

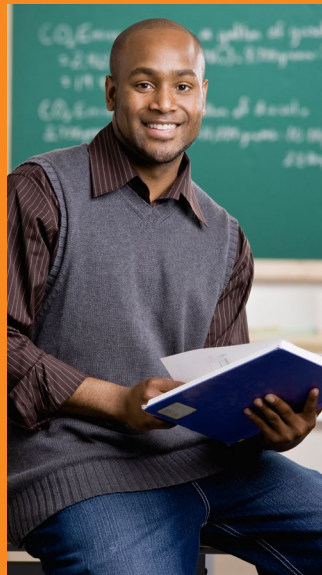
THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2020

A PROFILE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE,
AND THE UNITED STATES

RUTH MILKMAN AND STEPHANIE LUCE

THE CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 2020



THE STATE OF THE UNIONS 2020:

A PROFILE OF ORGANIZED LABOR IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES

RUTH MILKMAN AND STEPHANIE LUCE

Organized labor in the United States has suffered sharp decline in numbers and influence in recent years. Following the long, slow recovery from the Great Recession, anti-union groups launched aggressive attacks on public-sector collective bargaining rights, culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2018 decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which prohibits public-sector unions from collecting “fair share” or “agency” fees from non-members. In the private sector, where unionization rates have fallen to record lows, rising health care costs and employer demands for concessions have added to the problems that unions face, even as inequalities in income and wealth have continued to rise.

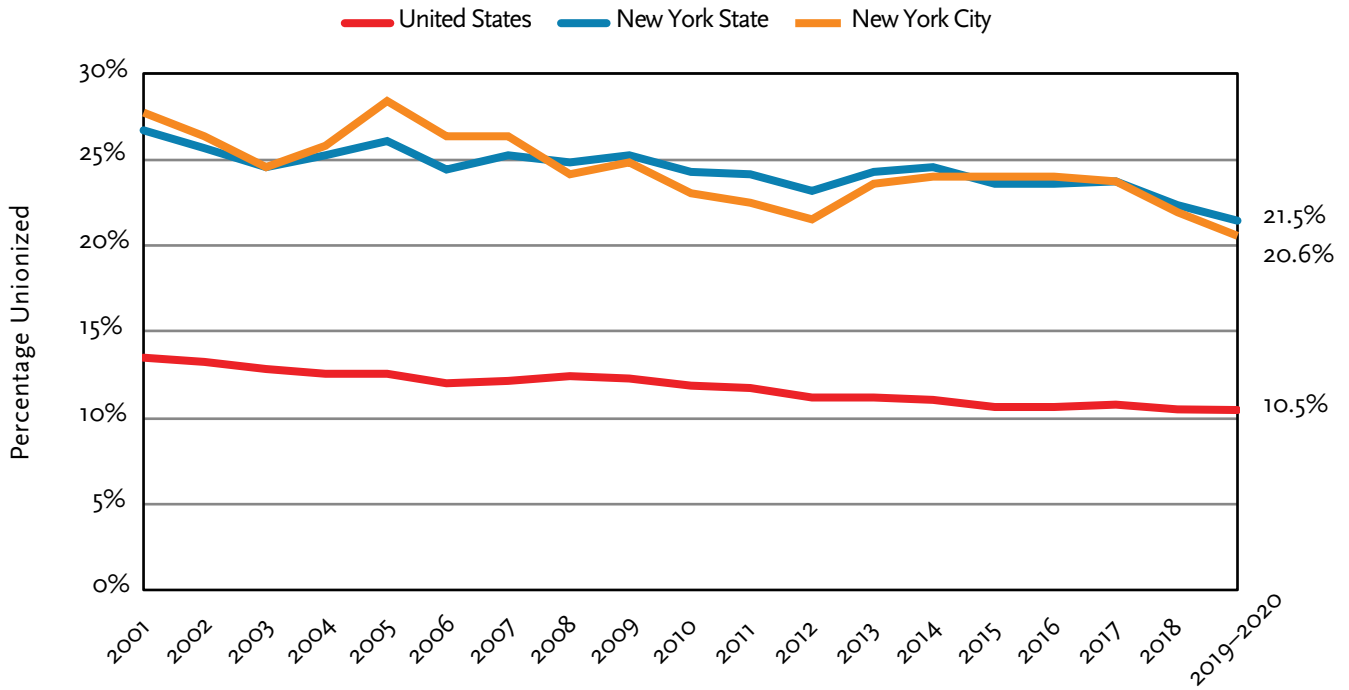
The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has compounded these formidable challenges. Millions of U.S. workers have been furloughed or laid off in both unionized and nonunion sectors. In highly unionized “essential” industries like health care, groceries, meatpacking, education and transportation, as well as in nonunion settings where labor demand remains strong, employers’ failure to provide adequate protection for workers’ health is a huge challenge. In this report we present preliminary data on confirmed COVID cases and deaths among members of some of New York City’s largest unions, providing a snapshot of the pandemic’s deadly impact as of July 2020. The rest of this document provides an update of our

previous reports on union membership, but with the crucial caveat that the data available at this writing were collected too early to capture the impact of the economic downturn that began in the spring of 2020 on workers and union members.

Organized labor remains much stronger in New York City and State than in the nation as a whole; indeed, overall unionization rates in those jurisdictions have been relatively stable over the 2010s, in contrast to steady erosion on the national level, as Figure 1a shows. Over the past few years, however, density declined in both the City and State. It remains to be seen whether this is a temporary setback or a more enduring trend.

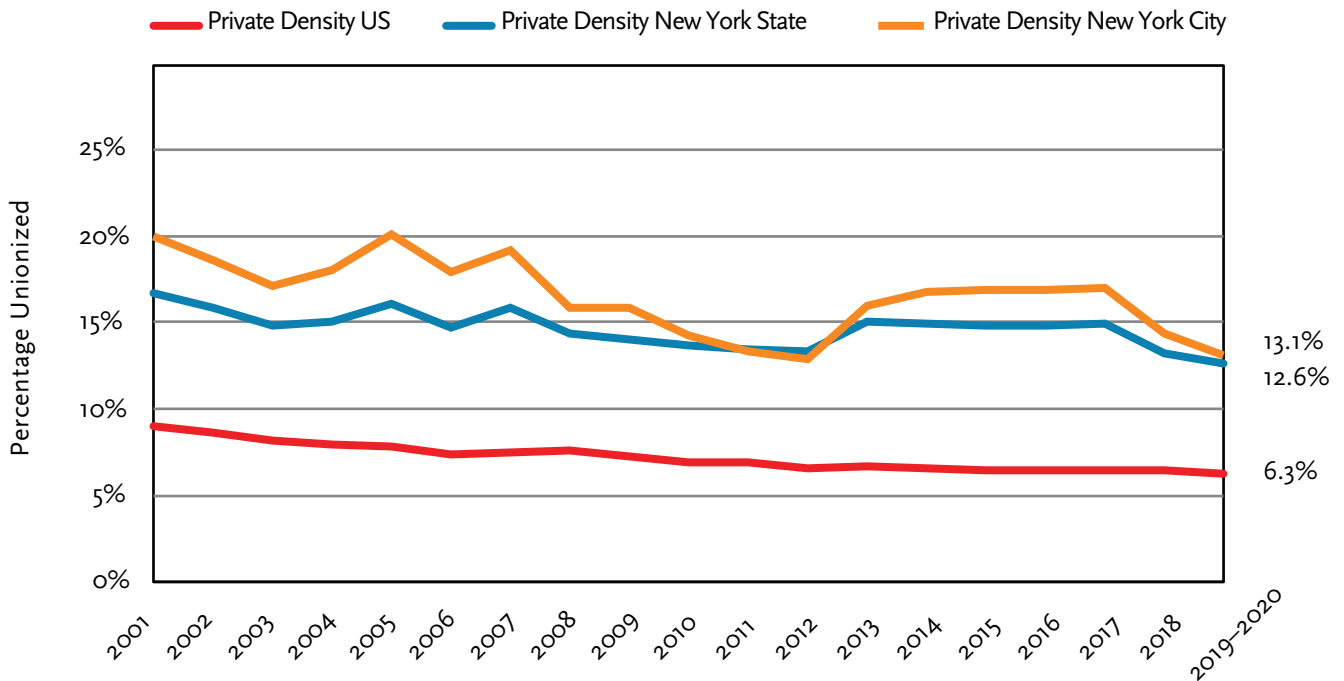
Over one-fifth (20.6 percent) of all wage and salary workers residing in the five boroughs of New York City were union members in 2019–20, a decline from the 24 percent level that held nearly steady from 2013–2016, according to the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS) data that serve as the primary basis of this report.¹ The unionized share of the workforce was slightly higher in New York State (21.5 percent). New York ranks first in union density among the nation’s largest states, with a unionization rate more than double the U.S. average of 10.5 percent in 2019–20, and ranks second overall among all states (Hawaii’s union density is the nation’s highest, at 23.4 percent in 2019).² In absolute terms, New York State had more union members—1.7 million—than any state

FIGURE 1A. UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2001–2020



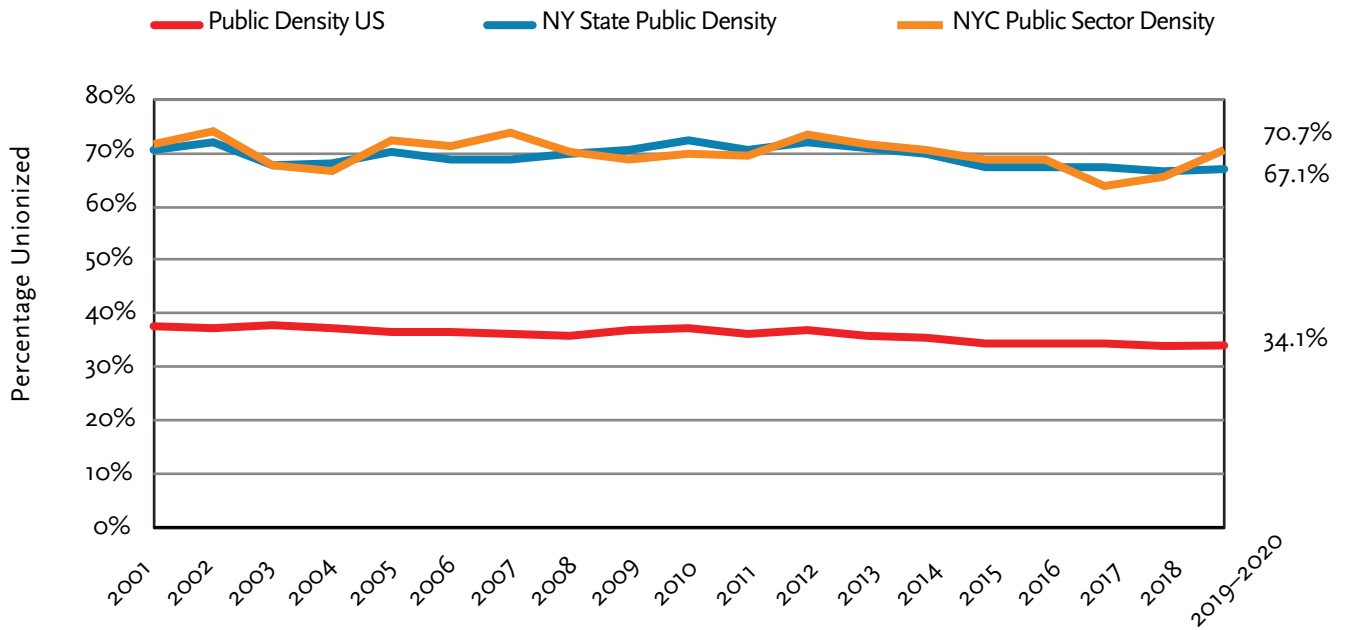
Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2001–June 2020.

