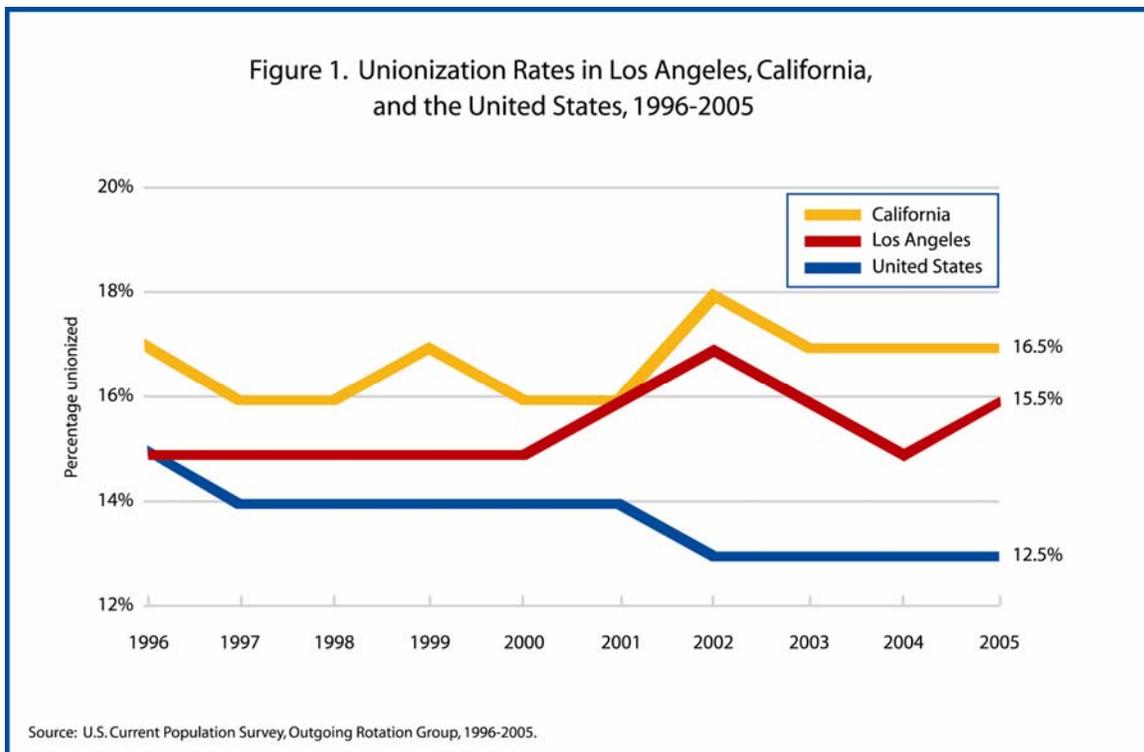


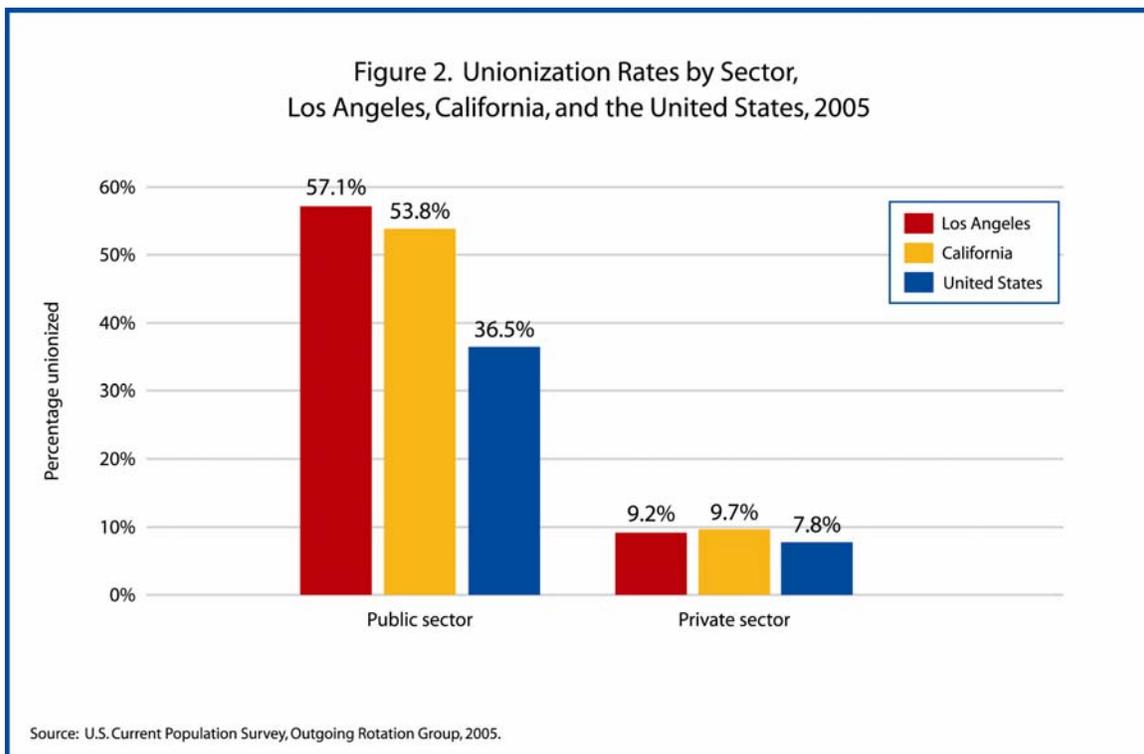
## UNION MEMBERSHIP IN 2005: DATA ON LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, AND THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

Over the past decade, the nation's unionization rate – the percentage of all employed wage and salary workers who are union members – has continued its relentless decline. In both the Los Angeles metropolitan area and in California, however, the unionization rate has held steady over this ten-year period, and it has even edged upward in some years, as Figure 1 shows. The rate in 2005 was 15.5% in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and 16.5% in California – in both cases well above the national average of 12.5%.



