

# Findings of the COSATU Workers' Survey, 2012

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# I. Aims and methodology

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## 1 Aims of the survey

The 2012 COSATU Workers' Survey aims to provide an objective analysis of the perceptions of union members and potential members on issues facing the labour movement. The questions asked in the survey range from what workers want from their employers to their views on labour unions and thoughts on the broader political landscape.

The findings of the Workers' Survey relate amongst others to service to members, union democracy and accountability, solidarity, gender and recruitment. This document provides an initial overview. In future, we hope the survey will provide a resource for more in-depth research in specific areas.

The survey should help union members, shopstewards, activists and leaders to enrich their views on workers' needs, desires and hopes. It should strengthen internal democracy in the union movement and identify ways to improve the organisation of the unorganised and to serve members better.

## 2 The survey

The 2012 survey largely replicates the 2006 COSATU Workers' Survey, with questions on what workers want from their employers and unions; why non-members do not belong to unions; whether workers face racial or gender discrimination or harassment at work; their views on strike action, union services and union democracy; and their political commitments.

The survey explores the views and opinions of workers. It did not ask detailed questions on working conditions, which are analysed in the government's Quarterly Labour Force Survey. It asked about working conditions primarily to make it possible to understand the perceptions of different groups of workers. These questions also help explore differences in working conditions by affiliate.

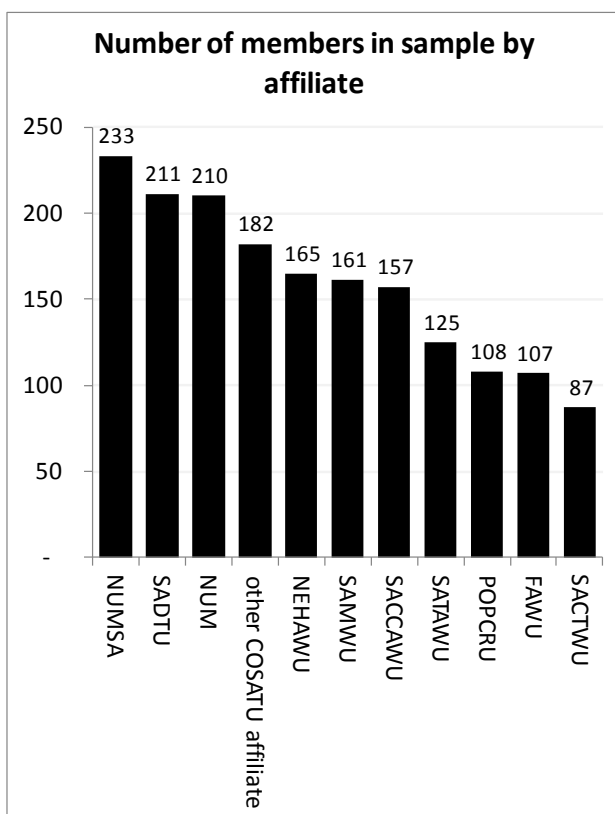
Like any survey, the sample of workers interviewed was designed to reflect the views and conditions of the broader constituency studied – in this case, primarily formal-sector workers. To that end, it covered 3030 workers in 37 urban districts across the country.

The sample was designed to permit an in-depth analysis of the views of union members as well as the unorganised. To ensure a meaningful sample of actual and potential union members, some large sections of the working class had to be excluded. Specifically,

- The survey excluded workers in enterprises with under five workers. That means that it excluded virtually all informal workers and the self employed as well as domestic workers, all of whom find it difficult to organise in unions.
- It was only conducted in urban communities with an average household income of under R12 000 a month, according to the 2001 Census. According to the official Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2012, over 80% of all union members lived in urban areas.

- The survey was effectively divided into two in order to enable a larger and therefore more reliable sample of union members. As a result, while only 47% of formal sector workers are in unions, the survey of union members in the COSATU Survey was twice as large as the survey of non-members. Because organised workers were deliberately over-represented in the sample, we present findings separately for members and non-members.

The final sample included 753 non union members and 2293 union members. Of the union members, some 1746, or over half the entire survey, belonged to COSATU affiliates.



The sample included a large enough number of members from ten COSATU affiliates to permit some insight into individual unions. As the chart shows, these affiliates each had over 75 members in the survey. Only one union outside of COSATU, the Public Servants Association (PSA), had that many members in the survey.

The size of the sample in the survey does not necessarily correspond to the relative size of the union. NUM and the public service unions in particular are underrepresented because they have proportionately more members in rural areas.

Survey results are usually analysed in a weighted form that is proportional to the full larger population being analysed. Even unweighted, however, the final sample in

the COSATU Survey largely conformed to the findings of the much larger Quarterly Labour Force Survey, which covers some 30 000 households.

In particular, the sample roughly paralleled the Quarterly Labour Force Survey's findings in terms of race, gender, age and incomes. White workers were however heavily under-sampled and Coloured and Asian workers over-sampled in the COSATU Survey. Women made up only 43% of the COSATU Survey, which is below their share in the total population but roughly equal to their share in urban formal employment.

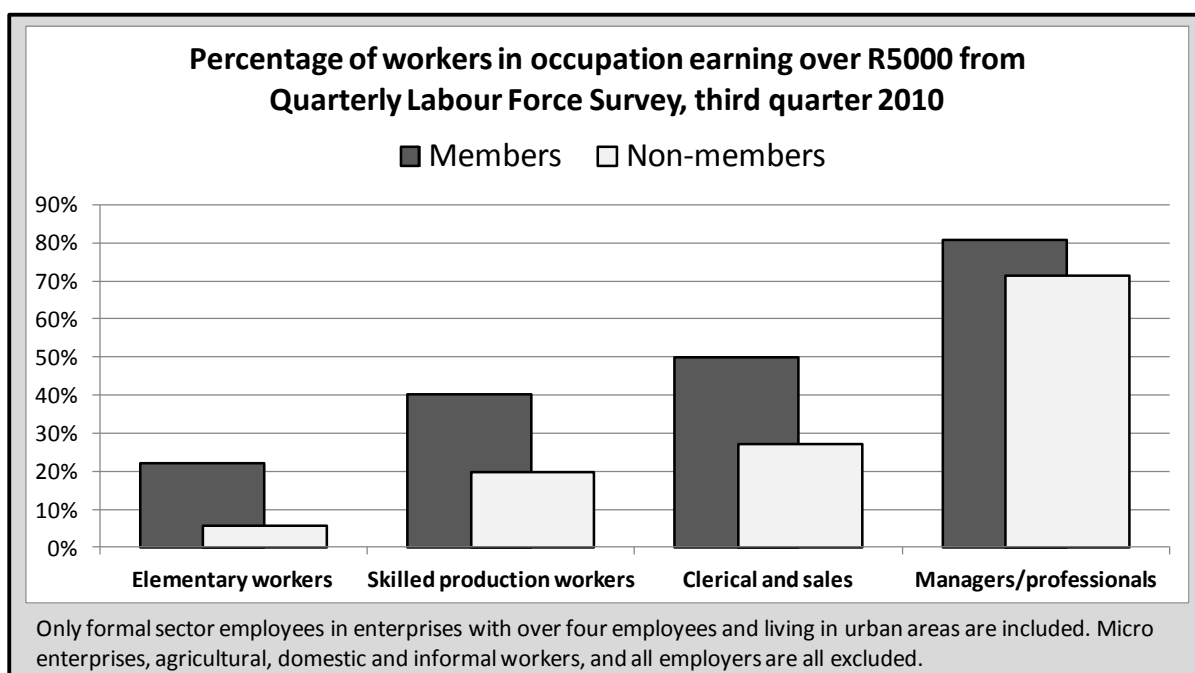
The survey was managed by a team based in NALEDI and led by Liesl Orr, with assistance from Debbie Budlender and Neva Makgetla; Jane Barrett and Theo Steele of COSATU; and Rudi Dicks, Musa Malabela and Sian Byrne of NALEDI. It was carried out by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) and analysed primarily by Neva Makgetla. We are grateful to Gay Seidman for comments and the Employment Promotion Programme for funding.

## II. Describing formal sector workers

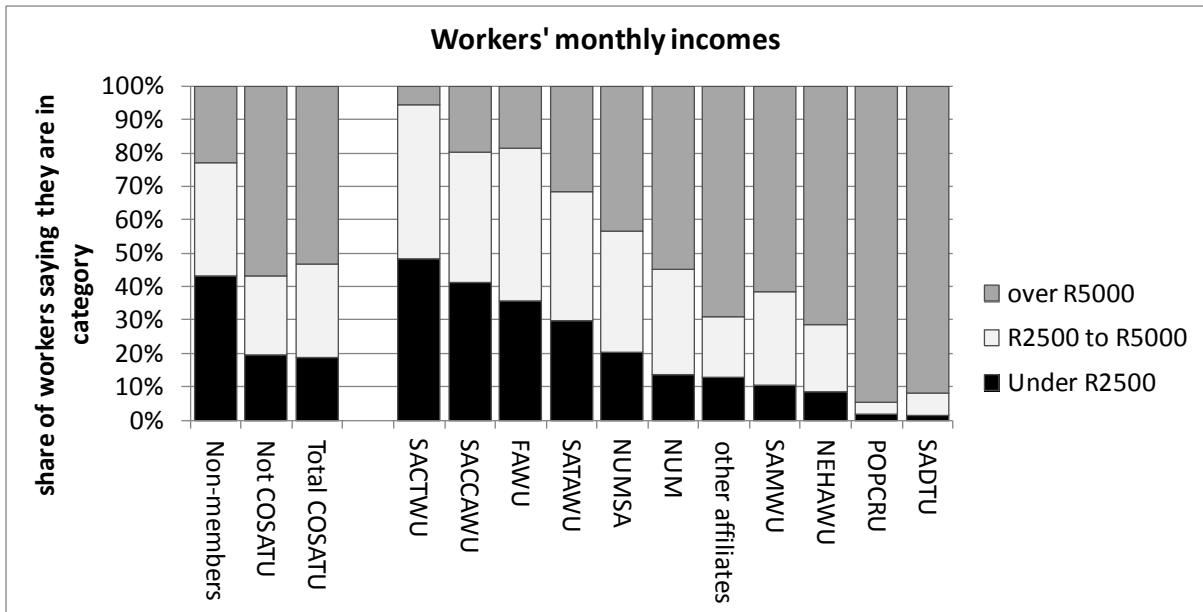
This section describes some characteristics of members and non-members arising out of the survey – their pay, education, occupations, race and gender. For overall comparisons of members and other formal sector workers, we report on the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, which is larger and more comprehensive than the COSATU Survey. We use the COSATU Survey for insight into differences between members of the affiliates, which are shaped primarily by occupational and sectoral differences.

### 1 Income levels

Amongst formal employees, non-members tend to earn less than members in every occupation. The COSATU Survey only compared ordinary workers, however. It did not include most managers, employers and self-employed professionals, who are generally not organised but earn far more than most union members. The equivalent data from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the third quarter of 2010 – the latest published - is presented in the chart below.

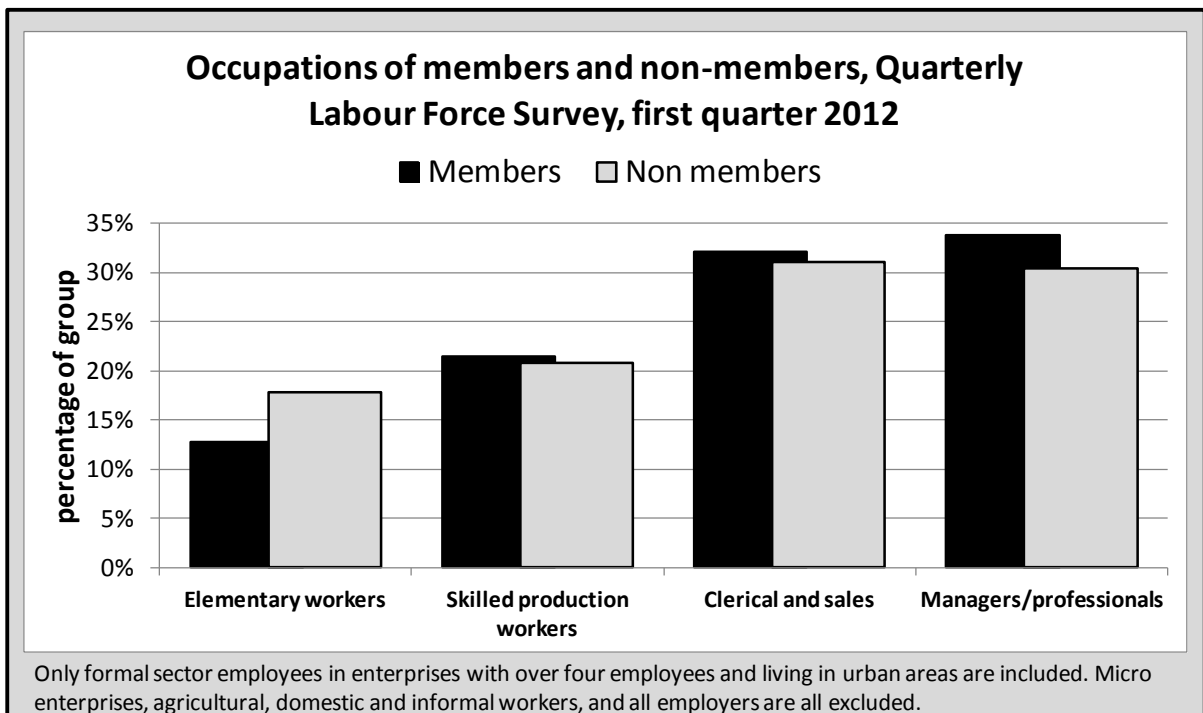


Differences in pay between unions mostly reflect the structure of employment and pay in the industries they organise. The worst paid union members are in retail, private services (including security) and light industry. The best paid are in the public services, where the majority of members are in the big public-service professions – education, health and policing.



## 2 Occupations

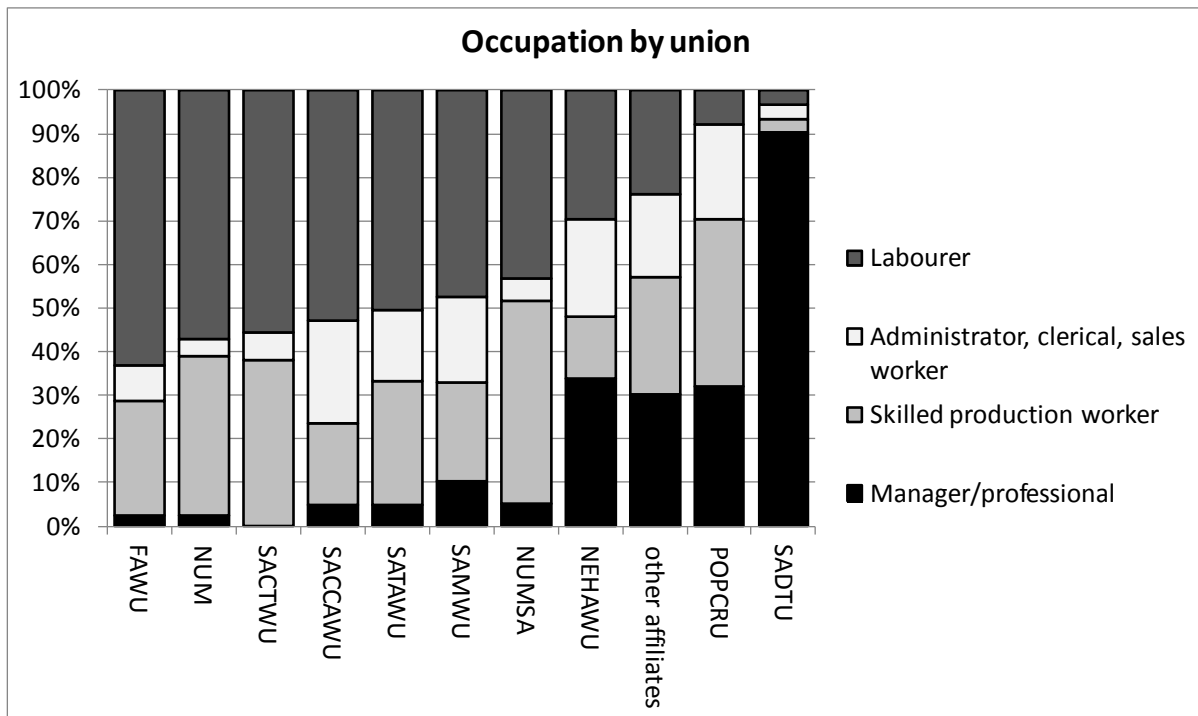
Overall, according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, union members are spread almost equally between professionals, clerical and sales workers, and production workers. Formal employees who are not union members are somewhat more likely to be recorded as elementary workers in relatively low-skilled jobs.



The COSATU Survey found a different distribution of employment from the QLFS. In the COSATU survey, 40% of members said they are elementary workers or labourers, 27% skilled production workers, 13% clerical or sales workers, and 21% management or professionals. The divergence from the QLFS proportions apparently partly reflects the undersampling of whites in the COSATU survey. It also seems to result from differences in

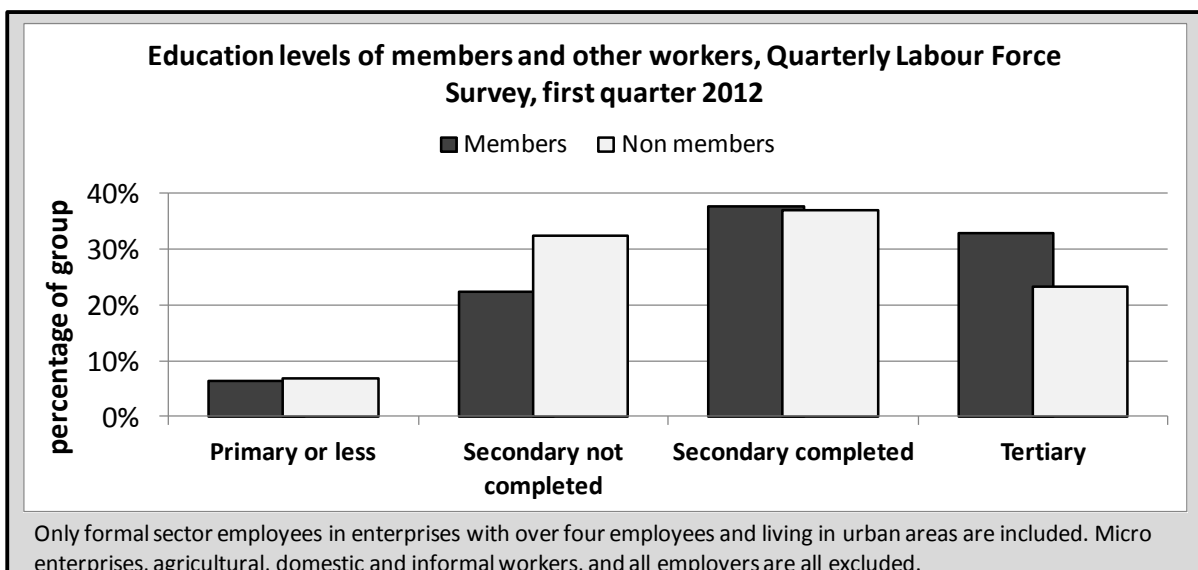
participants' understanding of occupational classifications between the two surveys, especially for clerical and sales workers.

The following chart shows the distribution of occupations within unions according to the COSATU Survey. The public service unions contained the largest share of professionals, while over half of members in private sector unions classified themselves as labourers. The public service unions accounted for around a quarter of COSATU membership but seven out of ten professionals.

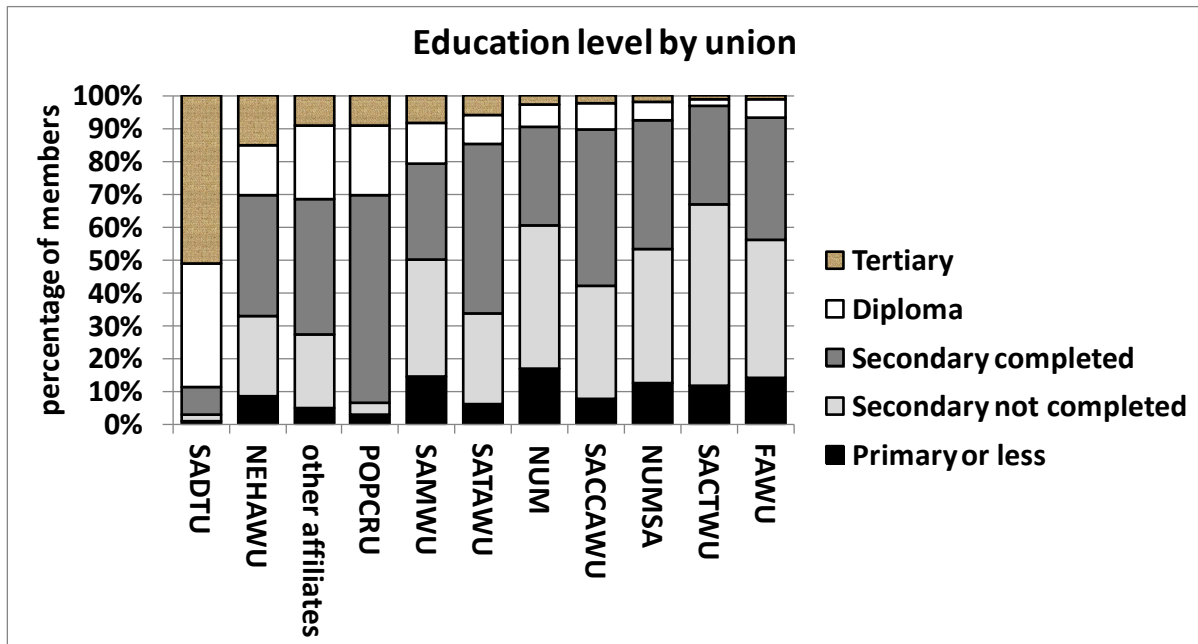


### 3 Education levels

The Quarterly Labour Force Survey finds that union members are more likely than other workers to have matric or a degree. In part, this is because union density is higher in the public sector, where teachers, nurses and police dominate.

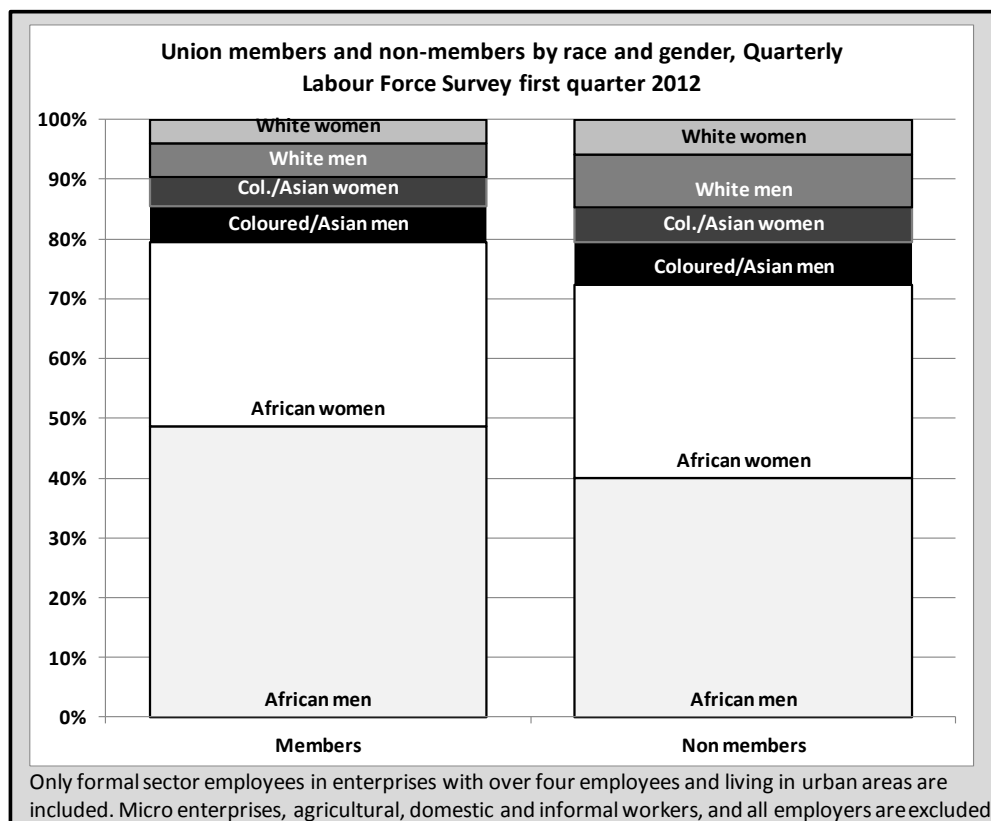


The COSATU Survey found that half of COSATU members with a post-secondary diploma or a degree were in a public service union. Members in the private sector and local government were much less likely to have continued schooling after matric.

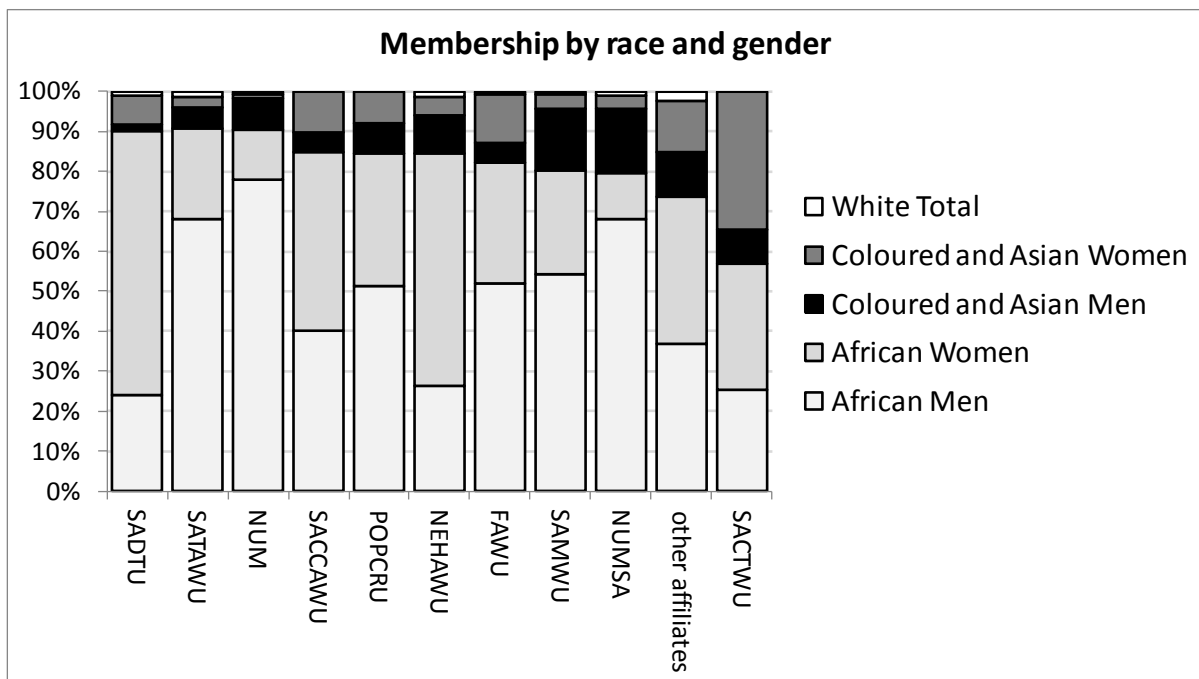


#### 4 Race, gender and age

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, union members are more likely to be African men than are non-members. Almost 50% of union members are African men, compared to 40% of non-members. In contrast, about 30% of both union members and non-members are African women. On the other hand, non-members are more likely to be white than members. One in ten union members is white, compared to one in seven non-members.



