

Industrial Trade Union Structure and Organising Strategies in Germany

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Union Structure

Umbrella Organisation

Members

**Unified Trade Unions
Industry Structure**

**German Trade Union
Federation**

- Eight industry unions
- Merger wave (from 17 to 8 unions)
- More than 6 Mio. members (80% of all)

Public Servants

**German Civil Service
Association**

- 1.26 Mio. Members
- Partly public officers
- Partly white collars (competitor Verdi)

Christian Trade Unions

**Christian Trade Union
Federation**

- 16 Unions
- 280000 Members
- Temp agency work

Occupational Unions

No Common Umbrella

- 4 Unions
- About 150.000 members
- Privatised public services

Collective Bargaining**Codetermination**

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Plant Level Agreements

Unions and Employers' Associations

Works Councils and Management

Primacy of Collective Bargaining Agreements

Benefit-of-the-Doubt-Principle

Centralisation of Labour Conflicts on Industry Level

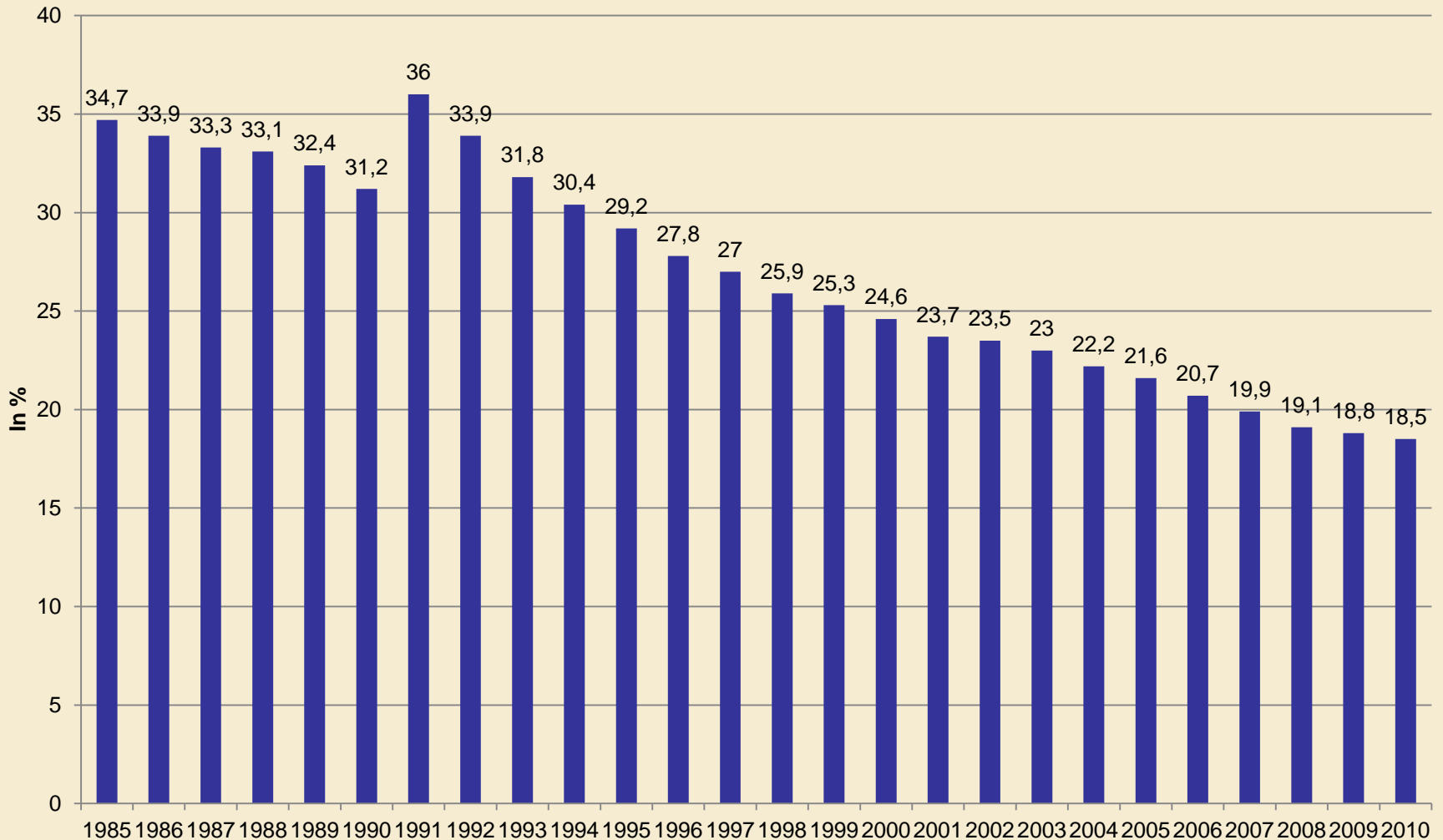
**Dual System of Interest Representation Workers /
Contradictory Unity****Trade Unions:**

- Collective bargaining agreements
- Labour conflicts, strikes
- Support, consultancy
- Organizational power
- Union shop stewards not comprehensive and subordinated to works councils

Works Councils:

