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UNION WORKPLACE VOICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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This paper offers an explanation for the phenomenon of declining democratic engagement. The paper assumes that what happens at work is the primary driver of what occurs outside of the workplace. If workers are exposed to the formalities of collective bargaining and union representation they also perhaps increase their attachment to, and willingness to participate in, structures of democratic governance outside of the workplace. Put another way, if workplace voice and civic voice are complements in the sense that they foster a shared understanding of democracy's value and common cause then we would expect the decline of union representation to affect the civic attitudes and democratic behaviours of individuals outside of the workplace as well. In order for this argument to hold one needs to first test whether individual union members are more prone to vote and participate in civil society than non-members: other research refers to this as the 'union voting premium'. Our finding is that the voice effect of unionism on democratic participation is significant and is larger for those groups which are significantly under-represented when it comes to voting; namely those with fewer years of education, immigrants and younger workers.

Key Words: unions; voting; civic engagement

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“Democracy...is more likely to succeed in countries with a shared feeling of belonging together.... [Best] positioned are “people so fundamentally at one that they can safely afford to bicker,” as Lord Balfour, a 19th-century British politician, said.”

The Economist (January, 14, 2010)

The decline in democratic participation across many Western democracies has been the subject of both popular and academic discussion for some time. The most obvious form of weakening attachment to democratic and civic engagement has occurred in the simple act of voting, which in Canada, Britain and the United States -- three countries sharing broadly similar legal systems and representative liberal democratic structures -- has declined over the past 40 years (Figure 1).¹

[Figure 1]

Many theories have been proffered for these remarkable falls in voter participation. Most notably the “bowling-alone” phenomenon which argues that a general decline in most forms of social participation has been occurring since the late 1960s. Few studies, however, have sought to locate the demise of democratic participation in the decline of union voice and its particular set of workplace representative structures.² Indeed as noted by Freeman, until very recently, despite the importance that unions attach to political activity and the potential effect this activity has on election results, research on ‘what unions do to voting’ has been limited. Economists have continued to focus on the impact of unions on wages and other labor market outcomes whilst studies of voter turnout by political scientists have focused on socio-economic determinants of voting that rarely include union effects.³

This paper aims to redress this gap by building upon the small but growing literature showing that what happens at work is intimately related to what occurs outside of the workplace. Put another way, if workplace voice and civic voice are complements -- in the sense that they foster a shared understanding

¹ In the US in 2008 there was an upturn in voter turnout associated with the Obama election. The common law notable exception of course is Australia (not included in the figure) where since 1924 voting in federal and state level elections is mandatory (see www.idea.int/vt).

² See Jake Rosenfeld, “Economic Determinants of Voting in an Era of Union Decline” (2010) 91:2 Soc Sci Q 379 [Rosenfeld, “Economic Determinants”]; and Richard B. Freeman, “What Do Unions Do . . . To Voting?” (September 2003), *NBER Working Paper No. w9992*, online: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=450893> [Freeman, “What Do Unions Do”].

³ The few political science studies that have addressed this issue have found contrasting results. Radcliff finds a positive union effect on electoral participation of persons in union households in the US from 1952 to 1992 whereas Delaney et al., concluded that union members turned out more than non-members but that persons in union households did not. See Benjamin Radcliff, “Organized Labor and Electoral Participation in American National Elections” (2001) 22:2 *Journal of Labor Research* 405; and John Thomas Delaney, Jack Fiorito & Marick F. Masters, “The effects of organizational and environmental characteristics on union political action” (1988) 32:3 *AJPS* 616.

of democracy's value and common cause -- then we would expect the decline of union representation to affect the civic attitudes and democratic behaviours of individuals outside of the workplace as well.

In order for this argument to hold we need to first examine whether, at the individual level, union members are more likely to vote and participate in civil society than non-members. This tendency for union members, other things equal, to be more inclined to vote than otherwise comparable non-members has been found to be positively related in US voting data and is sometimes referred to as the 'union voting premium'.

However, several things that unions do can confound the relationship between unionization and civic participation, at least as articulated above. We know, for example, that unions are associated with a wage premium as well as being disproportionately located in sectors such as education and public service which are themselves factors that are positively associated with voting and participating in civil society. So if one is seeking to isolate the 'true spillover effect' of union voice on democratic participation, controls for wages and sector, amongst others, must be accounted for. The residual 'voting premium' after accounting for these other union covariates then becomes the pure 'civic or voice-related effect of unionization', or the 'union voice-face' premium adapting the nomenclature developed first by Freeman and Medoff to describe union effects that are non-wage/benefit related.⁴

Though this is an intuitively appealing idea, there is also a contrasting possibility. What if exercising voice at work is not complementary to democratic participation but substitutable? That is, if one form of social engagement fosters a decline in competing forms of participation, then union voice might reduce the demand for civic voice. The channel could be as simple as people having finite resources (e.g., time, energy) or that the desire for democratic voice is satiated once it has been attained in an alternative domain of life.

This paper offers an original analytical treatment of these contrasting theories and an empirical examination of a nationally representative Canadian survey which was especially designed to measure social and civic engagement (including voting behaviour) and which crucially contains a union status question, allowing us to compare union and non-union members. We focus on Canada and draw conclusions that we feel bare upon countries sharing broadly similar (though not identical) common law

⁴ R Freeman & J. Medoff, *What Do Unions Do?*, (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

systems, workplace governance models and democratic forms of government such as Britain and the United States.⁵

I. UNION MEMBERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

A. Existing Literature

This paper offers an explanation for the phenomenon of declining democratic engagement by extending the logic that an organizational affiliation in what might otherwise be a private sphere (e.g., the chess club or residents association) can promote greater social awareness and foster norms of collective responsibility which, as the opening quote from *the Economist* suggests, can lead to ultimately greater political engagement. This is not a novel idea insofar as a similar argument was advanced over 200 years ago by de Tocqueville and extended in the twentieth century by political scientists such as Almond Verba to trade unions, which he argued, act like any other interest group in society by increasing democratic participation through their capacity to organize and mobilize voters.⁶

Unions, however, remain distinct from other actors that operate between the state and citizen because of their connection to the workplace (i.e., where at least in Canada workers are obliged to be *de facto*-style members), their 'solidaristic' character and their resulting effects on civic participation. Trade unions, along with their labour political parties, comprise what Lipset et al. termed "the two principal paths by which members of the working classes [are] accepted into the fabric of societies as political and economic citizens."⁷ This idea has been recently tested by Sojourner⁸ using US data and unions do seem to offer non-elites and otherwise marginalized sub-groups of the population a greater chance of playing "a major role in fostering the institutions of political democracy" as Lipset argued. But as their presence in the private sector dwindles, this otherwise positive influence on democracy is having a reduced effect.

⁵ Data for the US, Canada and Britain will be examined in future work in an effort to link cross-nationally the demise of workplace voice (union and non-union forms) to an increased/decreased likelihood of civic engagement and participation.

⁶ See Alexis Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (New York: Harper Perennial Books, 1969); and Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, & Henry E Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics" (1983) 77: 1 *American Political Science Review* 1 at 6.

⁸ Aaron J. Sojourner, "Do Unions Promote Members' Electoral Office Holding? Evidence from Correlates of State Legislatures' Occupational Shares" (April 2012) IZA Discussion Paper No. 6479, online : <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2039665>>

We do know from recent literature that union members are associated with an increased propensity to vote. Freeman has estimated that for the US this increased likelihood averages 12 percent in non-adjusted terms and about 4 percentage points when socioeconomic characteristics that differentiate union members from non-members are taken into account:

...the voting rate of union members averages some 12 points above that of non-union members; and that the voting rate of non-union persons in union households averages 3 points above that of persons in non-union households. Most of the higher rate of turnout of unionists is due to socioeconomic factors that differentiate union members from others, but there remains a union voting premium for both members and other persons in union households. The difference in turnout between members and non-members with *comparable characteristics* is about 4 percentage points.⁹

In a follow-up study, Rosenfeld has estimated that unions do not necessarily provide any added positive effect on voting behaviour amongst highly educated workers or those working in the public sector. The direct or true influence of unions on voting behaviour lies with less educated private-sector workers. It is here where Rosenfeld argues that “the continuing disappearance of private-sector unions from the U.S. economic landscape severs an important bridge connecting average workers to politics”.¹⁰ Their demise from the US industrial relations landscape has, according to Rosenfeld, caused these less-advantaged groups to be further marginalised from the political process.