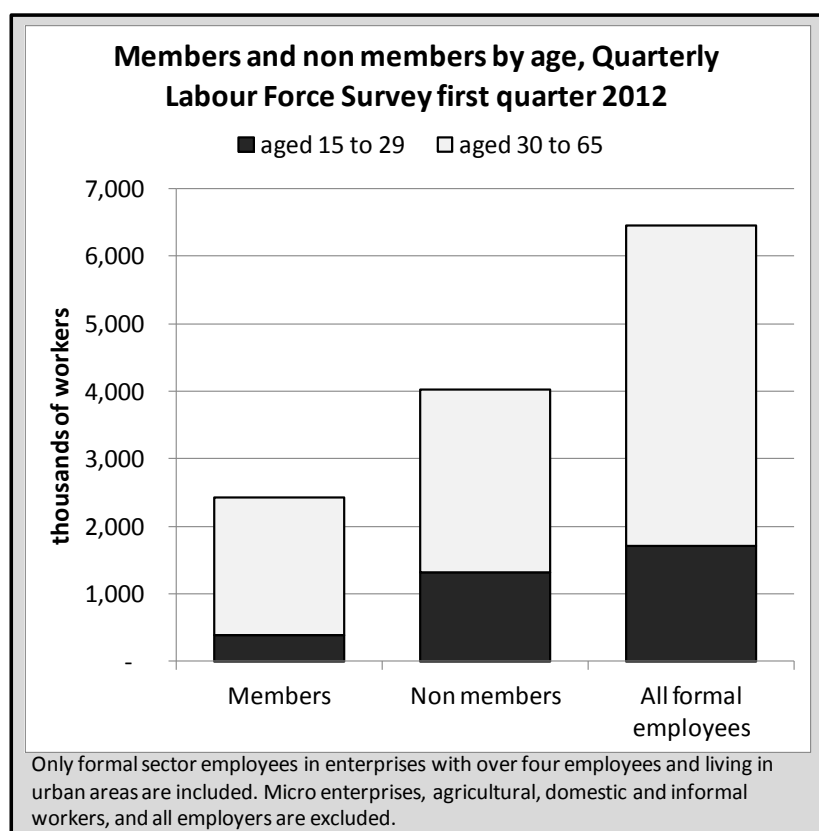
Amongst COSATU affiliates, the COSATU Survey found substantial variations in the race and gender of members, mostly reflecting the labour force in the industries each union organises. As noted above, the COSATU Survey probably understates the share of whites amongst both members and non-members.



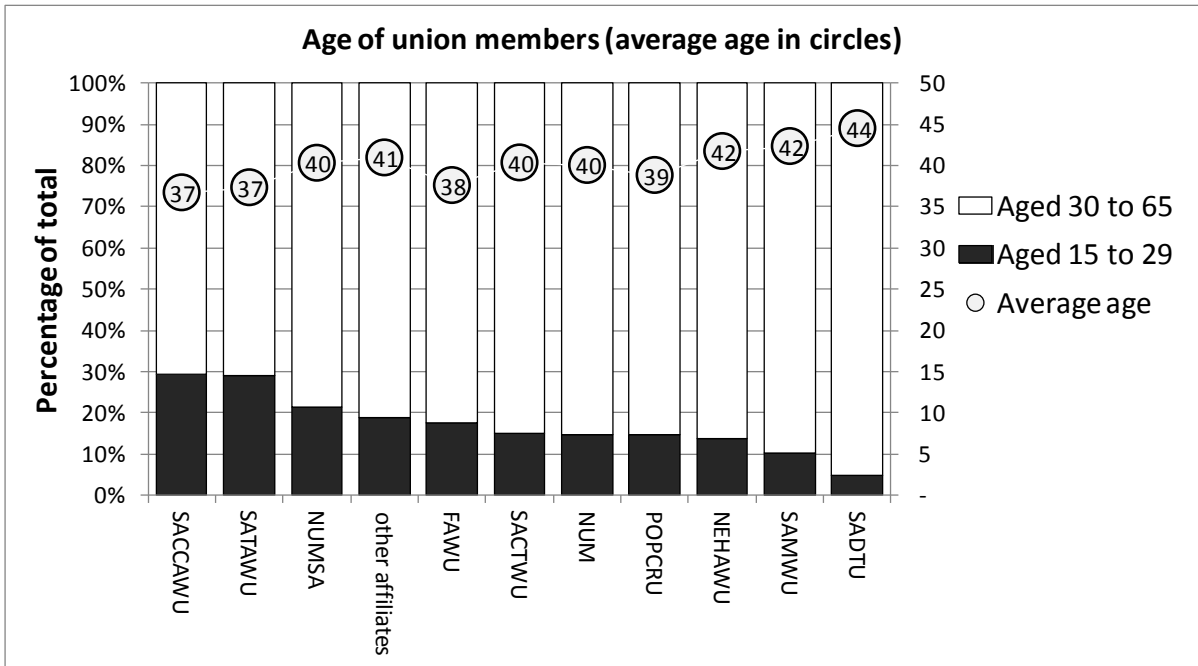
The Quarterly Labour Force survey finds that amongst union members, young workers are under-represented. Workers who are under 30 years old make up just one in seven union members, compared to a third of non-members.

The COSATU Survey found that the average COSATU member was 40 years old. That is virtually the same age as the 2006 COSATU Survey reported.

Amongst COSATU affiliates, the share of younger workers is highest in industries where employment has grown relatively fast in the past ten years. These industries include retail, construction and security. The share of younger members is lowest in sectors that, like the public service, have grown slowly or not at all.







## 5 Conclusions

Union members are typically older, better paid and better educated than other formal sector employees. There are, however, substantial variations between affiliates, mostly due to the nature of the industries in which they organise.

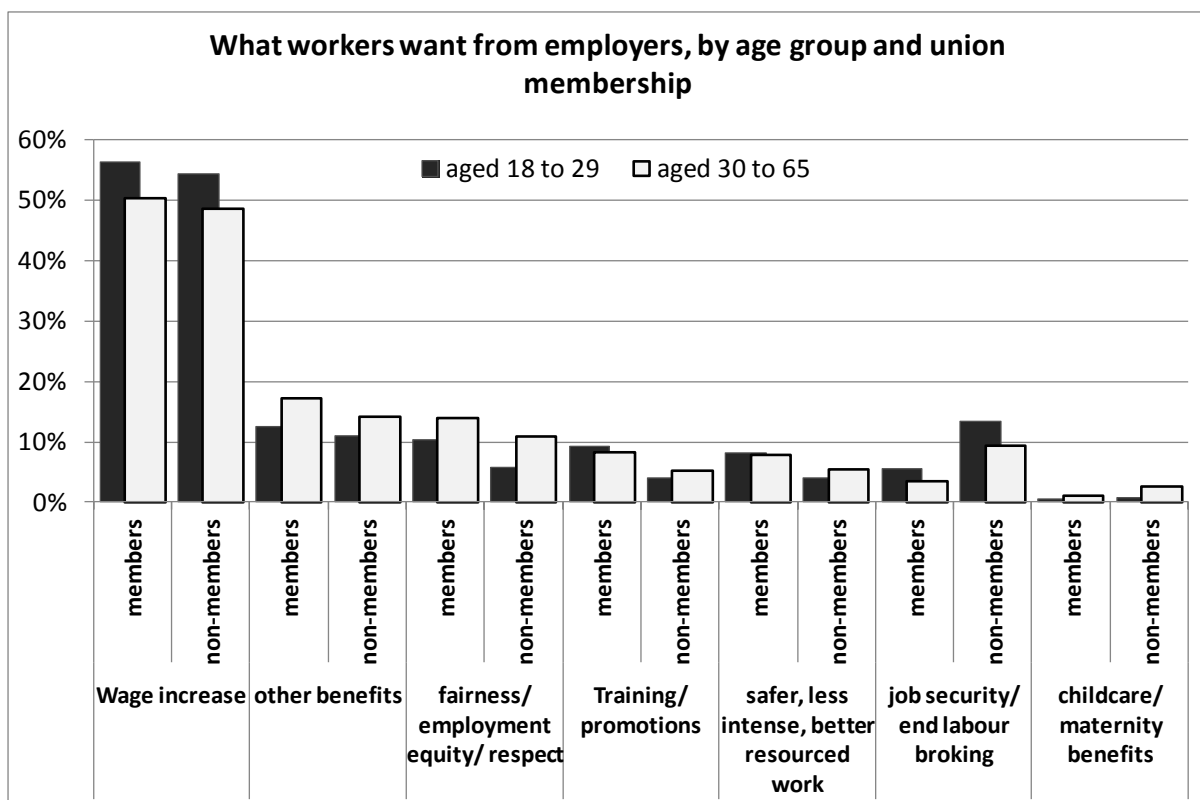
### III. Workers on the job

The survey asked workers a range of questions about what they want from their employers and about labour relations, including work status, racism and strikes.

From the responses, two over-arching demands stand out. First, virtually all workers placed higher pay at the top of their list of what they want from employers. Second, many workers complained of unfair treatment. South Africa’s extraordinarily sharp income inequalities, history of oppressive and hierarchical work organisation, and the associated social divisions probably contribute to this perception. In particular, a quarter of African workers said they are racially abused at work. This figure remained virtually unchanged from 2006. Then as now, non-African workers were far less likely to perceive racial abuse or discrimination in the workplace.

#### 1 What workers want from their employers

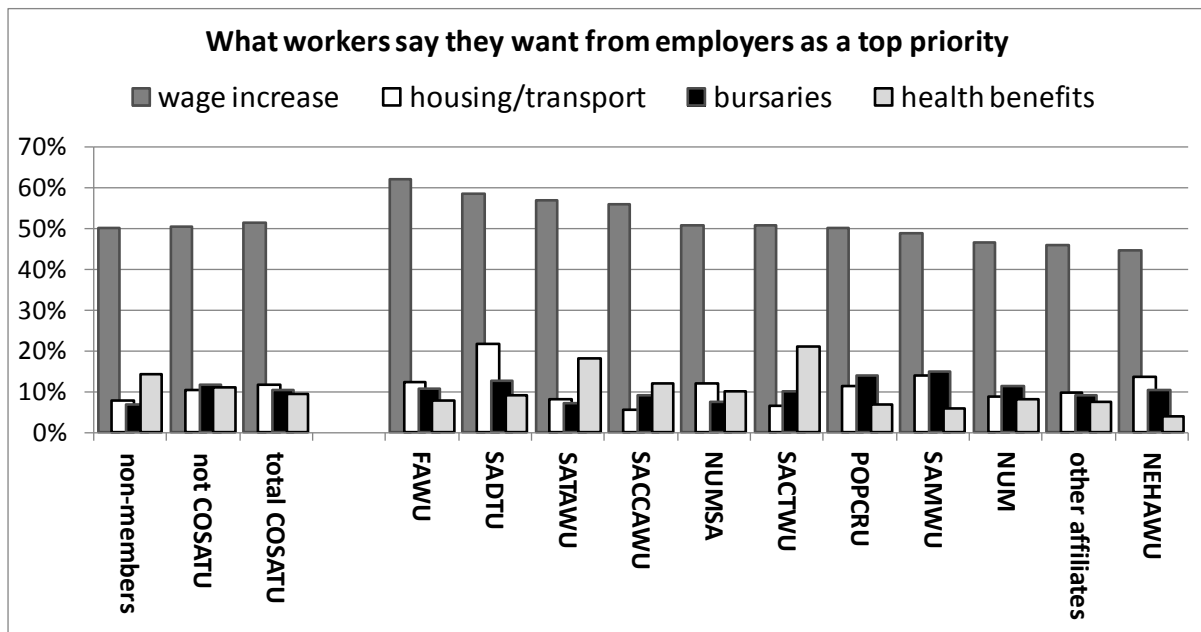
In all categories of workers, the vast majority said better pay was what they wanted most from their employers. Benefits came in second place for union members, but non-members focused more on job security. Many union members also emphasised that they wanted fair treatment.



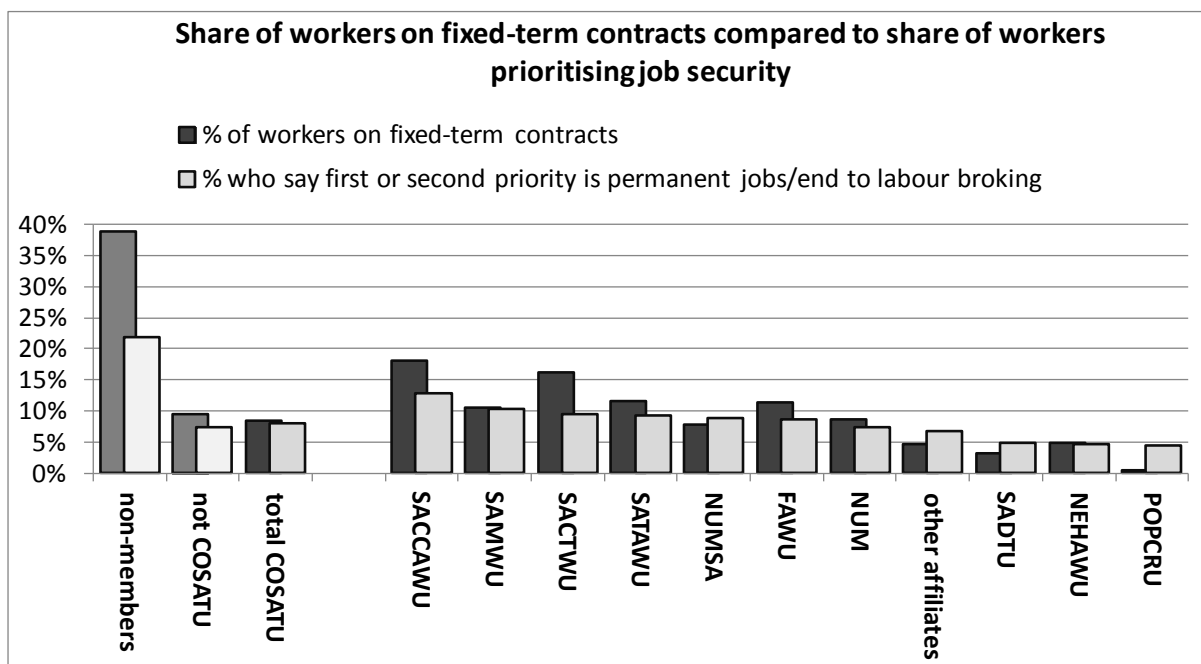
Generally, younger workers were more interested in improving remuneration, benefits and job security. Older workers also overwhelmingly prioritised higher pay, but put rather more emphasis than younger workers on fair treatment and better working conditions. According

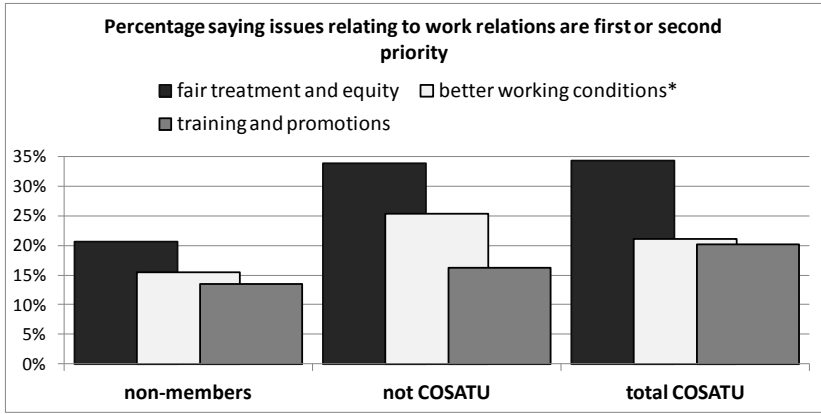
to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2012, workers under 30 years old were twice as likely as older workers to say they do not have permanent contracts. Two out of five younger workers were not permanent, compared to one out of five older workers.

COSATU members' claims on employers with regard to pay and benefits varied substantially, as the following charts show. Only 1% of union members and 3% of non-union members ranked retirement funds as one of their top two claims.



A third set of claims related to fairness, employment equity and employment security. In contrast to other claims, the demand for permanent jobs to replace fixed-term (temporary) contracts was closely linked to the objective conditions of workers. Non-members, who are much more likely to be in fixed-term and other kinds of insecure employment than members, were most likely to want the employer to provide permanent jobs.

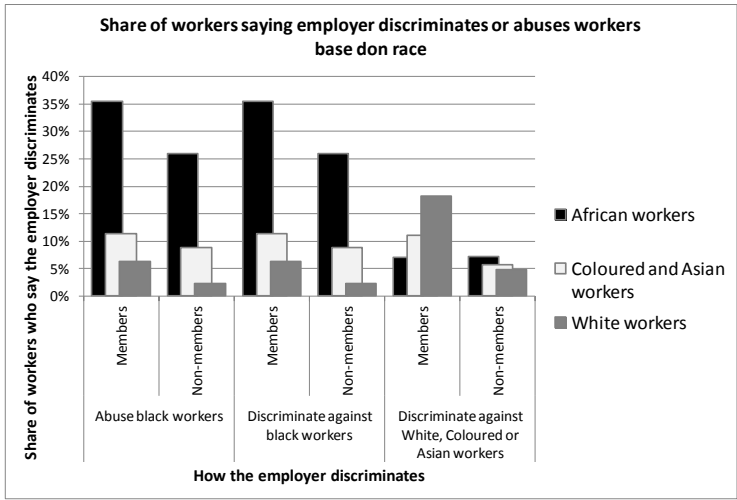
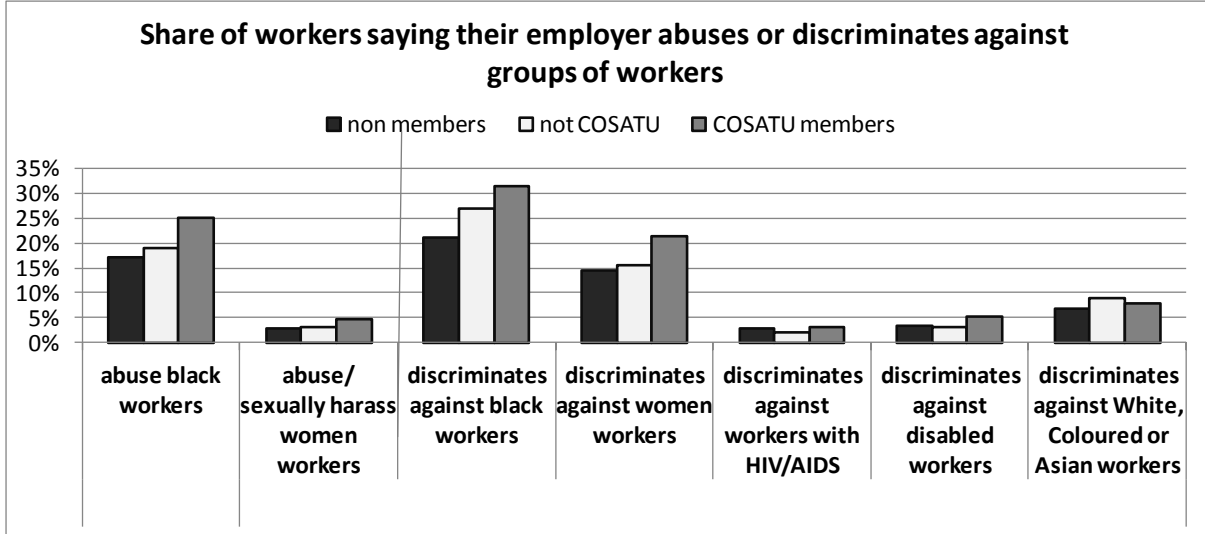




Finally, around a third of workers said they wanted fair treatment, better working conditions, or training and promotions from their employers. Union members were more likely than non members to prioritise fair treatment.

## 2 Racial and gender discrimination

Around a quarter of workers said their employer discriminated against black workers, and around one in six said the employer abused black workers. The survey did not, however, define abuse in detail. Around one in seven workers said women faced discrimination in the workplace, but less than one in 20 said women suffered sexual harassment or abuse. The share saying the employer was abusive or discriminatory was virtually the same as in the 2006 survey.

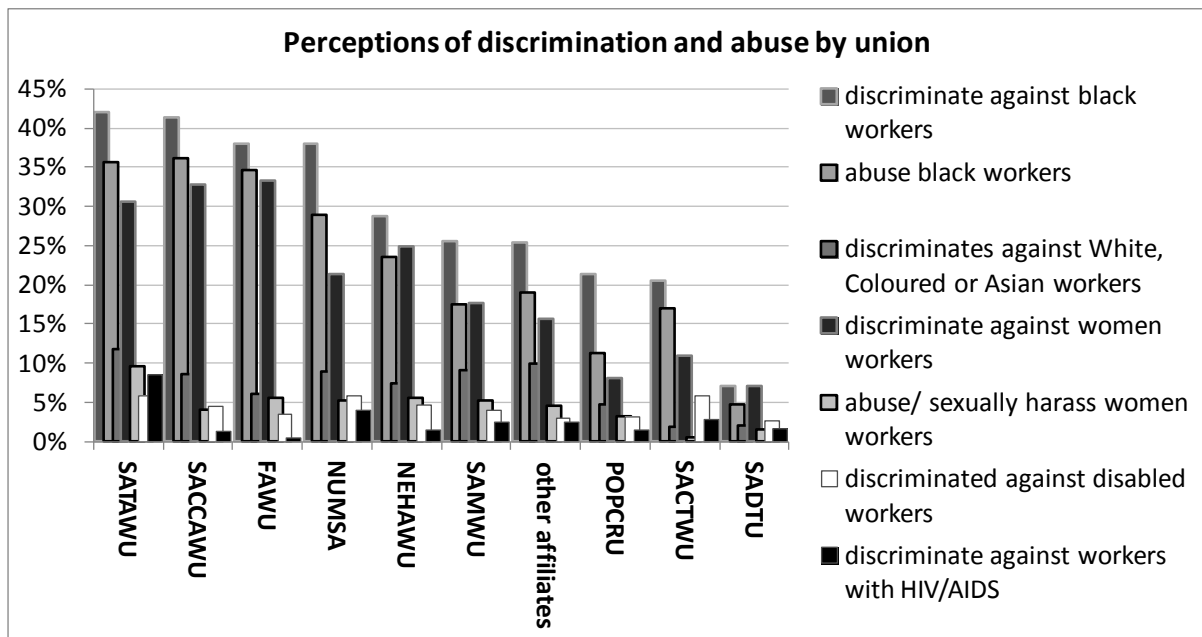


Perceptions of racial discrimination and abuse were shaped largely by whether workers are on the receiving end. African workers were much more likely than white workers to see discrimination and abuse, except when it came to discrimination against White, Coloured or Asian workers, and *vice versa*. COSATU members as a group were more likely to see discrimination, but this was mostly because COSATU

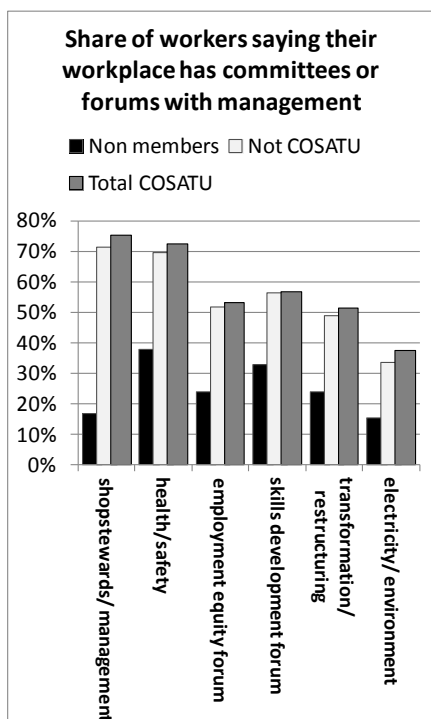
has a higher share of African members than FEDUSA and unaffiliated unions. Indeed, if we analyse answers only from Africans, members of FEDUSA and NACTU affiliated unions were substantially more likely to say the employer discriminates than African COSATU members.

There was almost no difference between men and women workers in their perceptions of gender discrimination, abuse or sexual harassment. Young workers were slightly less likely than older workers to perceive discrimination by the employer.

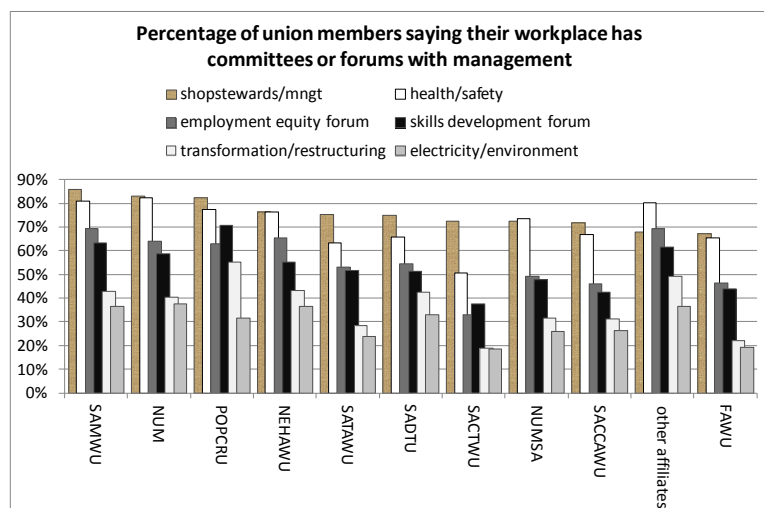
As the following chart shows, public sector union members on the whole were less likely to say the employer discriminates than private sector members. The workers in relatively low-wage industries were most likely to say the employer discriminates.



