sense of injustice. In this vein, George Rudé observes that Chartism was viewed by many of its adherents as a "knife and fork" question.[39] In the words of a radical journalist writing in 1838, Chartism was the means by which workers could "furnish their houses, clothe their backs, and educate their children."[40]

Because depressed artisans and outworkers lacked the possibility of defense as an isolated group, they provided the core support for broad social movements that appealed beyond sectional trade unionism to all those condemned by capitalism. E. P. Thompson writes of the handloom weavers:

> As their way of life, in the better years, had been shared by the community, so their sufferings were those of the whole community; and they were reduced so low that there was no class of unskilled or casual laborers below them against which they had erected economic or social protective walls. This gave a particular moral resonance to their protest, whether voiced in Owenite or Biblical language, they appealed to essential rights and elementary notions of human fellowship and conduct rather than to sectional interests.[41]

Such analyses of the sources of radical discontent in England and elsewhere have

supported the view that the decline of revolutionism in mature industrial societies was due to the eradication of traditional communities.[42] Although skilled workers in the new factories might be threatened by continuing economic development, they rarely faced the obliteration of their whole way of life. Unlike the handworker and the artisan, the factory worker, according to this view, did not find himself defending a traditional way of life against inexorable economic change. The factory worker attempted to improve his condition within the industrial order rather than by overthrowing it, and he could do this gradually through the exchange relationship in the labor market.

If it is not pressed too far, this argument contains an important insight. Those who could adapt themselves and their organized defenses to the changing division of labor were generally content, as I argue below, to pursue improvements within the system of wage labor. But it is quite another thing to argue that backward-looking radicalism is unique to early industrialization. Strongly organized occupational communities with a vested interest in traditional industries are a feature of contemporary as well as preindustrial society. Coal miners, steelworkers, and shipbuilders are the most prominent examples of workers who have built particularly strong unions based on communities that were established as industrial societies matured. Although workers in contemporary western societies are cushioned to some extent by state unemployment and welfare provisions, the restructuring of contemporary economies away from heavy industries is a process that appears to have some striking parallels to the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution. Contemporary industrial workers locked in stable and close-knit occupational communities, with correspondingly entrenched unions, have fought rearguard battles against economic change almost as intense as those fought by artisans and domestic workers more than a century ago.

The Adaptive   So far I have discussed groups of workers and artisans who had little collective control over their working lives, either because they lacked the ability to organize or because the forces they had to contend with swept away their defenses. But what of those groups who could adapt to the changing division of labor and project their influence over working conditions into the future through stable and effective unionism? Such groups formed an even smaller proportion of the work force than is indicated by the aggregate figures for union membership noted above, for they formed just one stream of unionism in the nineteenth century. But their historical importance is far greater than their numerical weight suggests, because in their struggle to defend and improve their working conditions while adapting to capitalism they were in the vanguard of the labor movement in western Europe and North America.

Where gradual improvement in the labor market was possible, unions were generally content to pursue a sectional strategy of business unionism. Classical political economists argued that such unions were anachronistic because they were unable to secure higher wages for their members in the long run, but workers themselves learned from experience that they could use their capacity for effective organization to press for higher wages, shorter hours, healthier working conditions, a measure of respect from employers, and greater control over their working lives. In short, they were drawn into the struggle to improve their conditions under capitalism instead of trying to abolish the system of wage labor. If we wish to find the first sources of reformism among workers in western societies, we need look no further than

their earliest successes in creating viable unions in the early nineteenth, and in some cases eighteenth, century.