Despite the handful of studies showing positive union impacts on voting, there is still lacking a set of studies looking at the overall relationship between union membership and other civic behaviours such as mobilising for a cause or being an active part of a political party and no study has looked at Canadian voting behaviour in this way.

B. Mechanisms Linking Unions and Voting Behaviour

Several mechanisms might explain why union membership is linked to greater voter participation. First, as noted by the political theories surrounding mobilization, the institutional capacity to organize and assemble persons for a singular purpose can be translated into voter turnout. Unionization therefore serves to bring voters out to the polls, either through awareness and facilitation (offering rides to the polls and reminders) or through pressure (subtle or overt).

⁹ Freeman, “What Do Unions Do”, supra note 2 at 36.

¹⁰ Rosenfeld, “Economic Determinants”, supra note 2 at 394

Second, unionization may also be associated with certain characteristics of persons who would otherwise be inclined to join and participate in all forms of democratic culture. This is not limited to civic or workplace arenas, but in all aspects of life. Union membership, in this explanation, is but a mere byproduct of an underlying preference.

Third, unionization serves to increase wages even after controlling for productivity differences between union and non-union workers—the so-called ‘union wage premium’ -- and greater earnings are linked to greater political participation. This wage setting effect of unionization has been termed the ‘monopoly face’ of unions as contrasted with the non-wage ‘voice’ face of unions. A feature of recent work on voter participation shows that declines in voter turnout have been far greater for those earners at the lower end of the income distribution.¹¹

If, after accounting for all the variables associated with these three voting channels (including the ‘monopoly face’), we are still left with a union advantage when it comes to voting, then we would be left with a fourth channel: the *voice- face of unionism* explanation. Unions, through their voice-face provision inside the workplace, can serve to educate otherwise non-interested individuals on the value and worth of participation and representative voting. Whether this occurs at union election time or when ratifying a collective agreement, the transmission mechanisms are social as opposed to pecuniary or directly instrumental. Contact with more politically active co-workers drawn to unionized jobs and settings can activate or reinforce latent democratic instincts in persons who would otherwise eschew civic engagement. To the extent that a workplace lacks any form of institutional voice (union or non-union) this serves to undermine social information about the value of voting and civic participation. Generally, non-union members in non-union workplaces will therefore have limited access to the daily practice of democracy and therefore be less inclined, other things constant, to vote come election day.

C. Causal Possibilities

All four mechanisms outlined above still leave open the question of ‘causality.’ – i.e., none of our empirical techniques fully rule out which way the true causal arrow is pointing, either in the direction of greater civic participation leading to more unionization or vice versa. Despite this, we can nevertheless sketch out the

¹¹ Richard B. Freeman, “What, me Vote?” (August 2003), NBER Working Paper No. w9896, online:<<http://www.nber.org/papers/w9896>>.

possible ways in which theory may guide us in interpreting our empirical results. We identify five causal possibilities that would be consistent with a positive 'union voting premium' for Canada. These are:

First, in the original exit-voice model proposed by Albert Hirschman¹², collective action was dealt with by assumptions about utility functions. Some individuals are assumed to have utility functions such that the benefits of collective action are not net of the costs of association but rather -- since association action is itself experienced as a benefit -- the sum; so collective action in general and involvement in voice in particular is sustained by a self-selection mechanism drawing such utility functions into the relevant domain. This may be because the performance of altruism is experienced as a return by individuals, or because the individual is making broader calculative decisions about the benefits of social capital. This model is presented simply in Figure 2a.

[Figure 2a]

Second, in mobilization theory (which has its origins in the works of Marx and in more modern times in the works of Shorter and Tilly and John Kelly) unionization definitely precedes political action because it is fomented by the perceived injustice of employer action. As described by Kelly, social movements and "collective ...activity ultimately stem from employer actions that generate amongst employees a sense of injustice or illegitimacy."¹³ The analysis follows a clear Marxist trajectory and the basic category of interests is determined by a sense of injustice engendered by location in the process of production and class position, not by ethnic or religious grouping. As Kelly further states; "perceived injustice is the origin of workers collective definition of interests."¹⁴ This model is depicted in figure 2b.

[Figure 2b]

A third approach is to say that, whatever the domain of causation; civic skills are generated in all forms of association and deployed across all relevant domains. This is essentially the De Tocqueville civil society argument and is an assertion about civic behaviour having large spillover effects into most areas of life. Individuals acquire the 'habit' of association and involvement, whether or not some form of self-

¹² Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

¹³ See Shorter, E and Tilly, C. *Strikes in France 1830- 1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974 and Kelly, J. *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves*. 1998, London: Routledge For an excellent review of mobilization theory see Martin, R. Mobilization Theory: A New Paradigm for Industrial Relations? *Human Relations*, Vol. 52, No. 9, 1999

¹⁴ For an excellent review of mobilization theory see Martin, R. "Mobilization Theory: A New Paradigm for Industrial Relations?" *Human Relations*, Vol. 52, No. 9, 1999

selection initiates it (as in Figure 2a) and crucially this 'habit' is not localized to one center of social activity such as the workplace (as in Figure 2b). This is presented in Figure 2c.

[Figure 2c]

A fourth model offers perhaps a better explanation of voting behaviour than civic activity. In this approach, association allows mobilization. Specifically, to use our example, once people are members of a union they can be identified and influenced to vote. This is distinct from the previous approaches since it is not model of individual decision making. It is essentially a model about social visibility or network connectedness. It is depicted in Figure 2c.

[Figure 2d]

Finally, we need to consider the causal chain in Figure 2e. This depicts the priority of socio-religious civic engagement as prior to union involvement. Historically, it has substantial empirical support. Gerber et al. show that for the US, engagement in formalized social behaviour such as religious church activity is a predictor of voting behaviours.¹⁵ They come to this causal conclusion by analyzing changes to the latter subsequent to the former. More distantly, there is substantial qualitative evidence to indicate the emergence of union activity in 18th and 19th century Britain from prior experience of religious, particularly protestant, non-conformist, community engagement. This fourth model of socio-religious centered causality is depicted in Figure 2d.

[Figure 2e]

II. MEASURING VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND BROADER CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Much of the political research on voting behaviour uses exit polling data. But there exists a richer array of data available in annual social attitude surveys such as those in Britain (the British Social Attitudes Surveys, BSAS) and in general social surveys (GSS) found in Canada and the United States. We exploit the 'social-engagement' wave of the GSS-cycle 17, conducted in 2003 by Statistics Canada on a nationally representative sample of 24,952 individuals. The GSS contains information on the union membership of the respondent and whether they voted in the last previous municipal, provincial or federal

¹⁵ Gerber, A, Gruber, J and D. Hungerman. (September 2008) "Does Church Attendance Cause People to Vote? Using Blue Laws' Repeal to Estimate the Effect of Religiosity on Voter Turnout". NBER working paper 14303.

election. From this information one can construct two additional voting behaviour variables: whether the respondent voted in any or all of the elections prior to the survey.

The GSS also contains questions on attitudes toward political and economic issues and other political activities, such as volunteering to a political party or going to rallies. These broader civic engagement variables follow immediately from the basic 'did you vote in the last election' questions and are all based on a question series asking respondents: "In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following activities: *searched for information on a political issue?*; *volunteered for a political party?*; *expressed your views on an issue by contacting a newspaper or a politician?*; *signed a petition?*; *boycotted a product or chose a product for ethical reasons?*; *attended a public meeting?*; and *participated in a demonstration or march?*." This provides seven non-mutually exclusive categories of political involvement and civic engagement,

The GSS-cycle 17 asks only one question about union status: whether the person is a union member. However, the union membership variable in the GSS signals an accurate identifier of who is actually being represented for bargaining purposes because in Canada, given its agency rules and the lack of any 'right-to-work' legislation in any province or the federal jurisdiction; most workers with coverage would respond as *de facto* members. The GSS union identifier variable therefore relates to union membership only.