### 3 Workplace forums

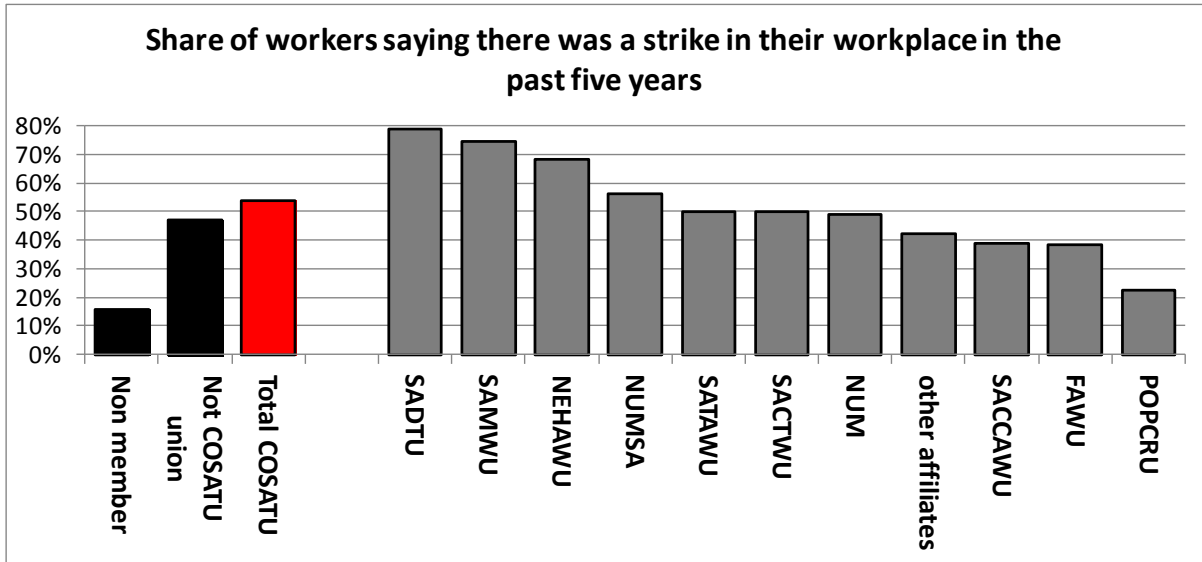


Union members were much more likely to report that their workplaces have consultative forums of all kinds than non-members. Public-sector union members reported more consultative structures than private-sector members.

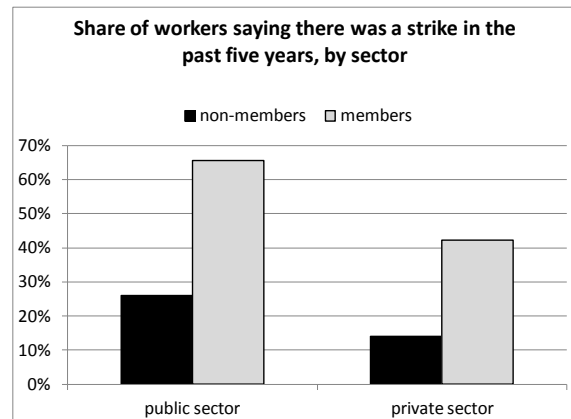


## 4 Strike action

Just under half of union members and a seventh of non-members reported that there had been a strike in their workplace in the past five years. The difference probably largely reflected the ability of union members to hold strikes. The result might also be influenced by workers' perceptions. Non-members were less likely to participate in strikes and therefore to remember them. The share of members reporting strikes in the past five years ranged from just under 80% for educators to just over 20% for police, for whom strikes are banned.

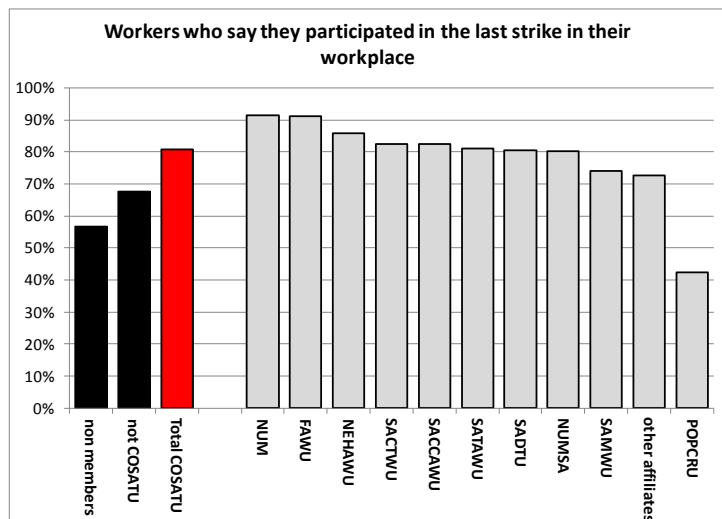


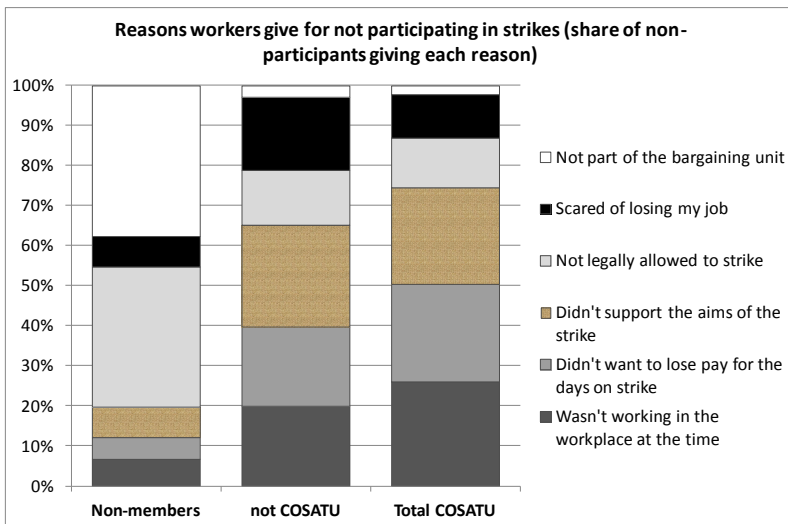
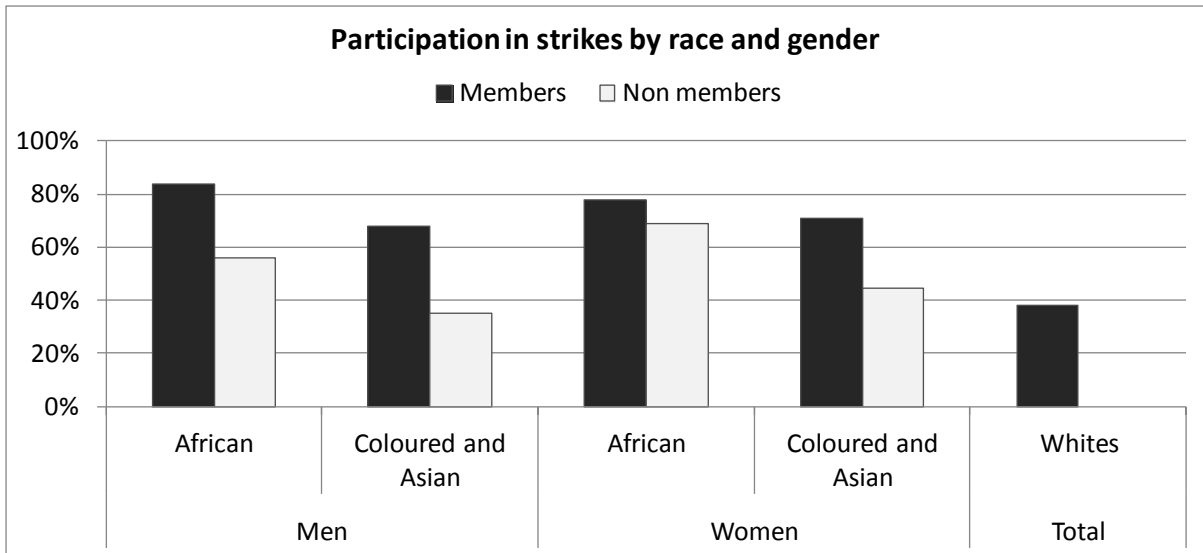
Members of public service unions were most likely to report strikes. Over two thirds of members in the public service said there had been a strike in their workplace in the past five years, compared to two fifths of private-sector members. In both the public and private sector, non-members were less likely to remember strikes than members. POPCRU members reported fewer strikes because their right to strike is legally restricted.



The vast majority of workers, particularly union members, said that if a strike was held in their workplace, they participated in it. Some 80% of COSATU members said they took part, compared to just under 70% of members of other unions and around 55% of non-members.

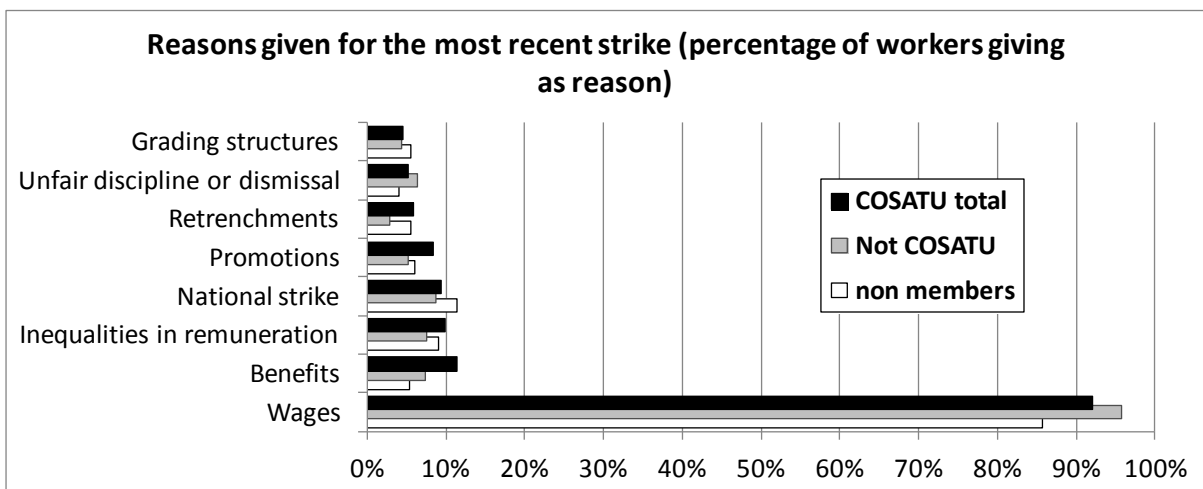
Participation in strikes varied substantially by race and gender. Africans were most likely to join in a strike if one happened in their workplace, and whites were least likely.





Amongst union members, the main reasons for not joining a strike, if they were working in the workplace at the time, was that they didn't support the aims of the strike or didn't want to lose pay. Amongst non-members, the overwhelming reasons given for not participating were that they were not part of the bargaining union or could not legally go on strike.

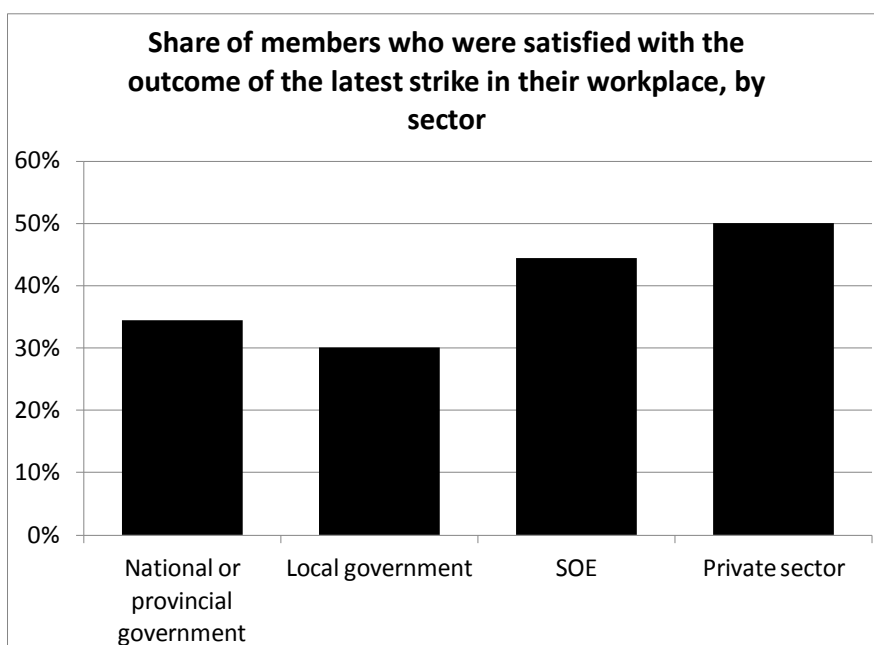
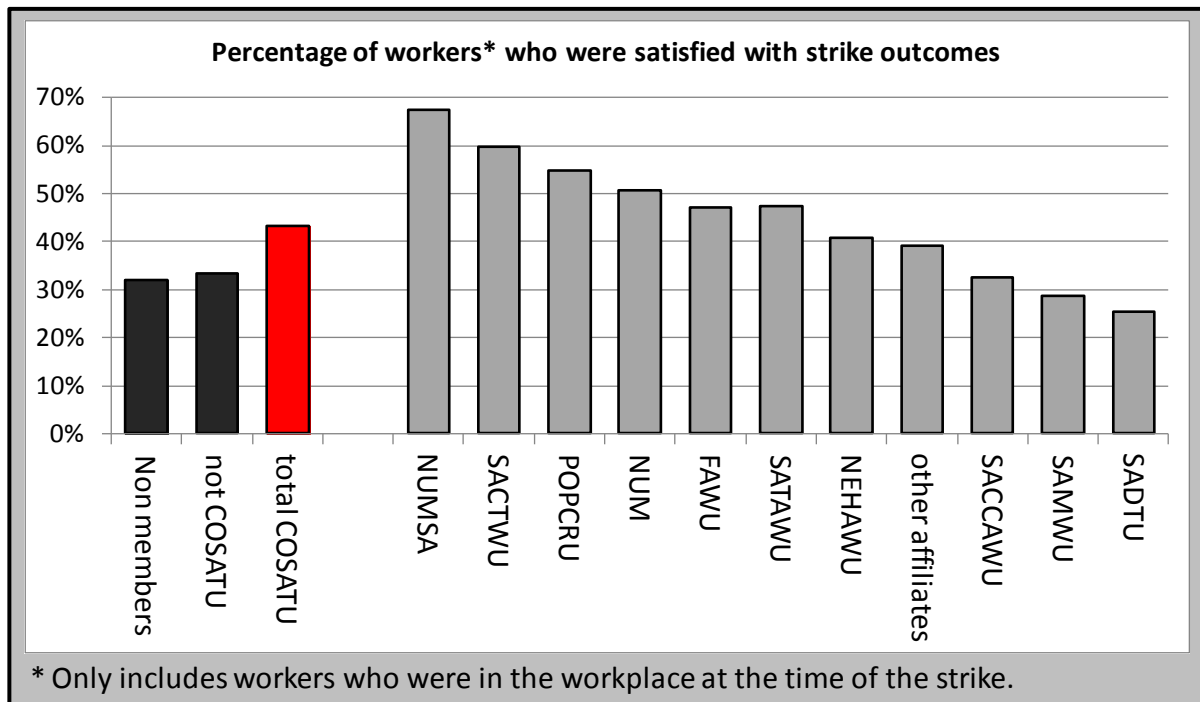
The most common reason given for strikes, by far, was wage negotiations. Between 85% and 90% of workers said the latest strike in their workplace was linked to pay. Benefits, inequalities and promotions were mentioned by around 10% of workers, but these issues often formed part of a package during wage negotiations.



A further 10% of workers said the latest strike in their workplace was part of a national

strike. The survey took place around a month after the national strike against labour broking and urban road tolls.

Almost half of COSATU members and around a third of other workers were satisfied with the outcomes of the latest strike in their workplace. Amongst union members, the highest levels of satisfaction were found in the private sector and state-owned enterprises, while the lowest levels were in local government and the public service.

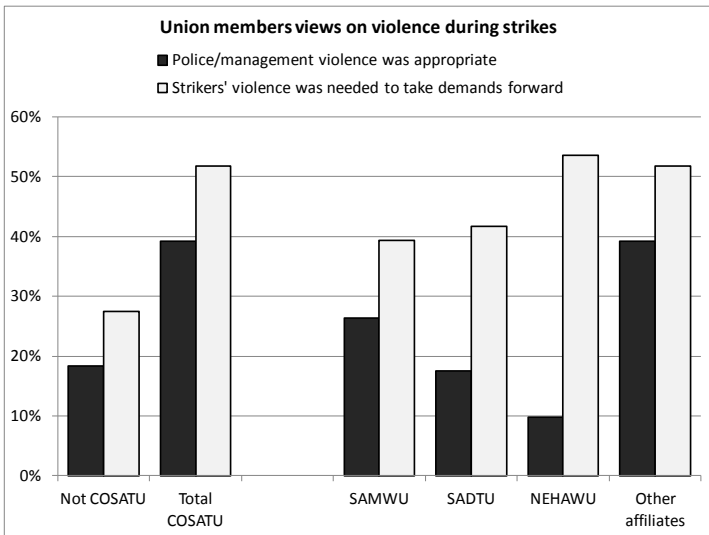
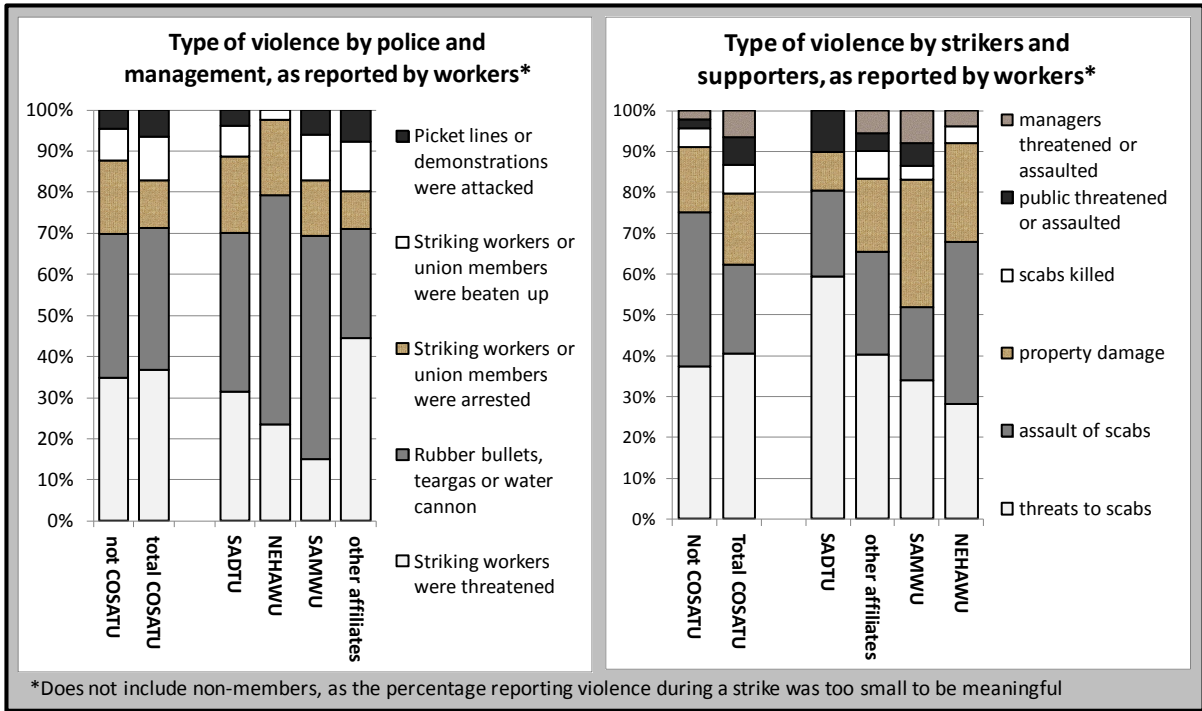


Similarly, satisfaction with strike outcomes was markedly lower for members in the public sector than for those in the private sector.

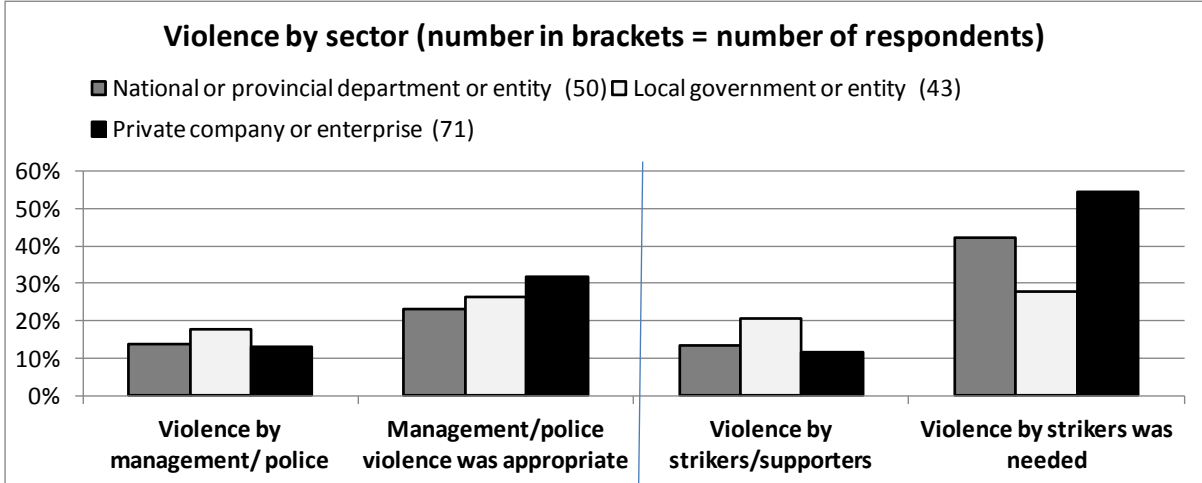
Between 10% and 15% of workers reported that there had been violence or intimidation by management or the police, mostly threats against strikers, rubber bullets or teargas. A similar

number said there had been violence or intimidation by strike supporters, mostly threats to scabs. Again, these figures reflect workers' perceptions, which were based in large part on hearsay rather than personal experience.





Around half of COSATU members involved in a strike thought the violence by workers was necessary. Around two in five thought the violence by the police or management was an appropriate response to the strikers' behaviour. The highest level of violence by strike supporters was reported in local government strikes, mostly in the form of damage to property, Local government was also the sector where members were least likely to say it was necessary.



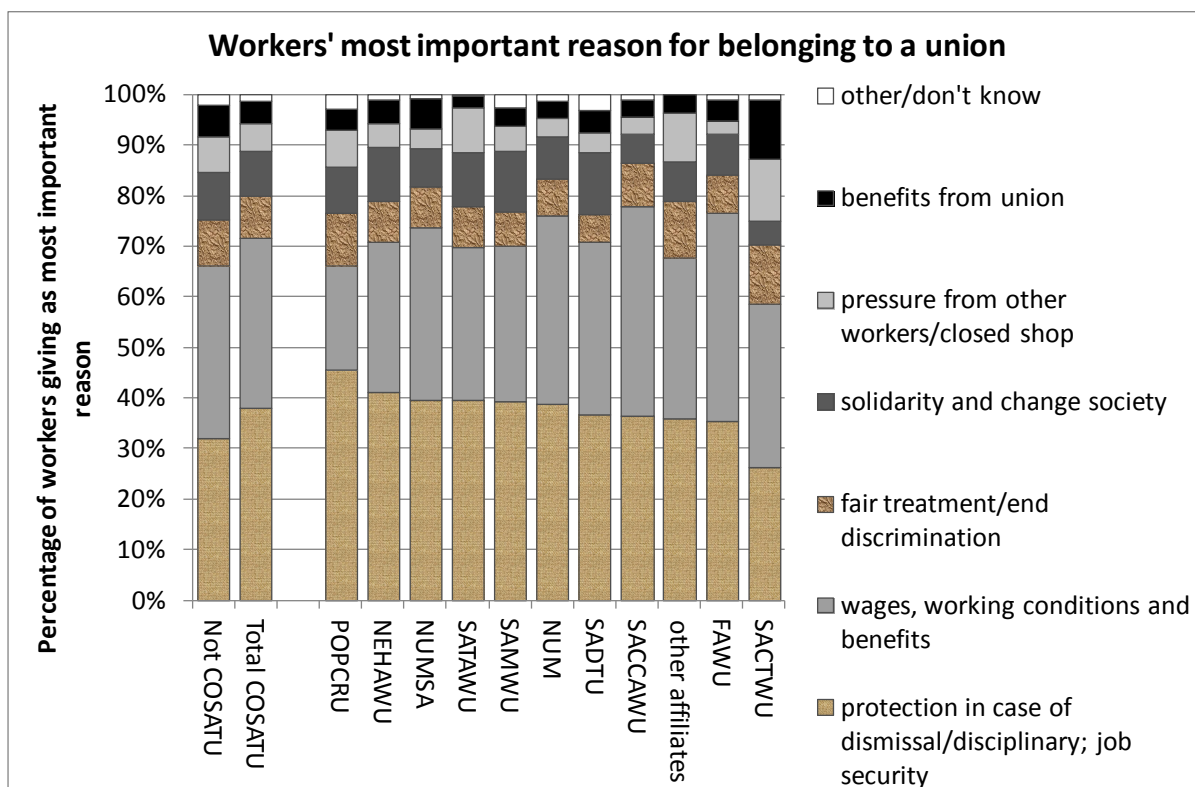
## IV. Union members

The survey asked a range of questions to understand how members see their unions and what they want from them. As in 2006, the survey found that COSATU affiliates generally performed fairly well on responsiveness, mandating, worker education and reporting back.