FIGURE 1B. PRIVATE-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2001–2020



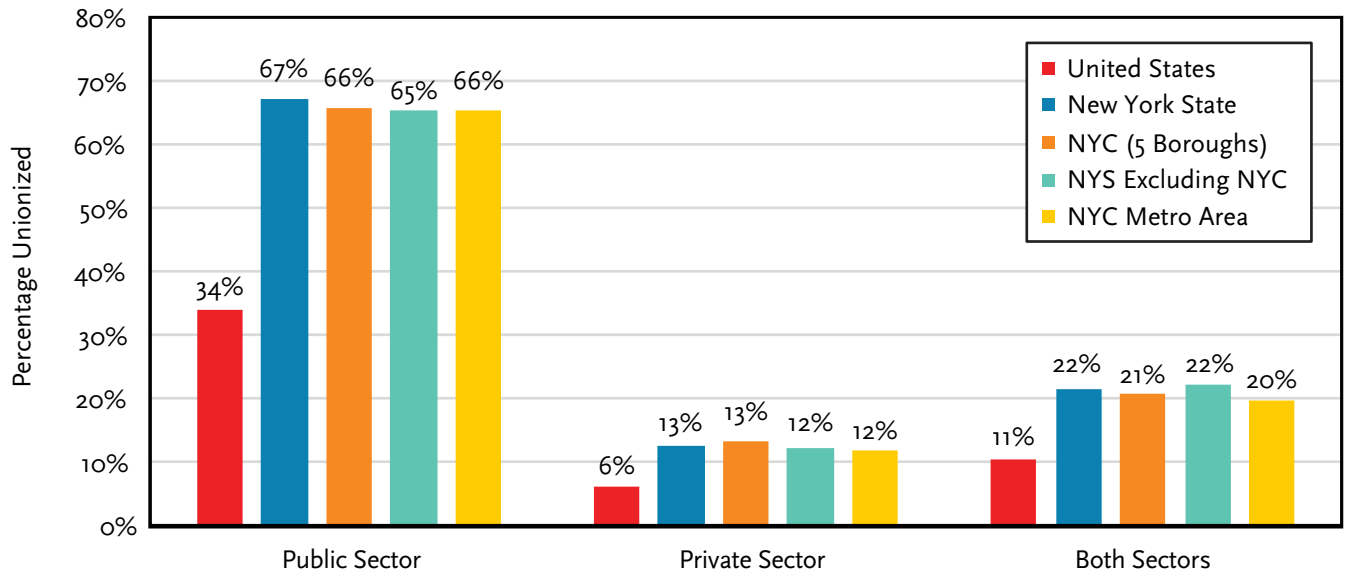
Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2001–June 2020.

FIGURE 1C. PUBLIC-SECTOR UNION DENSITY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2001–2020



Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2001–June 2020.

FIGURE 2. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE AND THE UNITED STATES, 2019–20



Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NEW YORK CITY WORKERS AND UNION MEMBERS

The 2020 pandemic has had a devastating impact on labor markets worldwide, and New York is no exception. Indeed, New York City was the national epicenter in the early phases of the pandemic. Its high population density, extensive reliance on public transportation, high rates of poverty and poor access to health care made it especially vulnerable. The initial delays before government officials issued stay-at-home orders and mandated other social distancing measures, as well as the limited availability of testing, compounded these problems.¹

In June 2020 the official unemployment rate in New York City reached 20.4 percent, higher than any time since the 1930s—and the actual jobless rate may well have been still greater. Private-sector workers were far more likely than public-sector workers to be laid off or furloughed as a result of the pandemic, and the city’s low-wage workers were especially hard hit.² (By June there had been a partial recovery; job losses were at their peak in April.) Unemployment may still grow in the public sector in the coming months, if declining tax revenues and limited federal aid force public-sector agencies to cut their payrolls.³ A “second wave” of inflections could also generate new job losses in the private sector in the fall and winter of 2020.

In June 2020, the City had 758,400 fewer private-sector jobs than it did in June 2019. But the impact on workers varied widely across industries and sectors:

- Workers whose jobs are dependent on tourism suffered extensive layoffs and furloughs. Hotel and restaurant workers were especially hard hit, as were retail and entertainment industry workers. More than half of the private-sector job losses between June 2019 and June 2020 were in only two industry groups: “leisure and hospitality” (-278,900) and “trade, transportation and utilities” (-136,700). As the New York City Comptroller’s Office reported, between March 1 and July 10, 2020 alone, at least 2,800 small businesses closed permanently, including 1,289 restaurants and 844 retail businesses.⁴ The jobs lost in those businesses will not be restored in the foreseeable future.
- In contrast, some New York employers faced acute labor *shortages* as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Examples include hospitals, grocery stores, and delivery businesses.⁵ “Essential” workers in those sectors were at notoriously high risk of on-the-job exposure to the virus, especially in the early phases of the pandemic when personal protective equipment was in short supply.
- The jobs least impacted were those that could easily transition to being performed remotely, so that workers could remain employed while working from their homes. This was

See p. 23 for the endnotes to this section.

the case for many administrative workers, professionals, business service workers, as well as teachers. But these workers often faced other challenges, such as trying to work at home while also attending to the needs of children whose schools or child care were closed. For this group, however, the risk of infection was relatively low, once the schools were shut down; most also continued to receive their normal incomes.

Union members were among those affected in all three of these categories. Unionized hotel workers faced dramatic layoffs, for example. Hospital workers were in great demand and faced enormous on-the-job health risks. Most unionized teachers and white-collar city and state employees transitioned to remote work, and thus were minimally impacted.

Union members are less fearful of speaking out about workplace health and safety concerns than workers without union protections, who risk their jobs if they do so. New York City teachers, whose union leaders—and the threat of a mass sickout among rank-and-file teachers—insisted that the city’s schools close sooner than the Mayor would have preferred, played a key role in closing the schools in the spring. Contrast that to the immediate firing of a worker at Amazon’s giant warehouse in Staten Island—where management has intransigently opposed unionization efforts—when he protested the lack of health and safety protections there.⁶

Union members are far more likely than their non-union counterparts to have health insurance coverage and paid sick leave, which means that those who did contract the virus were seldom forced to choose between their jobs and taking care of their health and that of their family members. New York City’s paid sick leave law provides most nonunion workers with up to five paid sick days, and that measure was supplemented by state and federal measures making additional paid sick leave available to many workers during the pandemic emergency.⁷ Still, workers’ limited awareness of these protections and concerns about enforcement led many nonunion workers to be justifiably fearful of losing their jobs if they took time off due to their own or a family member’s illness—and that fear was only intensified by the dramatic surge in unemployment during the pandemic. Union members have less reason to be fearful, at least initially. But those who have been subject to long-term pandemic-related layoffs are at risk of eventually losing their health insurance and other protections.

Table 1A shows the numbers of layoffs/furloughs, COVID-19 cases, and COVID-19 deaths reported by a selection of large labor unions in New York City as of July 2020. The data are far from comprehensive; some unions have not systematically collected such data or declined to make it available. Those

unions that did gather data were handicapped by inadequate testing and other challenges, so the figures in the table for cases and deaths are extremely conservative estimates. The two largest unions in the city, 1199SEIU and District Council 37 of AFSCME, provided data on layoffs (which were minimal in both cases) but did not report cases or deaths. If we exclude those two from the calculation, more than one in five (22 percent) of the union members listed in Table 1A suffered either layoffs or COVID-19 infections as a result of the pandemic. Hundreds of union members lost their lives while doing their jobs during the crisis, as the table also shows (and again, the estimates included are highly conservative ones).⁸

These numbers are nevertheless modest relative to the larger toll of COVID-19 cases and deaths among the working-age population of New York City. The City Department of Health estimates that about 6,000 residents aged 18–64 died from COVID-19 (among a total of about 23,600, the vast majority of whom were age 65 or over).⁹ Although unionized workers were less likely to lose their lives due to COVID-19 than the general workforce, for a few sectors and unions, the impact was devastating nevertheless, especially in light of the knowledge that better preparation and an earlier lockdown could have prevented so many infections and deaths. Some unions have created memorial pages to honor fallen members.¹⁰ Others have created funds to assist members who have lost work or suffered hardship due to the pandemic.¹¹

At this writing, the virus is at a low ebb in New York. But widespread fears of a “second wave” prior to a vaccine or effective treatment becoming available suggest that these issues may well re-emerge in the fall and winter of 2020. As more businesses reopen and with the prospect of schools

TABLE 1A. ESTIMATED LAYOFFS/FURLoughS, INFECTIONS AND DEATHS FROM COVID-19 AMONG MEMBERS OF SELECTED NEW YORK CITY UNIONS, JULY 2020

Union	Members ^a	Layoffs/ Furloughs	Infections	Deaths
1199SEIU	191,528	671	NA	NA
AFSCME DC 37	139,162	331	NA	NA
AFSCME Local 2507 ^b	4,549	0	1,700	7
Amalgamated Transit Union	14,723	12,000	450	29
American Postal Workers Union	7,909	0	NA	30
Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York ^{c, d}	24,000	8,680	832	44
CWA Local 1180	8,804	0	29	12
IATSE	21,544	19,390	NA	NA
NYC Police Benevolent Association	23,357	0	5,740	45
NY State Nurses Association	27,226	NA	6,808	29
PSC CUNY	23,312	2,800	NA	29
RWDSU Local 338 ^d	11,771	100	266	6
SEIU 32BJ	85,000	7,089	426	110
Taxi Workers Alliance	24,000	21,600	45	62
Teamsters Local 237	11,647	NA	NA	40
Teamsters Local 831	6,523	0	600	4
Transit Workers United Local 100	46,180	5,000	2,000	97
UFCW Local 1500 ^d	17,989	0	270	9
UNITE HERE Local 100 ^d	19,842	13,000	150	28
United Federation of Teachers	125,564	0	NA	67

a Membership data are from the same sources as those shown in the Appendix to this report.

b Local 2507 is part of DC 37, but shown separately because—unlike the larger District Council—it tracked deaths and infections among its members, who are Emergency Medical Technicians, paramedics, and fire inspectors.

c These data are based on a sample of building trades union locals.

d Membership data shown includes some members employed outside New York City.

resuming in-person instruction, concern is mounting among union and non-union workers alike. Workers and their unions are demanding that employers and government officials make much more extensive efforts to ensure their health and safety, by providing personal protective equipment, disinfectant and cleaning supplies, and access to testing, and by involving them in re-opening plans to ensure enforcement of social distancing and other protective measures.¹² Both the teachers’ and school principals’ unions have urged a delay in re-opening schools due to such concerns.¹³ This interim report on the pandemic’s impact on workers offers a snapshot of the first wave, and a warning about what may lie ahead.

except California, which has a far larger population. In 2019–20, there were about 695,000 union members residing in the five boroughs of New York City, accounting for 40.3 percent of all union members in the State.³

In recent decades, losses in union membership have been disproportionately concentrated in the private sector in the City, State and nation alike (see Figures 1b and 1c).⁴ After a period of stability from 2015 to 2017, the decline of private-sector density resumed in the City and State, although in the nation as a whole it has held steady, with only minor fluctuations. By contrast, in the public sector, union density has been relatively stable over time; indeed, despite the *Janus* decision it has increased slightly since 2018 in all three geographical jurisdictions (see Figure 1c).

Geographical Variation in Union Density

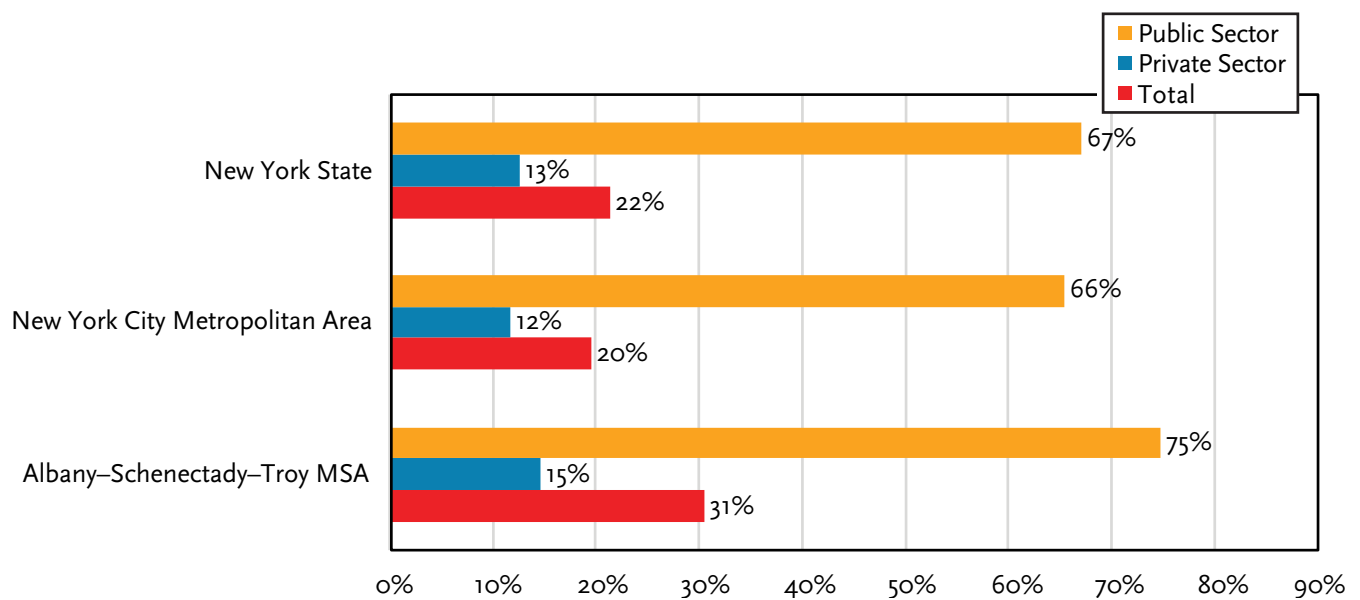
Figure 2 shows the 2019–20 private- and public-sector union density levels for the United States, New York State, New York City, upstate New York (excluding the five boroughs of New York City), and the larger New York City metropolitan “Combined Statistical

Area.”⁵ These are the five entities for which we present detailed data in this report.