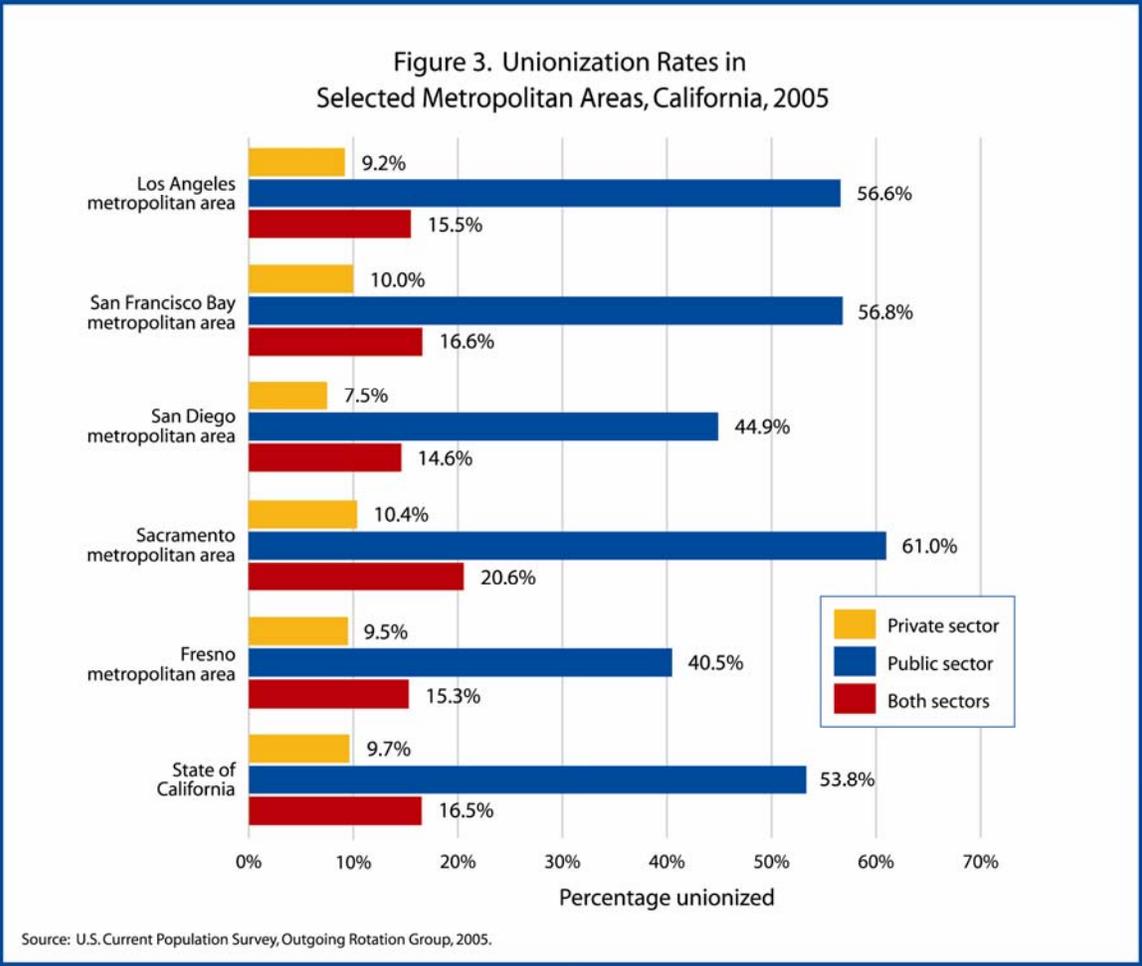
<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by Ruth Milkman and Bongoh Kye of the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations. It is based on our analysis of the U.S. Current Population Survey Data for 2005. We created a merged data set including data from all twelve monthly surveys conducted in 2005 using the Outgoing Rotation Group data. All results are calculated using the CPS unrevised sampling weights. The sample includes employed civilian wage and salary workers, age sixteen 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.: Bureau of National Affairs, 2006, 1–8). Special thanks to Rebecca Frazier, who constructed all the graphs in this report and edited the text.

Unionization rates are consistently higher in the public sector than in the private sector. As Figure 2 shows, public-sector unionism is especially strong in Los Angeles as well as in California: in 2005, well over half of all workers in the public sector were union members in both the Los Angeles area and the state. In the nation as a whole, the unionization rate for public-sector workers was 36.5%; this was much higher than the rate for the private sector, but well below the rates for public-sector workers in California and Los Angeles. Private-sector unionization in all three geographical units was much lower – indeed, in the single digits – but it was substantially greater in both California and Los Angeles than nationwide.