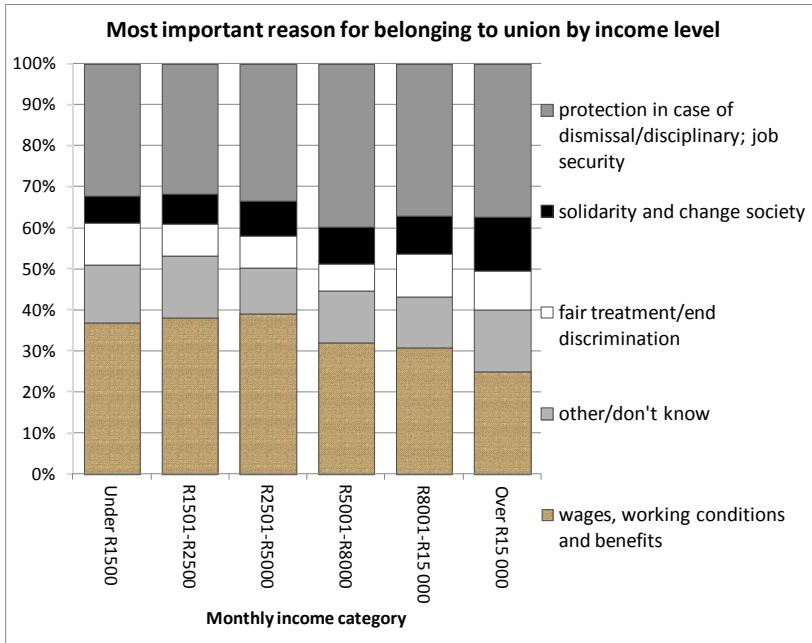
### 1 What workers want from unions

Workers said they belong to unions mostly to protect them at work and improve their pay and conditions. For most aspects of union work, between 50% and 60% were satisfied with their union's services. Asked what would improve workers' support, they asked for improved communications and overall responsiveness as much as for better services.

When asked for the most important reason they belong to unions, over a third of members said their top priority was for the union to defend them at work from dismissals and disciplinary challenges. Around a third wanted improvements in pay, conditions and benefits. Just under 10% of workers said their priority was to achieve a generally more fair and equitable workplace, and around the same percentage joined the union to support solidarity and social change. Most of the remaining members said they joined because of pressure from other workers or because everyone in their workplace was in the union.



The picture does not change much if we add in workers' second and third order aims in joining a union. The main difference is that around one in seven COSATU members, and about one in five members of other unions, said they also wanted specific benefits that the union provides, such as funeral insurance.



Workers with lower incomes were most likely to say they belonged to union to improve pay, benefits and conditions. Higher income workers tended to stress protection from disciplinary challenges and dismissal and were somewhat more likely to mention solidarity and social change.

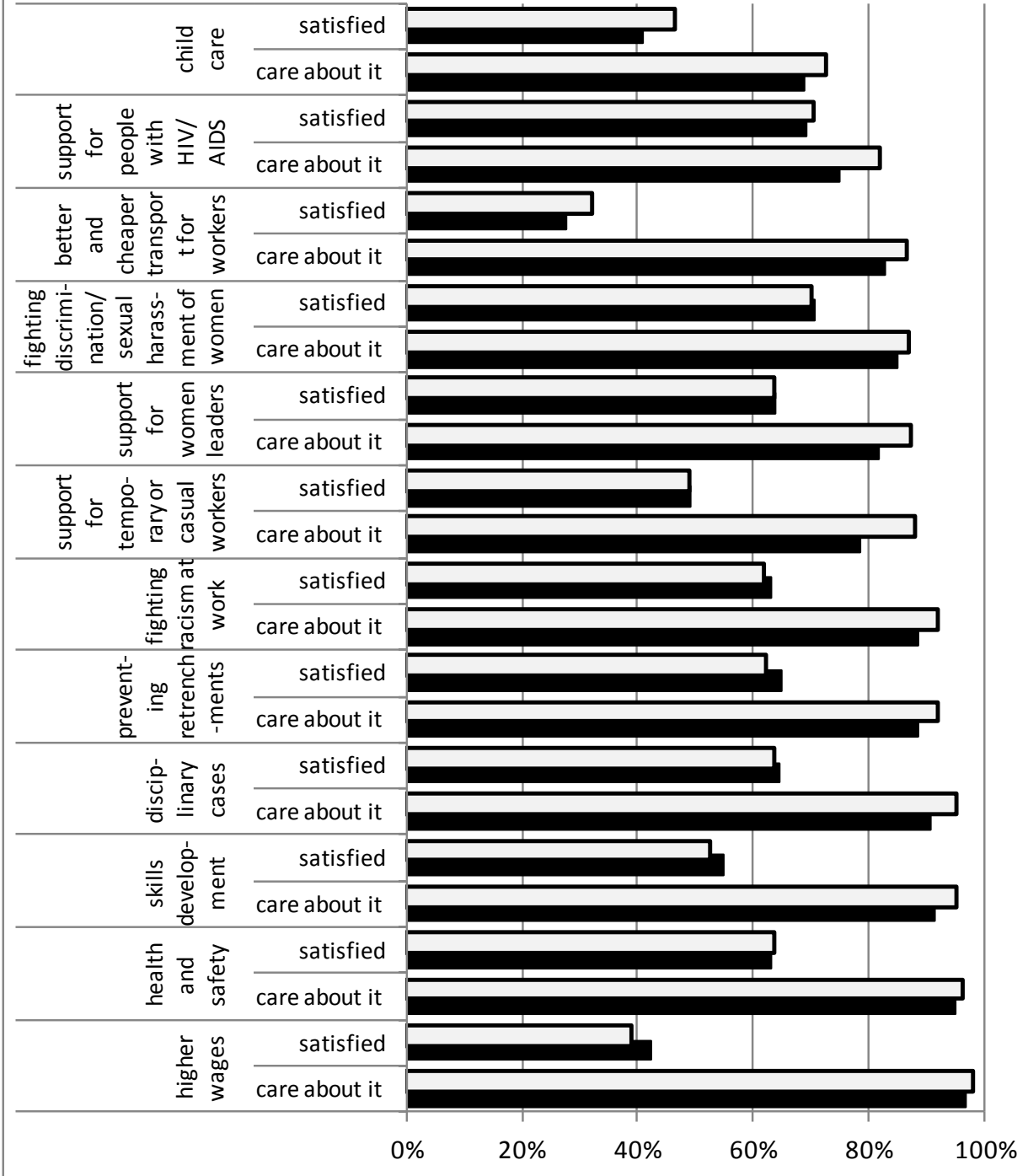
The survey asked workers what they thought about their union's work in specific areas, ranging

from negotiations on pay to childcare. As the questions asked about particular issues, they did not necessarily reflect members' priorities. The survey did, however, record if workers were not interested in an issue or did not know about the union's work in that area. Members who gave either of these answers presumably do not see the issue as a priority.

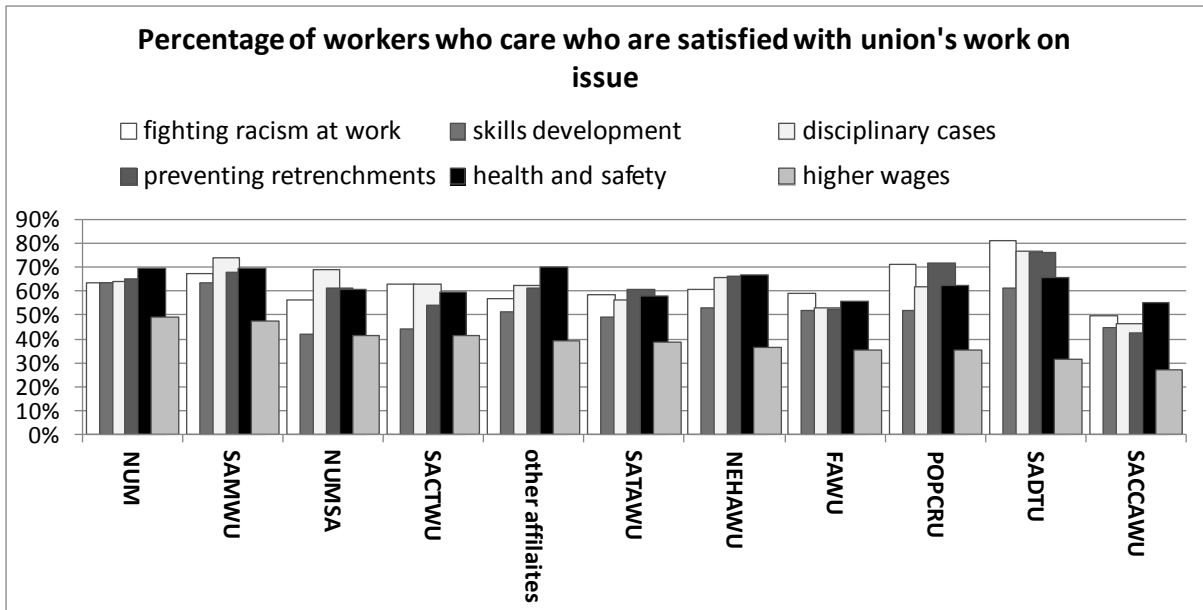
Overall, the highest share of union members – some 98% - said they cared about their union's work on wages. But that was also the area where members were least likely to say they were satisfied. Only about two fifths of workers were satisfied with their union's work on pay. Half were satisfied with their union's work on skills development, two thirds with retrenchment efforts, and four fifths on issues around racism.

## Assessment of union work

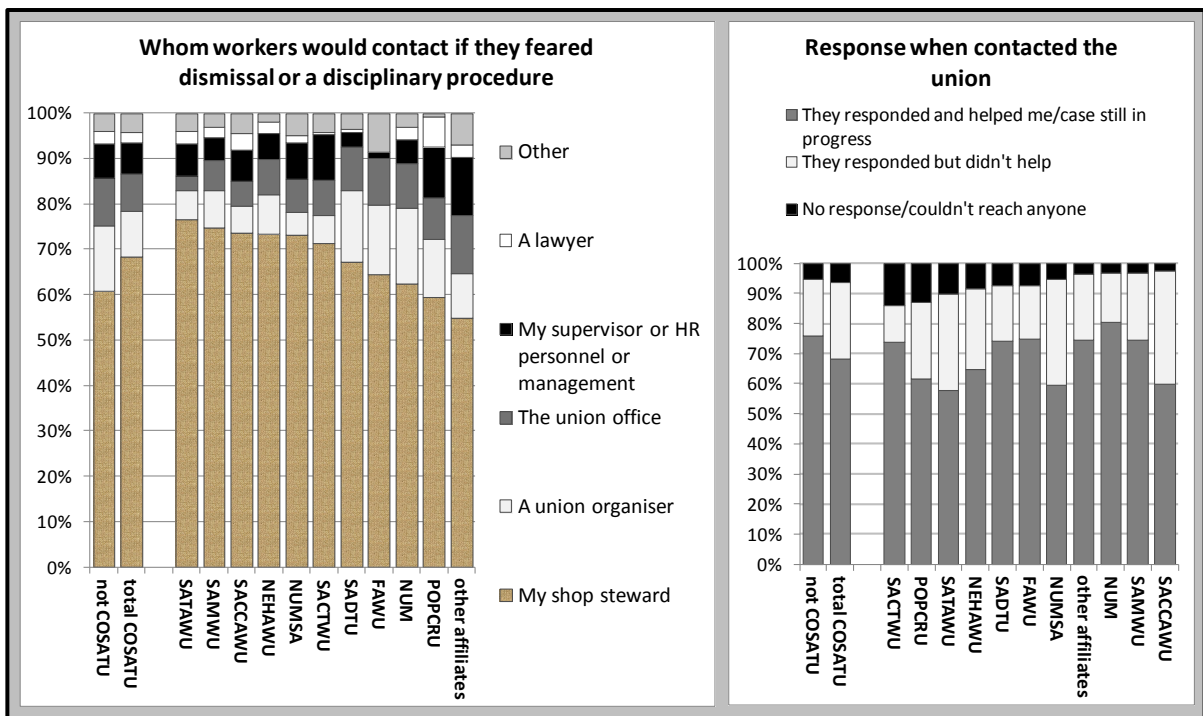
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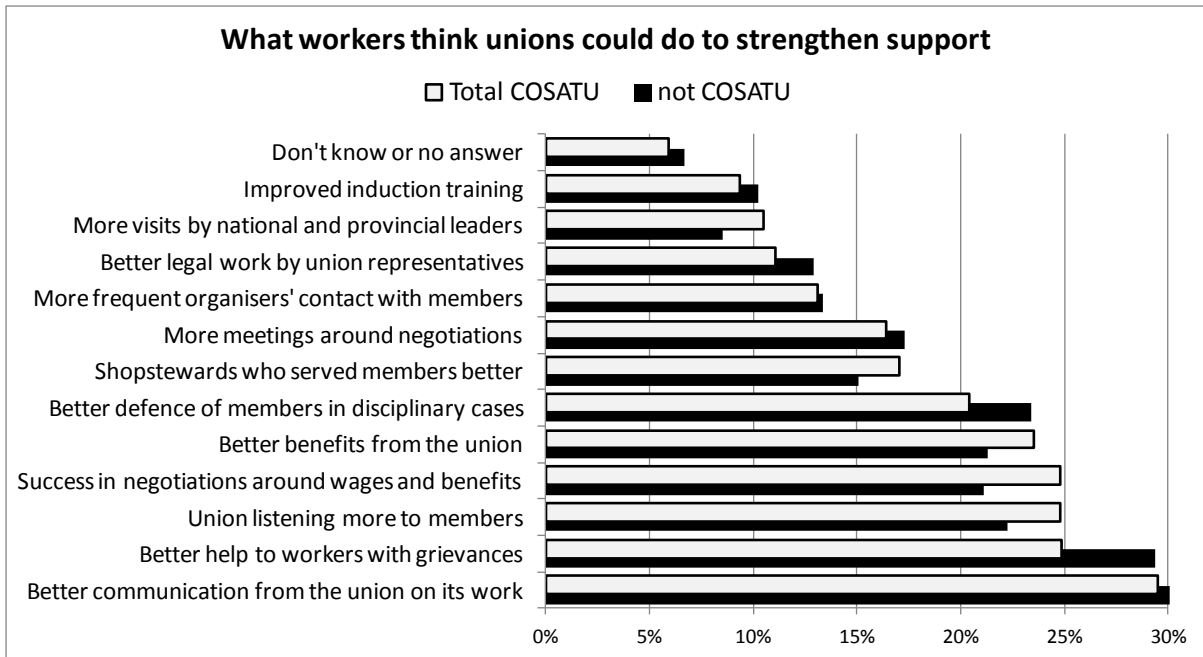
The following chart shows members' satisfaction with their union's work on six issues where over 90% said they cared.



The COSATU Survey also assessed members' views of their unions by asking whom they would contact if they were afraid of being fired or unfairly disciplined at work. As the following chart shows, the vast majority would talk to their shop steward, with the organiser coming in second place. In 95% of cases where workers did try to contact a COSATU affiliates, the union responded; in just under 70% of cases, the union provided some help.



The survey asked workers what their union could do to improve support. Members were requested to name their three top priorities, but not in order. A third said unions should communicate better, and a quarter that they should listen more. Most also wanted improved services, including more success in negotiations as well as better work on individual cases.



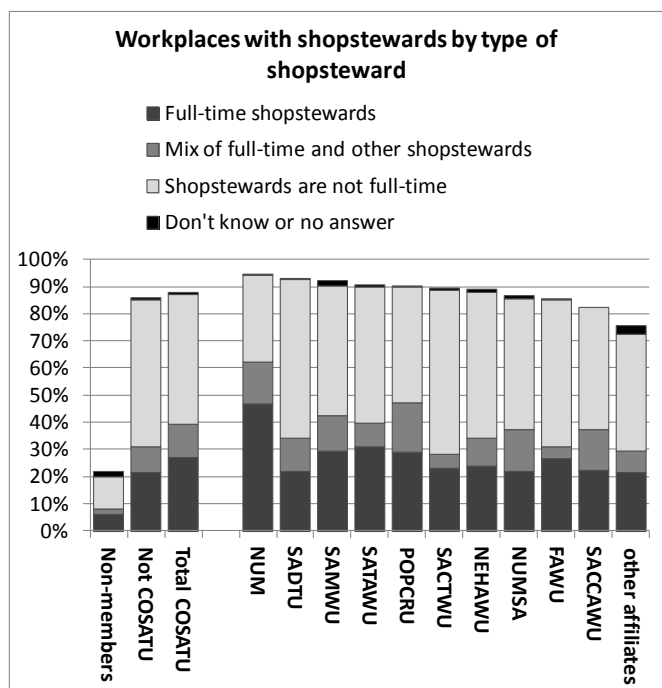
Finally, the COSATU Survey found that workers often do not know much about their unions' national structures. When asked about national leadership, just 6% of the members of COSATU affiliates knew who their president or general secretary was. Another 8% gave the name of a COSATU national office bearer, and the rest either named a local official or no one at all.

Members of unions that are not affiliated to COSATU were notably unsure of that fact. Three quarters of the members of independent unions thought they belonged to COSATU affiliates. So did around a quarter of the members of unions affiliated to NACTU or FEDUSA.

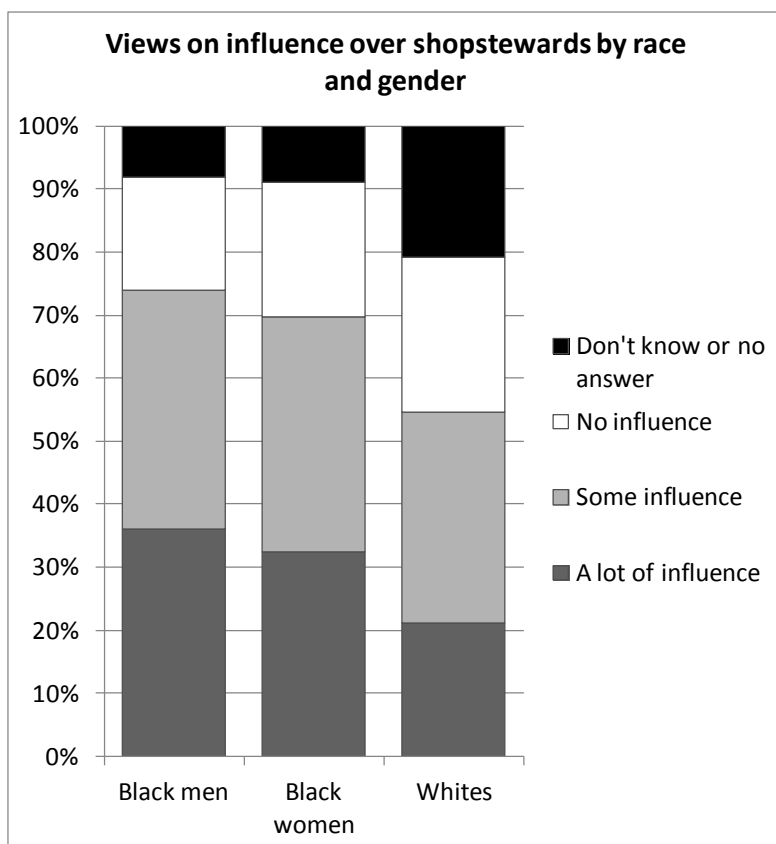
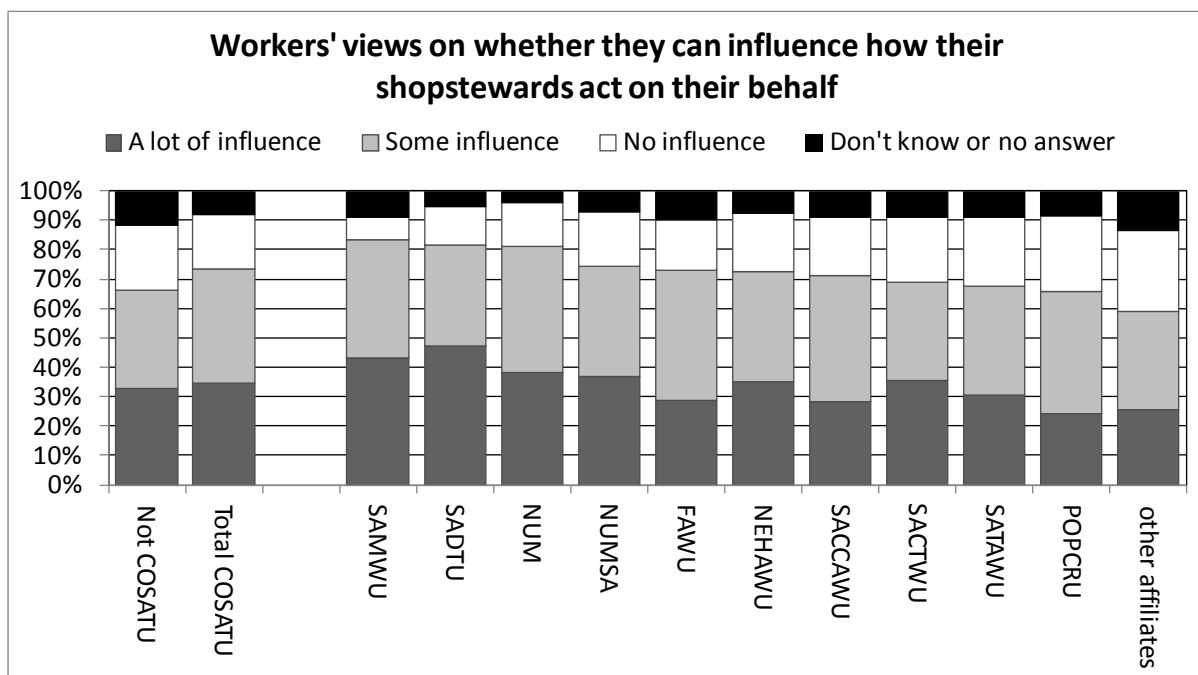
## 2 Shopstewards

Less than 15% of union members, but 80% of non-members, said their workplace did not have any shopstewards. Overall, two fifths of COSATU members said they had at least some full-time shopstewards, but the share varied substantially by affiliate.

Union members in smaller companies were less likely to have shopstewards. Only seven out of ten of those who worked for employers with nine workers or less reported any shopstewards in their workplaces. And if they had any shopstewards, only around a quarter were full time. In contrast, in the largest workplaces nine out of ten members reported that they had shopstewards, and two out of five were full time.



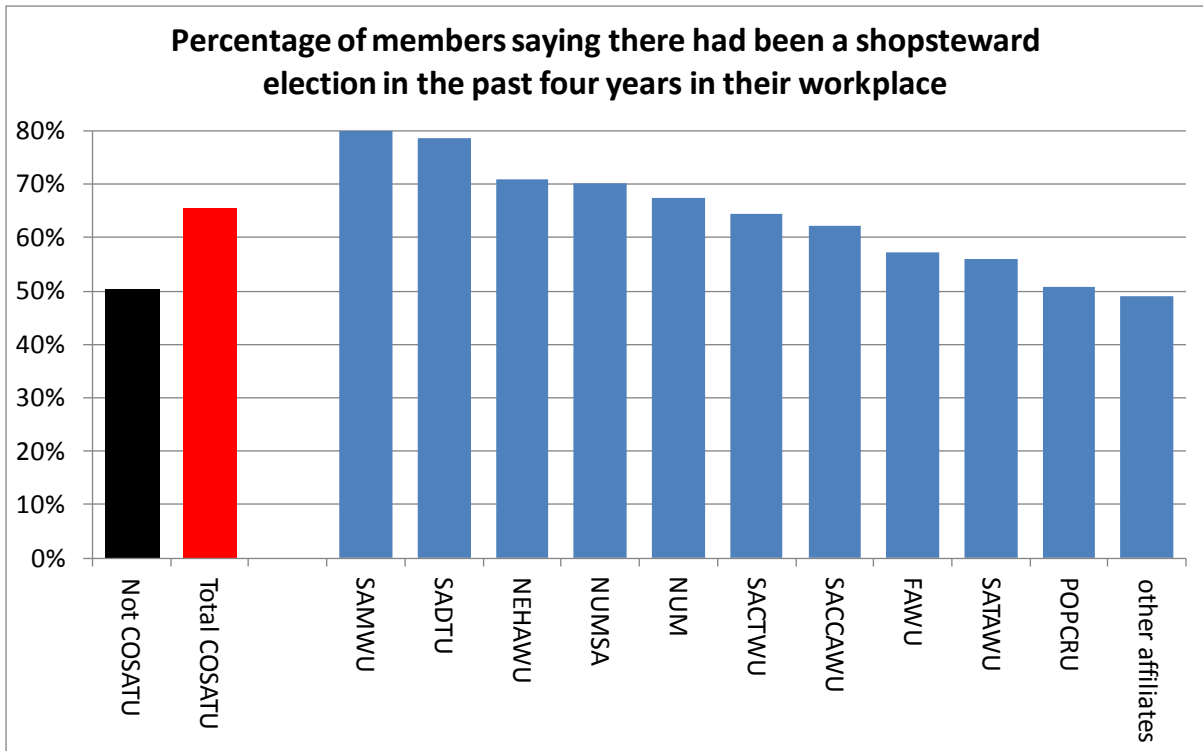
Almost three quarters of COSATU members and two thirds of members of other unions said they had at least some influence over their shopstewards. Amongst COSATU affiliates, the share saying they had at least some influence ranged from over 80% to 60%.



Workers' perception of their influence over shopstewards varied to some extent by gender. African and Coloured women were generally less likely than African and Coloured men to feel they could influence shopstewards. Whites as a group were less likely than others to feel they could influence their shopstewards, but they also largely did not belong to COSATU affiliates.

Two thirds of the members of COSATU affiliates said there had been a shopsteward election in their workplace in the past four years, compared to half of members of other unions. Amongst COSATU affiliates, the share reporting

an election in the past four years ranged from just under 50% to 80%.

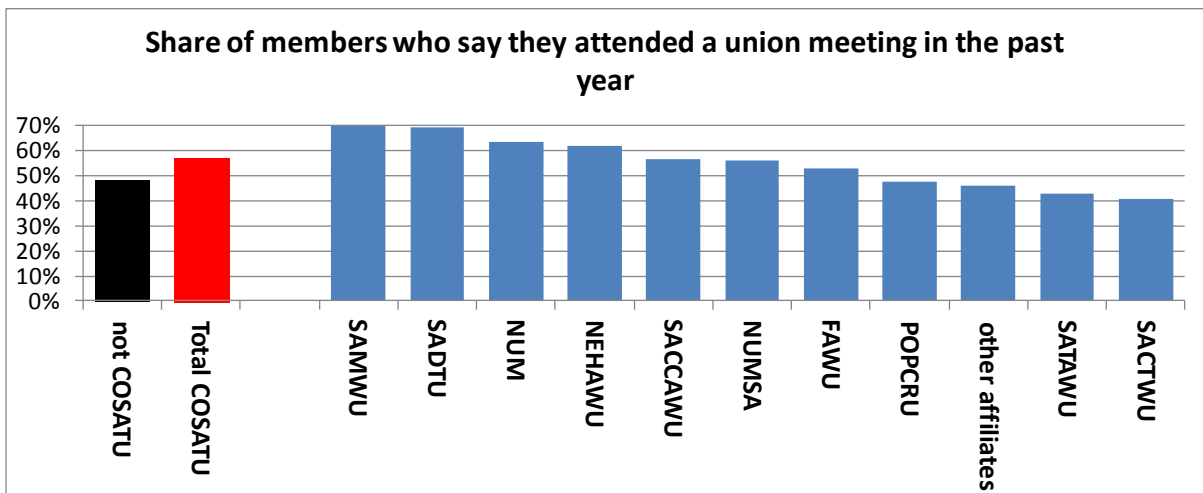


Overall, where a shop steward election had been held, almost nine out of ten members of COSATU affiliates said they had voted, compared to eight out of ten members of other unions. Amongst COSATU affiliates, the share of members who said they had voted in shopsteward elections ranged from 97% to 81%. There were no significant differences by race, gender or age.