By way of background, however, we begin with a brief look at some additional geographical areas. Figure 3 shows the 2019–20 density figures for the State, the New York City metropolitan area, and the second largest metropolitan area in the State, namely Albany-Schenectady-Troy.⁶ In all of these geographical entities, unionization levels were consistently higher in the public than in the private sector. In New York State public-sector density was 67.1 percent, nearly double the national average of 34.1 percent. The New York City metropolitan area had a slightly lower level of public-sector density (65.5 percent) than the state average, while the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area had a much higher one (74.8 percent).

Private-sector union density was lower across the board, but in this sector New York State had a 12.6 percent in 2019–20. Figure 3 shows the two metropolitan areas in the state for which data are available (the New York City and the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan areas). In the New York City metropolitan area

FIGURE 3. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK STATE AND SELECTED METROPOLITAN AREAS, 2019–20



Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

private-sector density was 11.7 percent, nearly double the national rate, whereas Albany-Schenectady-Troy had a substantially higher rate of 14.6 percent. The large public-private sector differential, combined with the fact that the Capital District has a disproportionate share of public-sector employment, helps to explain why overall union density is higher in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan area than in all the other areas shown in Figure 3.

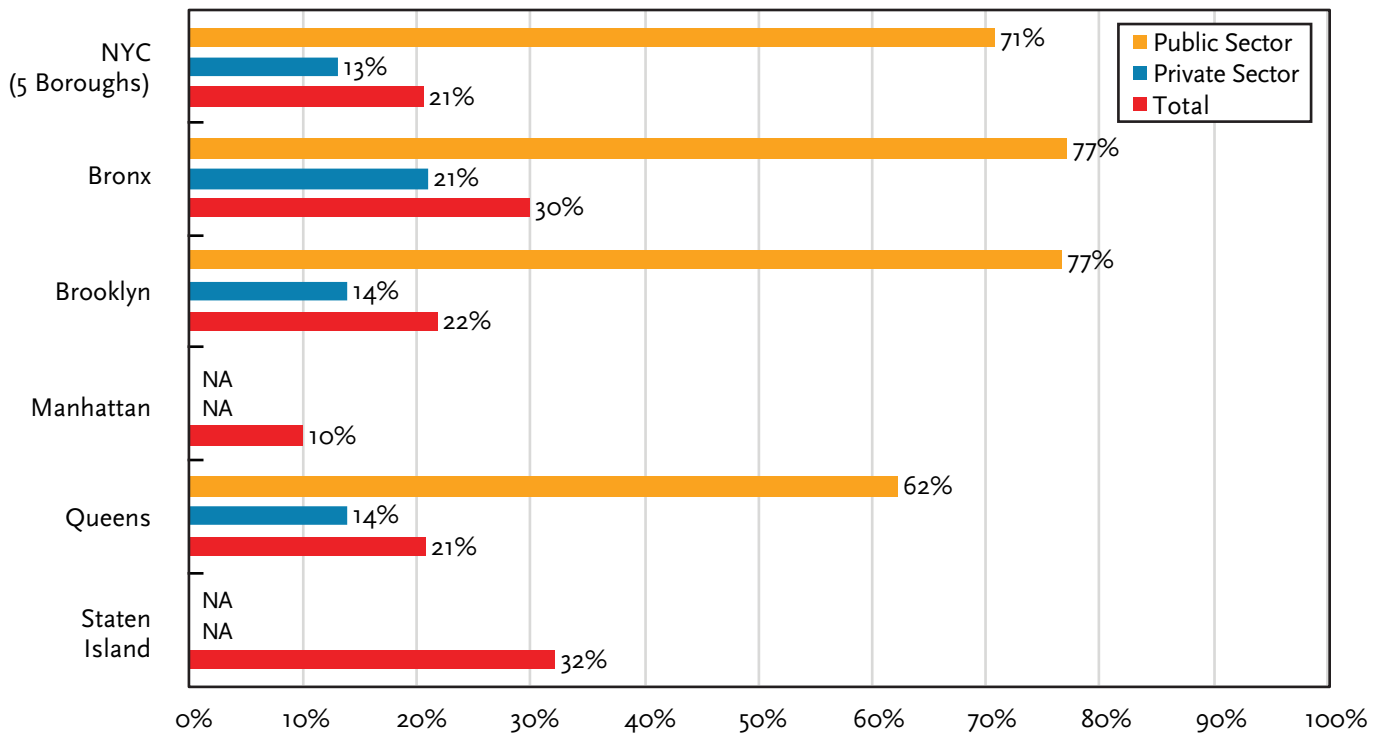
Within New York City, as Figure 4 shows, union density varies across the five boroughs, with substantially higher unionization levels among residents of the “outer boroughs” than among those living in Manhattan in 2019–20. (Unfortunately, the CPS sample size is too small to disaggregate the private- and public-sector rates in Manhattan and Staten Island.) The highest private-sector union density level among the other three boroughs is in the Bronx, followed by Brooklyn. In regard to the public sector, as

Figure 4 shows, public-sector density is slightly above the city-wide average in Brooklyn and the Bronx, while in Queens it is somewhat lower.

Union Membership by Age, Earnings, and Education

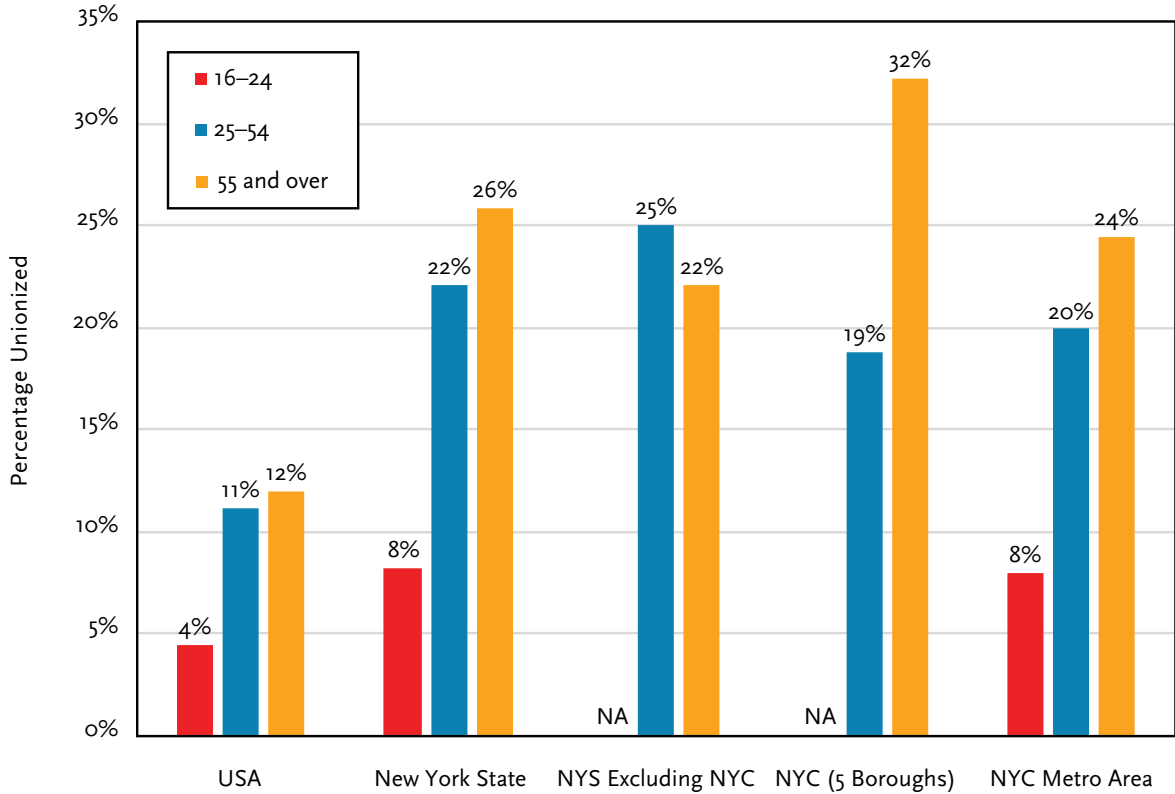
Unionization rates are much higher for older than younger workers. As Figure 5 shows, in all the geographical entities shown except for upstate New York, the rates are highest for workers aged 55 years or more, somewhat lower for those aged 25-54, and far lower for those aged 16-24. (In upstate New York the rate is highest for those 25-54 years old.) This pattern reflects the limited extent of union organizing among new labor market entrants. In addition, as Figure 6 shows, unionized jobs typically provide workers with higher wages than non-union jobs do. Higher wages, in turn, are strongly associated with lower turnover, skewing the unionized workforce to include a

FIGURE 4. UNION DENSITY BY SECTOR, NEW YORK CITY AND ITS BOROUGHS, 2019–20



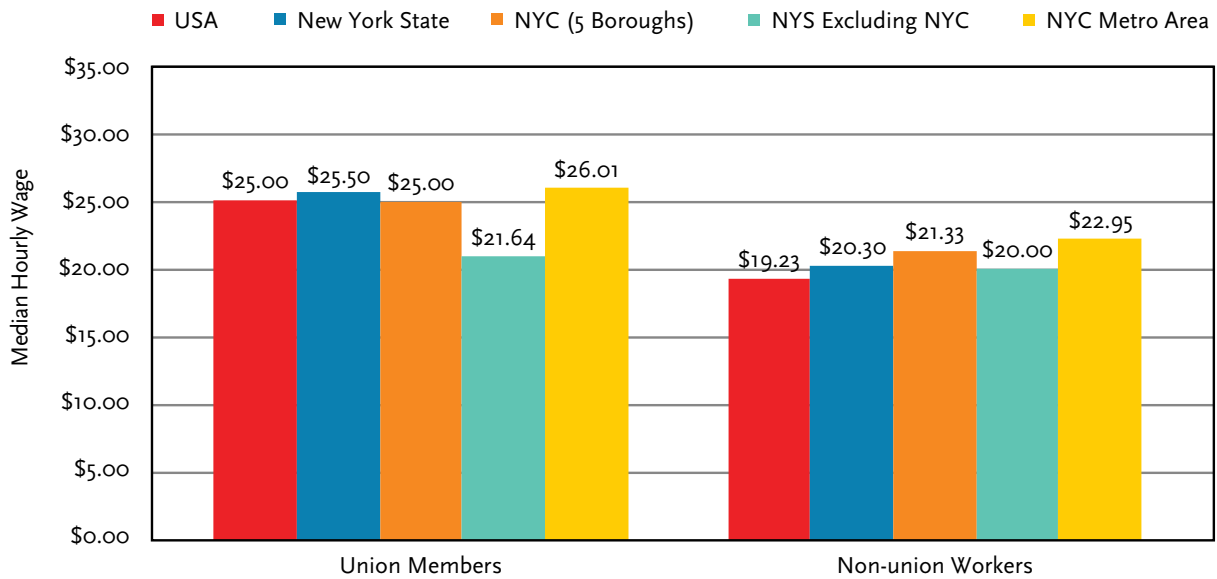
NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

FIGURE 5. UNIONIZATION RATES BY AGE, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

FIGURE 6. MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE, UNION MEMBERS AND NON-UNION WORKERS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



Figures reflect preliminary estimates, in 2020 dollars.
 Wages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

disproportionate share of older workers. In addition, unionized jobs typically offer more job security than nonunion jobs, further reducing turnover and thus further contributing to the relatively higher average age of unionized workers.

Figure 7 shows that—contrary to popular belief—in both upstate New York and the United States, the more education workers have, the higher their unionization rate tends to be. Decades ago, the archetypal union member was a blue-collar worker with limited formal education. In contrast, today mid-level professionals in fields like education and public administration are more likely to be unionized than virtually any other group of workers (as discussed further below).