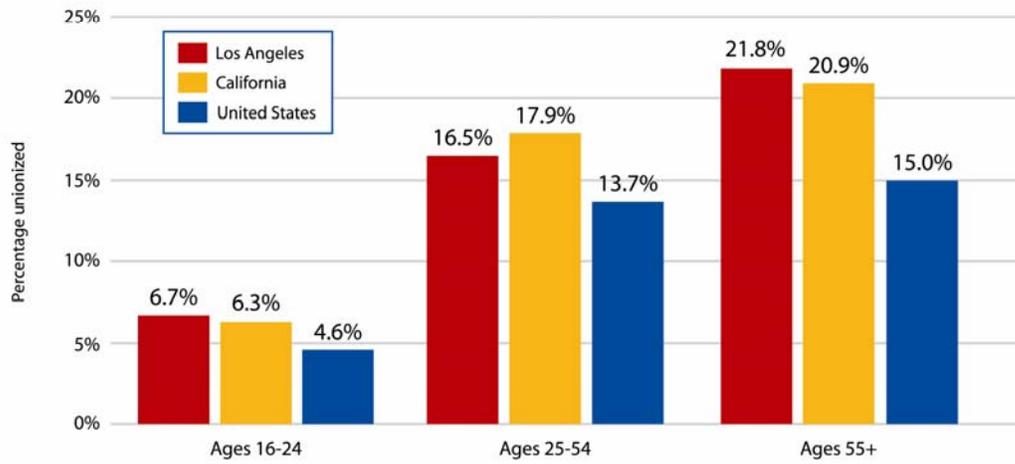
As Figure 3 shows, unionization rates in public and private sectors alike vary among California’s major metropolitan areas. Sacramento has an especially high rate of unionization in both the public and private sectors; in San Diego the opposite is true. Most unusual is the Fresno metropolitan area, where public-sector unionization is lower than in all the other areas shown in Figure 3, while private-sector unionization is only slightly below the state average.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Los Angeles Metropolitan Area as shown in Figure 3 includes Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, Ventura, and San Bernardino Counties; the San Francisco Bay Area includes San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara, Marin, San Mateo, Sonoma, Napa, Contra Costa, Solano, and Santa Cruz Counties; the San Diego Metropolitan Area includes San Diego County only; the Sacramento Metropolitan Area includes El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo Counties; and the Fresno Metropolitan Area includes Fresno and Madera Counties.



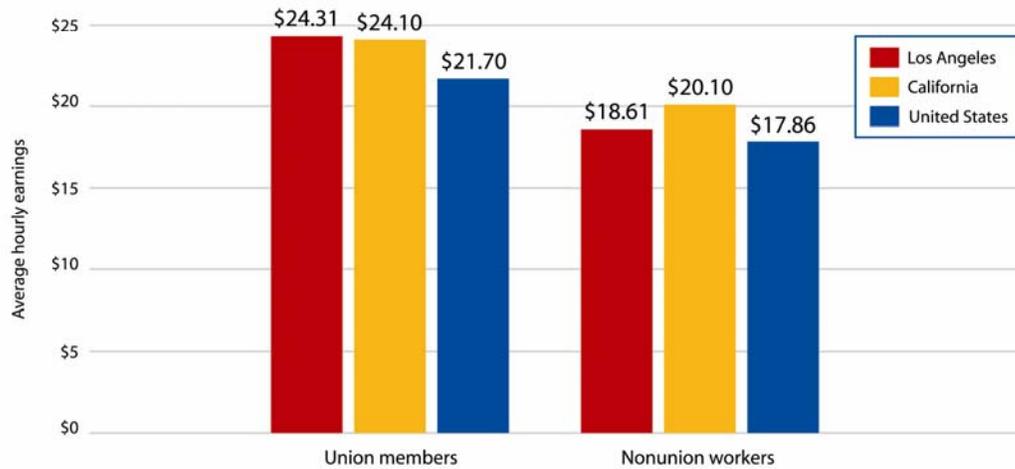
Unionization rates are highest for workers over 55 years old, as Figure 4 shows. They are extremely low among the youngest workers, those aged 16-24, a pattern that is consistent across the Los Angeles metropolitan area, the state of California, and the nation. This age variation reflects the fact that unionized jobs, on average, provide workers with substantially higher wages, as Figure 5 shows. Higher wages are typically associated with lower employee turnover, which generates an older workforce over time. In addition, unionized jobs generally offer more job security than nonunion jobs, which further reduces turnover and similarly leads to an increase in the average age of unionized workers.

Figure 4. Unionization Rates by Age, Los Angeles, California, and the United States, 2005



Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2005.

Figure 5. Earnings Differentials for Union Members and Nonunion Workers, Los Angeles, California, and the United States, 2005



Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2005.

Figure 6 shows that in Los Angeles, California, and the United States alike, the more education workers have, the higher their unionization rate is. Whereas decades ago the archetypal union member was a blue collar worker, today mid-level professionals are much more likely than anyone else to be unionized, especially in sectors like educational services and public administration. As Table 1 shows, workers in the educational services industry group alone make up over one-quarter of all unionized workers in the Los Angeles area, the state, and the nation; similarly, public administration accounts for over one-eighth of union members in all three jurisdictions. Both of these industry groups include relatively large numbers of college-educated workers, and, as Figure 7 shows, they have the highest unionization rates of the industry groups shown.