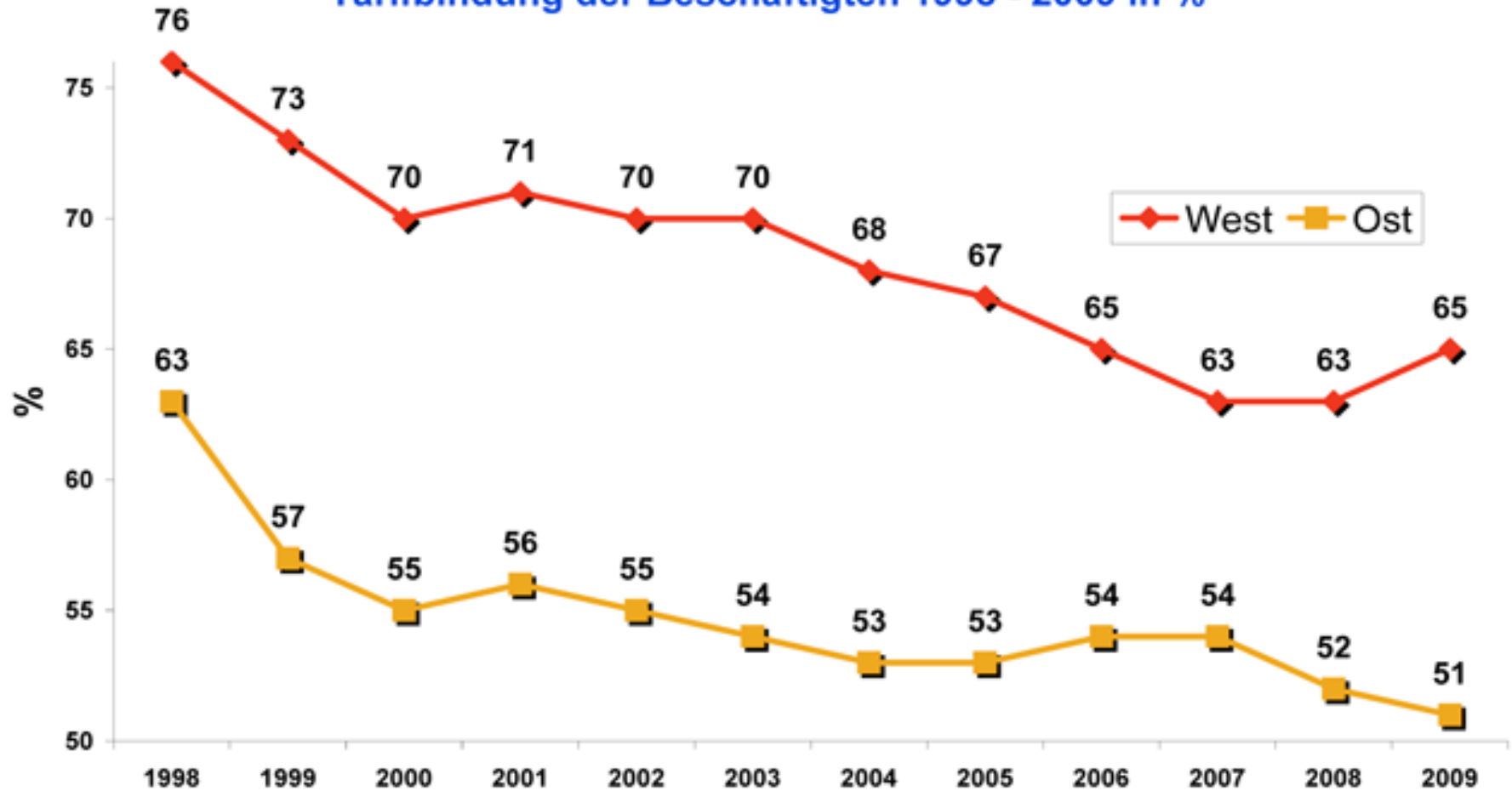
- Implementation and controlling of collective bargaining agreements
- Membership recruitment unions
- Mobilisation für labour conflicts
- Influence on collective bargaining policy
- Incorporation of shop stewards

Trade Union Density (OECD)



Collective Bargaining Coverage

Tarifbindung der Beschäftigten 1998 - 2009 in %



Quelle: IAB

WSI
Tarifarchiv

Works Councils: Crisis of traditional recruitment pattern:

- Internal tertiarisation of manufacturing sector
- New industries (IT; green industries)
- Structural weakness in private services
- Fragmentation of workforce: Low wage and high qualified

Three Strategies of Union Organising:

- Organising unorganised plants:
- New forms of plant level collective bargaining
- Activation of works councils

- ✓ Departments for organising - training courses organisers (Verdi / IG Bau / IG Metall) - shift of resources
- ✓ Campaigning and coalitions (Verdi, IG Bau): Schlecker and Lidl Campaigns
- ✓ Grievances and justice (IG Metall)

Evidence:

- Campaigning and coalitions: Little recruitment success
- Grievances and justice: No evidence yet
- Focus on election of works councils

Local conflicts and rank-and-file participation in derogations (IG Metall)

- Derogations: Pforzheim Agreement 2004
- Expansion of Agreements 2004/2005 (since then about 10%)
- Countermeasure Union: Coordination of decentral bargaining
- Rank-and-file participation: Meetings of members; membership voting on negotiations/derogations

Evidence:

- Strengthening of works councils in labour relations
- Highly attractive for members - membership growth of union in plants
- Problem: Limited to derogations

The „Better not cheaper“ Campaign (IG Metall):

- **Activation of works councils:** Challenging management strategies and employee participation
- **Organisation/material infrastructure:**
 - ✓ Campaigning Team
 - ✓ Workshops for works councils
 - ✓ Single case consultancy by union oriented consultants and building a network of consultants
 - ✓ Industry networks among works councils

Evidence:

- Challenging Management in mainly in realm of organisational strategies (production process, teamwork...)
- Importance of external support (consultants and union)
- Participation of employees as experts highly attractive and successful
- Strengthening of works councils
- Weak effects on union density – exception: white collars

Summary

- Dominance of industry unions, but growing union competition
- Contradictory unity between unions and works councils
- Decline of union density
- Growing problems of membership recruitment
- Organising strategies of unions:
 - Organising unorganised plants
 - New forms of collective bargaining
 - Activation of works councils