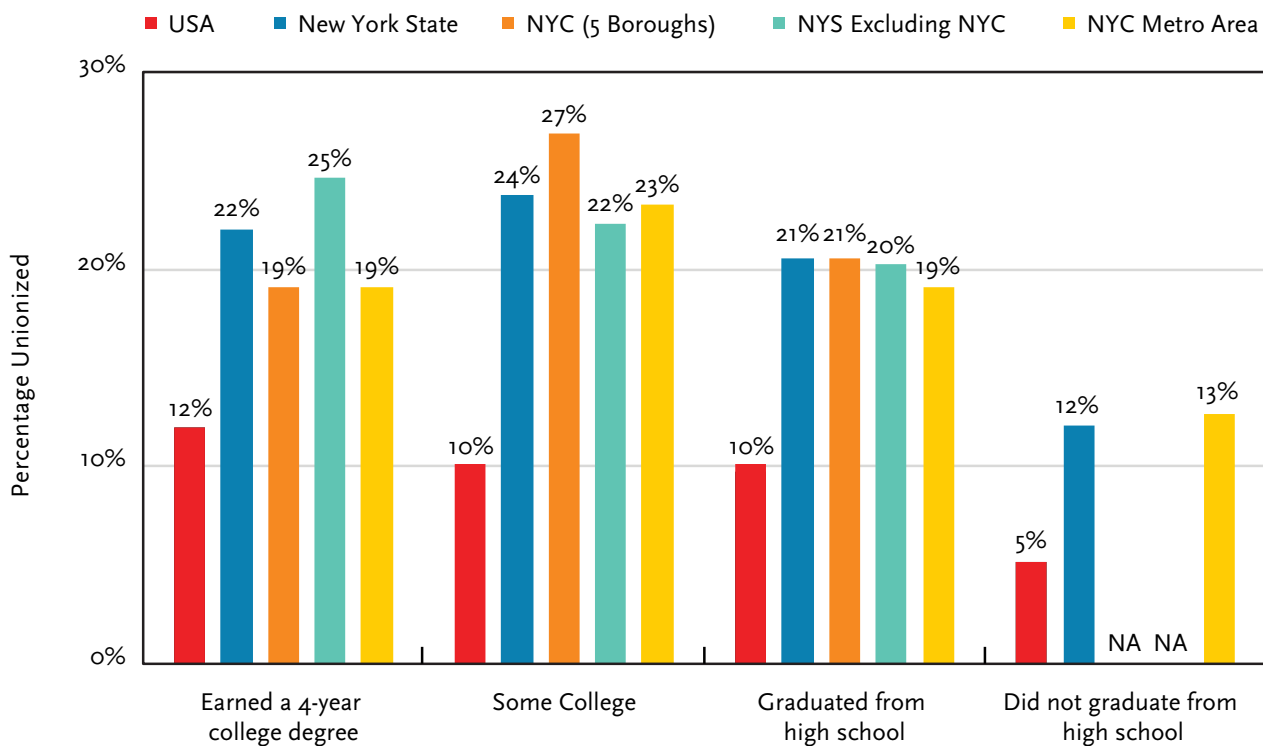
However, the traditional pattern is still in evidence in the five boroughs of New York City and in the New York City metropolitan area (and to a lesser extent in New York State as a whole). In all three of these

jurisdictions workers with some college (but not a four-year college degree) have higher unionization rates than college graduates do; in the five boroughs of New York City workers with no education beyond high school also have a higher unionization rate than college graduates (but below that of workers with some college, short of a four-year degree). This reflects the high union density of New York City’s transportation and health care industries (see below), both of which employ large numbers of workers with high school and two-year college degrees.

Industry Variation in Unionization Rates

In 2019–20 more than half (55.4 percent) of all unionized workers in the United States were in three basic industry groups: educational services, health care and social assistance, and public administration, as Table 1 shows. In New York City and State, those three industry groups account for an even larger

FIGURE 7. UNIONIZATION RATES BY EDUCATION, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

majority of all unionized workers (61.1 percent and 61.4 percent, respectively). All three of these industry groups include vast numbers of public-sector jobs (although in health care the majority of workers are in the private sector, as are about one-third of those in education). Moreover, in contrast to many traditional union strongholds, all three of these industries include relatively large numbers of college-educated workers.

As Table 1 also shows, the composition of union membership in New York City, and to a lesser degree in the state as well, deviates in other respects from the national pattern. Manufacturing accounts for a miniscule proportion of union membership in the five boroughs (so small that the sample size makes it impossible to specify a precise figure), and only 2.2 percent in the New York City metropolitan area as a whole. In contrast, finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE) and professional and business services account for a larger share of the total than is the case elsewhere in the nation.

Table 2 shows the composition of wage and salary employment by industry group for the same five geographical entities for which the composition of union membership is presented in Table 1. Comparing the two tables reveals that, for most industry groups, the share of union membership deviates greatly from the share of employment. Industry groups with high union density, such as educational services, or transportation and utilities, make up a much larger share of union membership than of employment. By contrast, wholesale and retail trade, and the leisure and hospitality industry group, account for a far more substantial share of employment than of union membership.

Figure 8 depicts the industry group data in a different format, showing unionization rates by industry (as opposed to the share of the unionized workforce in each industry group, as shown in Table 1) for the City, the metropolitan area, the State and the nation. Unionization rates vary widely across the eleven industry groups shown. In all four of the

TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF UNION MEMBERSHIP BY INDUSTRY GROUP, FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2019–20

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC (5 Boroughs)	NYC Metro Area
Construction	7.8%	6.6%	8.0%	4.5%	7.0%
Manufacturing	8.8%	2.9%	4.0%	NA	2.2%
Wholesale and retail trade	5.2%	3.0%	3.5%	2.4%	3.1%
Transportation and utilities	12.5%	11.0%	10.7%	11.5%	12.3%
Information services	1.8%	2.5%	NA	NA	3.2%
Finance, insurance and real estate	1.5%	3.1%	NA	5.3%	3.5%
Professional and business services	2.8%	3.2%	2.6%	4.0%	3.1%
Educational services	28.5%	29.1%	39.9%	23.4%	29.9%
Health care and social assistance	11.6%	19.0%	15.0%	24.1%	18.2%
Leisure and hospitality	2.6%	2.5%	NA	4.1%	2.5%
Other services	1.1%	1.0%	NA	1.4%	0.9%
Public administration	15.3%	16.0%	17.7%	13.6%	14.0%
TOTAL	99.6%	99.9%	101.4%	94.3%	100.0%
TOTAL of education, health and public admin	55.4%	64.1%	72.6%	61.1%	62.1%

NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.

NOTE: Totals may not sum due to rounding and missing data.

Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

TABLE 2: COMPOSITION OF WAGE AND SALARY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY GROUP, FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 2019–20

Industry Group	USA	New York State	NYS Excl. NYC	NYC (5 Boroughs)	NYC Metro Area
Construction	7.2%	6.8%	7.4%	6.0%	6.8%
Manufacturing	9.8%	5.3%	7.3%	2.7%	5.3%
Wholesale and retail trade	12.8%	10.7%	11.9%	9.0%	10.6%
Transportation and utilities	5.6%	6.0%	5.1%	7.2%	6.7%
Information services	1.8%	2.7%	1.8%	3.8%	3.0%
Finance, insurance and real estate	6.7%	8.4%	6.7%	10.8%	10.0%
Professional and business services	12.4%	12.8%	11.4%	14.7%	14.2%
Educational services	9.1%	11.4%	12.4%	10.0%	10.9%
Health care and social assistance	13.5%	16.2%	16.0%	16.4%	14.9%
Leisure and hospitality	9.7%	9.8%	8.9%	11.0%	8.7%
Other services	4.9%	4.7%	4.5%	5.0%	4.8%
Public administration	4.6%	4.6%	5.4%	3.5%	3.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

NOTE: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

geographic jurisdictions shown, education, public administration, and transportation and utilities are the most highly unionized industry groups. In New York City, the next most unionized industry group is health care and social assistance. By contrast, in the United States as a whole, the unionization rate for that industry group is only slightly above average. The other outstanding high-density industry group is construction, which has a higher unionization rate than health care and social assistance nationally, and one nearly as high in the New York metropolitan area. At the other extreme, union density is consistently low—in the single digits—in wholesale and retail trade, and in finance, insurance and real estate, regardless of geography.

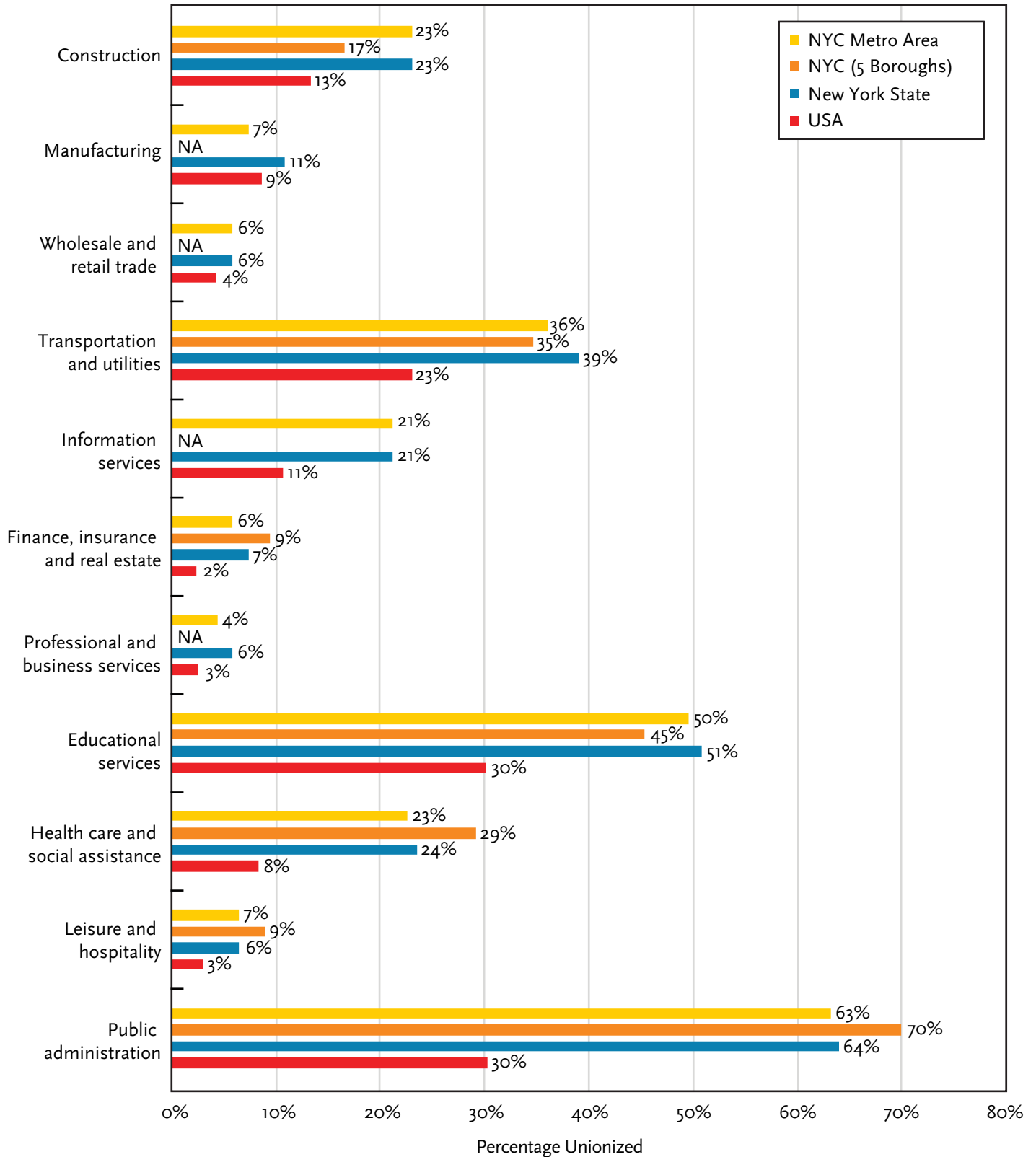
Because these industry group data are highly aggregated, however, they obscure the complexity of the City, State and nation’s extremely uneven patterns of unionization by industry. The limited sample size of the CPS restricts our ability to capture that complexity for 2019–20. For this reason, we created a different dataset that consolidates CPS data over a much longer period, the eleven and a half years from January

2009 to June 2020, inclusive. This 138-month blend provides a much larger sample size, permitting a far more disaggregated analysis of industry variations. Because of the longer time span represented in the data, however, the unionization rates derived from this dataset differ somewhat from those shown in Figure 8 for 2019–20.⁷

Table 3 summarizes the 2009–2020 data for 41 industry groups, showing unionization rates in the New York City metropolitan area, New York State, and the United States as a whole. For almost all of the industry groups shown, both the metropolitan area and the State had far higher union density than in the nation as a whole in this period. Two of the exceptions are residual categories: in “other transportation” the metropolitan area and the State have a lower density rate than the nation, while in “other manufacturing” the metropolitan area lags behind both the state and the nation as a whole. The same is true of food manufacturing, the one other exception.