Labor reformism was particularly strong among printing unions across western societies. The effectiveness of printing unions in the labor market, buttressed by the extraordinarily cohesive occupational communities that printers formed in the workplace, opened up possibilities of gradual improvement under capitalism. In Germany, printers were able to sustain unionism from the 1840s and became known for their political pragmatism. As the author of the first history of printing unions observed, "of all trades it was the printers who began to draw from the altered political relations of 1848 consequences for practical life. While all of Germany reveled in a sea of republican dreams, the printers were intent on securing material advantages."[43] Rather than pursue a broad political strategy of radical change, the printers' union focused its efforts in the labor market where it had direct influence on employment conditions. Because the union was among the first worker organizations to be established on a firm footing, it was never dependent upon the organizational support of the Lassallean *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein* and the Marxist leaning *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei*. The printers' union was represented in the congresses held in 1868 by these parties to gain union support, but it never extended its commitment to the comprehensive programs set out by either party. From the 1890s the printers' union, the *Verband der Deutschen Buchdrucker,* campaigned for formal party-political neutrality and was the first free union to sign collective bargaining agreements with employers.[44]

Adaptive unionism, as I have conceptualized it here, rests on political as well as economic conditions. The orientation of the state to the legitimacy of labor organization fundamentally influenced working-class politics.[45] Where workers were denied the freedom to combine in the labor market or use their combinations to press claims against employers, the moderating influence of a strong bargaining position was negated. Under these conditions, unions had to try to change the rules of the game and this led them away from sectional market strategies to support broad political movements.[46] In Germany, state repression weakened many unions that might otherwise have adopted the kind of business strategy pursued by many unions in the United States and Britain. As organizations that were considered to be subversive, most German unions were thrust into politics whether they liked it or not. Repression also gave the initiative to socialist parties that demanded the reconstitution of the political order as a basic precondition of any improvement in workers' welfare. In the United States and Britain, the intensity of state repression was milder. But legal constraints frequently precipitated union political activity. All unions stood to gain if their legal rights were extended, and this was a powerful justification for national federation. The gradual development of AFL involvement in politics from the end of the nineteenth century and the establishment and growth of the British TUC and, later, the Labour Party itself were profoundly influenced by the desire to create the collective good of a favorable legal climate.

Craft and Industrial Unionism   In this paper I hypothesize contrasting political tendencies across basic types of working-class condition. Although I have not explored them in any detail, variations exist within these types. Extending the work of theorists of industrial relations, it is possible to indicate one important source of political differentiation

among adaptive unions rooted in the contrast between craft unionism and industrial unionism.[47]

The differences between craft unions and industrial unions are centered on the job characteristics of their members, differences in membership, and, above all, their contrasting labor market strategies. In each of these respects, craft unions pursued a strategy of closed unionism. They restricted membership to a small segment of skilled workers in a particular occupation, leaving less skilled workers to their own resources. Their focus was on organizing the aristocrats of labor, relatively skilled workers who tend to be the most educated and have the highest status jobs. The strategy of such unions was closed in the sense that they attempted to improve conditions of employment by restricting the supply of labor available to employers by making it difficult for them to hire workers who did not belong to the craft. These unions were not simply bargaining agents for workers concerning wages and employment conditions, but were in addition intimately concerned with the organization of production on the shop floor. Their strategy emphasized the boundaries between their craft and other types of labor, and this led them to battle employers over a wide range of control issues, including apprenticeship regulations and traditions of craft autonomy.

Rather than bargain with employers collectively, in formal negotiations between union and employer representatives, unions pursuing a restrictionist strategy often tried to establish minimum standards of employment unilaterally and support those of its members who could not find work meeting those standards. Thus most of these unions maintained an extensive benefit system to provide their members with the means to refuse substandard wages or working conditions. Traveling benefits allowed artisans ("journeymen") to find work where it was available and thus avoid competing with fellow members of the occupation where the supply of labor exceeded the demand. The union would also offer various additional benefits — funeral, sickness, old age benefits — providing private incentives for joining the unions and reflecting the sense of mutual obligation within the occupational community.