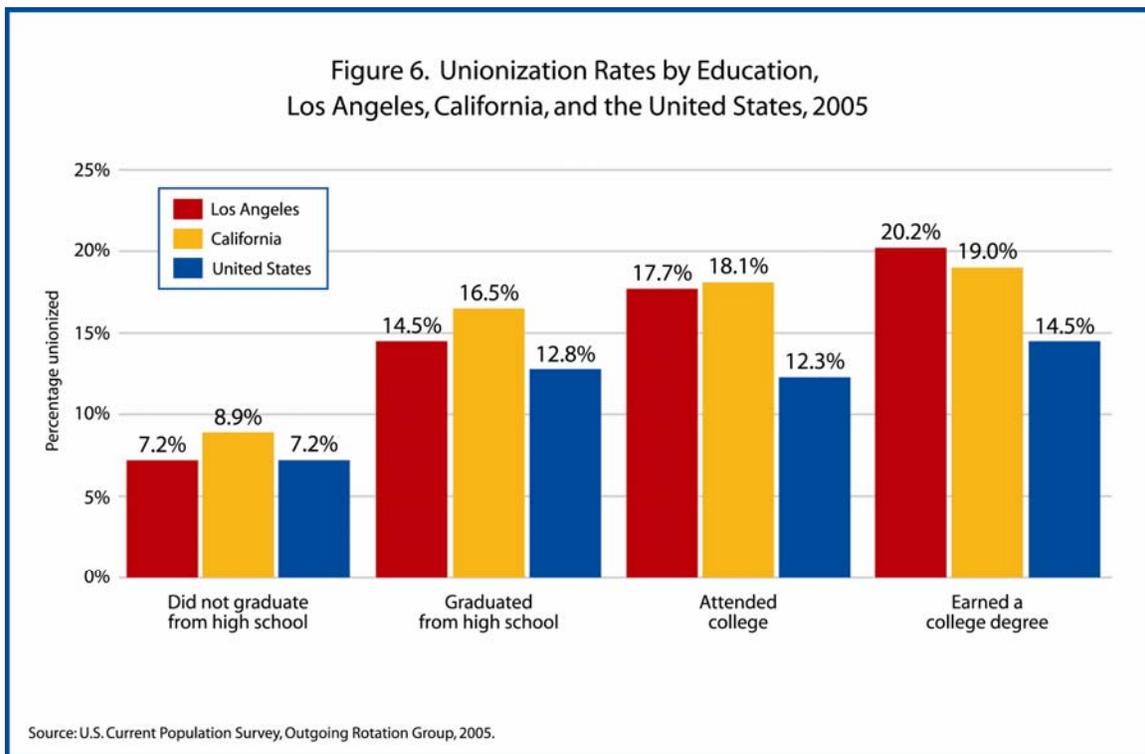
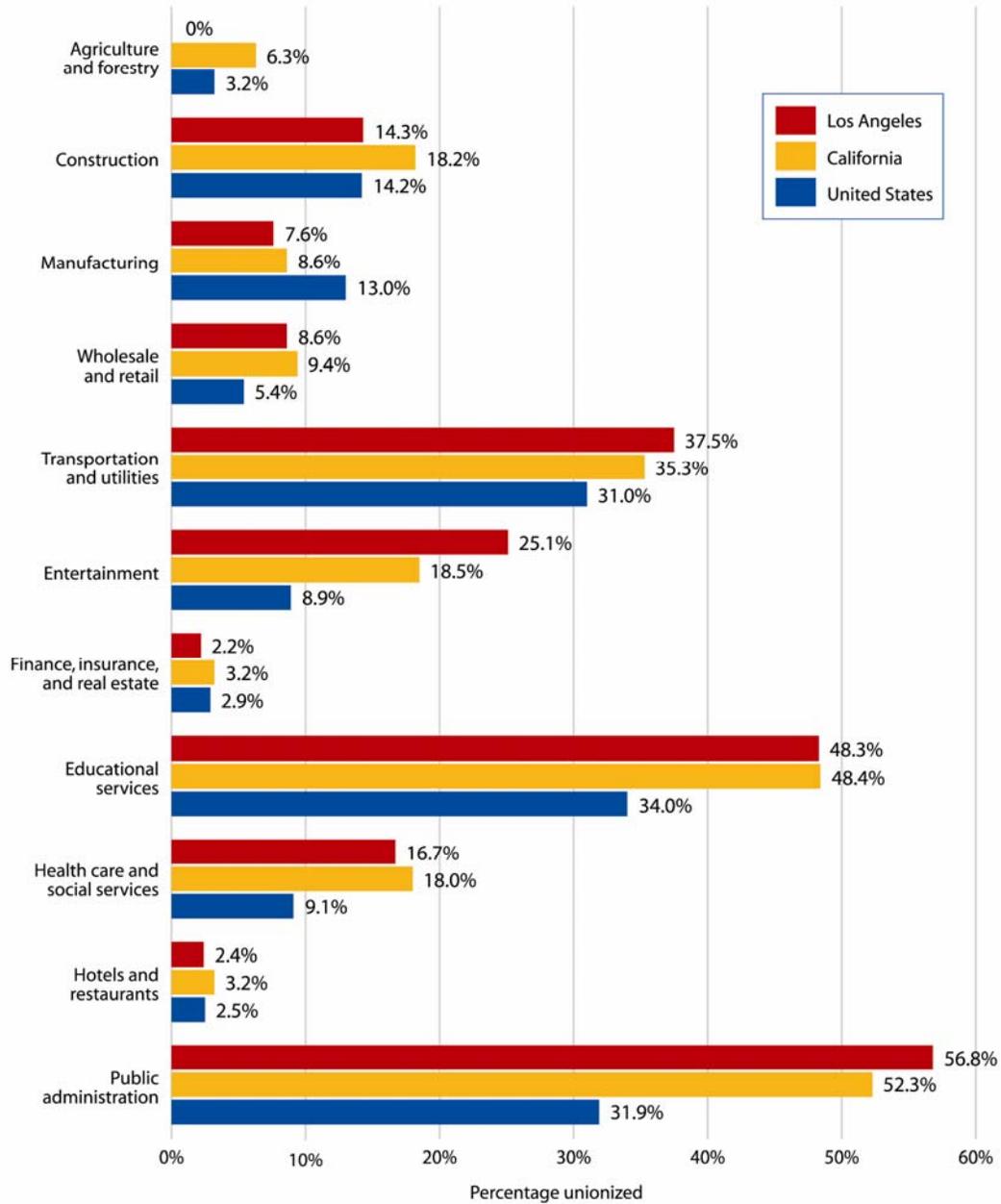