A. Measures of Voting and Civic Engagement

We view voting as one of the 'least' costly forms of civic engagement. The demands on time are negligible and in Canada at least, registration is for the most part automatically determined by election officials. Therefore, it should be the most prevalent form of civic activity. Table 1 panel A records the probability of voting across five differing measures (i.e., voted in any election, voted in the last federal election, voted in the last provincial election, voted in the last municipal election and then if voted in all of the above elections). The ordering reflects the decreasing voting propensity moving from federal to local elections and from any (the highest) to all elections (the lowest). The five voting measures are split by those who say they are union members and those who are not. The figure shows that the overall union

voting advantage (ranging from 12 to 10 percentage points) experienced by union members. This is consistent with the findings found in the US by Richard Freeman.¹⁶

[Table 1]¹⁷

The next seven rows of Table 1 panel B record the percentage of respondents engaging in a wide array of civic engagement behaviours. These are behaviours, which unlike voting require a modicum of proactive effort. Once again we have ranked the measures in descending order from the most prevalent (i.e., signing a petition) to the least prevalent (i.e., volunteering to help a political party). In all instances, union members enjoy an overall advantage over their non-union counterparts.

B. Estimating Strategy Linking Unions to Voting Behaviour and Civic Engagement

Though these data are suggestive that union membership is positively related to the propensity to vote and engage more broadly in civically responsible behaviours, we have not adjusted for differences in the characteristics of union/nonunion persons that may lead them to vote and participate in greater numbers, as opposed to the impact of unionism per se.

The ideal way to capture this singular union effect would be to observe the same person from one election to another as they moved from a non-union to a union job¹⁸. Unfortunately, the GSS data are cross sectional and do not follow persons from one election to the next. As a simple approximation of the unique union effect, we can estimate the extent to which the union voting advantages shown in table 1 panels A and B are attributable to differences in measurable socioeconomic characteristics between union members and nonmembers. Accordingly, we estimate a linear probability model that relates dichotomous voting and civic participating variables (1=voted/civically participated; 0 = did not vote/civically participate) to socioeconomic covariates and dummy variables for the union status of a person or their household.

¹⁶ Freeman, "What Do Unions Do", supra note 2

¹⁷ The overall sample in Table 1 column 1 is of all survey respondents, which includes those in and out of the workforce. Columns 2 and 3 are sub-samples of only those respondents who are working at the time of the survey.

¹⁸ The reason for only following non-union members into union status is that, as noted by Freeman, "What Do Unions Do", supra note 2 at 19, "If unions induced someone to vote, persistence of voting would bias downward the estimates of the union impact on voting behaviour when a person went from union to non-union status. In this case, a better test of the union effect would be to compare the change in voting among persons who switched from a non-union job to a union job."

This creates two initial measures of the union effect as found in Freeman. The first is the *union voting gap*, defined as the observed (mean) difference in the proportion of those voting or engaging in broader civic behaviours between union and non-union members. The second measure is the *union voting premium*, defined as the difference in voting and civic participation rates among persons with and without union attachment who have observationally similar socio-economic characteristics. The union voting gap is analogous to the gross or overall difference in wages between union and nonunion workers without any controls for worker characteristics. The union voting premium provides a closer estimate of the actual 'causal impact' of unionization on turnout analogous to labor economists' estimates of the union wage premium.

Having estimated this more accurate measure of union impact on voting and civic participation, there is still value in distinguishing between two possible union mechanisms: the monopoly face and the voice face. The monopoly face serves to increase the material gains to members in the form of better pay and working conditions. The voice face serves to offer (and elicit from) workers a chance to shape the nature of their working environment and to participate to a greater degree than a non-union worker would in determining the terms and conditions of work.

The former effect creates a mechanism that in and of itself has a directly positive effect on voting and democratic participation; income is a strong correlate of voting propensity so controlling for this in estimation could account for the union monopoly face and reveal the net union voice effect.

We are still left with the issue of whether we have captured the real causal impact of unionization, or simply an unobservable feature of union members that also affects politicization. Fortunately, the GSS is a survey where a number of familial and retrospective questions are asked which can approximate these intrinsic motivators. The variables include: whether the respondents parents volunteered when the respondent was young, whether the respondent was a members of a youth organization, a measure of how long the respondent has resided in their present dwelling and whether the respondent works in one of the industries that make up the broader public sector (i.e., health, education and public administration).¹⁹

¹⁹ As noted by Rosenfeld, "Economic Determinants", supra note 2, if there are characteristics intrinsic to public-sector work which raise political knowledge and feelings of civic responsibility, then public sector employment may increase the likelihood of voting for reasons similar to those that increase union members' voting rates, and union membership

Adjusting for these additional variables would net out the monopoly face effect of unions and the intrinsic civic mindedness effect from our final impact estimate which we term the *union voice-face premium*.

III. RESULTS

A. The Effect of Unions on Voting

Table 2 panel A and Figure 3 shows the effect of unions on voting across all five measures of voting behaviour. Each cell entry and figure marker is based on a regression coefficient for the union membership variable. The first (top) line in Figure 3 and first column of Table 2 panel A shows the overall union gap (the union dummy with no controls), which ranges from a high of 12.8 percentage points for voting in the last federal election to 9.5 percentage points for voting in the last municipal election. Since voter turnout in municipal elections is much lower overall, the relative union effect is actually greater here, accounting for a 20 percent greater chance of voting for union members than non-members.

[Table 2 Figure 3]

The second line (middle) in Figure 3 and the middle column in Panel A of Table 2 show the union voting premium; i.e., the union-non-union differential that remains after controlling for observed socio-demographic characteristics (Appendix table 1 column 2 shows the full specification of the model that generated these results for our union dummy variable for two voting equations; the vote in any and vote in all election outcomes). The union voting premium is about half the size of the overall voting gap indicating that much of the effect of union status was actually driven by differential characteristics of union members that simultaneously made them more likely to vote as compared to non-union members. Still the percentage differences are all above 6 percentage points for every measure of voting.

Finally, the third line (bottom) in Figure 3 and Table 2 column 3 show the union voice-face premium; i.e., the union differential in voting that remains after socio-demographics, sector, income and intrinsic civic mindedness variables have been accounted for. The voice-face premium is once again half the size of the previous estimate (3 percentage points), but is still significantly positive across all measures of voting.

in the public sector may not increase voting probability above and beyond the effects of public-sector employment. See Rosenfeld, "Economic Determinants", *supra note 2*

On the basis of these data and estimates, we conclude that union members are more likely to vote than non-members in all forms of measured voting behaviour, with an average 10-12 percentage point union voting gap for members, a 6-7 percentage point union voting premium for otherwise observably comparable union members, and a 3 percentage point union voice-face premium after having controlled for monopoly-face union effects and differences in intrinsic civic mindedness.

In sum, there is a union voting premium among persons with observationally equivalent characteristics of roughly 0.07 points (7 percentage points). This falls to about 0.03 points (3 percentage points) when including income, characteristics of the parents and evidence of civic activity as a youth, which is about 1/3 the size of the overall raw union vs. nonunion voting gap.