In 13 of the 41 industries shown, 2009–2020 unionization rates were at least 25 percent in the New York City metropolitan area: utilities, construction, retail

FIGURE 8. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY GROUP, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

TABLE 3. UNIONIZATION RATES BY INDUSTRY, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES, 2009–2020

Industry	New York Metro	New York State	United States
TOTAL (All Industries)	21.0%	23.8%	11.2%
Agriculture and mining	NA	NA	3.6
Utilities	45.0	52.3	25.9
Construction	26.8	29.5	14.7
Food manufacturing	8.7	12.0	13.5
Textile and apparel manufacturing	NA	NA	3.0
Paper products and printing	NA	23.2	12.3
Other manufacturing	7.4	13.6	9.3
Wholesale grocery and beverages	16.0	16.6	8.9
Other wholesale trade	5.6	7.1	2.8
Retail grocery stores	25.0	20.4	15.8
Pharmacy and drug stores	9.1	9.5	4.6
Department and discount stores	7.4	6.5	2.6
Other retail trade	4.6	4.4	1.9
Air transportation	42.3	41.5	39.2
Truck transportation	15.8	20.2	9.1
Bus service and urban transit	59.0	63.1	39.7
Postal service (transportation)	74.5	77.0	64.9
Couriers and messengers	29.2	30.6	26.6
Other transportation	24.8	27.7	30.6
Newspaper, periodical and book publishing	6.7	8.2	4.8
Motion pictures and video	16.0	15.8	11.8
Radio, television and cable	13.8	16.5	6.8
Wired and other telecommunication	22.9	32.7	15.1
Other information services	29.2	25.5	17.4
Finance, insurance and real estate	7.9	9.4	2.6
Building and security services	14.8	16.8	4.9
Other management and professional services	3.5	5.5	2.0
Elementary and secondary schools	64.3	68.6	40.2
Other educational services	23.9	26.9	12.9
Offices of physicians and other health providers	4.7	6.2	2.5
Hospitals	37.2	39.9	13.9
Nursing care facilities	26.8	30.2	7.1
Home health care services	28.3	28.7	8.0
Child day care services	11.4	12.4	3.5
Other health care and social assistance	21.0	23.8	9.4
Performing arts, museums and sports	21.2	22.2	11.6
Amusement, gambling and recreation	7.2	6.2	5.0
Hotels and accommodation	24.0	21.8	7.5
Restaurants, food service & drinking places	3.4	3.0	1.4
Other services	6.4	7.4	3.0
Public administration	60.2	65.3	31.2

NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2009–June 2020.

grocery stores, air transportation, bus service and urban transit, postal service (transportation), couriers and messengers, “other information services,” elementary and secondary schools, hospitals, nursing care facilities, home health care services and public administration. With the exception of retail grocery stores, these industries also had rates at or above 25 percent in the State. “Other transportation,” as well as wired and other telecommunications, and “other educational services” were well above that threshold in the State (but not in the metropolitan area). In the case of air transportation and postal service transportation, these high unionization rates are the product of national-level collective bargaining, while for the other industries they reflect union strength in local and regional labor markets.

Union contracts may no longer set the wage standard for the New York workforce as a whole, but they often do so in key industries like hospitals, nursing care facilities and telecommunications, as well as in

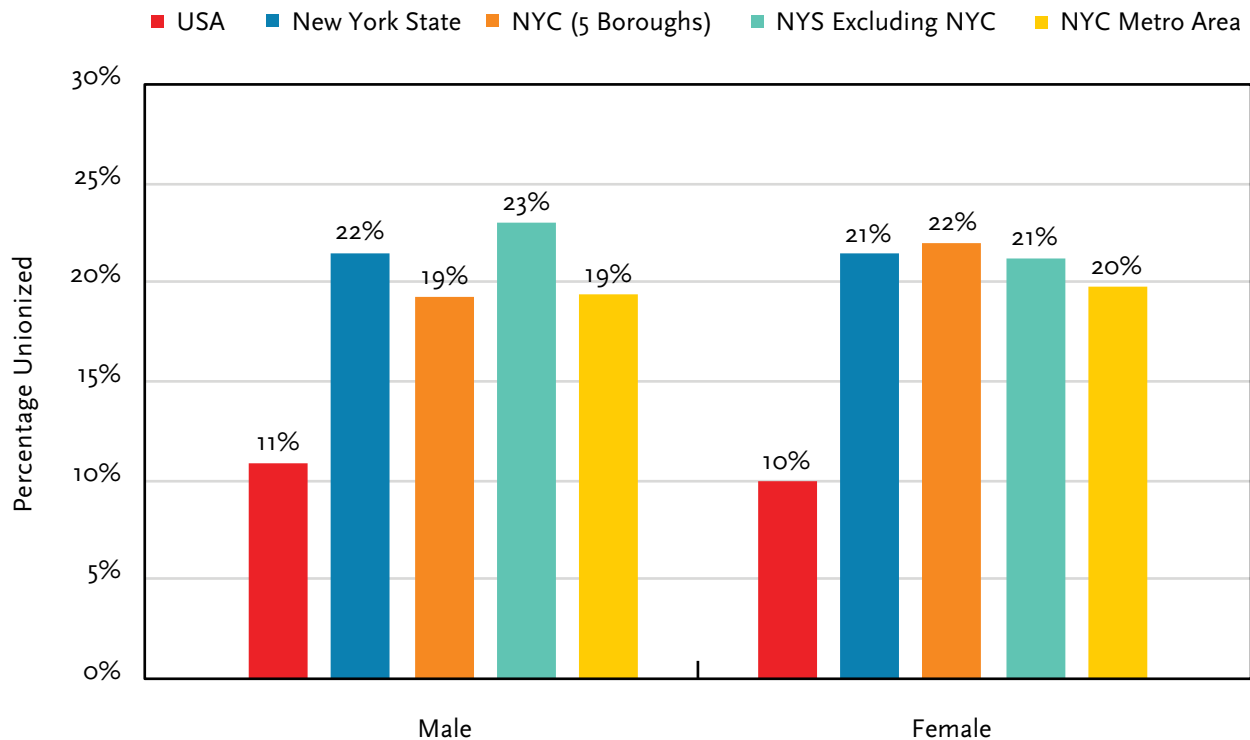
public-sector industries like transit, education, home health care (the unionized portion of which is publicly funded) and public administration.

That said, the portrait of industry-specific unionization rates shown in Table 3 fails to capture some important points of differentiation. A notable example is the differences among construction industry segments: commercial construction is far more unionized than its residential counterpart in the metropolitan area, the State and the nation alike.

Union Membership Demographics

The patterns of unionization by industry have a powerful effect on the demographics of unionism, because males and females, as well as workers of various racial and ethnic origins, are unevenly distributed across industries.⁸ For example, educational services, as well as health care and social assistance, both of which have very high unionization rates, rely disproportionately on female workers. This helps to

FIGURE 9. UNIONIZATION RATES BY GENDER, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

explain why the 2019–20 unionization rates for women in New York City and the New York metropolitan area were higher than that of men, as Figure 9 shows. The male unionization rate was slightly greater than that of females in 2019–20 in upstate New York and in the nation as a whole, but even in those jurisdictions the gender gap is relatively small by historical standards.

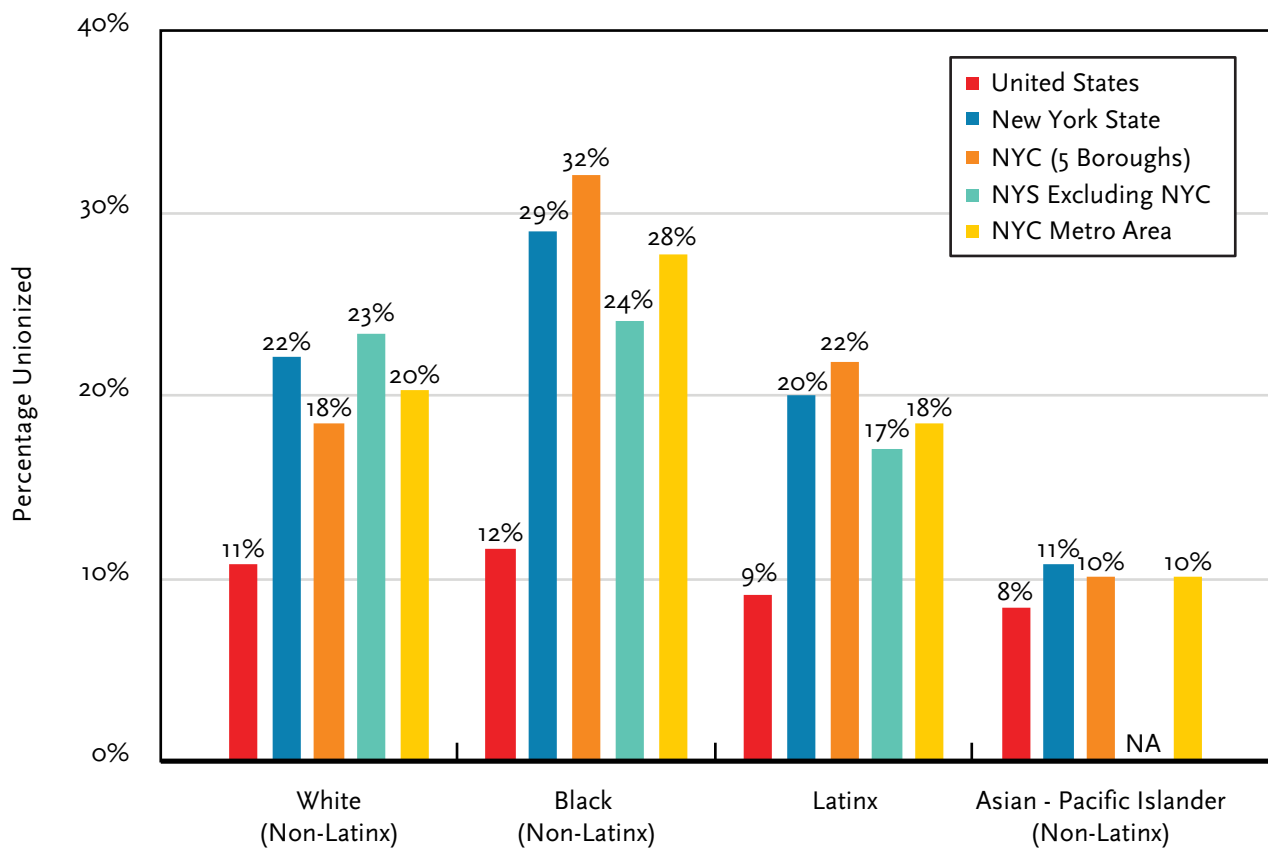
Unionization rates also vary by race and ethnicity, as Figure 10 shows. Like the gender dynamic, this too reflects differential racial and ethnic patterns of employment across industries. Blacks are the most highly unionized group across all five geographical entities, in large part reflecting their disproportionately high representation in public-sector employment. This effect is further amplified in New York City because of the size of the highly unionized transit sector, in

which Blacks are overrepresented. Although this is not the case for the other geographical areas shown in Figure 10, in New York City, Latinx workers had the second highest unionization rate among the racial/ethnic groups shown in 2019–20, higher than that of non-Latinx whites. In the other four jurisdictions shown, whites had a slightly higher unionization rate than their Latinx counterparts did.

