

Union versus non-union

[History](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Union versus Non-Union of the of the Concerned January 7, Union versus Non-Union The issue under consideration is pivotal in the free market economies as they are capital driven and have to hire skilled personnel to accomplish varied tasks in the procurement, production, marketing and distribution of goods and services. There is no denying the fact that the capitalist classes enjoy leverage over other aspects of production like labor owing to their financial wherewithal and acumen. On the contrary, in the case of skilled personnel, of all the possible leverages available to them, their collective bargaining power is the most important factor that can help them match the pecuniary power and authority of their employers. As each person is endowed with a different and unique emotional mind set, skill proficiency, aspirations and job expectations, conflict is the natural outcome of free market operations. In a conflict scenario, solidarity with peers could serve as an accessible empowering factor, while negotiating with one's resourceful employers. The objective of this paper is to identify and analyze the salient advantages and disadvantages of unions with an analytical approach, to enable the interested stakeholders decide as to their validity or futility. It would be prudent to begin with picking up the possible advantages of joining unions. Mulvey and Neo (1999), on the basis of a prolonged study, found that there existed a wage difference of 10 to 15 percent between the union affiliated and non-union workers. A possible conclusion is that perhaps the non-union workers find it difficult to exercise a profitable bargaining ability with their employers. This premise is rationally understandable. It should be easier to approach an employer regarding a grievance in a collective manner. A collective approach towards conflict resolution does not put a single worker on the line. This also to some extent makes an employer

<https://assignbuster.com/union-versus-non-union/>

more flexible and willing towards conflict resolution, as the outcome of failing to assuage a collective workforce is bound to be more debilitating than failing to fairly treat a single worker. The hypothesis put forward by Mulvey and Neo (1999) could logically be extrapolated to other aspects of work environment like work conditions, daily breaks, safety issues, health benefits, retirement benefits and the like, for as per the scientific study of Mulvey and Neo, if a non-union worker is more prone to face wage inequalities, one is certainly more vulnerable to inequalities in other aspects of one's job. Realistically speaking, besides giving a sense of belonging and redemption from victimization, unions could and often do make it affordable for an individual worker or a group to resort to other modes of conflict resolution like the courts of law. It is understandable that a single worker or a small group may not have the financial wherewithal to bear the costs associated with legal procedures; a union can garner massive funds by imposing a nominal membership fee on its adherents, in direct proportion to their wages. The funds so accumulated could be used by a union to succor its members in their hour of distress. Hence, unions do offer multiple benefits to any interested applicant, that are leverage before employers, safety from possible persecution, a sense of belonging and camaraderie, access to the statutory rights and financial, moral and legal support during difficult times. It is a known fact and almost all workers who are union members know that trade unions charge a fee for extending membership. So, union membership comes with a price. It may be nominal, still it is there. However, this sacrifice to a great extent may not seem much to some, considering the benefits offered by unions. According to the research of Addison, Heywood and Wei (2003), the one prominent problem with unions is that they instill a kind of

<https://assignbuster.com/union-versus-non-union/>

herd mentality in their members. What is a crisis for one may seem ignorable to other. There exists a valid and recognizable probability that all the workers may not agree with a decision taken by a union at some time or other. Yet, union membership makes it obligatory for a worker to support the decisions and activism resorted to by a union. Unions do profess to support democratic values. Yet, considering the human nature and practical experience, there does exist a possibility to earn the ire of some if not all union members and leaders, if one tows a line contrary to the union stand. Not to mention the possibility of being isolated and ignored during a professional crisis of one's own. Conclusively, very few will dare to do so. One wonders, how many enterprises may have collapsed, irrespective of the disagreement of a majority of their workers with a more aggressive union leadership. According to Bernhardt, McGrath and Defilippis (2008), there is no dearth of instances when the potential employers desist from hiring workers who are union members or even sympathizers. Their logic is readily understandable. For an employer, it is easier to deal with and bargain with a single worker than negotiating with one's collective workforce, especially more so, when the job of that worker is dependent on the goodwill of that employer. So, in a way, union membership may cut on the chances of employability of a worker. A non-union worker is always free to work for any employer, irrespective of what the union thinks. The same study by Bernhardt, McGrath and Defilippis (2008) states that not all the union members tend to be politically active or informed at any time. In such a scenario, there exists a valid possibility that a union leadership may be hijacked by vested interests who may adhere to their own personal agenda or connive with the owners to dupe workers. The intent of this paper by its

<https://assignbuster.com/union-versus-non-union/>

very nature is analytical and not conclusive. Ultimately it depends on a workers choice as to join a union or not. Unions do promise a collective bargaining power and support during a crisis. Yet, they also sometimes limit the chances of getting employed and the freedom to act as per one's conscience.

References Addison, John. T, Heywood, John. S & Wei, Xiangdong. (2003). New Evidence of Unions and Plant Closings: Britain in the 1990s. *Southern Economic Journal*, 69(4), 822-827. Bernhardt, Annette, McGrath, Siobhan & Defilippis, James. (2008). The State of Workers Protections in the United States: Unregulated Work in New York City. *International Labor Review*, 147(2/3), 135-144. Mulvey, C & Neo, L. M. (1999). Union Wage Effects and the Extent of Organization. *Australian Journal of Labor Economics*, 3, 65-92.