Sectionalism was inherent in the strategy of craft unions. On the one hand, they fought employers on issues having to do with control over production and the supply of labor, but on the other hand, they were determined to exclude unskilled workers from their job territory. Although workers in closed unions were often conscious of their status as labor aristocrats, they did not avoid conflict if their vital interests were affected. Closed unions could be extremely militant, and they have been associated with some of the most bitter strikes in American and western European labor history. But the struggle of workers in these unions was to remain above the common laborer, to preserve their niche in the division of labor. Their motivating fear was that of losing their craft and, as a result, being driven down into the *Lumpenproletariat*.[48] Many socialists viewed this strategy as irrational because it combined militance and sectionalism, yet these ambiguities were a response to the opportunities and constraints that faced craft unions in the labor market.[49]

Workers who were less able to control the supply of labor into their occupation, either because they lacked traditional barriers to occupational mobility or because they were simply less skilled, could not pursue a strategy of closed unionism. If they were to defend or improve their working conditions, they had to put pressure on employers directly, and this induced them to try to organize all those workers hired by their employers, regardless of occupation. This strategy is aptly termed open unionism for it was marked by expansionism

on the part of the union, an effort to make up for its lack of control of entry into the occupation through strength of numbers.

Because open unions are not usually able to influence the labor market from the inside, they have focused on enforcing changes externally, through legislation and by threatening employers with the consequences of a complete shutdown of their enterprises. What they could not achieve through the subtle exclusive tactics adopted by closed craft unions, they had to make up for by organizing all the workers in a particular industry and using their broad-based solidarity and force of numbers to put maximum pressure on employers.[50] Both closed and open unions politicize the labor market by introducing power relations in place of the impersonal logic of competition in the labor market. But open unions have had to introduce political considerations in a more explicit way, by force of numbers rather than by controlling the supply of labor, and this has led them to support extensive political regulation of the labor market.

The contrasting labor market strategies of closed and open unionism created differences in political resources that reinforced these orientations. The means by which open unions compensated for their inability to control the supply of labor gave them sources of political pressure denied to most closed unions. Open unions were the political heavyweights of labor; their inclusive strategy led them to encompass much larger constituencies and have greater financial resources than closed unions. Moreover, many open unions could take political advantage of the fact that they were based on industry rather than occupation. The geographical distribution of the membership of an industry-based union mirrors that of the industry in question, and where the industry is concentrated, as is generally the case in coal mining and textiles, the union may find that the extension of manhood suffrage presents it with direct access to the legislature.

Both closed and open unions were brought into conflict with employers, but their strategies led them to face other workers very differently. The strategy of closed unionism was based on the defenses of a niche in the division of labor, and this brought it into conflict, not only with employers wishing to standardize labor, but also with the other less privileged workers who might break into a particular job territory. Open unions, on the other hand, had no preferential job territory to defend; they had to try to exercise overt pressure against employers through strength of numbers and organization. This strategy implied a greater sensitivity to the benefits of inclusiveness, of working-class solidarity in pressing for standards that apply to all workers equally.

Conclusion

While there have been sustained efforts to generalize about the political orientations of labor movements across western societies, the comparative analysis of individual unions has received much less attention. The former line of analysis presupposes far greater homogeneity of working-class political orientation than has actually been the case. National characterizations of union orientation are really aggregations of the diverse activities of individual unions and groups of workers. National tendencies can be observed and legitimately contrasted, but we should not forget that individual unions have been a more important locus of decision making than the union movements they have formed at the

national level. In this respect the study of political parties can not provide a model for that of unions. Political parties tend to be centered on national politics in a way that few unions have been. To the extent that the comparative politics of unions has borrowed the methodological presuppositions of party-political analysis, it has ignored a vital source of diversity at the level of individual unions.