Figure 7. Unionization Rates by Industry Group, Los Angeles, California, and the United States, 2005



As Table 1 shows, the composition of union membership in the Los Angeles metropolitan area is somewhat different from that in the state and the nation. The highly unionized entertainment industry accounts for 7% of union members in the metropolitan area, almost double its share of California union membership, and quadruple its national share. By contrast, manufacturing has a much smaller share of union members both in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and in the state of California.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Union Members by Selected Industry Groups, for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, California, and the United States, 2005

Industry group	Los Angeles metropolitan area		State of California		United States	
	Number of union members	% of total	Number of union members	% of total	Number of union members	% of total
Agriculture and forestry	—	—	16,759	.7%	34,577	.2%
Construction	68,984	6.7%	195,437	8.1%	1,209,203	7.7%
Manufacturing	65,642	6.4%	142,574	5.9%	2,033,956	13.0%
Wholesale and retail	90,658	8.8%	206,638	8.5%	1,037,805	6.6%
Transportation and utilities	123,022	11.9%	247,980	10.2%	2,085,337	13.3%
Entertainment	72,360	7.1%	92,753	3.8%	272,280	1.7%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	10,896	1.1%	34,823	1.4%	253,565	1.6%
Educational services	276,040	26.7%	635,590	26.2%	4,067,223	25.9%
Health care and social services	106,771	10.3%	268,986	11.1%	1,423,054	9.1%
Hotels and restaurants	11,450	1.1%	33,655	1.4%	221,311	1.4%
Public administration	136,410	13.2%	374,753	15.5%	2,095,639	13.4%
Total	1,032,803	100%	2,423,855	100%	15,685,388	100%

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group, 2005.

Note: Totals do not add to 100% because not all industry groups are shown.

The high level of unionization in educational services and public administration also affects the gender-specific unionization rates shown in Figure 8, since both industry groups rely heavily on female workers. As Figure 8 shows, the unionization rates of employed women and men are almost identical in Los Angeles and in California, whereas for the United States as a whole, the male unionization rate is about two percentage points higher than the female rate. This reflects the fact that the public sector is so much more highly unionized in California and Los Angeles than in the nation as a whole (see Figure 2 above).