B. The Effect of Unions on Unlikely Voters

Unions may affect the voting behaviour of members who would otherwise be unlikely candidates for civic participation; namely workers with less education, immigrants and younger workers. It is amongst these worker sub-groups that exposure to the mechanisms of workplace collective voice could have their greatest positive effect, for these are workers that otherwise do not engage with politics. What is convenient about the Wagner-Act model, as practiced in Canada at least, from a democratic voting effect perspective, is that union members cannot opt out of paying union dues. As such, even if they resent being part of a collective group, they are forced to remain a due paying member. This should show up as an increased voting likelihood between a subset of union and non-union members that would otherwise not join or participate in any form of civic association. In short, these unionized 'unlikely voters' should out-vote their comparable 'non-union unlikely voters' even though both display lower than average voting inclinations. In fact, as argued by (Rosenfeld), the unlikely voter may be the more important sub-group than regular members since many of the other positive associations with unionization (e.g., age, public sector) are themselves attributes which serve to increase the probability of voting.

The unlikely voter is an important category of respondent in our case by virtue of the way in which union membership works in Canada. There are no right-to-work laws which allow workers to opt out of union membership due payments, even if they do not wish to be members, they still are represented by and pay dues to their union. Thus, it is plausible that the voting behaviour of some union persons with

little or no desire for collective or civic action nevertheless differs from that of similar persons in nonunion situations.

To examine the impact of being a union member who would otherwise not wish to be civically inclined we exploit another variable in the GSS which asks respondents if they are members of any group or social club (other than a union). The question can be recoded to identify respondents without a single non-union affiliation or just one. We refer to these individuals with no single affiliation as non-participatory workers. The probability of voting can therefore be estimated for three groups not inclined to participate using this new variable; i) the non-union respondent with no group/club affiliation; ii) the non-union respondent with only a single group/club affiliation; and iii) the union respondent with no group/club affiliation. In Table 3 we do just this using the specification which gave us the union voting premium results in Appendix Table 1 column 2. In each case we ran three separate regressions and used a dummy variable to capture each of the three groups above.

[Table 3]

The first five rows and first column in Table 3 shows the effect of being a non-member of any group (including a union) on voting relative to individuals who are at least members of one other group (union or otherwise). The voting 'discount' is almost exactly the opposite sized sign as the union voting premium. Non-union members of any group are on average 7 percentage points less likely to vote across all measures of voting. The second non-union group of unlikely voter can be found in Table 3 column 2; this is the non-union respondent of only a single (non-union) group or organization. This membership status conveys no voting premium effect as compared to union members with/without a non-union membership affiliation. The results are zero in magnitude and not-significant. The final group of 'unlikely voters' is the union member who is otherwise not engaged in any other civil society groups of any kind. Here the union voting premium magnitudes are one-fifth as large as the union-voice face premium and largely non-significant.

What can we conclude from these results?

Initially we can state that the (non-union) group membership variable is seemingly picking up some unobserved proclivity for democratic participation and civic engagement. However, even here it seems that union membership does have some role in raising participation in what would otherwise be

politically disengaged individuals. This effect can be seen more clearly in Figure 4 top line which takes the difference in voting propensity between the non-union and union non-members of any group or organization. That is, compared to non-union/non-members of any group or club, otherwise unaffiliated union members display a difference in voting propensity that ranges from 0.09 points (9 percentage points) greater in federal elections to 0.07 points (7 percentage points) greater in all elections. A positive differential (though smaller) also exists for non-union members who are otherwise unaffiliated and the non-union member who is a member of at least a single group or club.

[Figure 4]

As a final way into the potential effect of unions on unlikely voters, we identify two categories of respondents that displayed some of the lowest probabilities of voting in our empirical specifications (see Appendix Table 1). We ran separate regressions for union and non-union sub-samples and compared the results across groups with significantly lower than average civic engagement. These estimates are located in Table 4. Specifically, in panel A column 1, we see that for youth aged 18-24 unionization is associated with an 8.8 percentage point (0.088 point) increased probability of voting in any election as compared to youth who are non-union; this despite the nearly 40 percentage point voting disadvantage youth have in voting as compared to older respondents. This is the largest of the effects observed. For the other category of worker with negative voting propensities (i.e., immigrants) we find less of a clear-cut picture in our voting data. However, some of the union premium effect seemingly is occurring along a different participatory dimension; namely along broader social engagement measures which are higher amongst unionized immigrants than non-union counterparts, seen in Table 4 panel B. It is to these results that we now turn to.

[Table 4]

C. The Effect of Unions on Broader Civic Engagement

As noted above, there were a series of follow-up questions in the GSS-cycle 17 asking respondents whether in the past 12 months they engaged in a range of civic behaviours beyond voting. The civic behaviours ranged from low- effort (e.g., signing a petition) to the most involved in terms of time and effort (e.g., participating in a demonstration or public march). As seen in Figure 4 and in Table 2 panel B

column 1, the overall union gap is positive across all seven measures of civic engagement. The largest gaps in absolute terms reside in petition signing (0.17 points), boycotted/chose a product for ethical reasons (0.16 points) and attendance at a public meeting (0.15 points). But the largest union gaps in relative terms occur for those civic behaviours that are the most onerous in terms of effort and time (e.g., participation in demonstration or public march and volunteering for political party). In both cases, given the low frequencies at which these behaviours occurred in the GSS, the union gap represented an 80 percent (0.05 points out of an overall mean of 0.06) and 50 percent (0.016 points out of an overall mean of 0.032 points) share of the total observed propensities for demonstrating and political volunteering respectively. Union membership, it seems, has a greater effect on civic engagement than those studies limited to voting have been telling us.

To see if controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, monopoly voice and intrinsic civic mindedness wipes out the overall union gap for civic engagement, we turn to Figure 5 and turn back to table 2 panel B, columns 2 and 3. We see that like the voting behaviour measures, when we compare observationally equivalent union and non-union respondents the union gap declines. However, unlike the voting result, the declines are only about one-third (as opposed to half) each time we apply greater number of controls to the basic regression. So for example, looking at row 10 in Table 2 panel B, we see that the overall union gap in terms of contacting a newspaper or politician to express views is 0.089 points (8.9 percent). When we control for observable correlates of voting behaviour we see this gap fall by 0.024 points to 0.065 (or a 6.5 percent union premium). Applying our final set of monopoly face and intrinsic civic mindedness controls, we see that the union differential now falls to 0.042 points (4.2 percent), which is just slightly under 50 percent of the original propensity of 0.089 (8.9 percent) points. This pattern is repeated across all seven measures of broader civic engagement (see Figure 5).

[Figure 5]

Finally, as seen in Figure 6, for our subgrouping of voters with none or a single membership outside of the union, the union/non-union differentials follow the pattern set in the voting estimates. Union members out-participate non-union members with no membership in outside groups or clubs and have slight advantage over non-union members holding a single non-union group or club affiliation. The largest

relative union advantages show up in political party volunteering and boycotting a product for ethical reasons.

[Figure 6]

Amongst sub-groups with the lowest likelihood of engaging in civic behaviours, union status seems to increase immigrant participation the most (see Table 4 column 4, panel B). For the rest (youth, non-home owners and high school graduates) there are no significant effects worth noting). This lack of a clear result may be due, however, to the small sample sizes in the GSS once we estimate on so many subsamples of the population.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Access to union voice at the workplace increases the voting propensity of otherwise comparable respondents. Our study has both broadened the finding beyond the United States, and has extended the scope of civic engagement to include a wider set of democratic participation measures. We have also tried to isolate the proportion of the union voting and civic engagement premium that is due solely to union voice.