### 3 Reporting back

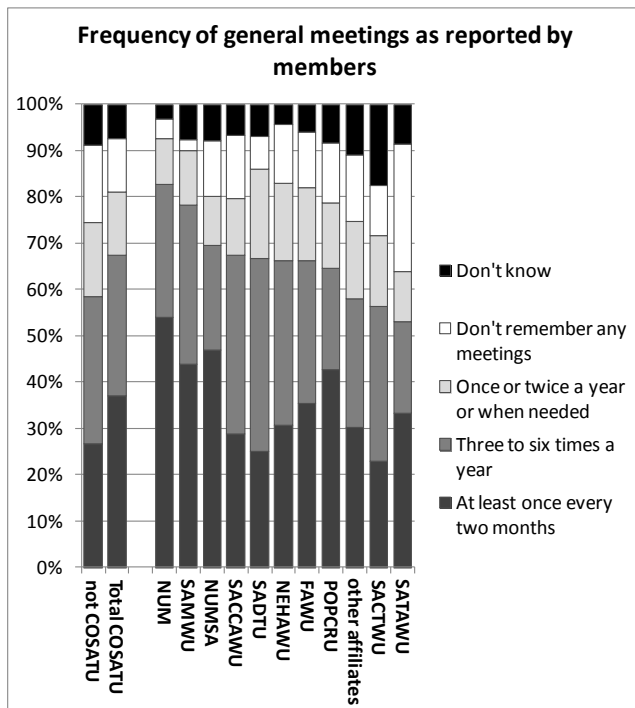
Reporting back to members in the workplace and getting their mandates is obviously central to union democracy. The COSATU Survey asked union members a number of questions on this topic.

Two thirds of COSATU members said they had attended a union meeting in the past year, compared to under half the members of other unions. The share that had attended a meeting in the past year ranged amongst affiliates from 70% to 40%.





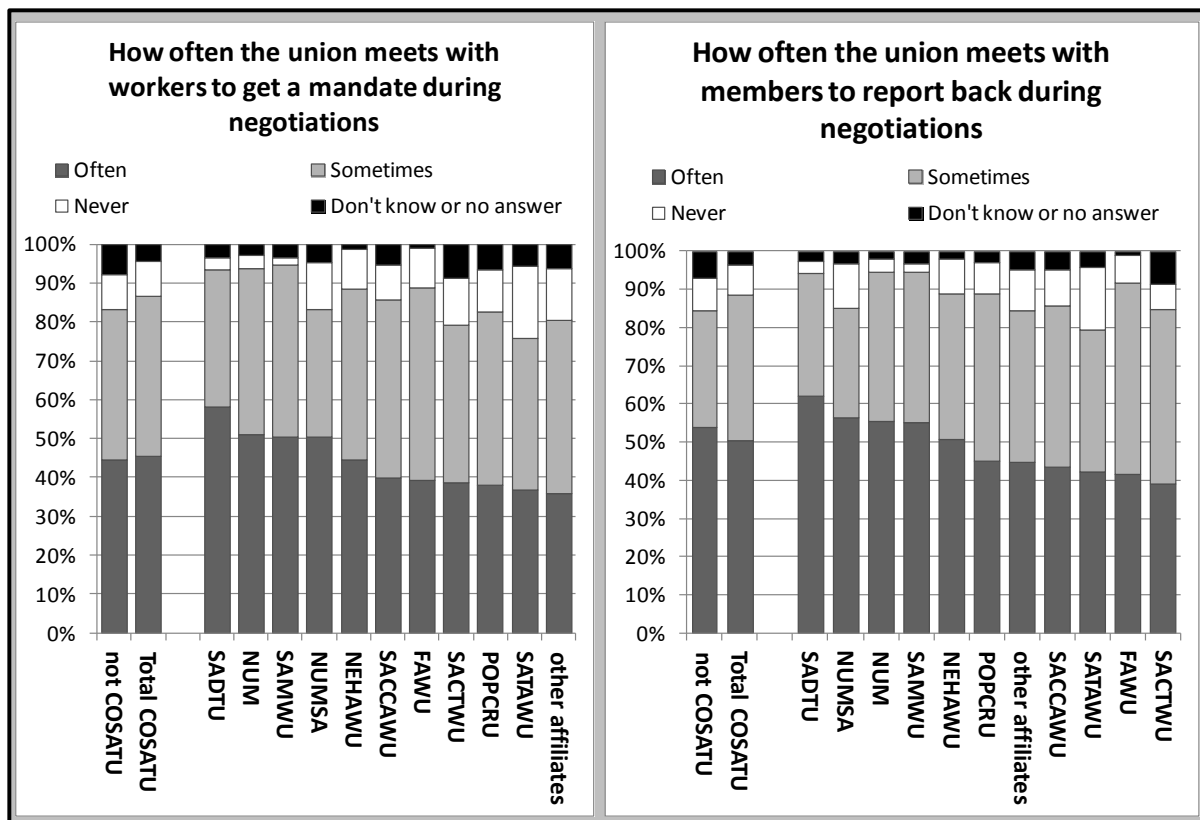
As with the influence over shopstewards, women were rather less likely than men to say they had been to a union meeting in the past year, and whites were less likely than anyone else. Of African, Coloured and Asian men members, 58% said they had attended a union meeting in the past year, compared to 53% of black women. For whites as a whole, the figure was only 40%.



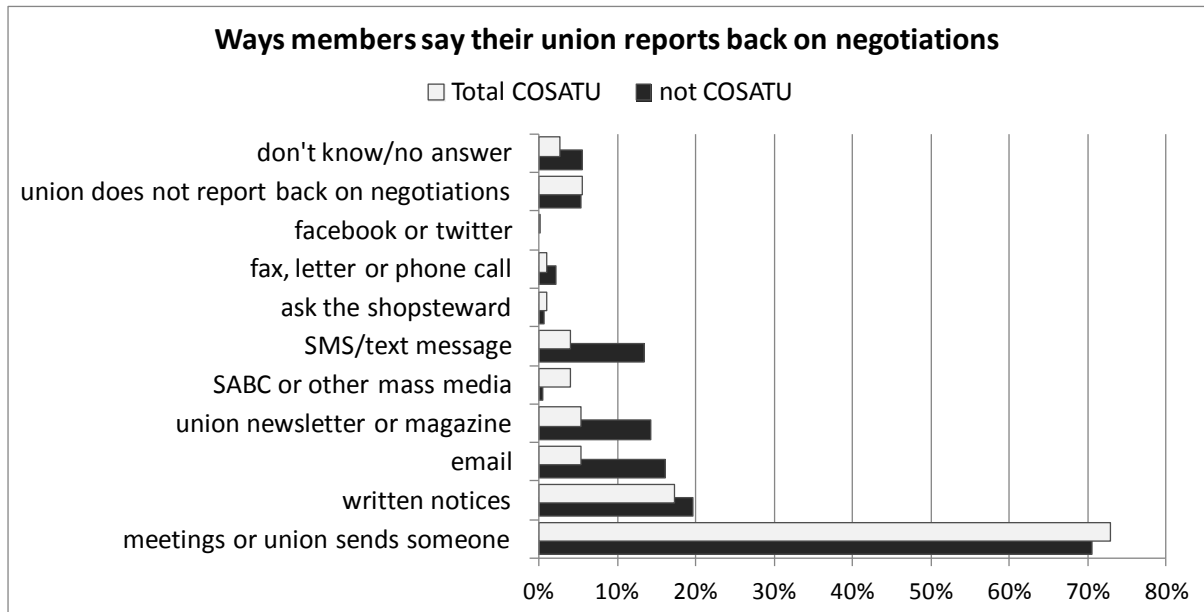
Around two thirds of COSATU members said that their union held a general meeting in their workplace at least once a quarter. One in five, however, said they did not remember any general meetings or did not know how often they took place. Amongst affiliates, the share of members saying general meetings were held at least once every three months ranged from four fifths to just over half.

The survey also asked members more specifically about mandating and reporting back during negotiations. Some 45% of union members said their unions always met with them to get a mandate, and another 41% said they met sometimes. The percentage saying they always met for mandating ranged from

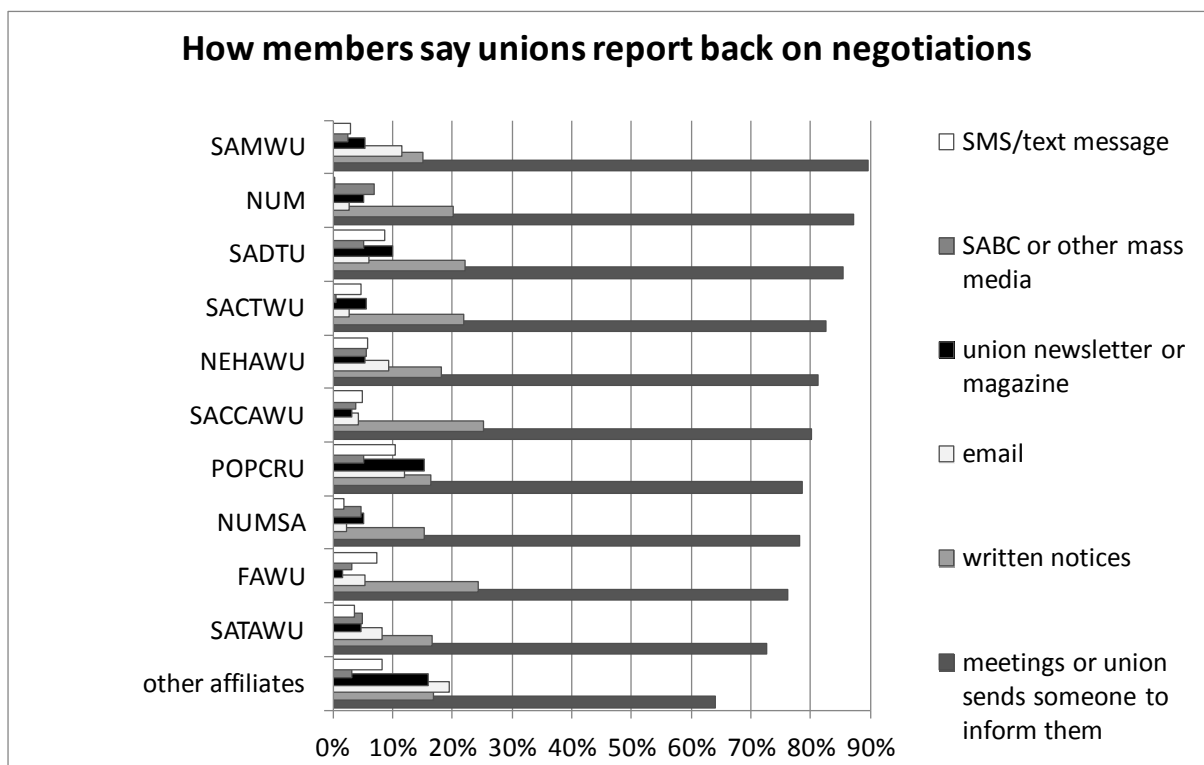
58% to 36% amongst COSATU affiliates. Half of members said they often got a reportback from the union on negotiations, and another two fifths said they sometimes did.



The survey let members list several ways their unions reported back. Four out of five COSATU members said the union reported back through meetings or by sending someone to the workplace. Another fifth got written notices. Relatively few were informed by email or text messages, and almost none by facebook or twitter. Unions that were not affiliated to COSATU were more likely to use email or text messages or a union newsletter.

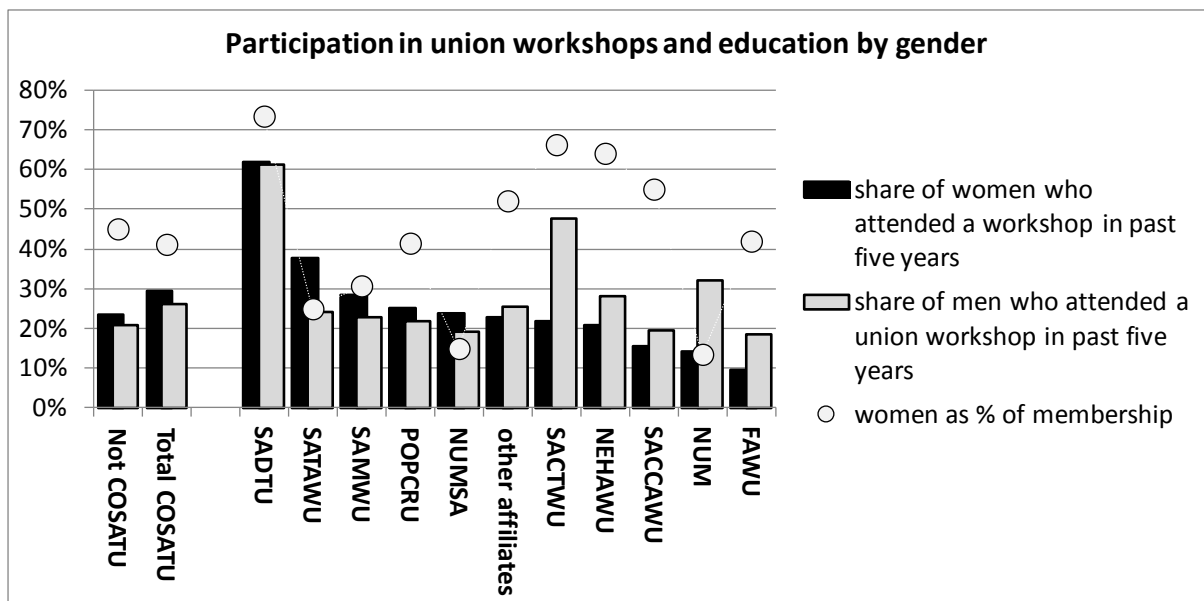


The survey also asked members to list the main ways their unions reported back on negotiations. Virtually all COSATU affiliates relied primarily on meetings. But there were differences in how much they used other systems to report back. The following chart only gives the main mechanisms that members noted.



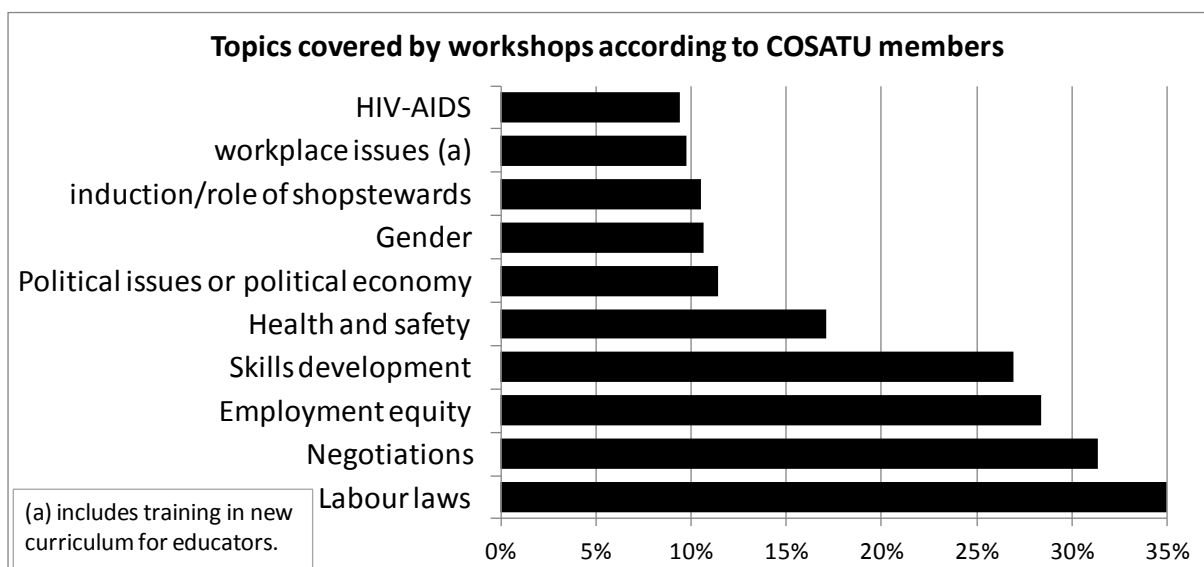
## 4 Union education

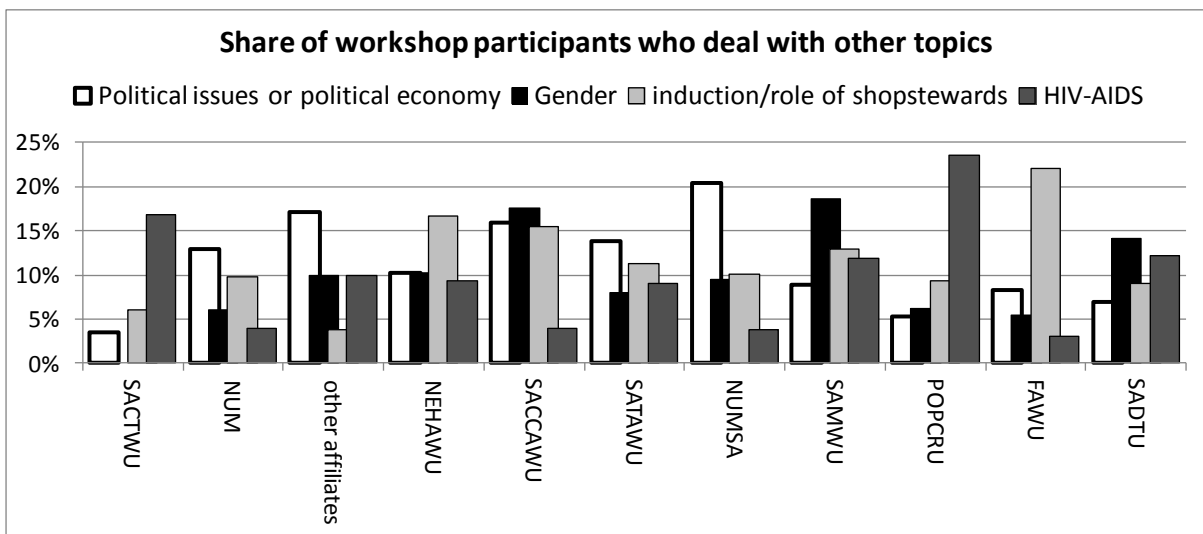
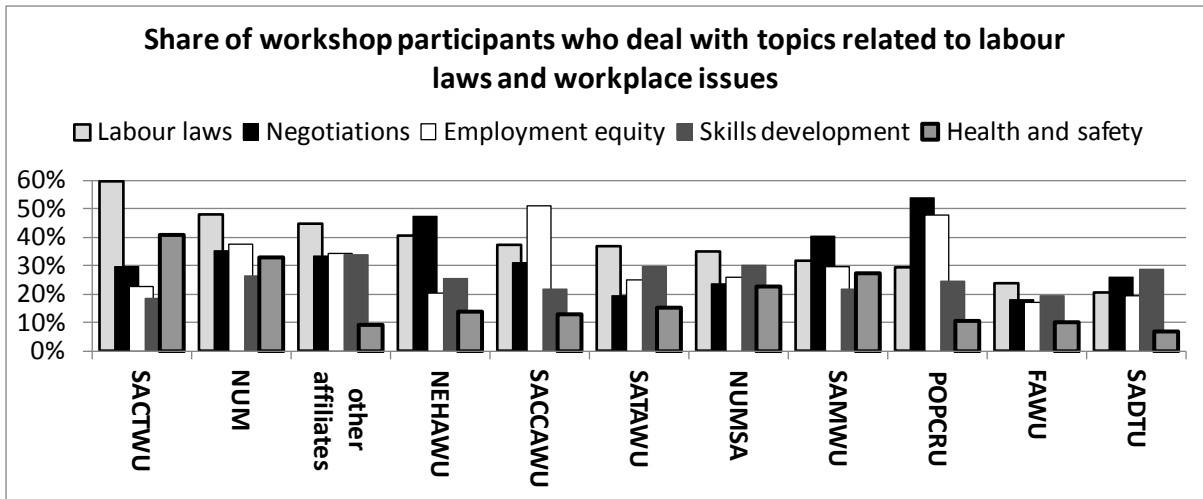
Around a quarter of COSATU members said they had participated in a union workshop or educational programme. By affiliate, the share ranged from under 20% to over 60%.



The 2006 COSATU Survey found that women were generally less likely to participate in union education than men. In the 2012 Survey, women COSATU members overall were slightly more likely to have participated than men. But women were much less likely to participate in educational programmes in almost half of all affiliates. Some of the affected affiliates had a majority of women members.

By topic, the largest number of participants said they attended workshops or educational programmes on negotiations, labour law, employment equity and skills development. In part, the topics were determined by the availability of funding from the Department of Labour in particular. Around 10% said they attended induction or shopstewards' training or political economy programmes, and a similar percentage attended programmes on gender or HIV/AIDS.

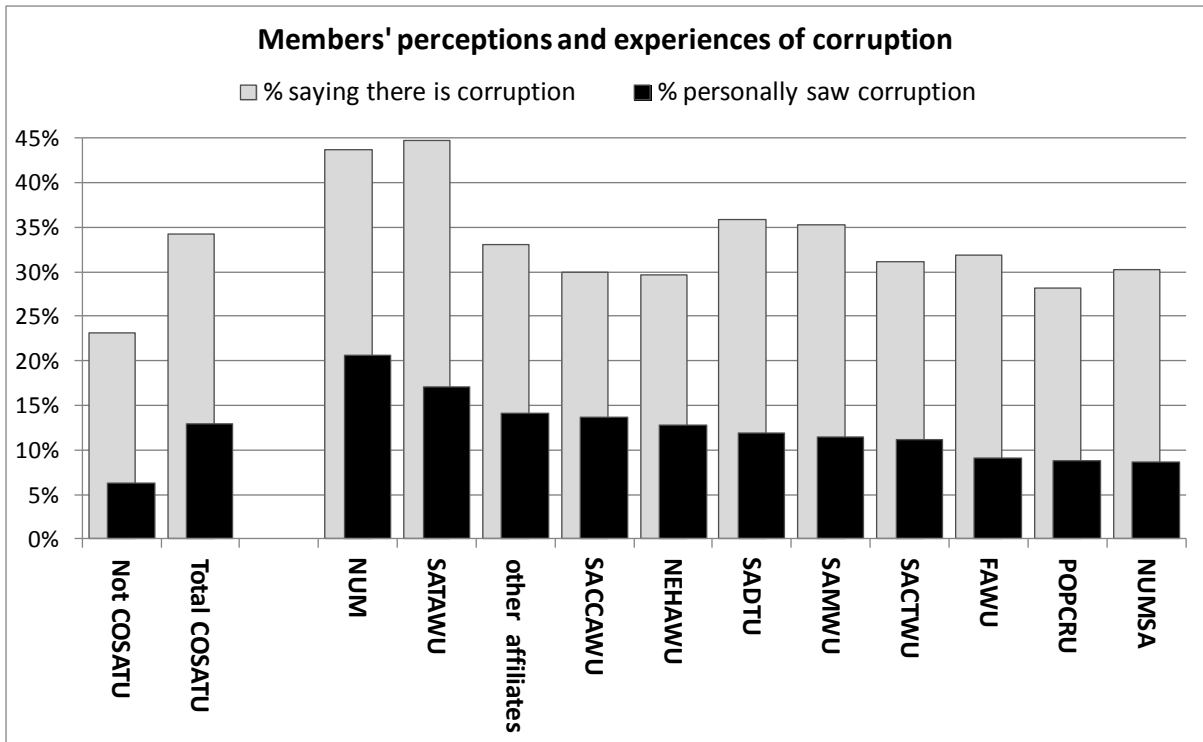




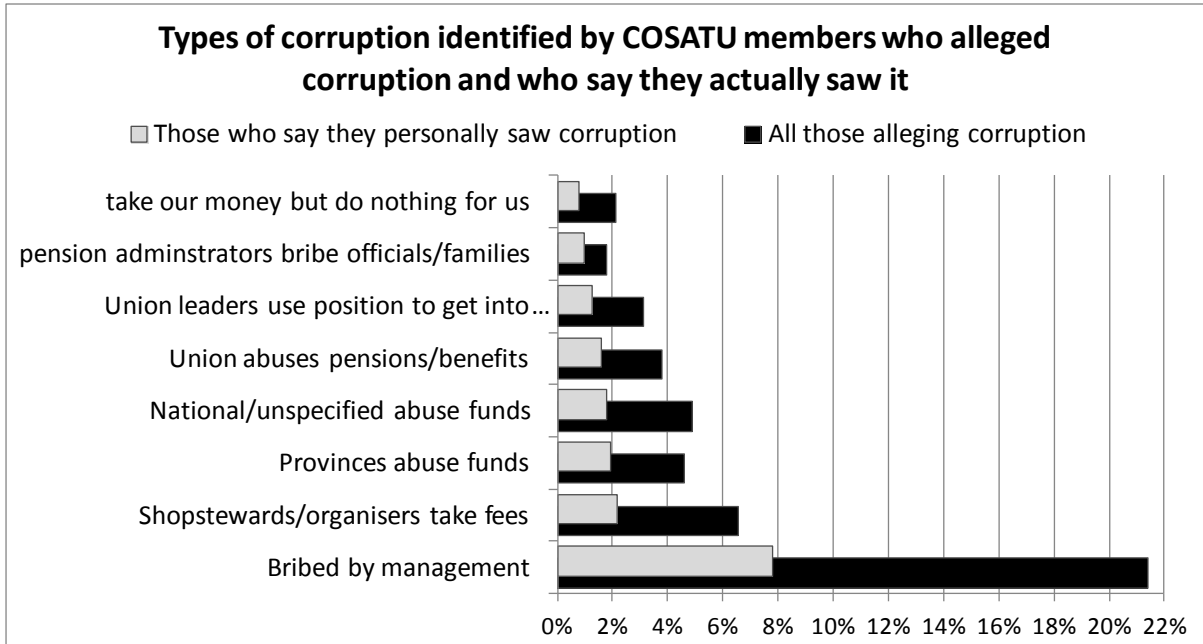
## 5 Perceptions of corruption

Around a third of union members said there was corruption in their unions, but fewer than one in seven said they had personally experienced it. This is a common challenge for surveys on corruption in the public sector, since people may believe there is corruption without much evidence. In a union, some members may say any failure in negotiations or disputes is due to employers bribing shopstewards or organisers.