Posing group, union, and sectoral comparisons as central topics of the comparative analysis of working-class political activity has one highly beneficial methodological consequence: it multiplies the number of cases that qualify for comparison. Comparisons of western societies that treat each society as a single case sooner or later run up against the fact that there are no more than about fifteen to eighteen cases that can be compared. The number of groups, unions, and sectors within a society are likely to far exceed this number. Comparison at this level has the potential flexibility of being able to compare different cases within the same society, holding national variables constant, and similar cases across different societies, holding the sector constant. On methodological grounds the benefits of including sectoral analyses in comparative projects are very strong.

This paper advances the claim that it is possible to generalize about the political orientations of individual unions and that these generalizations hold up across Britain, Germany, and the United States. In coming to grips with variations within western societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I have conceptualized the constraints and opportunities facing groups of workers in terms of their capacity to control their working lives. The line of argument developed here links the political orientations of workers to their occupational communities, their situation in the labor market, and their resources in the workplace. What appears to be crucial in the logic of working-class political activity is the interaction between the ability of workers to act collectively and their ability to do so effectively in the labor market.

From workers who lacked ties of occupational community and were unable to create or sustain unions, we hear very little. In exceptional circumstances of labor shortage they could mount strikes and gain concessions from employers, but their market power rested on transitory conditions. The response of unorganized workers was usually one of political apathy, or if they managed to act in concert, it tended to be in sharp, but short-lived, bursts of political opposition and violence. They could be mobilized in times of crisis to fill the streets, but lacked the social glue to sustain political opposition on a day-to-day basis. By contrast, those workers who formed close-knit occupational communities and could adapt their collective capacity to the challenge of controlling their fate in the labor market were in the vanguard of business unionism and labor reformism. Finally, sustained political radicalism was strongest where the impotence of the unorganized and the organized strength of the adaptive were combined. Workers who formed strong occupational communities, but who were overwhelmed by economic change, had the capacity to act, yet were denied the ability to defend their jobs and conditions of work directly in the labor market. Their ability to organize rested on the stability of their social relations, yet the ongoing division of labor against which they attempted to defend themselves undermined their traditional communities. They were, in other words, caught in the tension between tradition and change in modern society.

These patterns of union political orientation help us explain the existence of unions that deviate from national characterizations. In the absence of a theory of individual unions, the

101

radicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World in the United States or of the handloom weavers in England remain exceptions that defy systematic explanation. Similarly with the reformism of the printers' union within the socialist movement in Germany. In terms of the approach developed in this paper, such diversity is an inherent characteristic of working-class political activity. Recognizing this diversity greatly complicates national comparison, but it is possible that we have been searching for generalizable patterns of working-class politics at an inappropriate level of analysis. Alongside national sources of variation there appear to be some powerful influences rooted in the constraints and opportunities that workers faced in the labor market.

NOTES

1. Outstanding analyses in this genre are Adolph Sturmthal and J. G. Scoville, eds., *The International Labor Movement in Transition: Essays on Asia, Europe, and South America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics," *American Political Science Review,* 77 (March 1983). A recent suggestive analysis sensitive to variations within union movements is Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

2. See for example Robert J. Holton, *British Syndicalism 1900–1914* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), and J. Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards' Movement* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).

3. See for example Ulrich Engelhardt, *"Nur vereinigt sind wir stark": Die Anfänge der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1862/3 bis 1869/70* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977); Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848–1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), ch. 2.

4. Most especially at the 1905 congress. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen vom fünften Kongress Freien Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften,* May 1905, Cologne.

5. Analyses that are suggestive along these lines have been undertaken by theorists of social mobilization, particularly Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Sidney Tarrow, *Struggling to Reform: Social Movements and Policy Change during Cycles of Protest* (Ithaca: Center for European Studies, n.d.); and Ronald Aminzade, "Capitalist Industrialization and Patterns of Industrial Protest: A Comparative Urban Study of Nineteenth-Century France," *American Sociological Review,* 49 (August 1984). In the field of labor history there have been very few attempts to compare the political orientations of individual unions, an outstanding exception being John Laslett's comparison of six American unions in *Labor and the Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). E. J. Hobsbawm and Joan W. Scott, "Political Shoemakers," in E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), is a cross-national comparison of experiences within an occupation. Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848–1939,* provides a useful overview of working-class political activity in western Europe that includes comparisons of unions.