There are five substantive empirical findings:

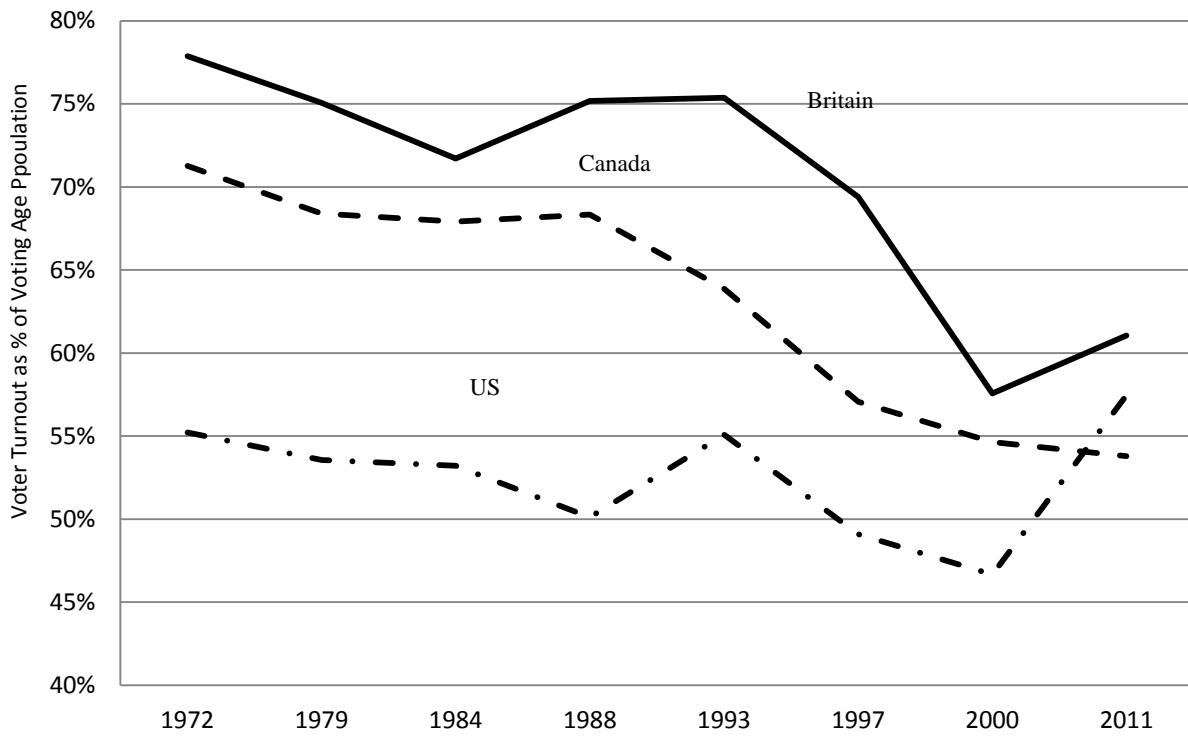
1. Union members are 10-12 percentage points more likely to vote than non-union members across all three levels (federal, provincial and municipal) of electoral activity. This overall union voting gap is replicated when broader measures of civic engagement – such as whether a respondent signed a public petition to volunteering to help in a political party -- are employed.
2. The union voting premium – defined as the difference in turnout between members and non-members with comparable characteristics – is smaller: about 6-7 percentage points for voting (or half the size of the overall union voting gap) and one-third the size for civic engagement.
3. About half of the union voting premium (or 3 percentage points) is actually due to the voice-face properties of union membership as opposed to the monopoly-faced ones. Controlling for the higher income of union members and the intrinsic civic mindedness of respondents leaves a significant but reduced union voice-face premium of about 3 percentage points. Civic

engagement is less affected by the introduction of observed correlates and is reduced by only one-third of its overall gap when union and non-union workers of comparable characteristics are compared.

4. Union members who are not members of any other group or club are less inclined to vote than union members with other group affiliations, but they nevertheless out-vote and out-participate non-union members with no group or club membership. Union non-members of any group or club are 7 to 9 percentage points more likely to vote than are demographically comparable non-union/non-member voters. For non-union respondents who are members of a single group or club, the difference with union members not part of any club or group is much smaller, just over 1.5 percentage points.
5. Amongst sub-groups that are least likely to vote, youth (aged 18-24) seem most affected by union membership in terms of voting, on average being 8.8 percentage points more likely than non-union youth to vote in any election. In terms of broader civic engagement, the union effect seems most pronounced for immigrants.

This area of research therefore has both academic and policy relevance. On the academic side they reinforce old theories of the complementarity of democratic participation in all spheres of life. There are spillover effects that come from encouraging representative voice at work in the form of greater participation in democratic processes. This finding is consistent with several theoretical conjectures and can perhaps best be considered in terms of the causality of relationship between union membership and civic engagement that were presented in the paper. Though our study cannot determine which causal channel is at work, it at least sheds light on the possibilities and pulls the plug on the idea that workplace democracy in the form of unionization lowers participation outside through a substitution channel

Figure 1: Voter Turnout in Federal/National Elections, Canada, Britain and US, 1972-2011



Source: IDEAS 2011. Figures based on authors calculations.

Figure 2: Possible Causal Pathways Linking Union Membership and Civic Engagement

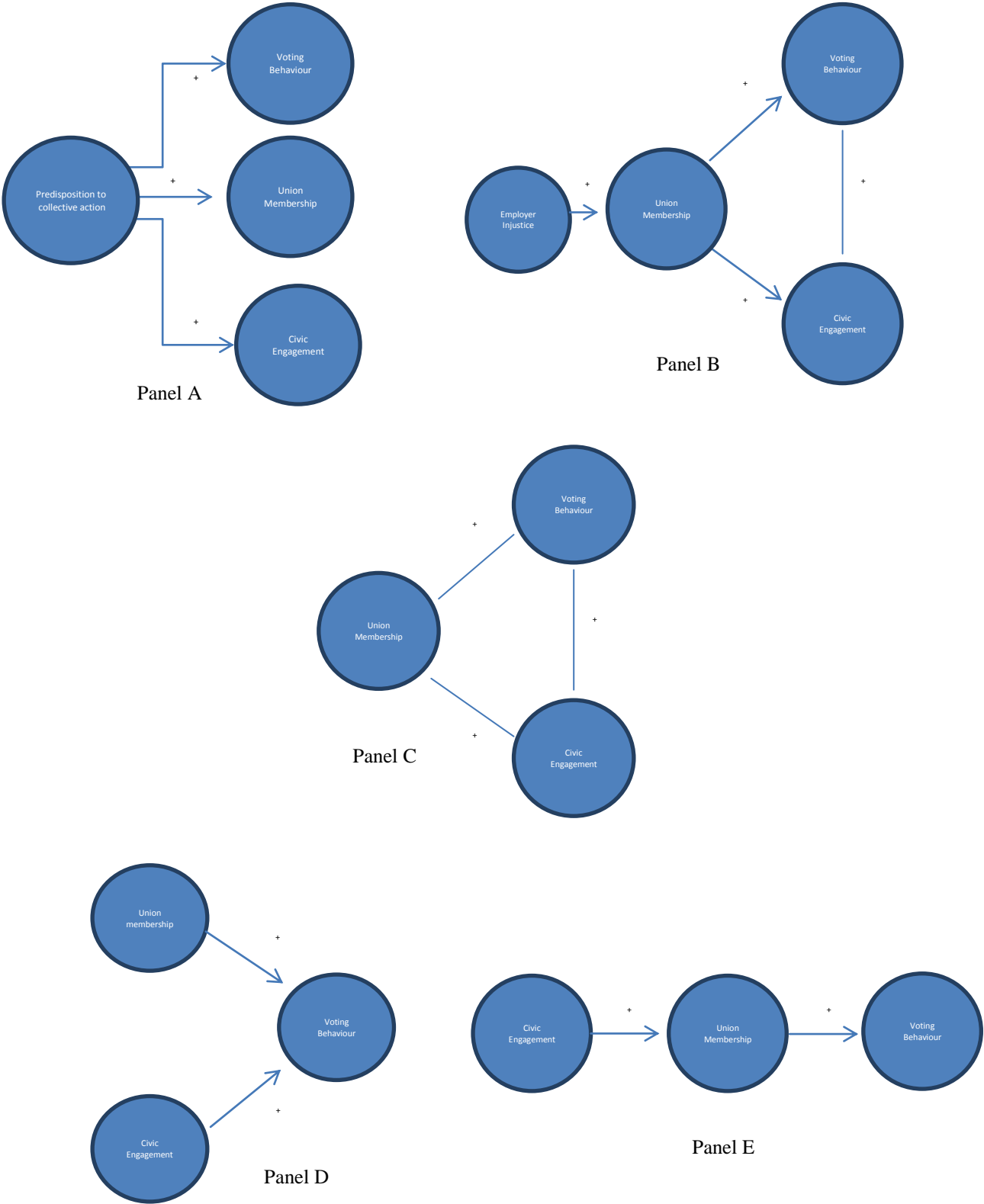
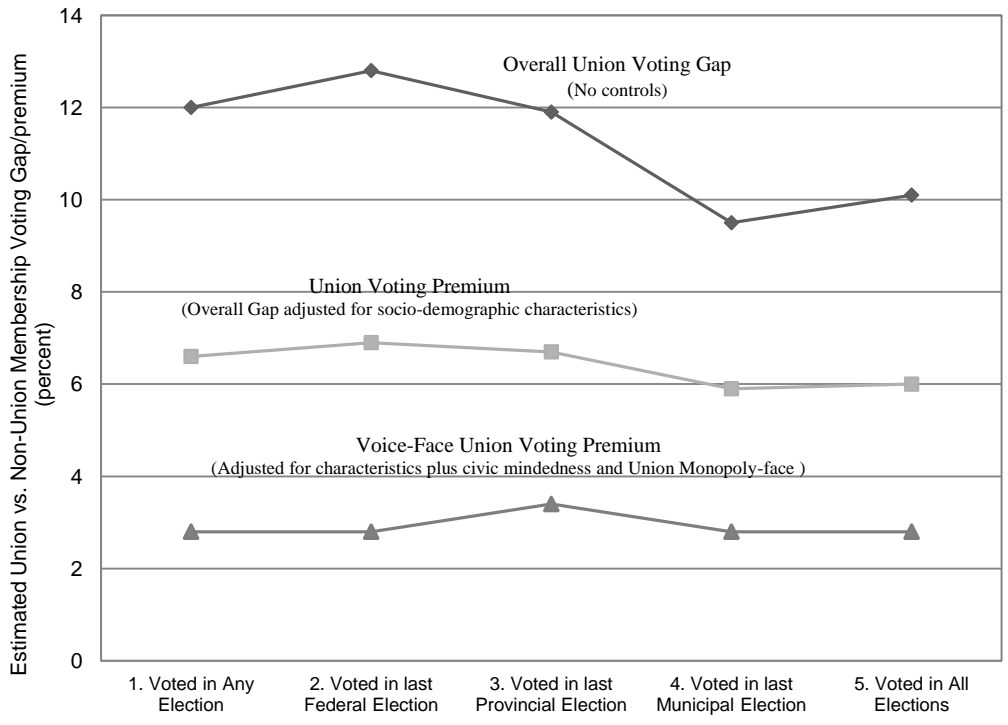