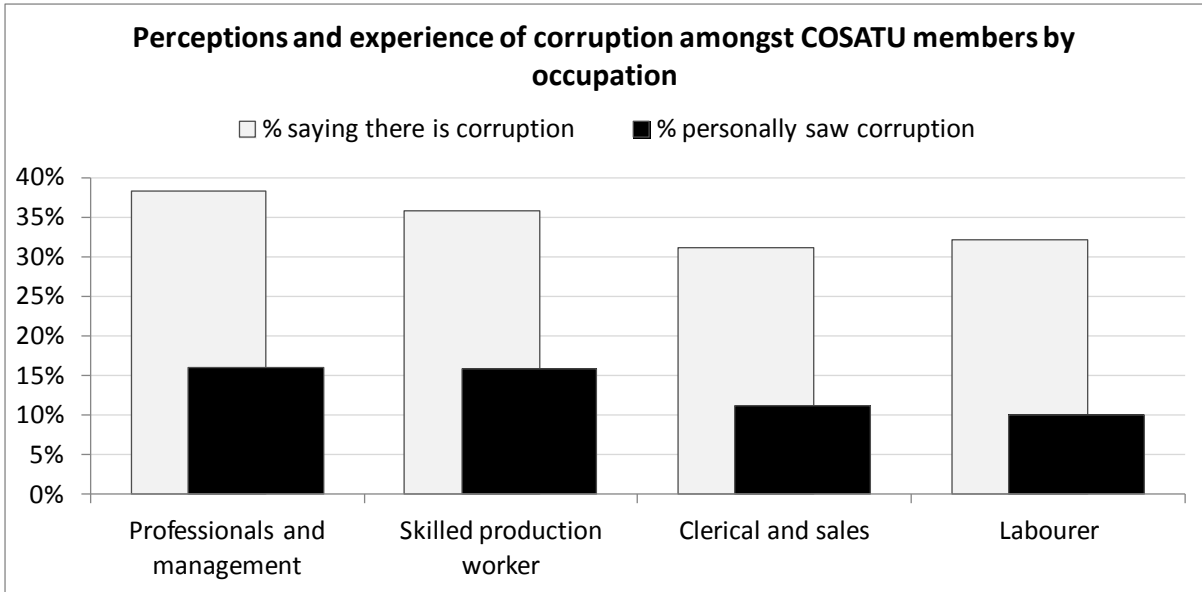
As the following chart shows, there was not much relationship between perceptions of corruption and actual experience of it.



Almost half of COSATU members who alleged or saw corruption said it involved shopstewards selling out to management. Most of the rest related to misuse of union funds. Again, some of the allegations did not constitute corruption as normally understood, but rather arose from the perception that union leaders were not serving members.

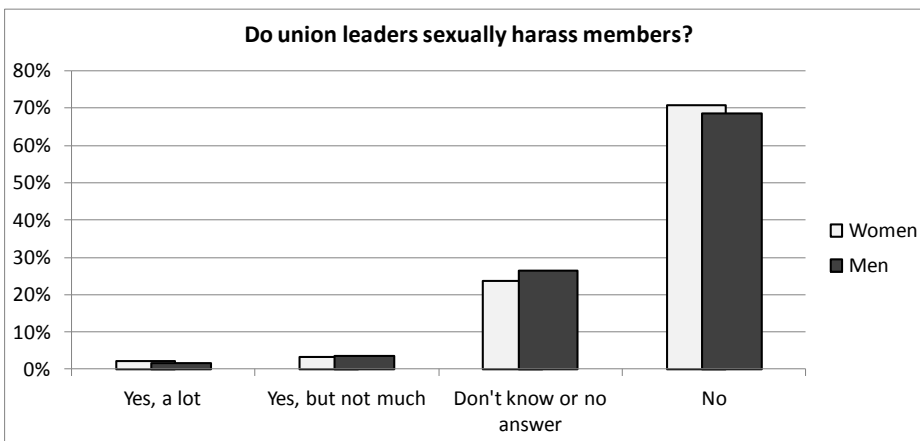
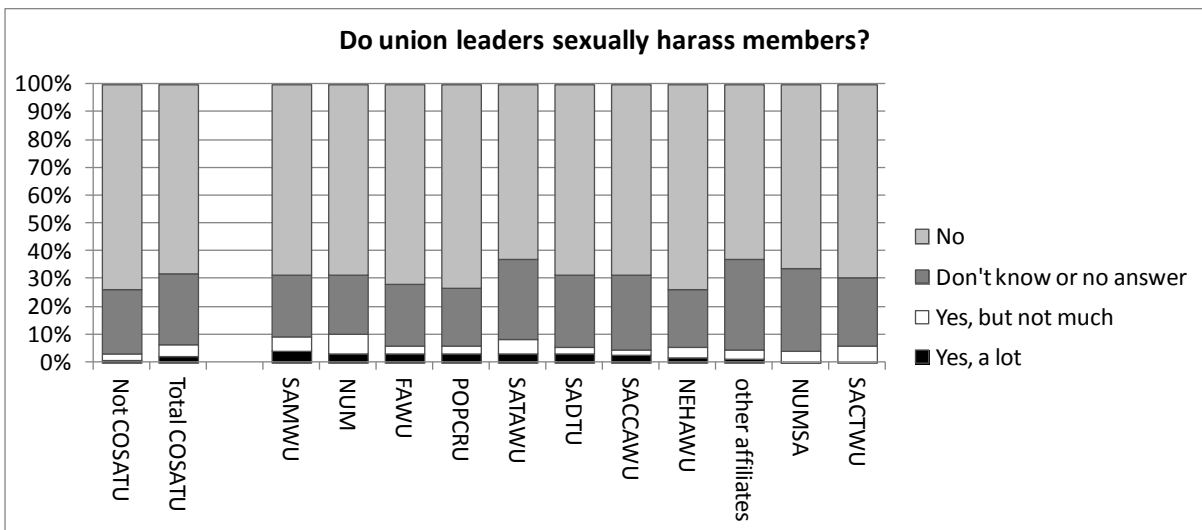


In COSATU, professionals and skilled production workers were more likely to say there was corruption than office workers and general labourers.



## 6 Sexual harassment

Just over 5% of COSATU members said leaders harassed women sexually at least sometimes, while another 25% said they did not know or would not answer the question.

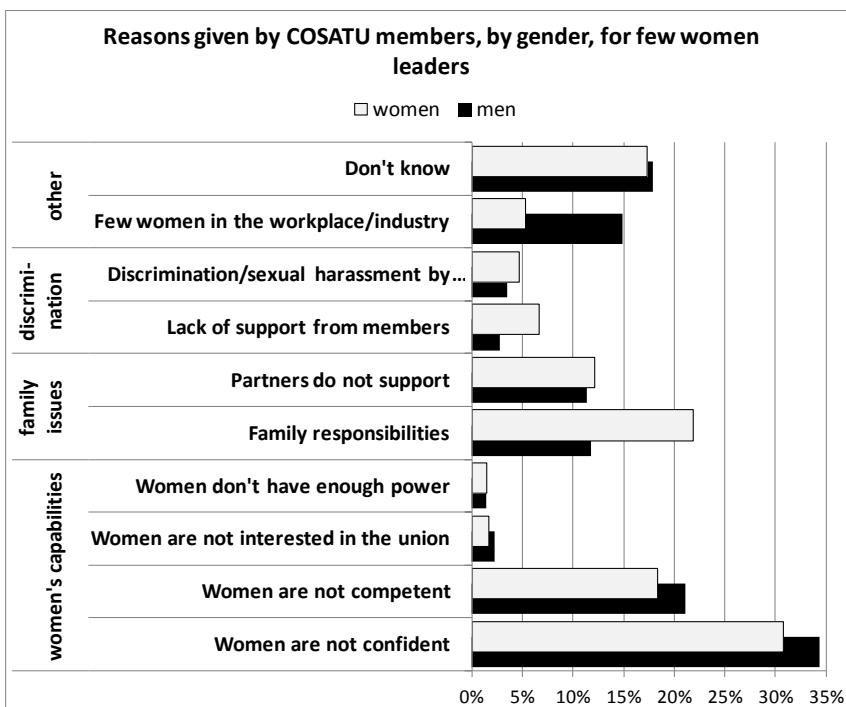
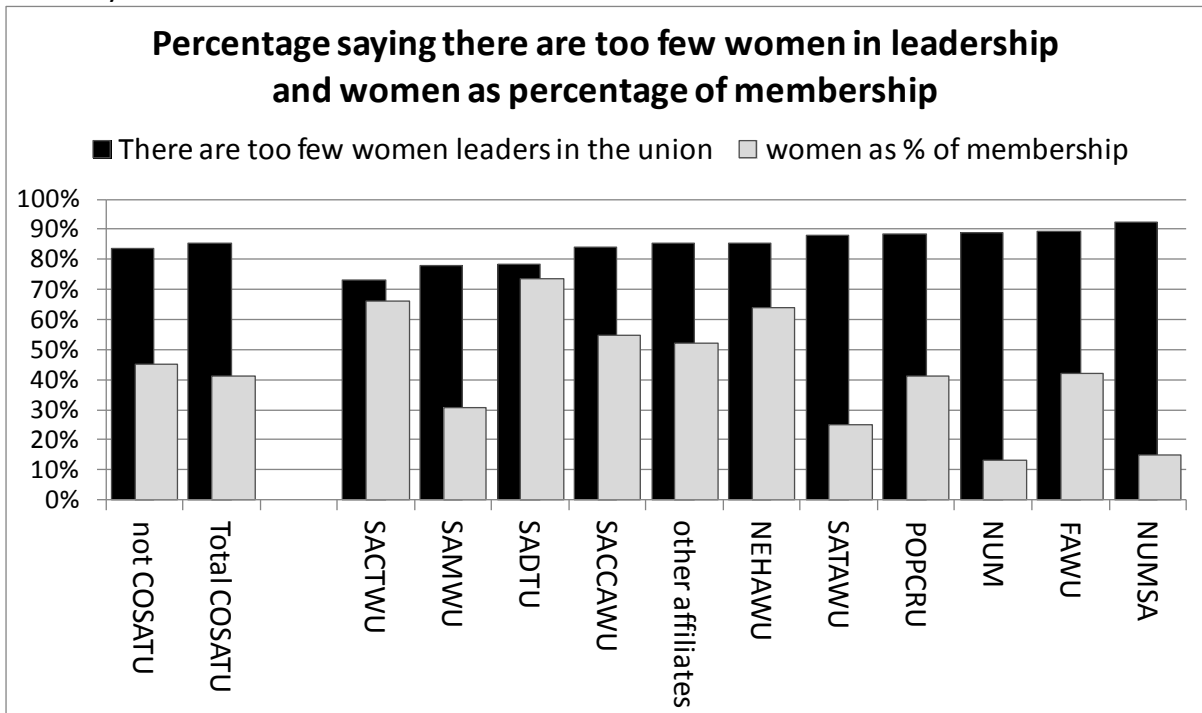


There was not much difference in perceptions of sexual harassment by gender. Around 2% of men and women union members said that sexual harassment was widespread.

## 7 Women leaders

The COSATU Survey asked members “why are there few women leaders and shopstewards in the unions?” While most members agreed that women were indeed underrepresented, they largely ended up blaming it on women’s own characteristics and competencies.

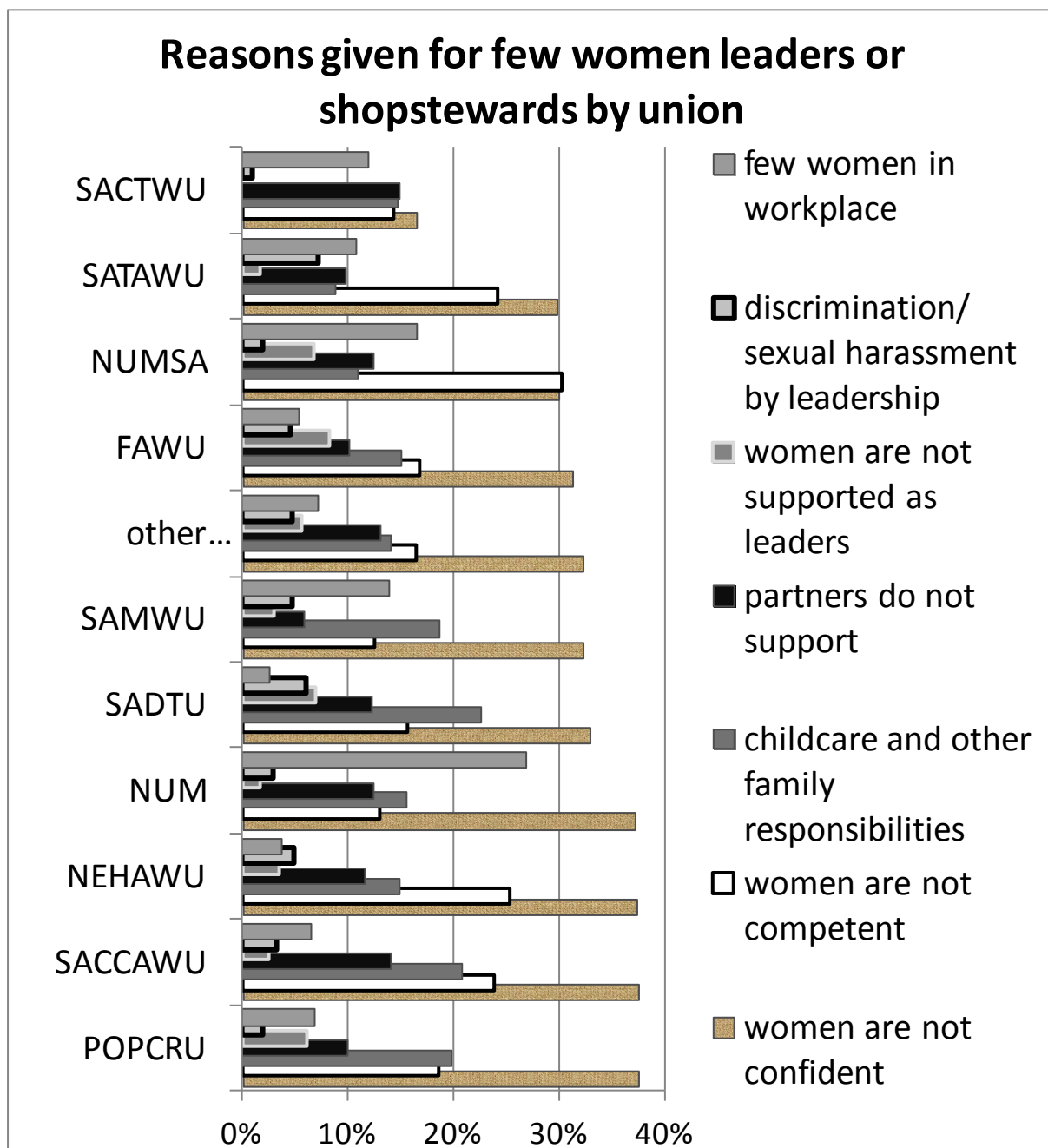
One in five members did not agree with the premise that there were too few women in leadership, mostly because they were in unions with relatively few women members. Overall, men were somewhat more likely than women to say that women were underrepresented in leadership, mostly because they were more likely to be in unions with relatively few women members.



Overall, members were most likely to say that women did not have the capabilities or confidence needed for leadership roles. They saw lack of family support as the second most important factor, with relatively few blaming discrimination within the union. Women were, however, far more likely than men to blame family responsibilities and lack of support from members and, to a

lesser extent, leadership.

The reasons that members gave for the under-representation of women in leadership varied considerably by union.



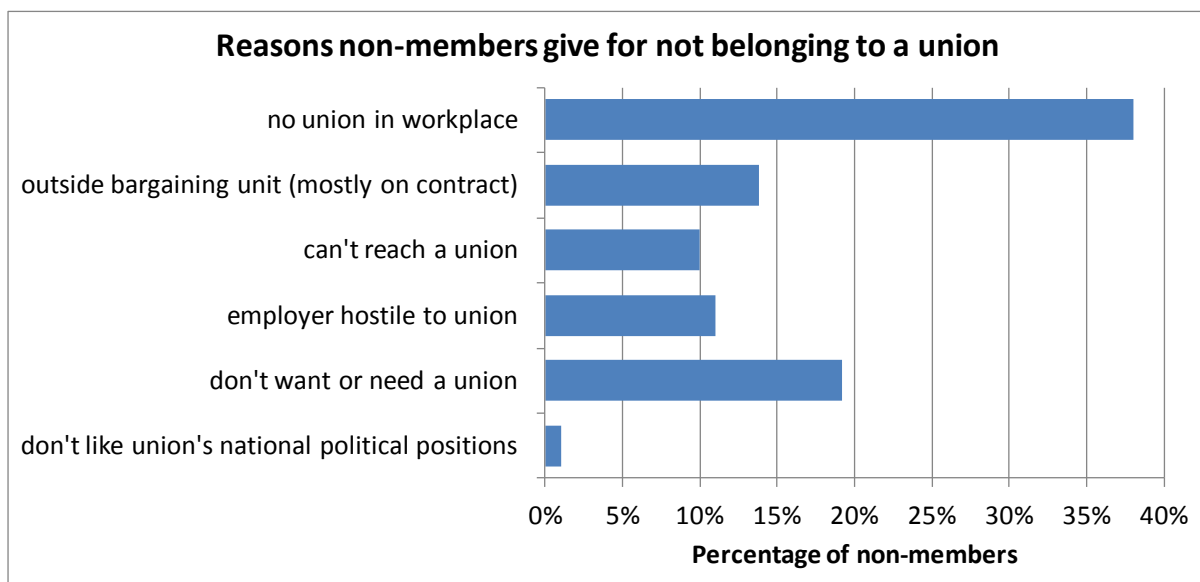


# V. Some challenges to recruitment

The COSATU Survey asked non-members a range of questions to understand why they are not organised. The share of non-members who do not want a union is relatively small. The overwhelming reason why non-members did not belong to a union was that there was no union in their workplace and no one had tried to recruit them. Non-members are less likely to be permanent workers and more likely to be in small companies.

## 1 Why non-members say they are not in a union

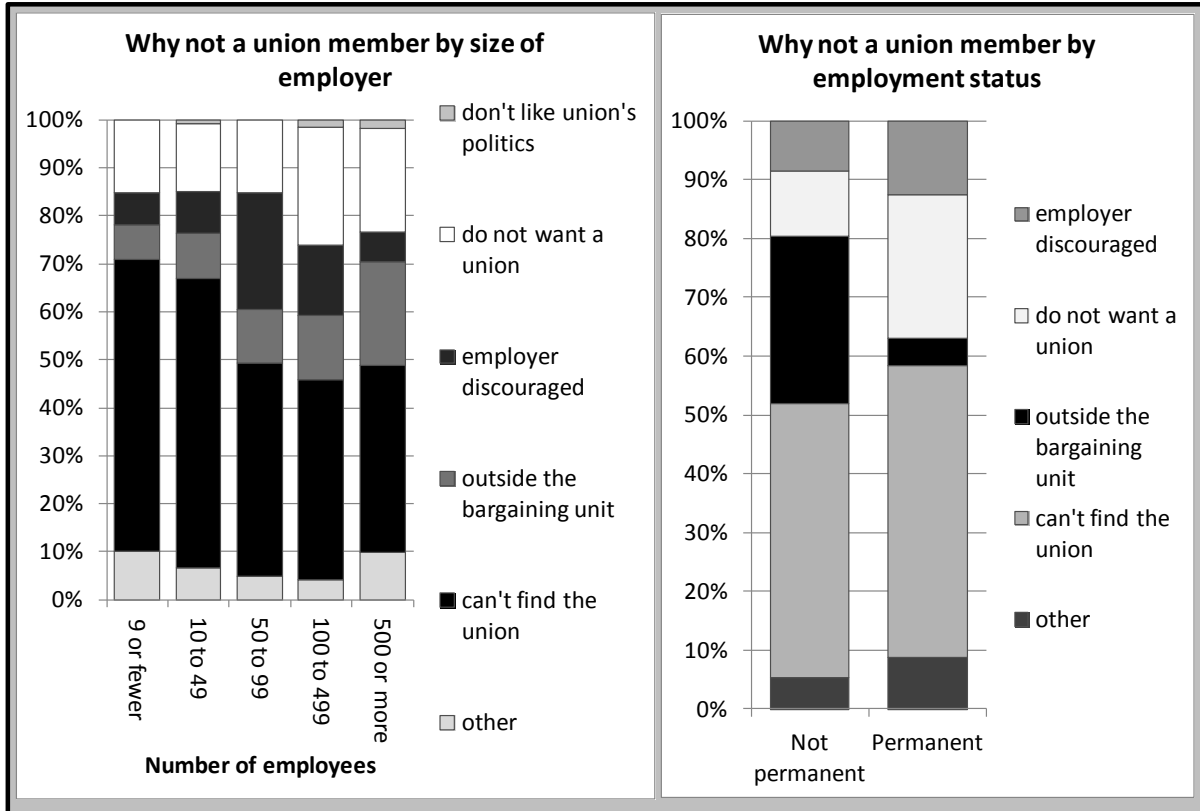
Almost half of non-members said they were not in unions simply because there was no union in their workplace or they couldn't contact one. One in seven was not in the bargaining unit, mostly because they were on contract. Only one in five said they did not want or like unions, and one in ten was deterred by their employer's reaction. Of those who did not want or need a union, almost half had left a union earlier due to poor service.



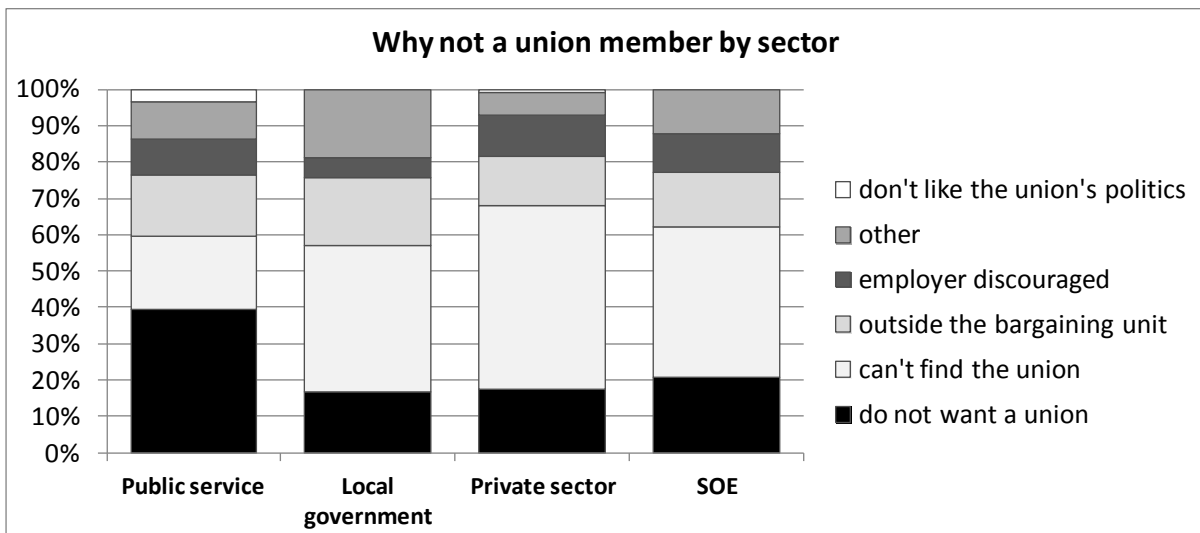
The flip side of this finding is that most union members joined because their workplaces were already organised. Thus, some two thirds of COSATU members joined within a year of entering their job. Less than a tenth were recruited when an organiser visited their workplace.

Non-members were more likely to say they could not contact a union if they were in a smaller company. In addition, if they were in temporary, casual or seasonal jobs they were much more likely to say they were outside the bargaining unit. Over a quarter of non-permanent workers said they were outside the bargaining unit, compared to one in twenty permanent workers.

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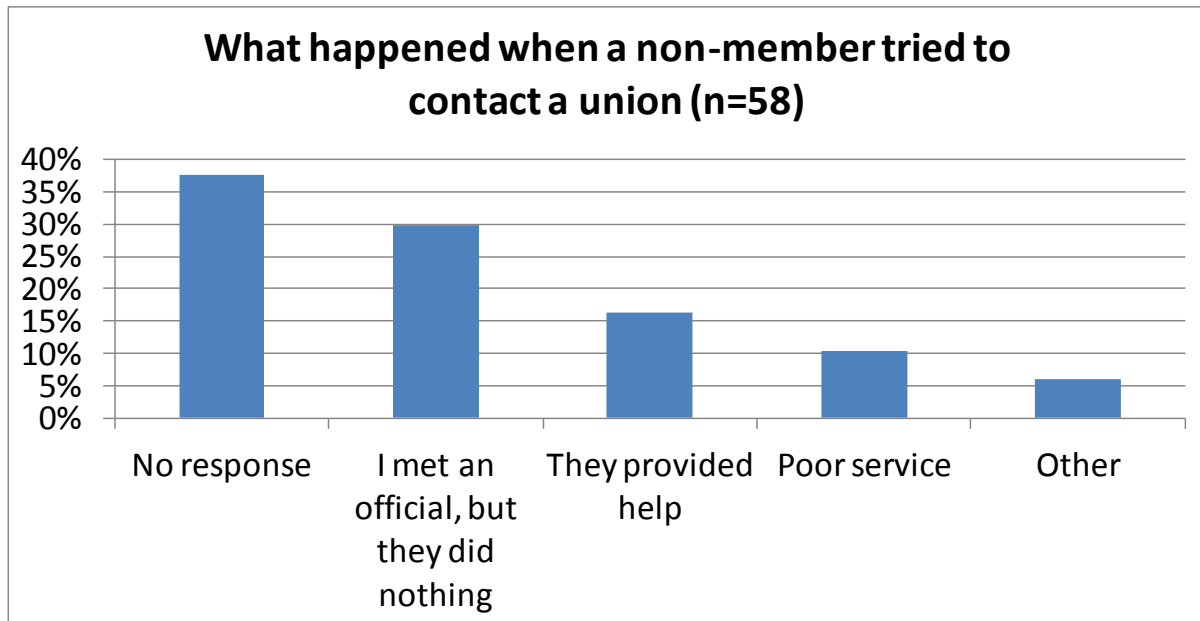


Public servants were most likely to say they had not joined because they did not want a union. Two out of five non-members in a national or public department or agency said this. This presumably reflects the fact that the public service has an agency shop, which means the vast majority of public servants are members of a union.