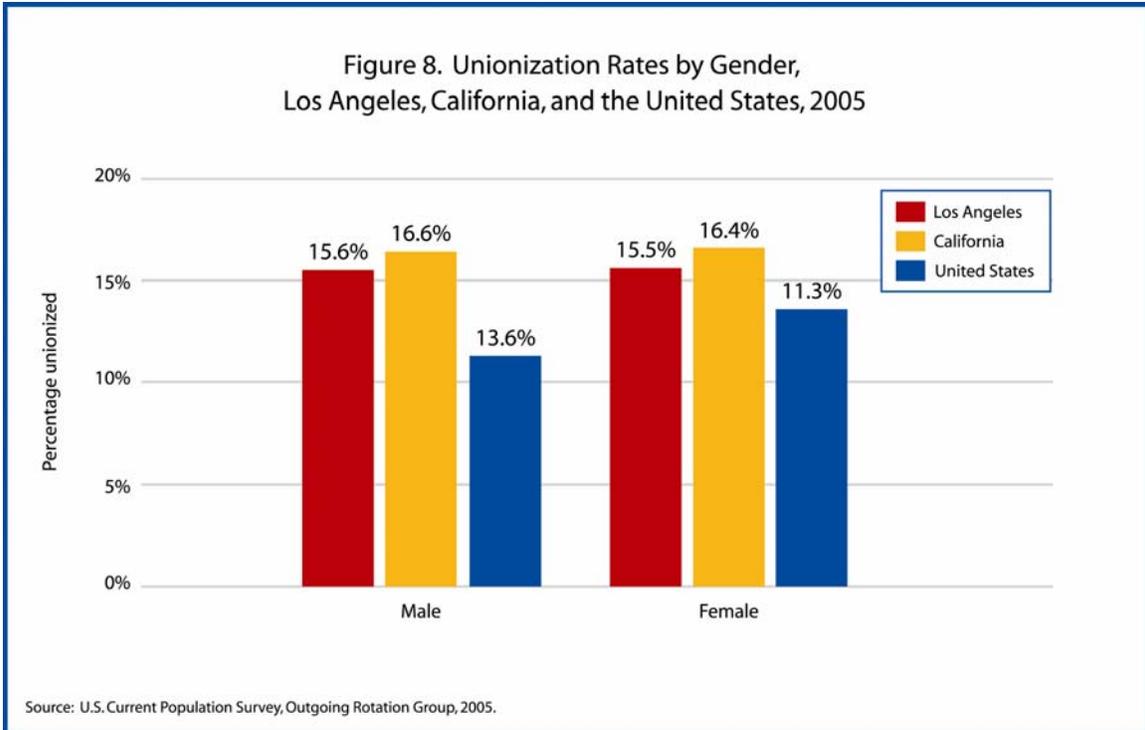
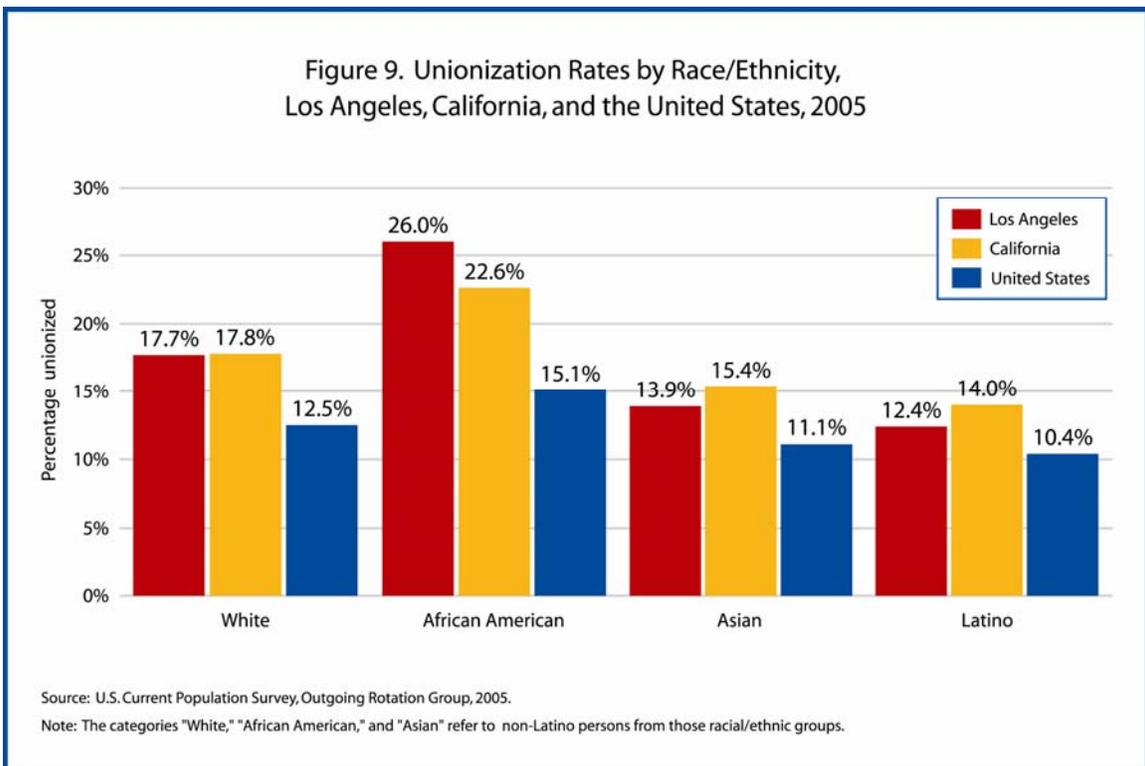
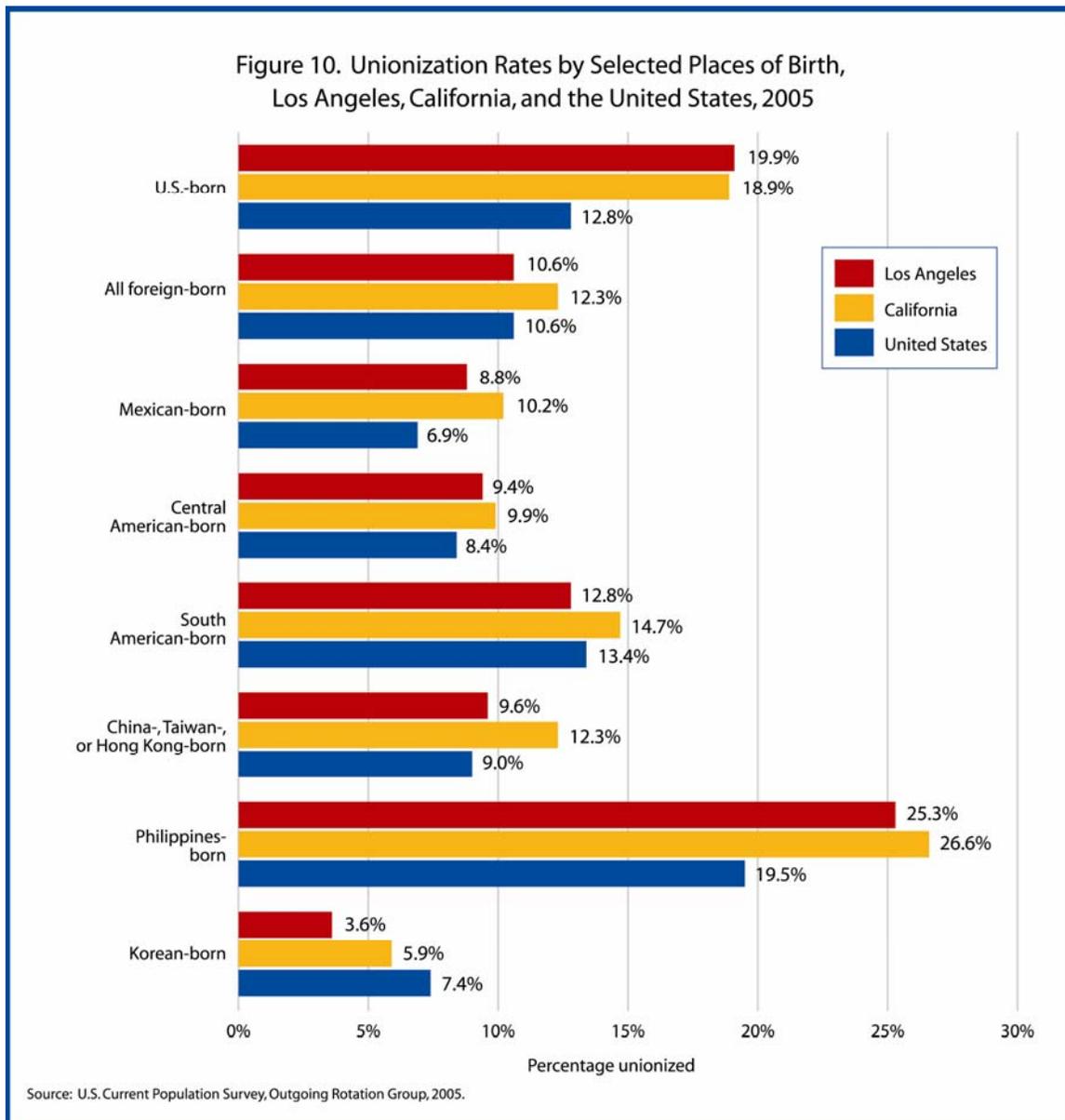