Immigrants and Unionization

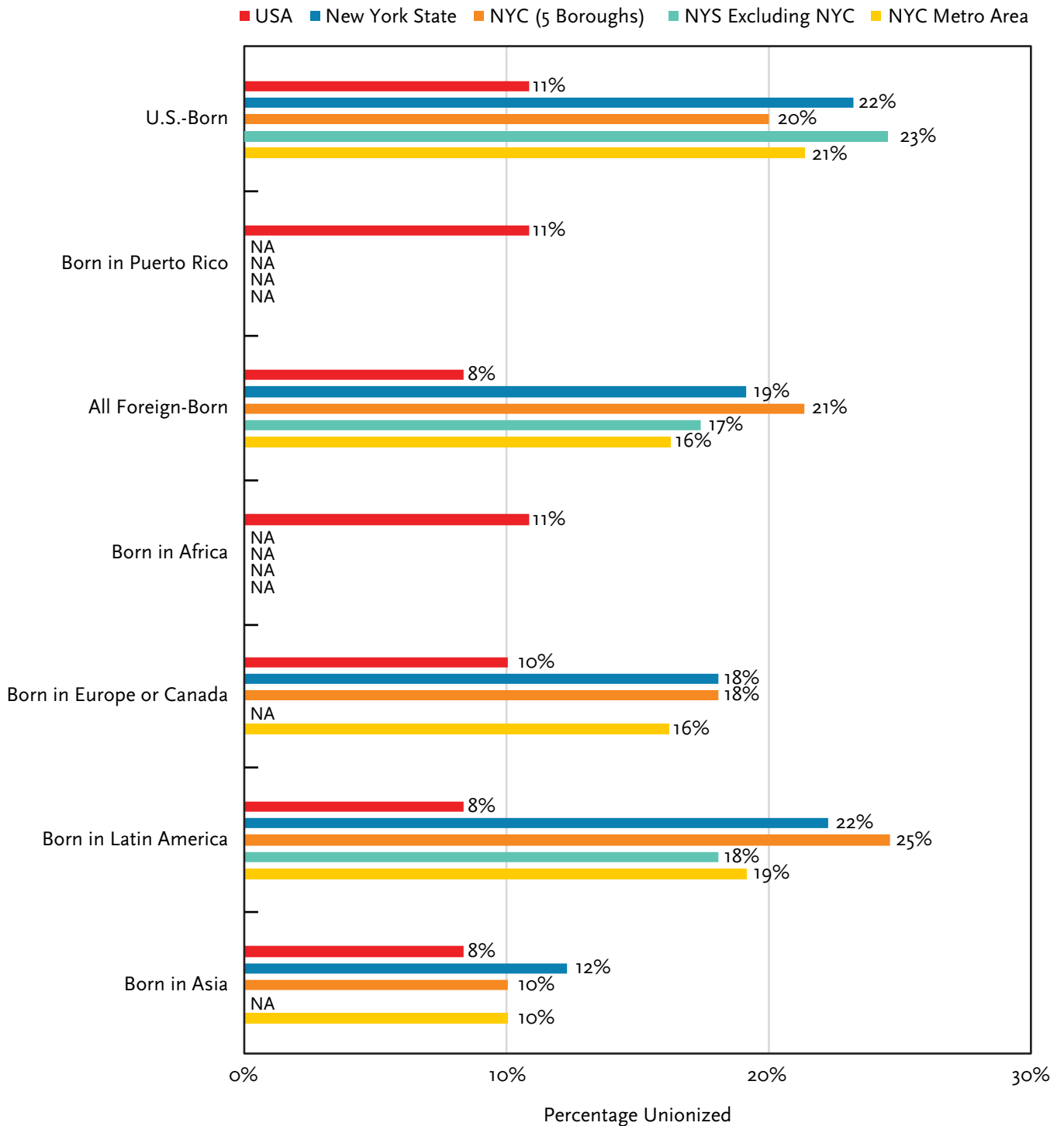
Unionization rates also vary with nativity, as Figure 11 shows. In 2019–20, foreign-born workers had a slightly higher unionization rate than U.S.-born workers in New York City, but the opposite was true in the other geographical areas shown, reflecting the fact that relatively few foreign-born workers are employed in the highly unionized public sector. New York City is

FIGURE 10. UNIONIZATION RATES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

FIGURE 11. UNIONIZATION RATES BY SELECTED PLACES OF BIRTH, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

different because it has a large concentration of immigrants who arrived in the United States decades ago; as discussed further below, foreign-born workers with longstanding residence in the United States are far more likely to be union members than recent arrivals.

More generally, as Figure 12 shows, foreign-born workers are by no means a homogenous group. The unionization rates of naturalized U.S. citizens and of immigrants who arrived in the United States before 1990, are higher than that of U.S.-born workers, regardless of geography, except that naturalized citizens have the same unionization rate as their U.S.-born counterparts in the New York City metropolitan area. Foreign-born non-citizens and recent immigrants, by contrast, have very low rates of unionization. Most recent immigrants are relatively young, and as noted above, few younger workers are union members, regardless of nativity. Moreover, the most recent immigrants are disproportionately likely to be employed in informal-sector jobs that tend to have very low unionization rates.⁹ Over time, however, these data suggest, many immigrant workers move up into sectors of the labor market where unions are present.

Figure 13 shows that unionization rates for foreign-born workers vary much less *within* the public and private sectors than between them. Even foreign-born workers who arrived in the U.S. during or after 1990, whose overall unionization rates are generally low (as Figure 12 shows), had 2019–20 public-sector unionization rates of 57.5 percent in New York State, 55.0 percent in the New York City metropolitan area, and 29.8 percent in the nation as a whole.

Relatively few noncitizens and recently arrived immigrants are employed in the public sector, however. Only 3.5 percent of all foreign-born noncitizens in the United States, and only 5.1 percent of all foreign-born workers who arrived in or after 1990, were in the public sector in 2019–20. By contrast, 9.4 percent of the nation’s U.S.-born workforce was in the public sector. Thus, the high level of public-sector unionization among noncitizen and recently arrived immigrants does little to boost their overall

unionization rate. And as the bottom half of Figure 13 shows, in the private sector, unionization rates are consistently lower for all groups, regardless of citizenship status or date of arrival.

Table 4 offers a closer look at patterns of immigrant unionization by national origin. Due to the limited sample size of the CPS, for this purpose we used the dataset (described above) that includes CPS data from January 2009 through June 2020. Table 4 presents unionization rates for immigrants from various countries and regions for that period, for foreign-born wage and salary workers living in the New York City metropolitan area, New York State and the nation.¹⁰ (It should be noted that because they are based on multiple years, the data in Table 4 differ from those shown in Figures 11, 12 and 13; since unionization declined between 2009 and 2020, the rates shown in Table 4 are consistently higher than the comparable rates in 2019–20).

Table 4 reveals that unionization rates vary widely among immigrants by place of birth. There are a number of reasons for this. One involves date of arrival; as Figure 12 shows, immigrants who have been in the United States for an extended period are more likely to be unionized than recent arrivals. Similarly, naturalized citizens are more likely to be unionized than non-citizen immigrants (as Figure 12 also shows). The case of Mexican immigrants is an extreme one in this respect; as recent arrivals—especially in New York—few of whom are citizens and many of whom are unauthorized.¹¹ In both New York State and the New York City metropolitan area, they have the lowest unionization rate of any group shown in Table 4 (but nationally, workers born in India have an even lower rate, likely reflecting the longstanding presence in the Southwest of Mexican-born workers, who have been able to move into unionized sectors over time). At the other end of the spectrum, workers born in the Philippines, Italy, or in the Caribbean are more likely to have arrived decades ago and to have become citizens.

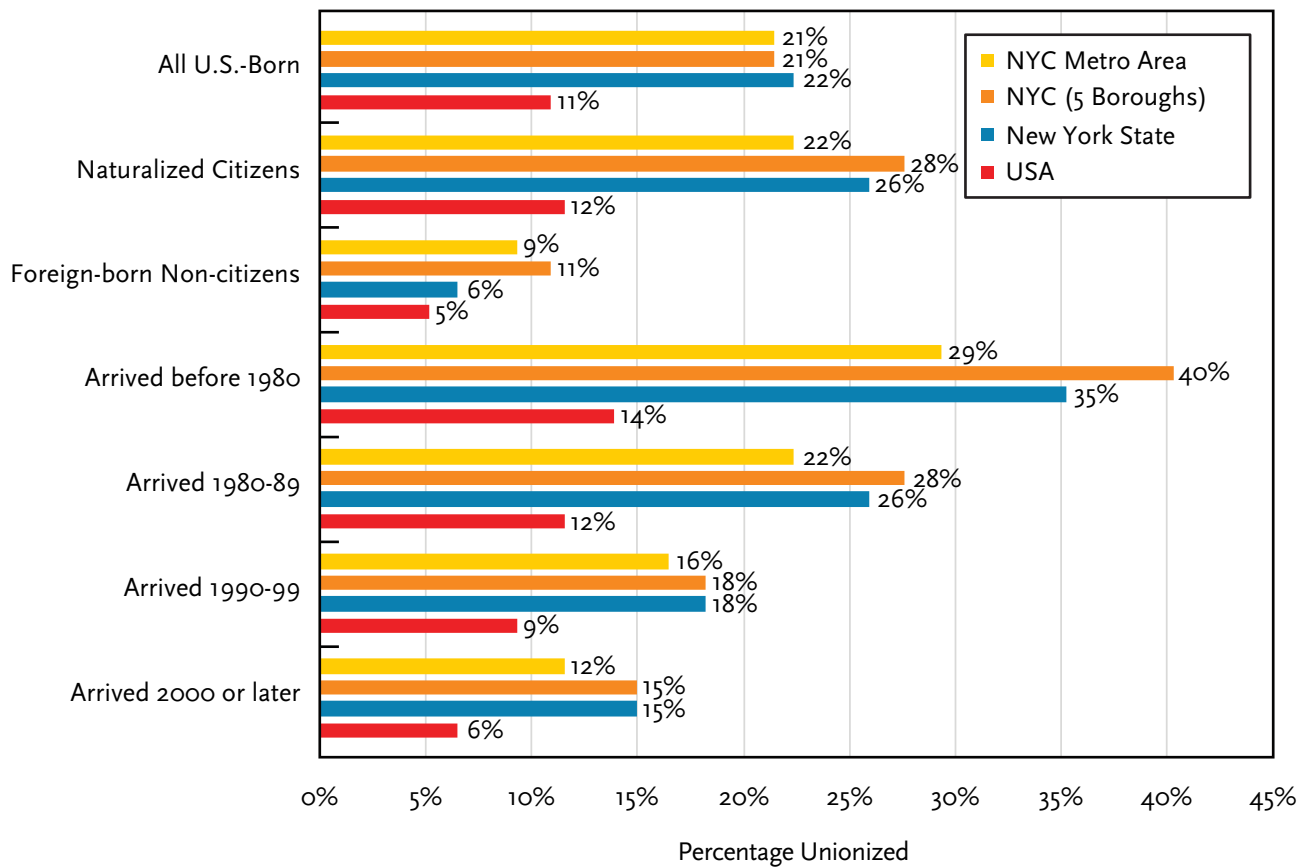
Notably, workers born in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico—a substantial population group in the New York

metropolitan area and the state, have higher unionization rates in those jurisdictions than mainland U.S.-born workers.¹² African immigrants (especially those from Ghana) also have very high unionization rates, reflecting their disproportionately high levels of educational attainment and authorized status, which combine to offer them access to jobs in highly unionized sectors like health care.

It is striking that several of the immigrant nationalities shown in Table 4 have unionization rates that exceed those of U.S.-born workers. In the New York City metropolitan area, that is the case for those born in Italy, the Philippines, Barbados, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, “other Caribbean,” Guyana and Ghana. Immigrant workers from all of these

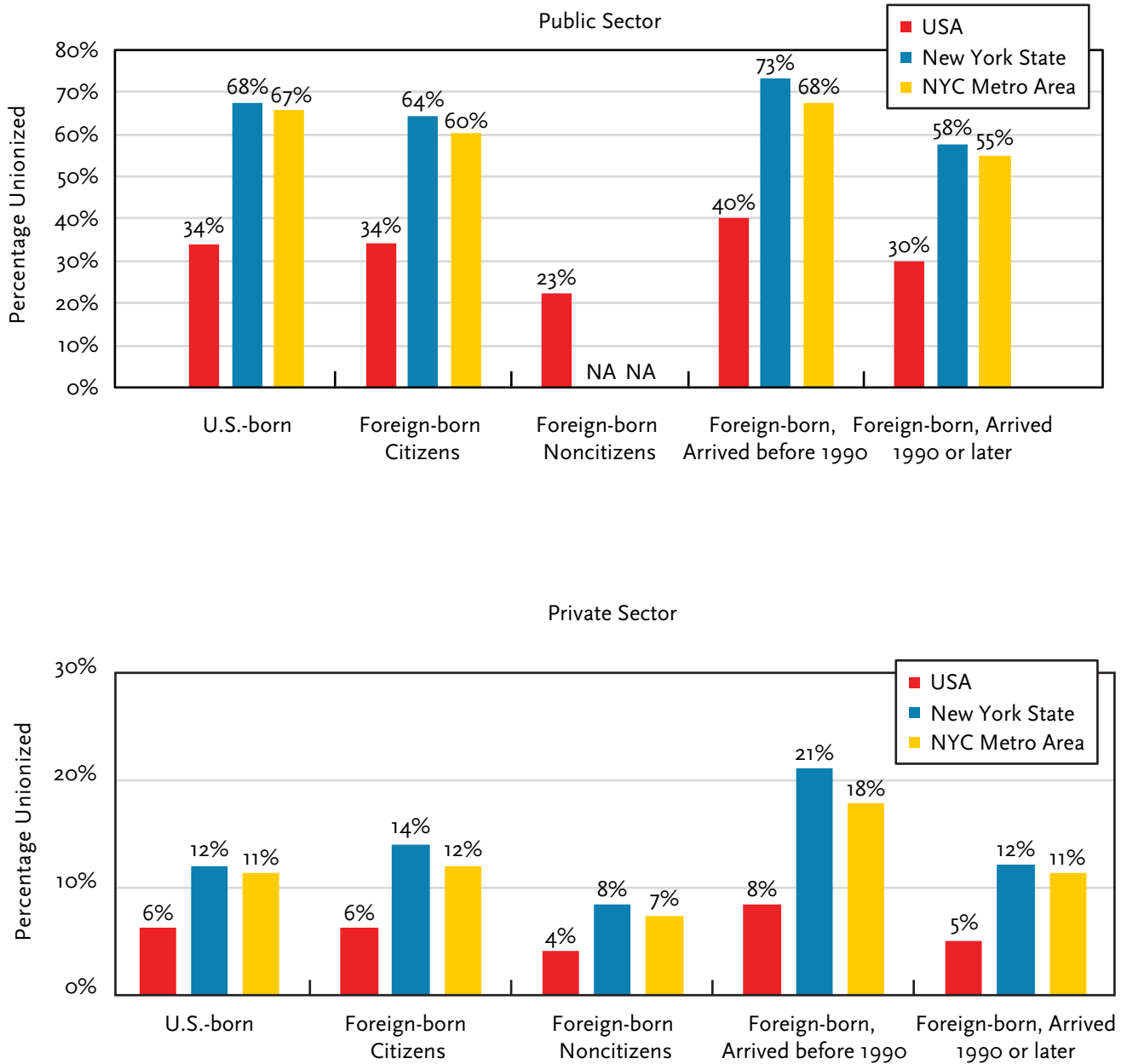
countries tend to be overrepresented in highly unionized industries. For example, 46.8 percent of Filipino immigrants, 40.0 percent of the Haitian-born, 42.2 of the Jamaican-born, 28.2 of the Trinidadians, and 27.8 percent of the Guyana-born workers in the New York City metropolitan area are employed in the highly unionized health care and social assistance group; by contrast, that industry group employs only 13.9 percent of the metropolitan area’s U.S.-born workers. Similar, immigrants from the Dominican Republic, Columbia, Haiti, as well as “other Africa,” are overrepresented in the highly unionized transportation industry, which helps account for their overall high unionization rates. The specifics are a bit different for immigrants in New York State and in the nation