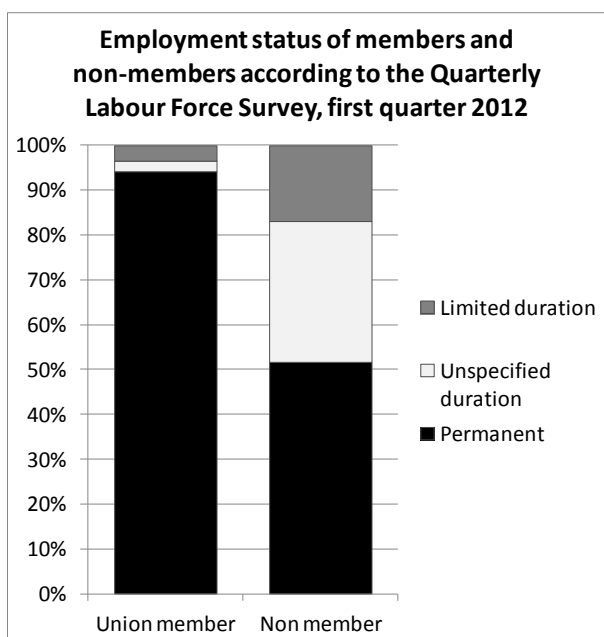
Only 20% of non-members in the public service said they could not find the union, compared to 40% of those in local government or parastatals, and half of those in the private sector.

Just 58 non-members in the sample of 737 non-members tried to get help from a union. As might be expected, they were far less likely to be satisfied with the response than were members who contacted their union. Only 15% said they received some help, while most of the others said they got either no response or no help.



## 2 Employment status and recruitment

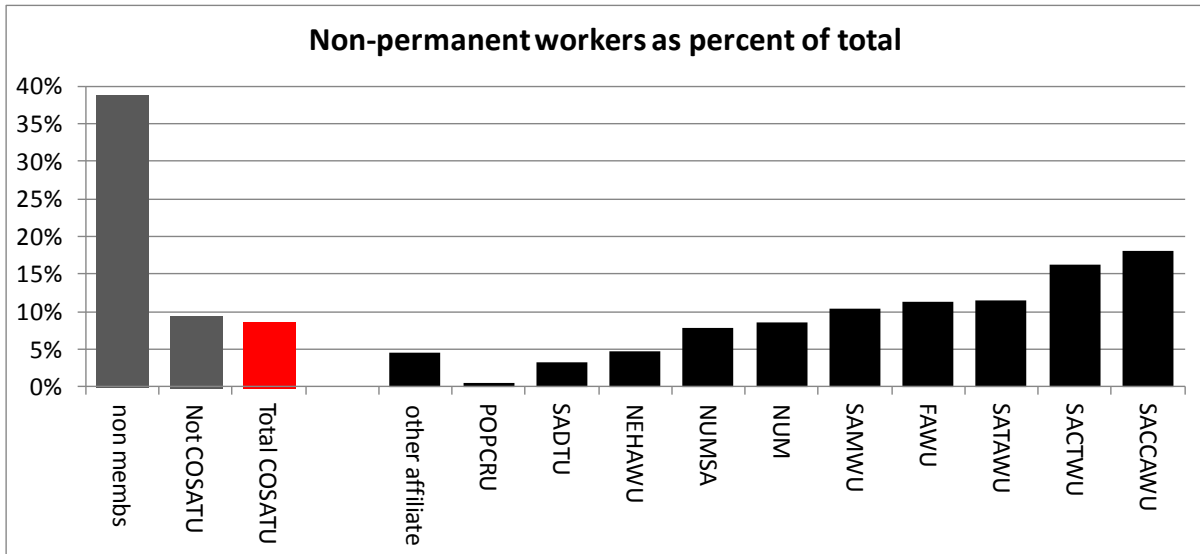
Workers who were in temporary, casual or seasonal positions or who worked for smaller employers were less likely to be in a union. That said, the share of members who were not in permanent jobs or large organisations varied substantially between affiliates.



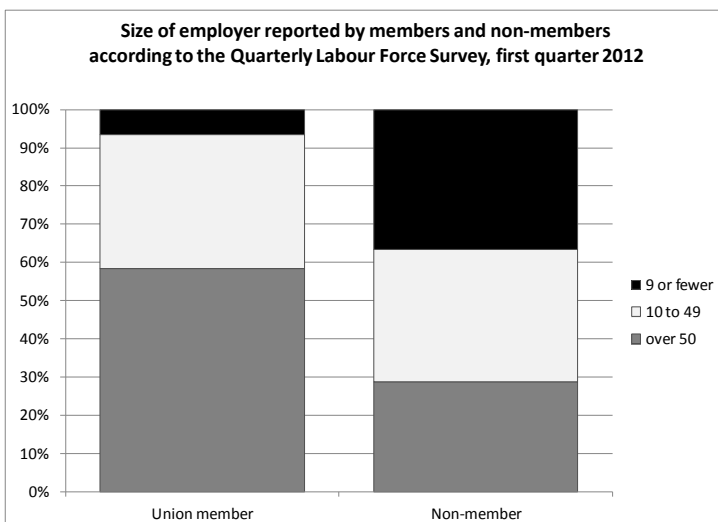
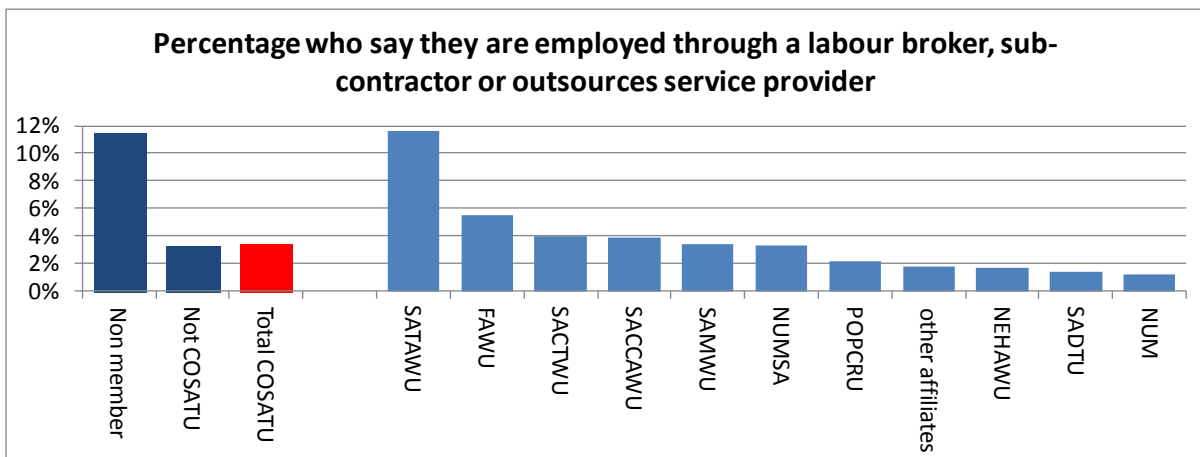
The Quarterly Labour Force Survey provides the most reliable data on the nature of employment and unionisation. In the first quarter of 2012, around 95% of union members had permanent positions, compared to half of non-members. Over 30% of non-members said they had contracts of unspecified duration. Under today's labour laws, they would count as permanent, so this answer may say more about their insecurity than about their employment contract.

The COSATU Survey permits analysis of employment status by union. While union members overall were more likely than non-members to be in permanent

positions, in some unions a substantial share of members were in non-permanent positions. Amongst SACCAWU and SACTWU members, between 15% and 20% said they were not in permanent jobs, compared to less than 10% of all COSATU members.

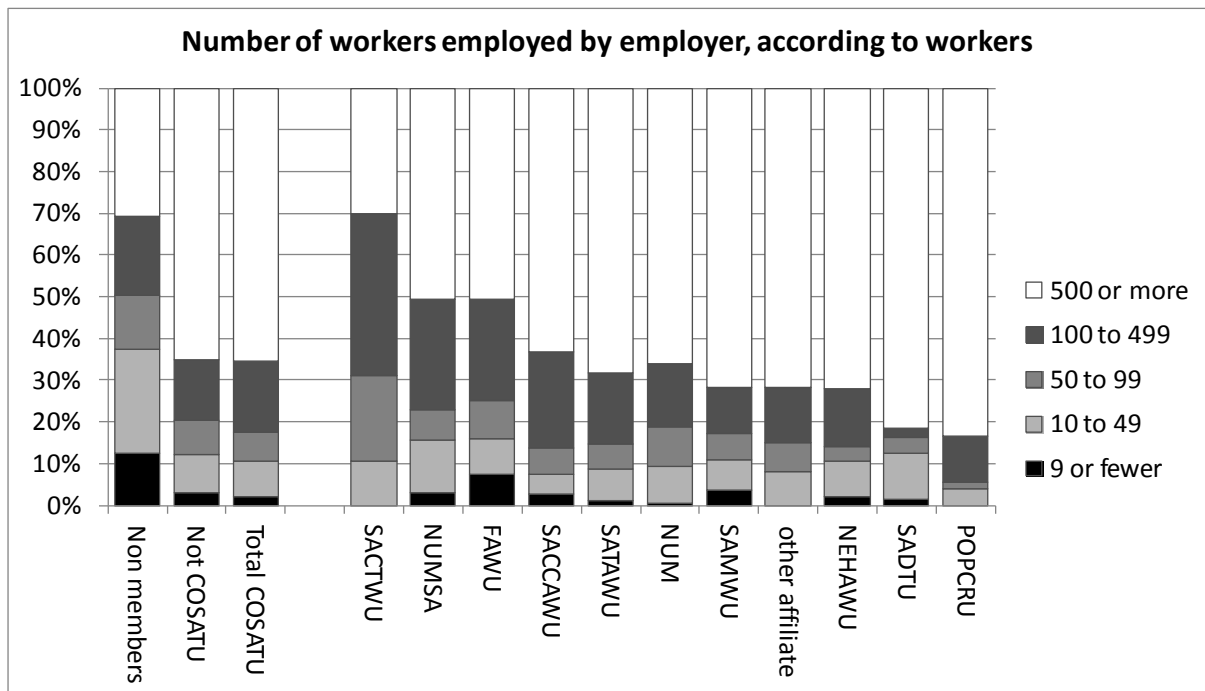


Only 3% of union members but 12% of non-members said they are employed through a labour broker, outsourced service agency or subcontractor. Amongst affiliates, SATAWU members were the most likely to say they were employed through an intermediary.



Non-members were also much more likely to work in relatively small enterprises. Again, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey provides useful data on this issue. In the first quarter of 2012, almost 60% of union members worked in organisations with over 50 workers, compared to fewer than 30% of non-members. Only 7% of union members were in organisations with fewer than ten workers, compared to 35% of non-members.

Again, the COSATU Survey provides information on the extent to which individual affiliates organised workers in smaller enterprises. Amongst members of SACTWU, NUMSA and FAWU, between a quarter and a third said they worked in a company with fewer than 100 workers, compared to the average of a fifth of all COSATU members.

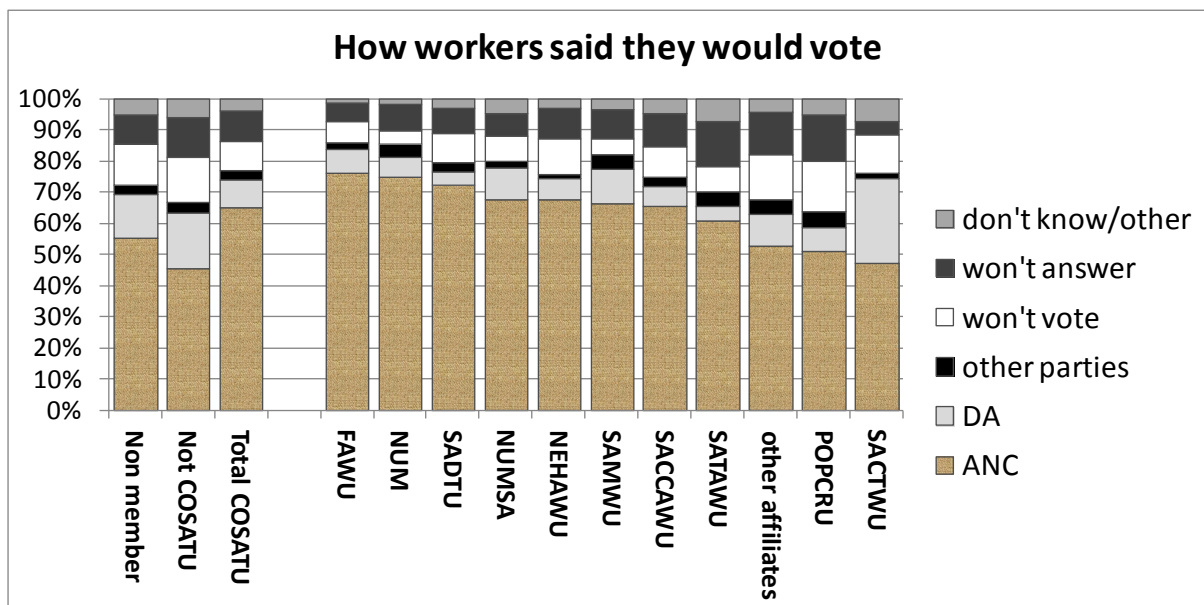


# VI. Political findings

The COSATU Survey asked workers how they felt about key political questions and about their participation in organisations and protest action outside the workplace. COSATU members were more likely to support the Alliance and the ANC than non-members and members of other unions, to have participated in social and political organisations, and to have taken part in protest action in their communities.

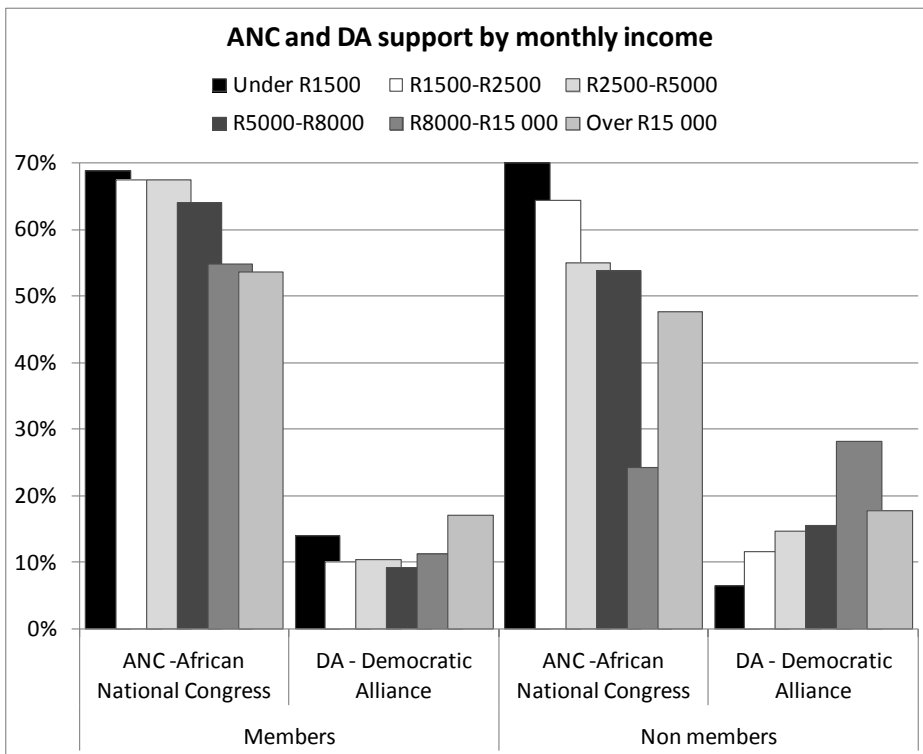
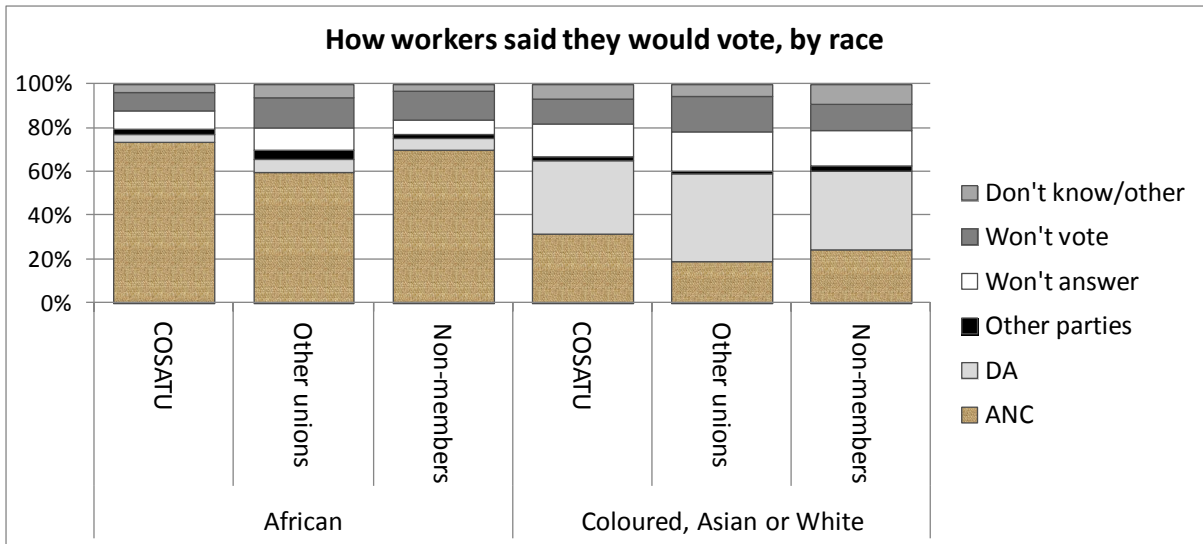
## 1 Political allegiances

Two thirds of COSATU members said they would vote for the ANC if elections were held next week. Just under a tenth would vote for the DA and a similar number would not vote. Most of the rest did not answer, with only 3% saying they would vote for a variety of smaller parties.



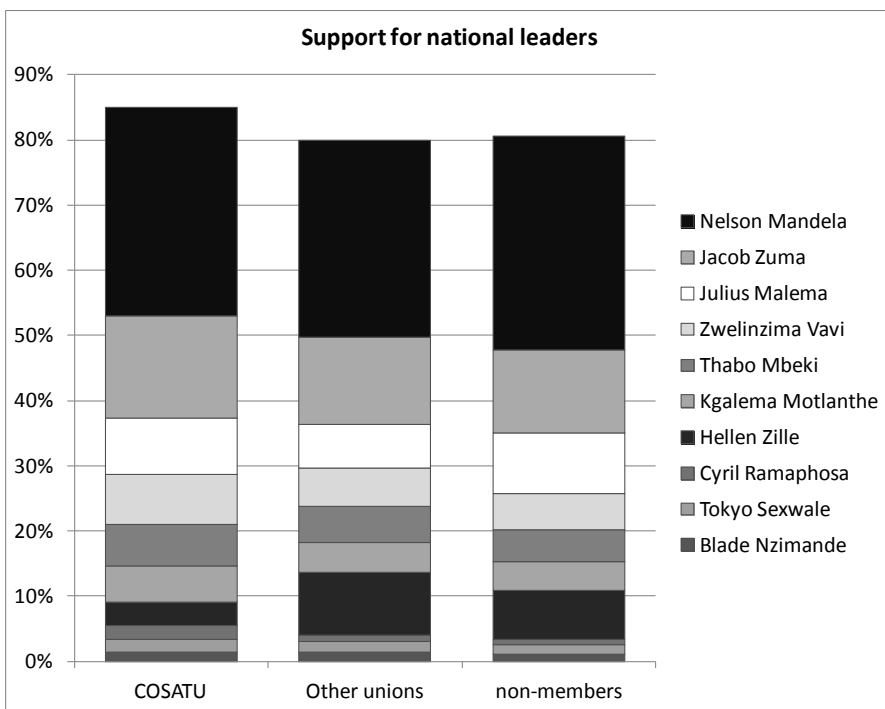
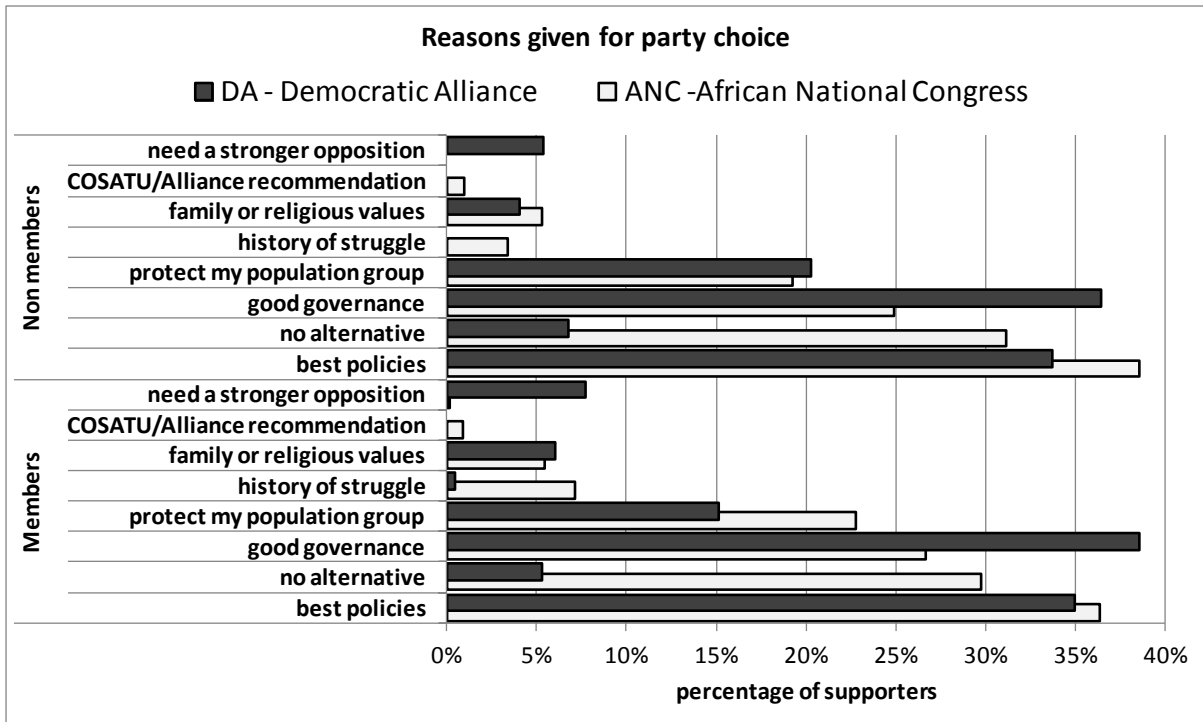
The ANC’s support amongst urban workers had increased somewhat compared to 2006. The DA gained even more support in proportional terms, apparently from workers who earlier said they would not vote or did not know whom to support. In 2006, fewer than 10% of workers surveyed said they would support the DA; in 2012, the figure had risen to around 15%.

Support for the DA came almost entirely from non-Africans, with the strongest support amongst members of unions that were not affiliated to COSATU. In contrast, the strongest support for the ANC amongst non-Africans came from COSATU members. Only around 5% of Africans said they would vote DA, compared to over a third of non-Africans. Non-Africans were also more likely than Africans to refuse to answer questions about their political views or to say they would not vote at all.



The ANC's support was strongest amongst lower-income workers. It fell off markedly amongst the higher-income group in the sample, especially amongst non-members. The opposite trend was even stronger for the DA, with higher-income workers tending to support it much more than lower-income workers.

To explain their support for the ANC, members were most likely to cite its policies, governance, a lack of alternatives and its efforts to achieve equality for Africans. DA supporters focused most strongly on governance. For both parties, these factors far outweighed the history of struggle, family or union support, and the desire for a stronger opposition party.



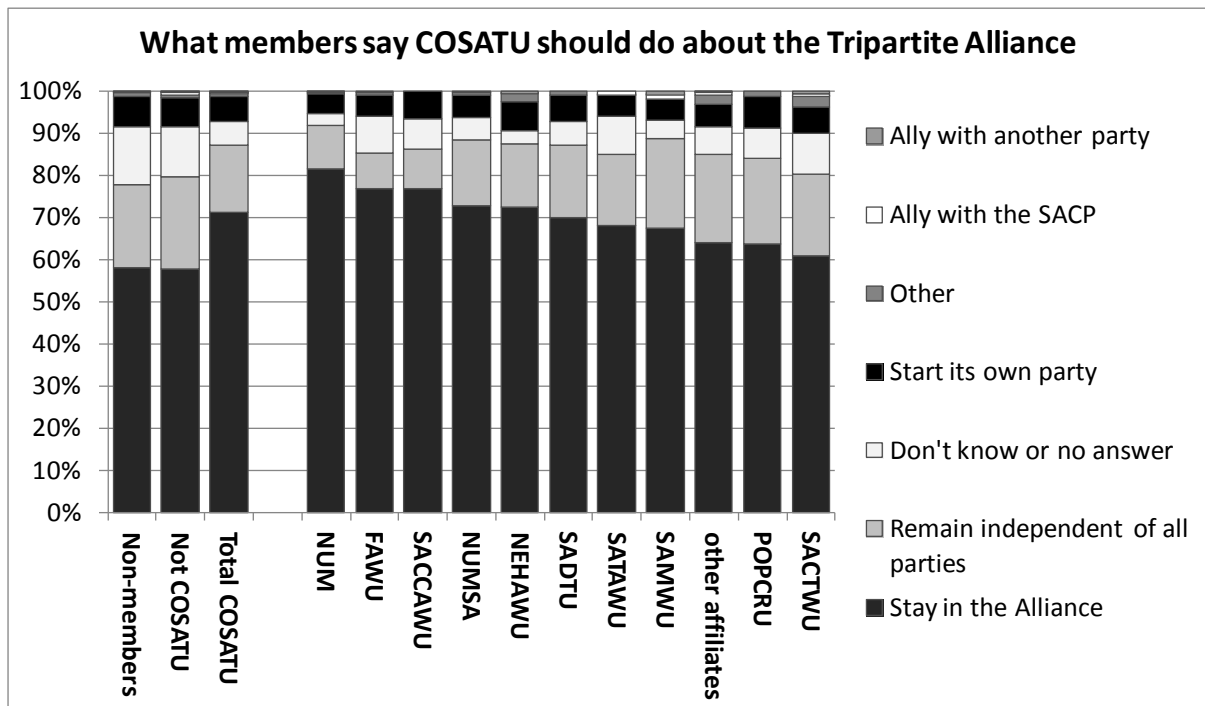
Asked which national leader most represented their aspirations, around a third of workers said Nelson Mandela. His name was followed by Jacob Zuma, Julius Malema and Zwelinzima Vavi in succession. The only woman in the top ten mentioned was Hellen Zille, who was named by 4% of COSATU members but around 10% of other workers.

