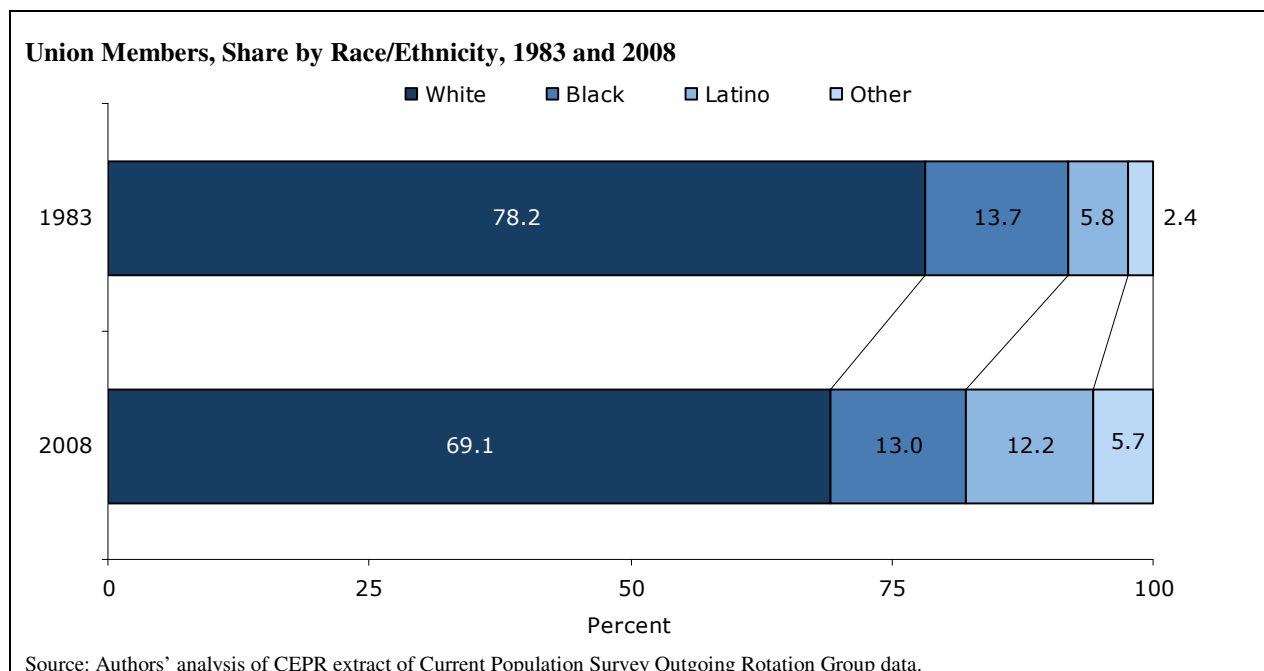


The Changing Face of Labor

Over the last quarter century, the unionized workforce has changed dramatically, according to a November 2009 report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, *The Changing Face of Labor, 1983-2008* [see www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/changing-face-of-labor].

In 2008, union workers reflected trends in the workforce as a whole toward a greater share of women, Latinos, Asian Pacific Americans, older, more-educated workers, and a shift out of manufacturing toward services.

- **Gender:** Over 45% of unionized workers were women, up from 35% in 1983. At current growth rates, women will be the majority of unionized workers before 2020.
- **Education:** Over 1/3 (37.5%) of union workers had a 4-year college degree or more, up from only 1/5 (20.3%) in 1983. Almost 1/2 (49.4%) of union women had at least a 4-year college degree. More-educated workers were more likely to be unionized than less-educated workers, a reversal from 25 years ago.
- **Sector:** In rough terms, 5 of every 10 union workers were in the public sector; 1 of every 10 was in manufacturing; and the remaining 4 of 10 were in the private sector outside of manufacturing. About 61% of unionized women are in the public sector, compared to about 38% for men.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Latinos were 12.2% of the unionized workforce, up from 5.8% in 1983. Asian Pacific Americans were 4.6% of union workers, up from 2.5% in 1989. Black workers were about 13% of the union workers, a share that has held fairly steady since 1983, despite a large decline in the representation of whites.
- **Immigration Status:** About 1-in-8 (12.6%) union workers was an immigrant, up from 1-in-12 (8.4%) in 1994 (the earliest year for which consistent data are available).
- **Region:** Unionized workers were most likely to be in the Northeast (27.4%), the Midwest (25.7%), and the Pacific states (22.7%). Since 2006, unionization rates have risen in the Pacific states (up from 17.6% in 2006 to 19.9% in 2008), the Northeast (up from 19.5% to 20.3%), and the West (up from 10.1% to 10.7%).
- **Age:** The typical union worker was 45 years old, about 7 years older than in 1983. The most heavily unionized age group was 55-64 year olds (18.4% in a union). The least unionized group was 16-24 year olds (5.7%).



For more information about workers and unions, see: www.cepr.net/index.php/the-benefits-of-unionization.