FIGURE 12. UNIONIZATION RATES BY NATIVITY, CITIZENSHIP STATUS, AND DATE OF ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text. Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020. Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

FIGURE 13. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONIZATION BY NATIVITY, CITIZENSHIP STATUS AND DATE OF ARRIVAL, UNITED STATES, NEW YORK STATE, AND NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA, 2019–20



NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
 Percentages shown for 2019–20 include the 18 months from January 2019 to June 2020.
 Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2019–June 2020.

**TABLE 4. UNIONIZATION RATES FOR FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS BY PLACE OF BIRTH,
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK STATE, AND THE UNITED STATES, 2009–2020**

	Place of Birth	New York Metro	New York State	USA
EUROPE	Italy	27.1%	29.8%	16.2%
	Great Britain and Ireland	12.6	14.3	8.5
	Other Western Europe	14.4	15.8	10.2
	Russia	17.2	18.2	8.9
	Poland	17.1	17.6	13.1
	Ukraine	19.6	22.2	12.6
	Other Eastern Europe	16.6	18.2	9.8
ASIA	Middle East	11.3	11.4	8.4
	China (including Hong Kong)	7.9	9.0	7.3
	Bangladesh	15.5	15.7	9.3
	India	10.7	19.1	5.3
	Pakistan	13.7	16.1	7.4
	Philippines	23.8	31.5	16.4
	Korea	7.0	NA	7.8
	Other Southeast Asia	12.7	11.3	8.7
	Other Asia	9.5	12.1	8.3
LATIN AMERICA	Mexico	5.7	6.7	6.2
	El Salvador	8.7	10.5	7.8
	Honduras	15.6	18.8	5.3
	Other Central America	15.0	21.2	7.0
	Barbados	41.1	40.1	28.6
	Dominican Republic	22.3	26.7	16.4
	Haiti	32.9	35.7	14.9
	Jamaica	33.7	37.0	19.1
	Trinidad and Tobago	30.0	32.2	19.4
	Other Caribbean	27.8	32.2	8.6
	Columbia	19.8	23.0	10.5
	Ecuador	14.1	16.5	11.5
	Guyana	28.6	30.6	22.6
	Other South America	12.7	15.6	7.2
AFRICA	Ghana	36.2	40.2	16.1
	Other Africa	20.2	25.5	10.6
	Other foreign-born	13.8	16.6	10.1
	U.S. (except Puerto Rico)	22.8	24.9	11.7
	Puerto Rico	31.2	35.0	13.6

NA = Sample size is insufficient to generate reliable estimates. See footnote 1 in the text.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, Jan. 2009–June 2020.

as a whole, but in those jurisdictions too, the varying unionization rates among the groups shown in Table 4 are closely correlated with their distribution across industries, which have a wide range of union density levels (see Figure 8 and Table 3), depending on such factors as dates of arrival and citizenship status.

Conclusion

Actively recruiting new members into the ranks of the labor movement, as many dedicated labor organizers have sought to do in recent years, is the primary means by which unions themselves can act to increase the unionization level. Indeed, this is one key counterweight to the downward trend in organized labor's influence. Yet many factors that the labor movement cannot control also critically influence the level of union density. All else equal, if employment declines in a highly unionized sector of the economy or expands in a non-union (or weakly unionized) sector, union density will fall. The best-known example of this is the steady decline of manufacturing, a former union stronghold, over the past few decades, along with the expansion of private-sector service industries where unions have historically been weak; indeed, these combined trends have been a major driver of the general erosion of union density. Conversely, if employment expands in a highly unionized sector or declines in a non-union or weakly unionized one, the overall level of density will increase. Privatization and subcontracting, both of which often involve a shift from union to non-union status for affected workers, further complicate the picture in some settings. Over the long term, given the “churning” effects of employment shifts and (in non-recessionary periods) normal labor market growth and turnover, simply to maintain union density at a given level requires a great deal of new organizing; and to increase density requires far more extensive effort.

As we have seen, in recent years New York City and State's unionization levels have been far higher than in other parts of the nation—about double the national average. However, this was not the case in the

mid-20th century, when unionization was at its peak: In 1953, 34.4 percent of New York State's workers were unionized, only slightly above the 32.6 percent national level.¹³ Although since then organized labor has more than held its own in New York relative to the nation, in absolute terms unions have lost considerable ground in both the City and State over the past few decades, especially in the private sector. As recently as 1986, New York City's private-sector union density was 25.3 percent, nearly twelve percentage points above the 2019–20 level (13.1 percent) level, and statewide the figure was 24.0 percent as recently as 1983 (compared to 12.6 percent in 2019–20).¹⁴

As union strength in the private sector has declined, the ratio of public- to private-sector unionization in New York City and State has soared to record highs. In the City in particular, where the Great Recession accelerated the decline in private-sector density, that ratio is of serious concern. In labor's glory days, a strongly unionized private sector helped foster a social-democratic political culture in New York City.¹⁵ The decline in private-sector density is among the factors that have threatened to undermine that tradition in recent years. Although thus far public-sector density in the City has been preserved intact, even there (albeit to a much lesser extent than in the rest of the nation) public-sector unions have been increasingly on the political defensive in recent years. They were unable to negotiate new contracts for several years after the Great Recession; although that was remedied in the early years of the de Blasio administration, for years that impasse deprived most City workers of significant increases in compensation.

More generally, even taking into account New York City and State's unusually high union density levels—the highest of any major U.S. city and the second-highest of any state—this is a difficult period for organized labor. Still, for the time being, unions continue to offer substantial protection to a diverse population of workers in the City and State, including teachers and other professionals, as well as large numbers of women, racial-ethnic minorities, and immigrants in both professional and nonprofessional jobs.

Notes

1. This report (apart from the Appendix) is based on analysis of the U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS) Outgoing Rotation Group data for 2019 and the first six months of 2020. We created a merged data set from the 18 monthly surveys conducted from January 2019 to June 2020, inclusive; the 2019–20 data discussed here and shown in the figures and tables below are the averages for those 18 months. All results are calculated using the CPS unrevised sampling weights, for employed civilian wage and salary workers aged 16 and over. We followed the sample definition and weighting procedures described in Barry T. Hirsch and David A. Macpherson, *Union Membership and Earnings Data Book* (Washington D.C., 2019). See also unionstats.com which Hirsch and Macpherson update annually (unlike the *Data Book* which was discontinued after 2019). To ensure reliability, given the limitations of the CPS dataset, we report unionization rates only for subgroups that have a minimum of 100 observations, unless otherwise noted. Rates for subgroups that fall below this threshold are labeled NA (not available). The New York City figures for earlier years are from our September 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 reports, based on CPS data for January 2009–June 2010, January 2010–June 2011, January 2011–June 2012, January 2012–June 2013, January 2013–June 2014, January 2014–June 2015, January 2015–June 2016, January 2016–June 2017, January 2017–June 2018, and January 2019–June 2020 respectively. Those earlier reports are available at <https://www.ruthmilkman.info/reports>

2. “Union density” denotes the proportion of all wage and salary workers who are union members in a region, occupation, or industry. For the state rankings, see unionstats.com

3. An estimated 695,343 union members resided in New York City’s five boroughs in 2019–20, while the statewide total is estimated at 1,725,866. The CPS data on which these estimates are based rely on respondents’ self-reports as to whether or not they are union members. (Respondents who indicate that they are not union members are also asked whether they are covered by a union contract, but the analysis in this report does not include those who replied affirmatively to that question.) It is important to note that all geographical data in the CPS (and in this report) refer to respondents’ place of residence—which often differs from the location of their workplaces. Since many workers commute from other areas to their jobs in the city, this makes the data for the five boroughs of New York City an imperfect approximation of the extent of unionization in

the city. Some sections of this report present data on union members residing in the wider New York metropolitan area, but that group includes many individuals who are employed outside New York City.

4. In January 2003, methodological changes were made in the CPS (for details, see <https://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/tp63rv.pdf>). As a result, the data shown in Figures 1a, 1b and 1c for 2003–2020 are not strictly comparable to those for 2001 and 2002.

5. Throughout this report, unless otherwise indicated, we use the term “New York metropolitan area” to denote the New York-Newark-Bridgeport NY-NJ-CT-PA Combined Statistical Area (CSA), based on the CSA definitions introduced in 2003. The New York-Newark-Bridgeport CSA includes the following counties (in addition to the five boroughs of New York City proper): Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Ulster and Westchester Counties, New York; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Union Counties, New Jersey; Litchfield, New Haven and Fairfield Counties, Connecticut. The CSA also includes Pike County, Pennsylvania, but that is not included in our dataset. For details, see <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Bulletin-20-01.pdf>

6. This is a “Metropolitan Statistical Area” based on the 2003 U.S. Census (OMB) area definitions.

7. Since unionization has declined somewhat since 2009 (see Figure 1a-c), the results of this analysis slightly overestimate the actual levels of density for each industry shown in Table 3.

8. Given the nation’s winner-take-all union representation system, and the fact that a relatively small proportion of present-day union membership is the product of recent organizing, the demographic makeup of union membership mainly reflects the demographic makeup of employment in highly unionized industries and sectors. Although unionized workers are more likely than their nonunion counterparts to express pro-union attitudes, this is typically a consequence rather than a cause of union affiliation. See Richard B. Freeman and Joel Rogers, *What Workers Want* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 68–77. Moreover, individual workers seldom have the opportunity to make independent decisions about union affiliation. Instead, unionization occurs when entire workplaces (or occasionally, entire industries) are organized, and once established, unionization in those workplaces tends to persist over time. Later, as a result of workforce turnover and de-unionization, strongly pro-union workers may be employed in non-union

settings, and workers with little enthusiasm for organized labor may find themselves employed in union shops.

9. Recent immigrants are also disproportionately employed in professional services nationally, although this is not the case for New York State or New York City.

10. Table 4 only includes nationalities for which there are 100 or more total observations, and at least 50 union members, in the 2009–20 dataset.

11. The CPS data do not include information on immigration status.

12. Puerto Ricans born on the U.S. mainland cannot be separately identified in the CPS data. Those born in Puerto Rico are likely to be older, all else equal, further contributing to their high unionization rate.

13. See Leo Troy, *Distribution of Union Membership among the States, 1939 and 1953* (National Bureau of

Economic Research, 1957), available at <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2688.pdf>. In 1939 the figures were 23.0 percent for New York State and 21.5 for the nation. Figures for New York City union membership levels during these years, unfortunately, are not available.

14. The 1986 private-sector figure is 25.3% for the New York PMSA (NYC's five boroughs as well as Putnam, Westchester and Rockland Counties). This and the 1983 statewide figure can be found at <http://unionstats.gsu.edu/> See also Gregory DeFreitas and Bhaswati Sengupta, "The State of New York Unions 2007," (Hofstra University Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy, 2007), which includes 1980s data, available at https://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/cld_stateofnyunions2007.pdf

15. See Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-Class New York* (New York: The New Press, 2000).

Notes for "The Impact of COVID-19 on New York City Workers and Union Members" (pp. 4-5)

Thanks to Joseph van Der Naald for his assistance with data collection for this section.

