**ABSTRACT**

This analysis explores the interrelation between demographic and occupational characteristics and private sector union membership, over time. Using 1990-2017 data taken from the Independent Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Current Population Survey (CPS) data, this study investigates the marginal propensity to join a private sector union given personal profile characteristic groups. Time trends between demographic and occupational characteristic (levels) are first plotted using historical CPS data during the period 1990-2017. The historical trends reveal that private sector union membership levels are highest for black people, men, individuals ages 25-34, individuals with some college education, and those in the professional services industry. To empirically test that these trends exist at the margin, a multidimensional logistic regression is employed to underscore the odds of joining a private sector union over time. Demographic measures include race, gender, and age, and are included first as explanatory variables, and occupational characteristics—industry and schooling—are added subsequently. The results indicate that over time black people, men, individuals ages 45-54, individuals in the transportation and utilities industry, and individuals who have only completed high school are more likely to unionize.

**RESULTS**

This analysis uses private sector union membership data captured through the Bureau of Labor Statistics’s (BLS) Current Population Survey (CPS) and extracted from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) data. The CPS is a monthly survey of households where surveyors interview nearly 60,000 households on the activities of everyone in the household during the prior week. The CPS data includes information on age, race, sex, schooling, location and employment status. The section of most interest for this study are the questions that comprise the BLS’s Outgoing Rotation Groups or the Earner Study. Households in the CPS are interviewed for four months, ignored for 8 months, and then interviewed for 4 more months. The earner study questions include information on labor union status.

**DATA**

Public and Private Sector Union Membership Rates, 1960-2017

**REFERENCES**