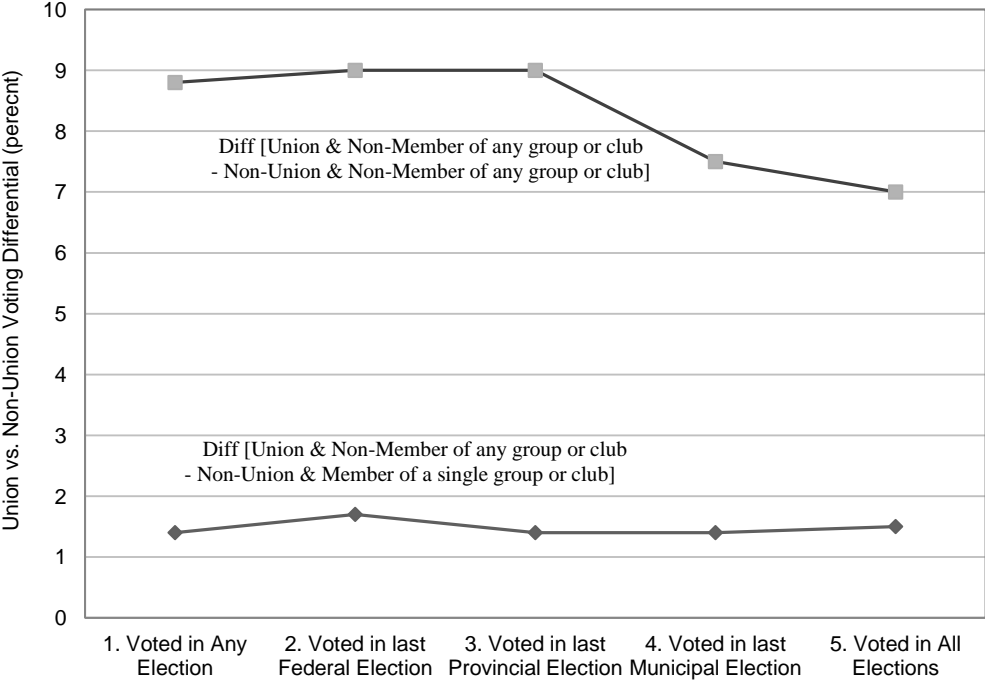
Figure 3: Union Voting Premium between Observably Comparable Union and Non-Union Respondents



Note: The top line is the raw differential between union and non-union voters, not adjusting for socioeconomic factors that differentiate union members from non-union workers. The middle line adjusts for these differing sets of characteristics between groups of workers. The bottom line controls for all observed characteristics found in line two that make union and non-union workers otherwise comparable plus wages and sector of respondent. These latter variables pick up the ‘monopoly face’ of unions which serves to indirectly increase voting participation by making voters richer and drawn to sectors where civic engagement is already naturally higher (i.e., broader public sector). This leaves the ‘voice-face’ effect of union membership on voting.

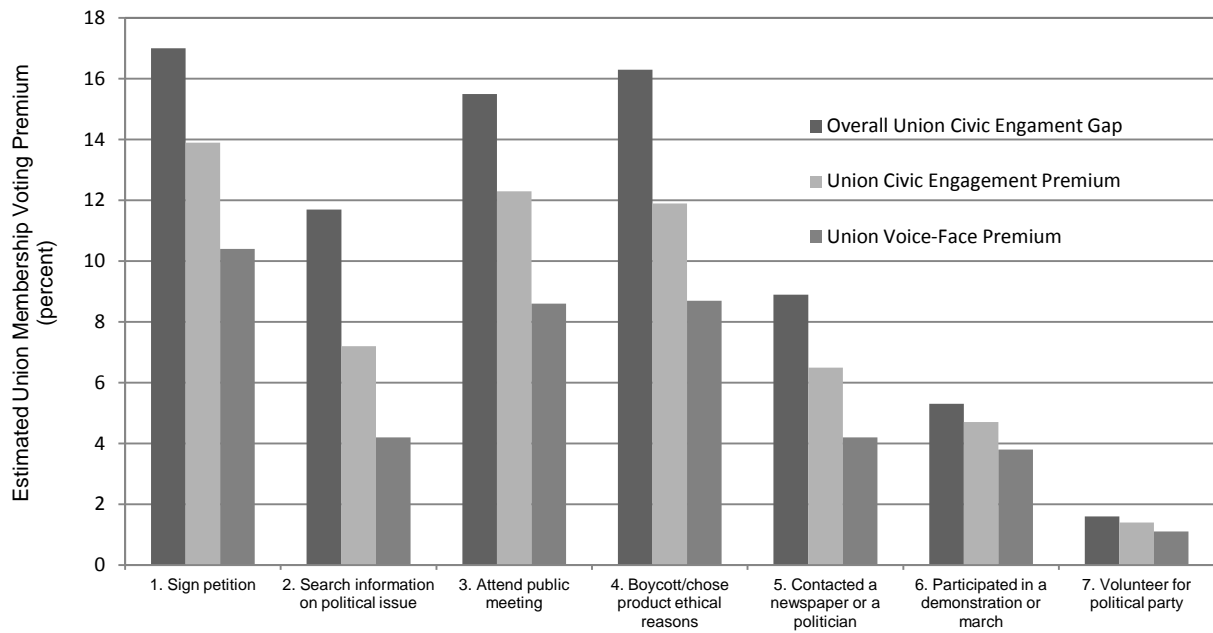
Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author’s calculations found in Table 2 panel A.