1 One expert estimated that the city's death rate could have been cut in half had social distancing gone into effect two weeks earlier. See <https://www.livescience.com/why-covid19-coronavirus-deaths-high-new-york.html>

2. See James A. Parrott and Lina Moe, "The Covid-19 New York City Economy Three Months In," June 29, 2020. <http://www.centrernyc.org/reports-briefs/2020/6/29/the-covid-19-new-york-city-economy-three-months-in-reopening-and-a-continuing-low-wage-worker-recession>

3. The Mayor of New York has already publicly warned that 22,000 city workers may be laid off in the fall. See Dana Rubinstein and Christina Goldbaum, "Pandemic May Force New York City to Lay Off 22,000 Workers," *New York Times*, June 24, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/nyregion/budget-layoffs-nyc-mta-coronavirus.html>

4 New York City Comptroller, "Save Main Street: A Crash Program to Help Save NYC Small Businesses," Aug. 2020. https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Save_Main_Street_8_5_20.pdf

5 However, some health care workers in upstate New York were furloughed during the pandemic. <https://www.nysna.org/blog/2020/05/05/nurses-rally-against-mvhs-staffing-cuts-during-covid-crisis>; and <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/us/politics/coronavirus-health-care-workers-layoffs.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/us/politics/coronavirus-health-care-workers-layoffs.html>

6 See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/15/new-york-city-coronavirus-schools-teachers> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/03/nyregion/coronavirus-nyc-chris-smalls-amazon.html>

7 <https://access.nyc.gov/programs/safe-and-sick-leave/>

8 The extent to which the cases and deaths shown in Table 1 involved on-the-job exposure to the virus is unknown.

9 These data include a few deaths that occurred after July 1. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-deaths.page>

10 For example: <http://www.twulocal100.org/memorial>; <https://www.nysna.org/memorial-fallen-nysna-nurses>; <https://ufthonors.uft.org/>; <http://teamsters.nyc/covid-memorial/>

11 For example: <https://www.afm47.org/press/covid19-relief/> and <https://www.unitehere100.org/wp-content/uploads/Hard-Times-2020-New-York-L100.pdf>

12 For example: http://www.twulocal100.org/sites/twulocal100.org/files/10-point_plan_new_final.pdf

13 Eliza Shapiro, "Can N.Y.C. Schools Open on Time?" *New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/nyregion/schools-reopen-nyc.html>

Appendix*

The table below, compiled from a variety of sources, indicates the number of members affiliated with individual unions with jurisdictions in New York City-based workplaces. Unlike the Current Population Survey (CPS) data that serve as the basis for the rest of this report, the membership data below indicate the number of unionized jobs located in New York City (some of which are performed by workers living outside the city) — whereas the CPS data indicate the number of City residents who are union members (some of whom work outside the city). Most of these data pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic and thus may not reflect unions’ loss of membership due to layoffs.

For a variety of reasons, the total number shown in the table is higher than the figure cited on page 6 of this report (695,000) for the estimated number of union members in New York City. Perhaps the most important factor here is that many union members who are employed in the City are commuters who live in the surrounding suburbs. In addition, some unions may inflate their membership numbers, and

unions with broader geographical jurisdictions do not always know precisely how many of their members are employed in the City. Moreover, many of the unions listed, especially those in sectors like construction and entertainment, have large numbers of members whose employment is irregular and for whom unemployment is common. Even when they are employed, workers in these sectors may oscillate between jobs in the City and jobs in other places. All these factors help account for the fact that the total shown in the table below is greater than the CPS estimate cited above. Another factor operates in the opposite direction: since the CPS is a household survey that relies on responses from individuals, it is likely to include numerous cases of unionized workers who are unaware of the fact that they are members of labor organizations, potentially leading to an undercount. (It is also possible that some individual respondents to the CPS believe they are union members when in fact they are not, but in all likelihood the greater error is in the opposite direction.)

*The data below were compiled from the most recent available LM-2/3/4 forms (in most cases from 2019) and other sources by Joseph van der Naald. Thanks to Ed Ott and Alex Gleason for assistance.

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Amalgamated Transit Union ^{a,c}	14,723
American Association of University Professors ^c	594
American Federation of Government Employees ^c	8,434
American Federation of Musicians ^b	7,068
American Federation of School Administrators — Council of Supervisory Associations	6,568
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees ^c	152,698
American Federation of Teachers ^{a, c} (includes 23,312 members of PSC-CUNY and 125,564 in the NYC UFT)	162,163
American Postal Workers Union	8,098
American Train Dispatchers Association	205
Anti-Defamation League Staff Association	139
Associated Actors and Artistes of America ^b (includes 19,392 members of Actors Equity Association; 778 members of the American Guild of Musical Artists; and 36,865 members of SAG-AFTRA)	57,280
Association of Surrogates and Supreme Court Reporters Within the City of New York ^a	307
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union ^c	1,346
Benefit Fund Staff Association	548
Brotherhood of Security Personnel	19
Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen	64
Building and Construction Trades Department ^b	150
Citywide Association of Law Assistants of the Civil, Criminal and Family Courts ^a	351

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
Civilian Technicians Association	19
Communication Workers of America ^{a, c}	24,884
Co-Op City Police Benevolent Association	79
Court Attorneys Association of the City of New York ^a	223
Faculty Interest Committee of Ethical Culture Fieldston School	285
Fordham Law School Bargaining Committee	80
Furniture Liquidators of New York	10
Graphic Artists Guild ^b	567
Hearst International Employees Association	79
Independent Association of Legal Workers	4
Independent Guard Union	7
Industrial Workers of the World	130
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees ^{b, c}	21,544
International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers ^b	7,804
International Association of Fire Fighters ^a	8,359
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers ^b	1,016
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers ^a	9,594
International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers ^{a, b}	8,879
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers ^b	599
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers ^b	27,528
International Brotherhood of Teamsters ^c	54,600
International Brotherhood of Trade Unions	91
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers	115
International Longshoremen's Association	1,949
International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots—Atlantic Maritime Group ^c	1,000
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers ^b	8,729
International Union of Elevator Constructors ^b	2,860
International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades ^b	36,348
International Union of Operating Engineers ^{a, b}	19,640
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades ^{a, b}	5,208
International Union of Police Associations ^a	116
Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center Staff Association	5
Laborers' International Union of North America ^b	20,882
League of International Federated Employees	909
Local One Security Officers	585
Major League Baseball Players Association ^c	85
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association ^a	134
Maritime Trades Department Port Council	25
Metal Trades Department ^b	17
MTA Commanding Officers Association ^a	23
Mount Sinai Pharmacy Association	110
National Air Traffic Controllers Association	156
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees	586
National Association of Letter Carriers	11,075
National Association of Transit Supervisors	5,190

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
National Basketball Players Association ^c	34
National Labor Relations Board Union	59
National Postal Mail Handlers Union ^c	1,412
National Treasury Employees Union	3,028
Neergaard Employees Association	9
New York Professional Nurses Union	1,271
New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association ^a	795
New York State Court Clerks Association ^a	1,539
New York State Court Officers Association ^a	1,524
New York State Federation of Physicians and Dentists	53
New York State Law Enforcement Officers Union ^a	27
New York State Nurses Association	27,226
Newspaper and Mail Deliverers Union	471
International Union of Allied Novelty and Production Workers	329
Office and Professional Employees International Union ^c	8,153
Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association ^b	1,138
Organization of Staff Analysts ^a	3,546
Organization of Union Representatives	10
Patrolmen's Benevolent Association ^a	23,357
Police Benevolent Association of New York State ^a	75
Police Benevolent Association of the New York State Troopers ^a	233
Postal and Federal Employees Alliance	362
Professional Association of Holy Cross High School	43
Professional Dieticians of New York City Presbyterian	46
Restaurant Workers Union 318	100
Safety Professionals of America	14
Service Employees International Union ^{a, c} (includes 184,303 NYC members in 1199SEIU ^c ; 85,000 members in SEIU Local 32B-J ^c ; and 10,100 members in Workers United ^c)	294,902
Special Patrolman Benevolent Association	80
Stage Directors and Choreographers ^{b, c}	892
St. John's Preparatory Teachers Association	32
Taxi Workers Alliance ^e	24,000
Transport Workers Union ^a	57,200
Uniformed Sanitation Chiefs Association ^a	78
Union of Automotive Technicians ^a	67
UNITE HERE ^d	45,738
United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters ^b	15,198
United Auto Workers ^c (includes 250 members of the National Writers Union ^e)	10,010
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners ^{b, c}	19,848
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union ^c (includes 12,296 members in the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union)	33,159
United Nations International School Staff Association	228
United Production Workers Union	2,319
United Steelworkers ^d	2,328

UNION NAME	Reported Membership
United Uniformed Workers of New York ^{a, f}	37,967
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers ^b	1,514
United University Professions ^a	2,991
Utility Workers Union of America ^c	8,348
Writers Guild of America ^b	2,979
TOTAL	1,337,615

a Under the Landrum-Griffin Act (1959) and Civil Service Reform Act (1978) private-sector, postal and federal employee unions are required to file LM-2/3/4 forms. Public-sector unions not covered by these Acts are not required to file such records; for them membership data were obtained directly from the unions, from the New York City Independent Budget Office (2020), or from a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request to the Office of the State Comptroller (2020), the Metropolitan Transit Authority (2020), or the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (2019).

b Data for these unions include some members working outside New York City. It is impossible to obtain precise data for those employed in the City, because the occupations they represent are not tied to stable workplaces; rather workers are hired for specific projects which are typically (but not always) located within the five boroughs. Therefore New York City data for these unions may be overstated.

c Membership figures for this union are available in LM2/3/4 forms. However, because the union's geographical jurisdiction extends beyond the five boroughs of New York City, the number reported here is based on data obtained directly from the union regarding its membership in the City.

d Precise membership estimates for one or more of the locals in this union are not available. The figures shown are likely to be inflated because they include some members employed outside New York City.

e This union has dues-paying members but does not currently have collective bargaining rights.

f This includes the following unions, some of which may have members working outside New York City: 5,555 members in the Detectives Endowment Association; 4,520 members in the Sergeants Benevolent Association; 1,706 members in the Lieutenants Benevolent Association, 8,291 members in the Correction Officers Benevolent Association, 6,523 members in the Sanitation Workers Local 831; 2,607 members in the Uniformed Fire Officers Association; 1,197 members in the Sanitation Officers Local 444; 113 members in the Assistant Deputy Wardens - Deputy Wardens Association; 749 members in the Captains Endowment Association; 803 members in the Correction Captains Association; 293 members in the NYC Detective Investigators Association; 1,166 members in the NYS Supreme Court Officers Association; 137 members in the Port Authority Detectives Endowment Association; 144 members in the Port Authority Lieutenants Benevolent Association; 2,203 members in the Port Authority Police Benevolent Association; 307 members in the Port Authority Sergeants Benevolent Association; 203 members in the Uniformed Fire Alarm Dispatchers Benevolent Association; 421 members in the Bridge and Tunnel Officers Benevolent Association; 876 members in the Police Benevolent Association MTA; and 153 members in the Superior Officers Benevolent Association - Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. The numbers for individual unions in the coalition were obtained from one of the following: the New York City Independent Budget Office, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Bridge and Tunnel Authority, the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, or the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Employee Payroll information directory in 2020.

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the above data are from the most recent LM-2, LM-3 and LM-4 forms that unions submit annually to the U.S. Department of Labor, available at <https://olms.dol-esa.gov/olpdr/>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

RUTH MILKMAN holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. She is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center and at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, where she chairs the Department of Labor Studies. Her most recent books are *On Labor, Gender and Inequality* (2016), *Immigrant Labor and the New Precariat* (2020), and the forthcoming *Immigration Matters* (2020, co-edited with Deepak Bhargava and Penny Lewis).

STEPHANIE LUCE holds an M.A. in Industrial Relations and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She is Professor of Labor Studies at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, and a member of the graduate faculty in Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her books include *Fighting for a Living Wage* (2004) and *Labor Movements: Global Perspectives* (2014).

ABOUT THE CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR AND URBAN STUDIES (SLU)

SLU was established in 2018, as an outgrowth of CUNY's Murphy Institute. The School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in Labor Studies and Urban Studies designed to meet the needs of working adults as well as traditional-age college students who seek to learn more about the challenges confronting poor and working class populations in the workplace and in the community. It also collaborates with other units of CUNY to offer a range of college-credit programs designed to give workers the academic and technical skills they need for professional advancement. Its faculty includes distinguished scholars in the social sciences as well as expert practitioners in government, labor, and public service. In addition to its academic programs, SLU sponsors research, organizes forums and conferences, and publishes the journal *New Labor Forum*.