Figure 9 shows that unionization rates also vary by race and ethnicity. Indeed, African Americans have the highest unionization rate of any group shown, largely because of their relatively high concentration in public-sector employment.



Unionization rates vary by nativity, or place of birth, as well. As Figure 10 shows, U.S.-born workers are more highly unionized than foreign-born workers as a whole. This is partly due to the fact that relatively few foreign-born workers are employed in the highly unionized public sector, with the exception of workers born in the Philippines. Fully 20% of workers born in the Philippines were employed in the public sector in the Los Angeles area in 2005, as were 22% in California and 16% in the United States. By contrast, only 4.4% of Mexican-born workers in the Los Angeles metropolitan area were employed in the public sector; as for Mexican-born workers in California and the United States, only 4.1% and 3.7%, respectively, were public-sector employees. Once again, high unionization rates in the public sector underlie what at first appears to be a difference in nationality or nativity.



As Figure 11 shows, however, foreign-born workers who have become U.S. citizens, and those who arrived in the United States before 1990, have unionization rates higher than or comparable to those of U.S.-born workers. More recent arrivals, by contrast, have extremely low rates of unionization.

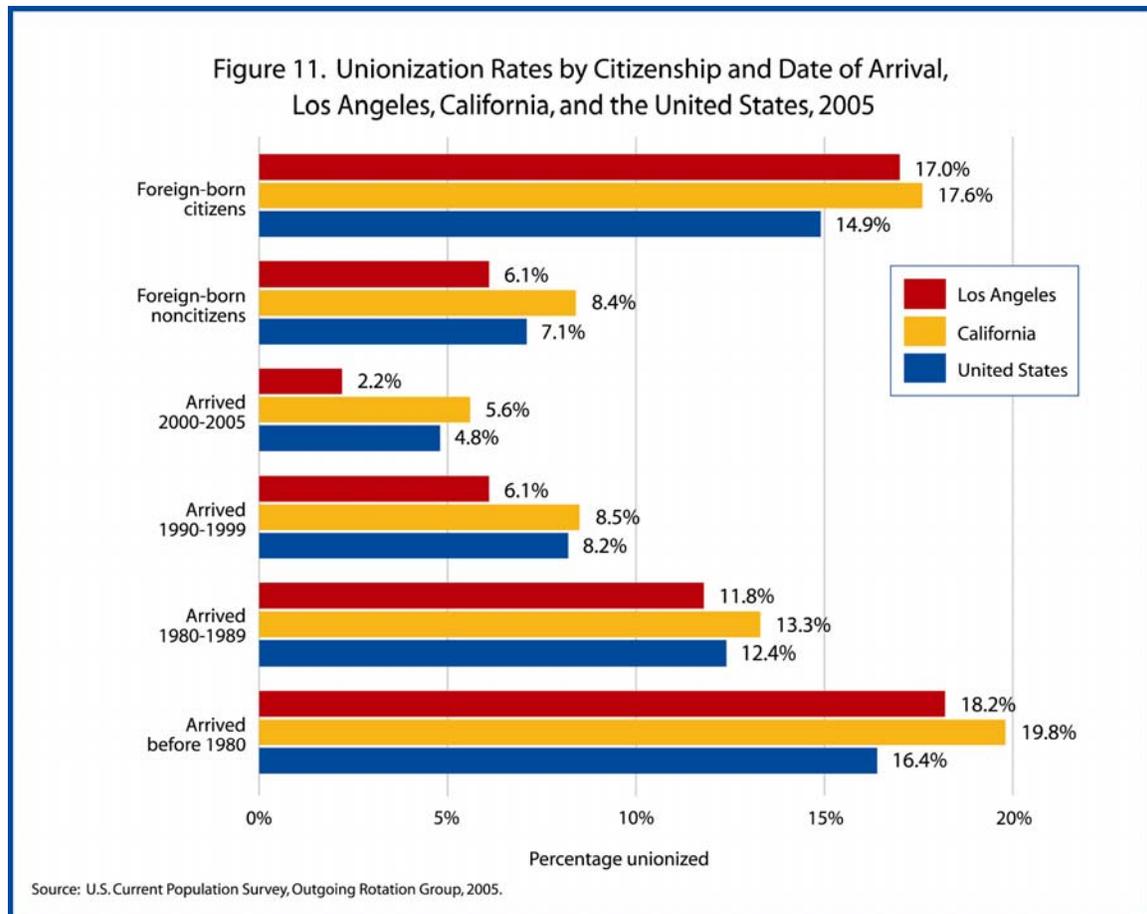
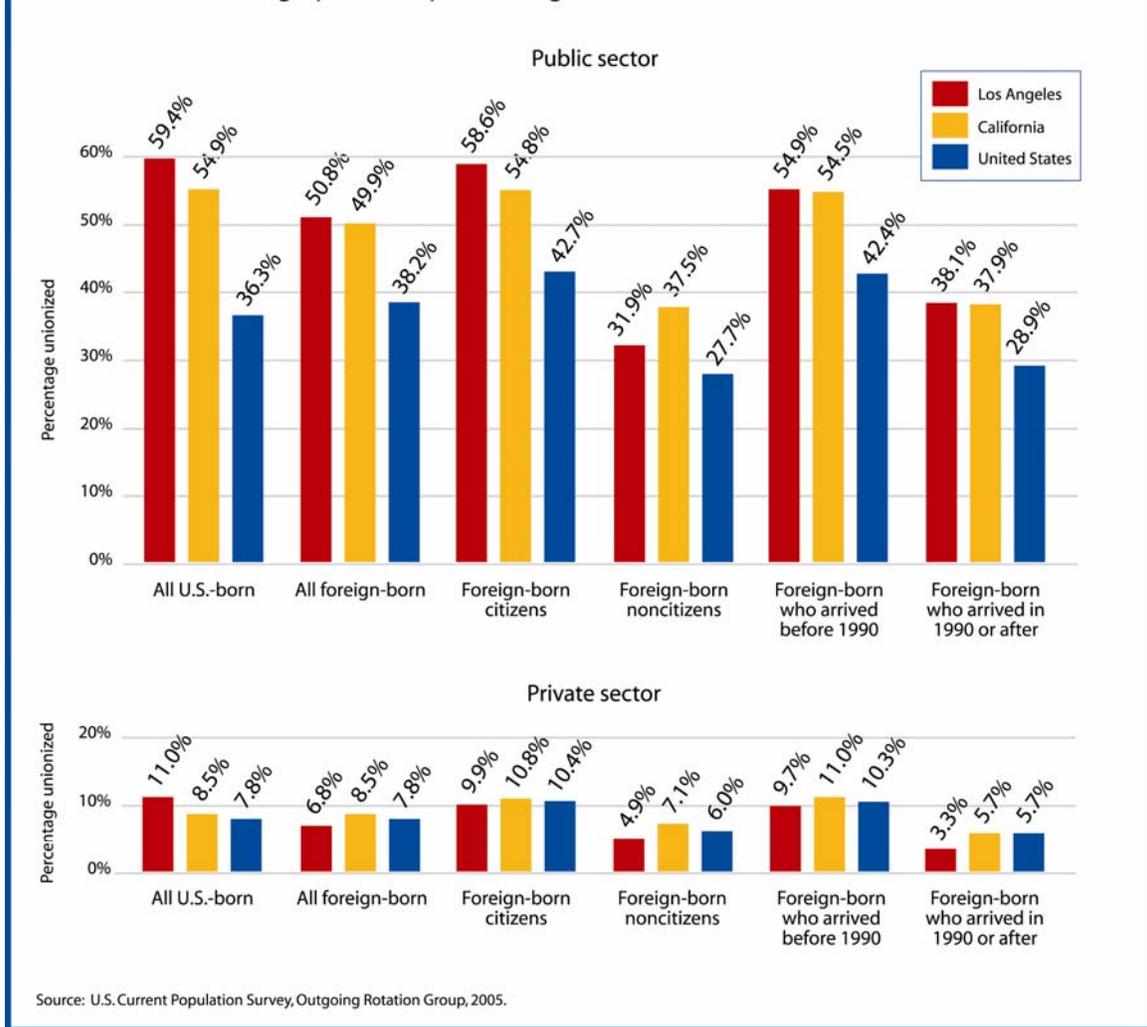


Figure 12 disaggregates the data for foreign-born workers between the public and private sectors. It reveals that unionization rates vary much less *within* each of these sectors than *between* them. Even foreign-born noncitizens and recently arrived immigrants, whose overall unionization rates are generally low (see Figure 11), have public-sector unionization rates well above 25%, for all three geographical entities shown. Relatively few noncitizens and recently arrived immigrants work in the public sector, however: only 4.9% of all foreign-born noncitizens in the United States, and only 5.5% of all foreign-born workers who arrived in or after 1990, are employed in this sector, compared to 17.6% of all U.S.-born workers. As a result, the high public-sector unionization rates for these immigrant groups do little to boost their overall rates. By contrast, in the private sector, unionization rates are consistently low for all groups, seldom reaching into the double digits. Indeed, the main reason for the relatively low unionization rates among recently arrived immigrants and noncitizens is the fact that they are frequently employed in industries and occupations that rely on casual forms of employment – either marginal to or entirely outside of the formal economy.

Figure 12. Unionization Rates in Public and Private Sectors for Selected Demographic Groups, Los Angeles, California, and the United States, 2005



Unionization patterns in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and in California are similar in many respects to those in the United States as whole. At the same time, however, the labor movement in the nation’s most populous state and in its largest city has some distinctive features as well. Most important, while the level of unionization has continued its long-term decline nationally, it has been stable and sometimes even increased in Los Angeles and California in recent years. This reflects the region’s relatively strong public-sector unionization, as well as its distinctive economic composition and its unusual labor history.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the ways in which Los Angeles and California are different, see Ruth Milkman and Daisy Rooks, “California Union Membership: A Turn-of-the Century Portrait,” *The State of California Labor 2003*, available on line at <http://www.iir.ucla.edu/sci/pdf03/sci2003ch1.pdf> and Ruth Milkman, *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006).