Figure 4: Estimates of Union/ Non-Union Voting Differentials for Respondents with Low Civic Engagement



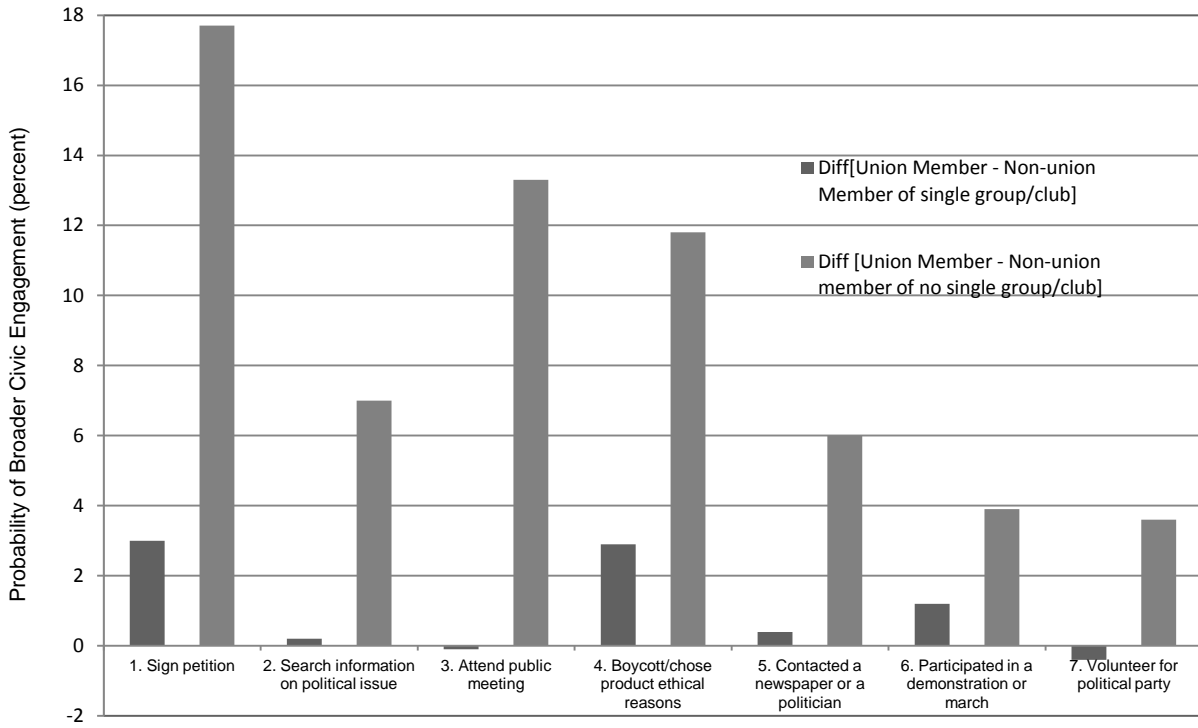
Source: Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author's calculations found in Table 3 panel A.

Figure 5: Civic Engagement Premium between Observably Comparable Union and Non-Union Respondents



Source: Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author's calculations found in Table 2 panel B.

Figure 6: Estimates of Union/Non-Union Civic Engagement Differentials for Respondents with Low Civic Engagement



Source: Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author's calculations found in Table 3panel B

Table 1: Voting Behaviour and Civic Engagement amongst Union and Non-Union Respondents

	By Union Membership Status		
	<u>Overall Sample</u>	<u>Non-Union Member</u>	<u>Union Member</u>
	<u>%</u> [1]	<u>%</u> [2]	<u>%</u> [3]
<u>A. Measures of Voting Behaviour</u>			
1. Voted in Any Election	76.6	69.4	81.3
2. Voted in last Federal Election	72.2	64.1	76.7
3. Voted in last Provincial Election	71.1	63.2	75.2
4. Voted in last Municipal Election	58.5	50.6	60.2
5. Voted in All Elections	54.5	45.9	56.1
<u>B. Measures of Broader Civic Engagement</u>			
6. Signed a public petition	28.1	25.0	42.1
7. Searched for information on a political issue	24.7	22.9	34.7
8. Attended a public meeting	22.4	18.1	33.7
9. Boycotted/chose a product for ethical reasons	19.6	17.1	33.4
10. Contacted a newspaper or a politician	13.1	10.5	19.5
11. Participated in a demonstration or march	6.1	5.3	10.7
12. Volunteered for a political party	3.2	2.5	4.1
13. Overall Probability of Civic Engagement (Unweighted)	37.6	32.5	43.5
N	23,455	13,126	5,660

Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on authors' calculations.

Notes: Column [1] excludes all those ineligible to vote. Columns [2] and [3] exclude all retirees and those out of the labour market.

Table 2: Estimates of the Union Voting and Civic Engagement Premium for Observably Comparable Union and Non-Union Respondents

	<u>Union vs Non-Union Voting Differential</u>		
	<u>Overall Union Gap</u> [1]	<u>Union Voting Premium</u> [2]	<u>Union-Voice Premium</u> [3]
<u>A. Measures of Voting Behaviour</u>			
1. Voted in Any Election	12.0**	6.6**	3.1**
2. Voted in last Federal Election	12.8**	6.9**	2.8**
3. Voted in last Provincial Election	11.9**	6.7**	3.4**
4. Voted in last Municipal Election	9.5**	5.9**	2.8**
5. Voted in All Elections	10.1**	6.5**	2.9**
<u>B. Measures of Broader Civic Engagement</u>			
6. Signed a public petition	17.0**	12.2**	9.7**
7. Searched for information on a political issue	11.7**	7.2**	4.2**
8. Attended a public meeting	15.5**	12.3**	8.6**
9. Boycotted/chose a product for ethical reasons	16.3**	11.9**	8.7**
10. Contacted a newspaper or a politician	8.9**	6.5**	4.2**
11. Participated in a demonstration or march	5.3**	4.7**	3.8**
12. Volunteered for a political party	1.6**	1.4**	1.1*
13. Overall Voting/Civic Engagement Premium (Unweighted)	11.0	7.0	4.3
<u>C. Controls</u>			
a. Socio-Demographic	No	Yes	Yes
b. Wage (Monopoly Face), Sector and Civic Mindedness	No	No	Yes

Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on authors' calculations.

* Denotes statistically significant differences at the at the 5-percent level and ** at the 1-percent level respectively.

Notes: Cells represent coefficients expressed in percentage terms conditioned on a linear probability regression specified with all relevant observable characteristics including: gender, age, marital status, immigrant status, self-reported health, educational attainment, province, and religious attendance. Estimates in [3] control for **monopoly face** effect of union membership via greater income (which increases probability of voting) and also typically unobserved **intrinsic civic mindedness** motivations for civic participation. **Monopoly face union** control variable includes wages. **Intrinsic civic mindedness**/motivational control variables include whether the respondent volunteered or participated in social groups as youth and whether parents volunteered when respondent was a youth, length of time in current dwelling and broader public sector workers which are associated with unionisation but which carry their independent effects.