6. The influence of the local political context has been explored in Herbert Gutman's writings, especially "Class, Status, and Community Power in Nineteenth-Century Industrial Cities," in *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), and by Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983). The influence of workers' economic and political rights and the character of the status system is analyzed by Lipset, "Radicalism or Reformism."

7. In 1899 the level of union density in Great Britain reached 12.1 percent. George Sayers Bain and Robert Price, *Profiles of Union Growth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 37.

8. Bain and Price, *Profiles of Union Growth,* pp. 87 and 133.

9. On the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, see G. D. H. Cole, *Attempts at General Union, 1818–1834* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1953); W. H. Oliver, "The Consolidated Trades' Union of 1834," *Economic History*

Review, ser. 2, vol. 19 (1964–65). On the membership of the Knights of Labor, see Leo Wolman, *The Growth of the American Trade Unions 1880–1923* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1924), p. 32.

10. Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965). Aspects of Olson's work have been applied to early unionism by Robert Max Jackson, *The Formation of Craft Labor Markets* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984), pp. 45–46, and Norbert Eickhof, *Eine Theorie der Gewerkschaftsentwicklung* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1973). For an overview of the literature on collective mobilization see Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.

11. The term *Unterstützungsverein*, which was adopted by several early unions including the coopers, coppersmiths, cigar workers, hatters, potters, and printers, also served the function of providing a legal front for union activities under the antisocialist laws from 1878 to 1890.

12. See, for example, Thomas Burt, *An Autobiography* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1924), and Thomas Wright, *The Great Unwashed* (London: Frank Cass, 1868).

13. See James E. Cronin, "Strikes and the Struggle for Union Organization: Britain and Europe," in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Hans-Gerhard Husung, eds., *The Development of Trade Unionism in Great Britain and Germany 1880–1914* (London: German Historical Institute, 1985), pp. 60–61.

14. Wilson, *Political Organization*, pp. 130–1.

15. R. T. Golembiewski, "Small Groups and Large Organizations," in James G. March, ed., *Handbook of Organizations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), reports research in this area.

16. Craig Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) p. 180.

17. See George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), ch. 8; Iorwerth Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Nineteenth Century London* (London: Methuen, 1979), ch. 2; David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), ch. 1.

18. J. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, vol. 2 (London, 1683), esp. p. 356; F. C. Avis, *The Early Printers' Chapel in England* (London, 1971); E. Howe and H. E. Waite, *The London Society of Compositors* (London, 1948), pp. 30–41; W. Krahl, *Der Verband der Deutschen Buchdrucker* (Berlin, 1916), pp. 81–98; G. A. Stephens, *New York Typographical Union No. 6* (New York: New York State Department of Labor, 1912), pp. 114–130. For an insightful discussion of the chapel, see Charles F. Sabel, *Work and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

19. A particularly vivid description of cultural heterogeneity in coal mining is Rowland Berthoff, "The Social Order of the Anthracite Region, 1825–1902," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 89 (1965). See also Robert Asher, "Union Nativism and Immigrant Response," *Labor History*, 23 (1982).

20. Duncan Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers*, pp. 48–9.

21. Barrington Moore, Jr., *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1978), ch. 7. Here I have also relied on David Crew's study of miners and metalworkers in *Town in the Ruhr: A Social History of Bochum 1860–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). For a comparison of coal miners' activities in Germany and Britain see Gaston Rimlinger, "The Legitimation of Protest: A Comparative Study in Labor History," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2 (April 1960).

22. Moore, *Injustice*, p. 260.

23. Ibid., p. 273.

24. Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966); Clark Kerr, John Dunlop, Frederick Harbison, and Charles Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (New York: Free Press, 1959).

25. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), book three, and *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1951), p. 253.

26. Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, pp. 205–6.

27. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle*, Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, and Crew, *Town in the Ruhr*, take up this issue directly.

28. See, for example, Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, pp. 202–4

29. Moore, *Injustice*, pp. 318–320.

30. Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution* (Berlin: J. H. W. Dietz, 1976), ch. 12. A study of the social backgrounds of those killed during the revolution in Berlin reveals that active participants tended to be young (60 percent were less than thirty-one years old) and geographically mobile (63 percent were born outside Berlin), findings that are congruent with the hypothesis that revolutionary activity was most common among those least integrated into a community setting.

31. Von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution*, p. 279. A similar social basis of revolt can be observed in other societies during these years. James Cronin has pointed out that "the prewar socialist and labor parties had their social roots among the skilled and organized not just in France but in England, Germany, Italy, and Austria. The emergent factory proletariat, on the other hand, had remained largely unorganized and unrepresented. When the wartime labor shortage gave these workers some additional social leverage, they organized massively and became the core, of not always the articulate leadership, of the post war insurgency." See James E. Cronin, "Labor Insurgency and Class Formation: Comparative Perspectives on the Crisis of 1917–1920 in Europe," in James E. Cronin and Carmen Sirianni, eds., *Work, Community, and Power: The Experience of Labor in Europe and America, 1900–1925* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 35.

32. See Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), pp. 7–9; Larry Peterson, "The One Big Union in International Perspective: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, 1900–1925," in Cronin and Sirianni, eds., *Work, Community, and Power;* and Mark Wyman, *Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution 1860–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 227.

33. H. A. Turner, *Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), pp. 75–8.

34. Ibid., p. 103. See also Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, ch. 9; Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers*, ch. 9; and Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 112–5.

35. The mobilizing role of threatened artisans is stressed in the context of French class formation by Michael P. Hanagan, *The Logic of Solidarity: Artisans and Industrial Workers in Three French Towns 1871–1914* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 211–212.

36. See A. E. Musson, *British Trade Unions* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 33, 46; Prothero, pp. 68–9, 300–1, and 332–8; I. J. Prothero, "London Chartism and the Trades," *Economic History Review*, ser. 2, vol. 24 (1971); Robert Sykes, "Early Chartism and Trade Unionism in South-East Lancashire," in James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson, eds., *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism and Culture, 1830–1860* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

37. Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy*, p. 14. See also Alan Dawley, *Class and Community* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), esp. pp. 228–9, which focuses on shoemakers.

38. Laslett, *Labor and the Left*, pp. 300–1.

39. George Rudé, *The Crowd in History, 1730–1848* (New York: John Wiley, 1964), p. 180.

40. Quoted in R. Church, *Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town* (London: 1966), p. 128.

41. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 326.

42. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle;* Moore, *Injustice*, pp. 477–9.

43. Ludwig Rexhäuser, *Zur Geschichte des Verbandes der deutschen Buchdrucker* (Berlin: Verband der deutschen Buchdrucker, 1900), p. 10.

44. See P. Ullman, *Tarifverträge und Tarifpolitik in Deutschland bis 1914* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1977), pp. 159–171; G. Beier, *Schwarze Kunst und Klassenkampf*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966).

45. I discuss this at greater length in Gary Marks, *Unions in Politics: Britain, Germany and the United States in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

46. Lipset, "Radicalism or Reformism," pp. 6–12; Geary, *European Labour Protest*, pp. 58–63.

47. This distinction is developed most carefully in Turner, *Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy*.

48. Andrew Dawson, "The Parameters of Craft Consciousness: The Social Outlook of the Skilled Worker, 1890–1920," in Hoerder, ed., *American Labor and Immigrant History*.

49. Charles Sabel makes this point from the perspective of the individual worker's psychology in *Work and Politics*, p. 176.

50. See Turner, part 5, ch. 1.