Table 3: Estimates of the Union Voting and Civic Engagement Premium across Voters with Low Civic Engagement

	<u>By Membership Status</u>			<u>Voting/Civic Engagement Gap</u>	
	<u>Non-Union</u>		<u>Union</u>	<u>Union Member vs Non-Union Member</u>	
	<u>Non-member of any group/club</u>	<u>Member of at least one group/club</u>	<u>Non-member of any group/club</u>		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[3]-[1]	[3]-[2]
<u>A. Measures of Voting Behaviour</u>					
1. Voted in Any Election	-7.4**	0.0	1.4*	8.8	1.4
2. Voted in last Federal Election	-7.3**	-0.0	1.7*	9.0	1.7
3. Voted in last Provincial Election	-7.6**	0.0	1.4*	9.0	1.4
4. Voted in last Municipal Election	-6.8**	-0.7	0.7	7.5	1.4
5. Voted in All Elections	-6.5**	-1.0	0.5	7.0	1.5
<u>B. Measures of Broader Civic Engagement</u>					
6. Signed a public petition	-17.1**	-2.4**	0.6	17.7	3.0
7. Searched for information on a political issue	-10.7**	-3.9**	-3.7**	7.0	0.2
8. Attended a public meeting	-18.5**	-5.1**	-5.2**	13.3	-0.1
9. Boycotted/chose a product for ethical reasons	-11.3**	-2.4**	0.5	11.8	2.9
10. Contacted a newspaper or a politician	-9.3**	-3.7**	-3.3**	6.0	0.4
11. Participated in a demonstration or march	-3.4**	-0.7*	0.5	3.9	1.2
12. Volunteered for a political party	-5.1**	-1.1**	-1.5**	3.6	-0.4
a. Socio-Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a

Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author's calculations.

* Denotes statistically significant differences at the at the 5-percent level and ** at the 1-percent level respectively.

Notes: Cells represent coefficients expressed in percentage terms conditioned on a linear probability regression specified with all relevant observable characteristics including: gender, age, marital status, immigrant status, self-reported health, educational attainment, province, and religious attendance. Each regression includes entire sample and uses individual dummies for each regression.

Table 4: Estimates of the Union-Non-Union Voting and Civic Engagement Differential across Groups with Low Civic Engagement

<u>A. Measures of Voting Behaviour</u>	<u>Union/Non-union Differential for</u>					
	<u>Youth Aged 18-24</u>			<u>Recent Immigrants</u>		
	<u>U</u>	<u>NU</u>	<u>Diff</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>NU</u>	<u>Diff</u>
1. Voted in Any Election	-0.359**	-0.447**	0.088	-0.238**	-0.258**	0.020
2. Voted in last Federal Election	-0.459**	-0.499**	0.040	-0.237**	-0.245**	0.008
3. Voted in last Provincial Election	-0.397**	-0.480**	0.083	-0.228**	-0.254**	0.026
4. Voted in last Municipal Election	-0.385**	-0.442**	0.057	-0.210**	-0.187**	-0.023
5. Voted in All Elections	-0.454**	-0.476**	0.022	-0.212**	-0.185**	-0.027
<u>B. Measures of Broader Civic Engagement</u>						
6. Signed a public petition	-0.022*	-0.010	-0.012	-0.078**	-0.118**	0.040
7. Searched for information on a political issue	-0.042*	-0.074	0.032	0.018	-0.015	0.033
8. Attended a public meeting	-0.196**	-0.103	-0.093	0.020*	-0.045*	0.065
9. Boycotted/chose a product for ethical reasons	0.003	0.003	0.000	-0.060*	-0.072*	0.012
10. Contacted a newspaper or a politician	-0.1428*	-0.080	-0.062	-0.011	-0.026	0.015
11. Participated in a demonstration or march	-0.025	0.002	-0.027	0.040*	0.012	0.028
12. Volunteered for a political party	-0.058*	-0.013	-0.045	0.019	-0.001	0.020
a. Socio-Demographic Controls	Yes			Yes		
b. Wage, Sector and Civic Mindedness Controls	Yes			Yes		

Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author's calculations.

* Denotes statistically significant differences at the at the 5-percent level and ** at the 1-percent level respectively. Cells represent coefficients

Notes: expressed in percentage terms conditioned on a linear probability regression specified with all relevant observable characteristics including: gender, age, marital status, immigrant status, self-reported health, educational attainment, province, and religious attendance. Union (U)/Non-Union (NU) differential (Diff) is the difference in the estimated co-efficient between union and non-union respondents obtained for each group in separate union and non-union regressions. A positive (negative) differential suggests by how union status increases (decreases) the probability of voting and/or broader civic engagement.

Appendix: Table 1: Estimates of the Impact of Union Membership on Voting Behaviour, Non-retired persons only, Canadian General Social Survey (Cycle 17, 2003)

Independent Variable	Dependent variable					
	Voted in Any Election			Voted in All Elections		
	Overall Voting Gap (No Controls)	Union Voting Premium	Union Voice Premium	Overall Voting Gap (No Controls)	Union Voting Premium	Union Voice Premium
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Mean dependent variable		0.73		0.49		
a. Union Membership						
(Non-Union member)						
Union member	0.119*	0.066*	0.031*	0.106*	0.065*	0.029*
b. Socio-demographic Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
(Female)						
Male		0.016	0.000		-0.027*	-0.036*
(Age 18-24)						
Age25pls		0.255*	0.213*		0.252*	-0.212*
(Single, never married)						
Married or common law		0.108*	0.098*		0.125*	0.112*
Widow, separated, divorced		0.078*	0.075*		0.126*	0.086*
(Children in household)						
No Children in household		0.098*	0.076*		0.098*	0.058*
(Immigrant)						
Non-immigrant		0.275*	0.245*		0.217*	0.186*
(Less than high school)						
High school graduate		0.062*	0.045*		0.026**	0.015
Some post-secondary		0.073*	0.059*		0.024**	0.016
Community college/voc. Ed		0.102*	0.084*		0.047*	0.039*
University graduate		0.121*	0.097*		0.049*	0.036*
(Health very poor or fair)						
Health very good		0.016	0.011		0.008	0.002
Health excellent		0.012	0.005		0.009	0.006
(Non-Religious, Never Attend)						
Religious but never attend		0.068*	0.059*		0.103*	0.090*
Religious and attend		0.099*	0.083*		0.122*	0.102*
(Ontario)						
Atlantic Provinces		0.022**	0.045*		0.005	-0.001*
Quebec		0.115*	0.117*		0.081*	0.081*
Prairies/Alberta		0.003	0.015		-0.025**	-0.024**
British Columbia		-0.004	0.007		-0.076*	-0.066*
c. Civic Mindedness Controls	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
(Lived in same dwelling <3yrs)						
Lived in same dwelling 3-5yrs			0.027**			0.020**
Lived in same dwelling 5-10yrs			0.071*			0.099*
Lived in same dwelling 10yrs+			0.140*			0.166*
(No group/club member as youth)						
Club/group member as youth			0.025*			0.028*
(Non-Volunteering parents)						

Parents Volunteered as youth			0.032*			0.037*
(Non-Broader public sector)						
Education			0.037*			0.044*
Health and Social Work			0.015			0.027**
Public Administration			0.075*			0.060*
d. Monopoly Face Union Control						
(Earned Income less 20k)						
Income 20-29K			0.049*			0.026**
Income 30-39k			0.058*			0.039*
Income 40-49k			0.055*			0.036*
Income 50-59k			0.078*			0.055*
Income 60-79k			0.105*			0.096*
Income 80-99k			0.096*			0.079*
Income 100k+			0.080*			0.049*
Sample size	18,347	18,347	18,347	18,347	18,347	18,347
R-squared	0.015	0.175	0.202	0.008	0.140	0.185

Source: Canadian General Social Survey: Cycle 17 (2003). Estimates based on author’s calculations.

* Denotes statistically significant differences at the at the 5-percent level and ** at the 1-percent level respectively.

Notes: Cells represent coefficients expressed in percentage terms conditioned on a linear probability regression specified with all relevant observable characteristics including: gender, age, marital status, immigrant status, self-reported health, educational attainment, province, and religious attendance. Estimates in [3] control for **monopoly face** effect of union membership via greater income (which increases probability of voting) and also typically unobserved **intrinsic civic mindedness** motivations for civic participation. **Monopoly face union** control variable includes wages. **Intrinsic civic mindedness**/motivational control variables include whether the respondent volunteered or participated in social groups as youth and whether parents volunteered when respondent was a youth, length of time in current dwelling and broader public sector workers which are associated with unionisation but which carry their independent effects.