## 2 The Alliance

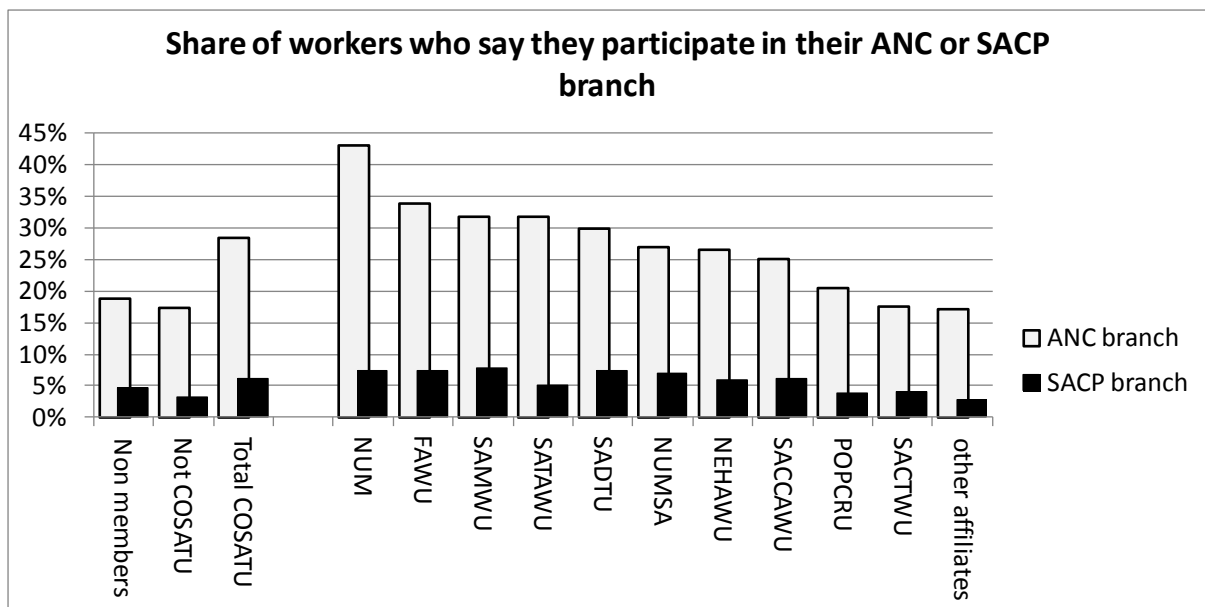
Over 70% of COSATU members said COSATU should stay in the Alliance, compared to 60% of other workers. Another 6% of COSATU members said they didn't know if it should stay in the Alliance. The remaining 23% said COSATU should leave the Alliance. Of those who said COSATU should leave, two thirds (that is, 16% of all COSATU members surveyed) said COSATU should stay independent. Another 6% of all members, or a quarter of those who wanted COSATU to leave the Alliance, said it should launch its own political party. Finally,



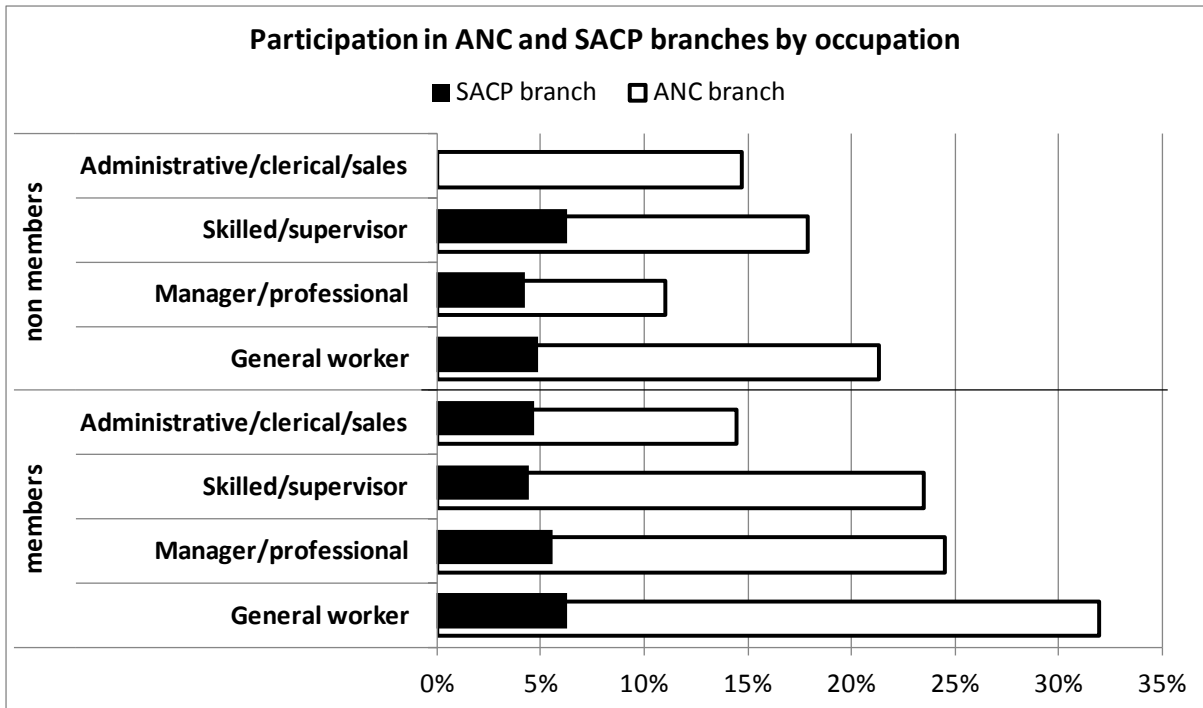
0,4% of all members, or 2% of those who wanted to leave the Alliance, said COSATU should ally with the SACP.



Over a quarter of COSATU members say they are active in their ANC branch, and 6% in their SACP branch. COSATU members were rather more likely than other workers to be active in these organisations.

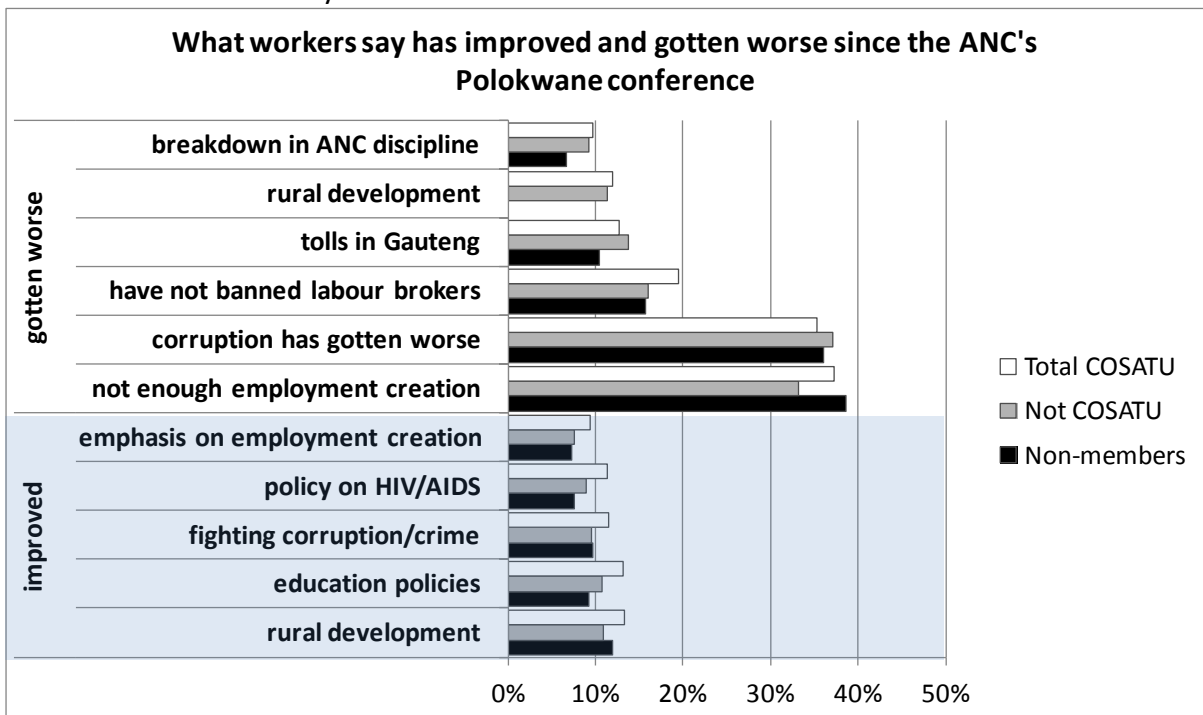


Amongst union members, general workers were most likely to be active in the ANC and the SACP, and administrative and clerical workers the least likely. Of COSATU members who are general workers, 32% said they were active in their ANC branch, compared to 15% of members who are administrative or clerical workers.



### 3 Workers' views on developments since the ANC's Polokwane Conference

The COSATU Survey asked workers what they thought had improved and what had deteriorated since the ANC's Polokwane Conference. The following chart shows only the issues that were raised by more than a tenth of workers.

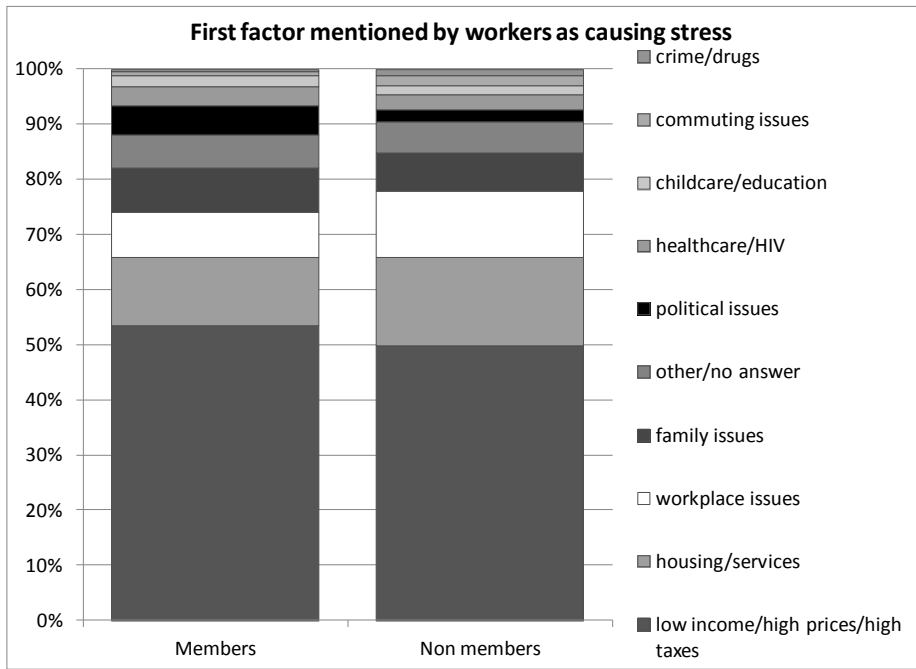


Around 10% of workers welcomed the stronger emphasis on employment creation, the transformation of policies on HIV/AIDS, efforts to fight corruption and crime, improved education policies and stronger prioritisation of rural development since the Polokwane

conference. In contrast, over 35% pointed to the failure to accelerate employment creation and to worsening corruption; another 15% to 20% said government had not banned labour brokers, and about 10% were angry about tolls in Gauteng, the lack of progress on rural development, and a perceived breakdown in ANC discipline.

#### 4 Sources of stress

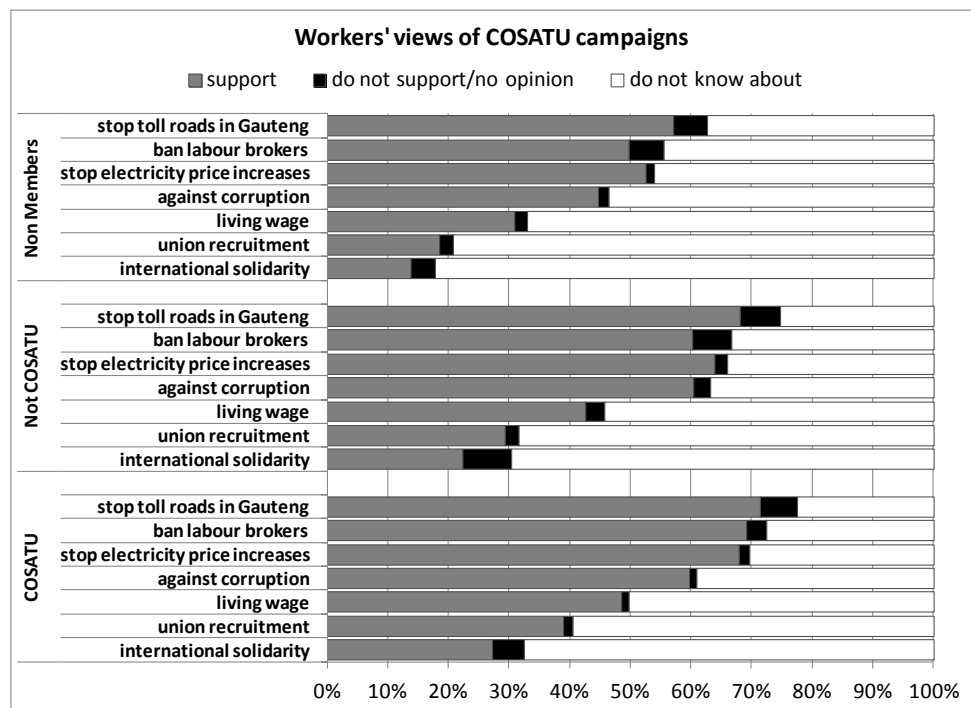
Asked about what caused stress in their lives, half of both members and non-members said



economic factors, especially low incomes and high prices. The second most important factor was poor housing and services. Non-members were somewhat more likely to say workplace issues caused them stress, while members were rather more apt to point to political and social problems.

#### 5 COSATU campaigns

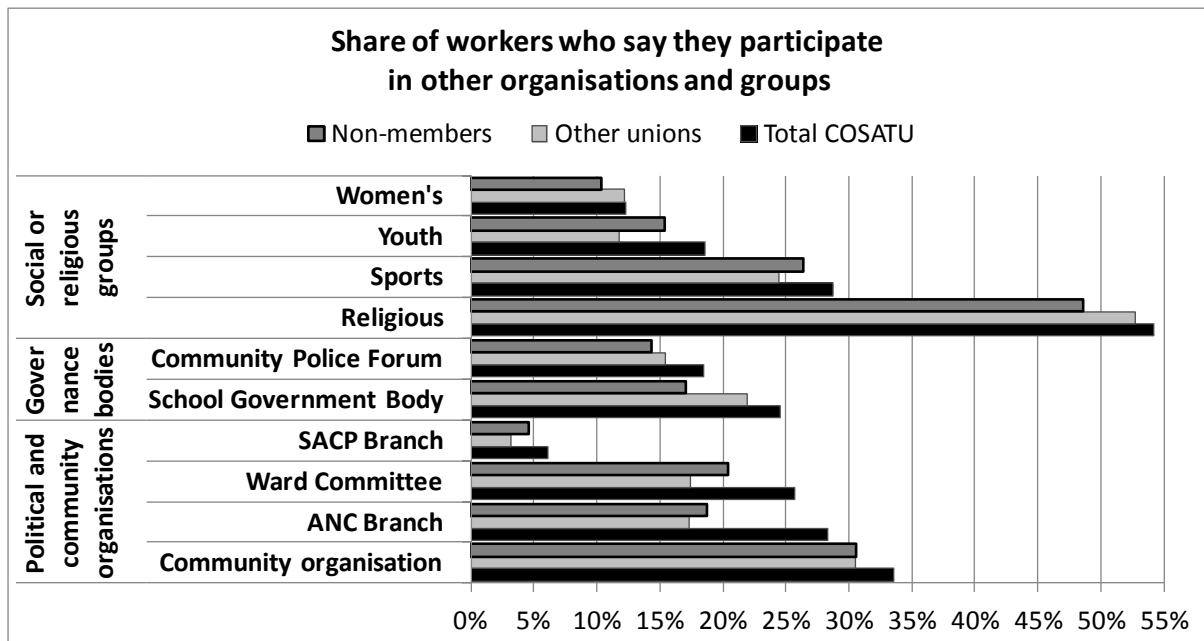
The survey asked whether members knew about specific COSATU campaigns, and if they supported them. Between 20% and 65% of members said they did not know about individual campaigns, with the share varying by topic. Where members knew



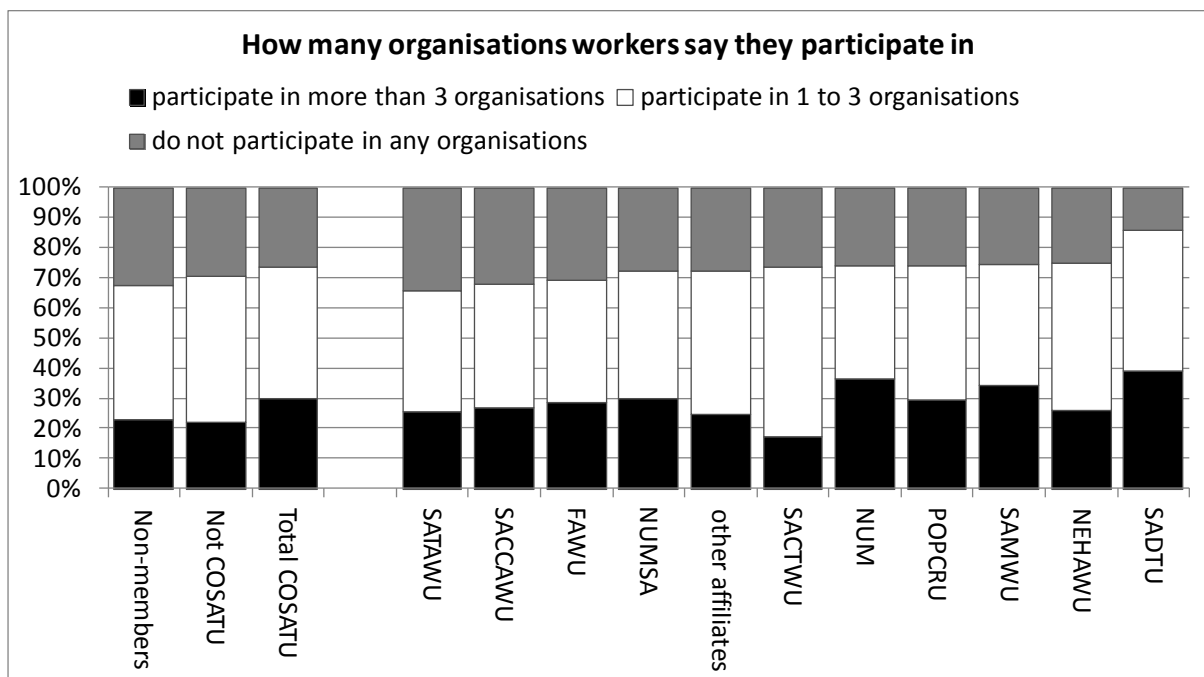
about a campaign, they generally supported it overwhelmingly. Support for individual campaigns ran between 84% and 98% of the COSATU members who knew about them.

## 6 Participation in organisations besides unions

COSATU members were more likely than other workers to say they participate in a variety of community and social organisations and in community protests.



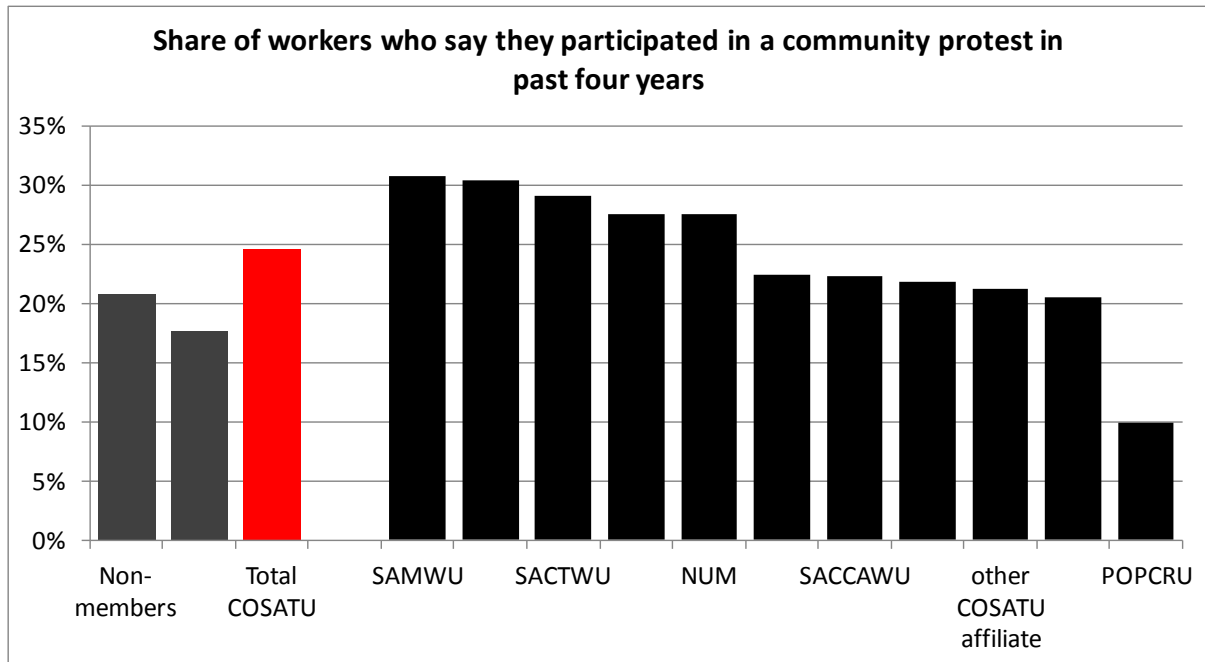
Almost a third of non-members said they did not belong to any political, social or governance organisations, compared to around a quarter of COSATU members. Moreover, COSATU members were more likely than other workers to say they belong to three or more organisations.



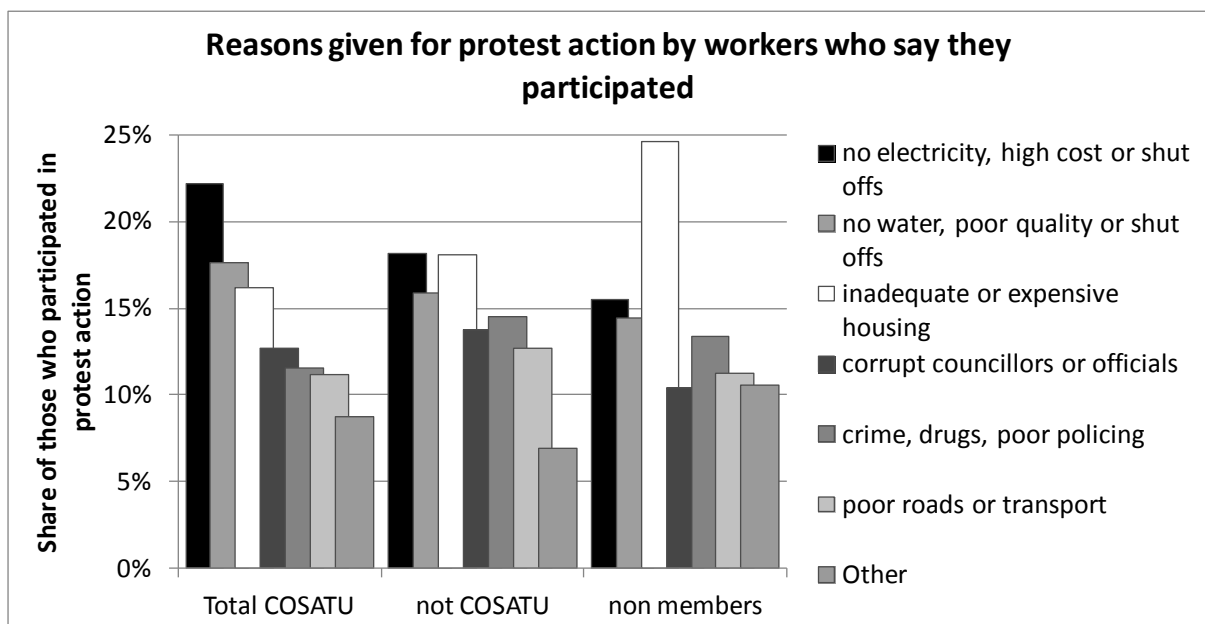
Public sector workers were more likely to participate in community and social organisations than other workers.

## 7 Participation in community protests

Just under a quarter of COSATU members, and a fifth of other urban workers, said they participated in a community protest action in the past four years.

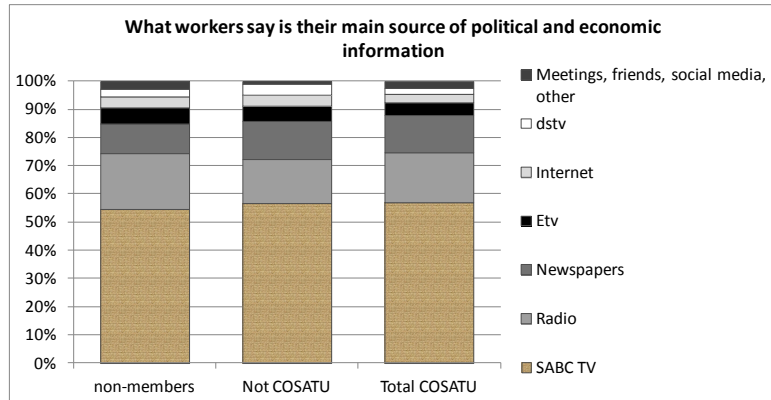


Amongst the workers who said they participated in protest action, the most commonly cited reasons related to the availability, quality and cost of electricity, water and housing. Corrupt councillors and city officials ranked fourth, and crime and poor policing fifth. Around 3% of workers said they joined protests against foreigners.

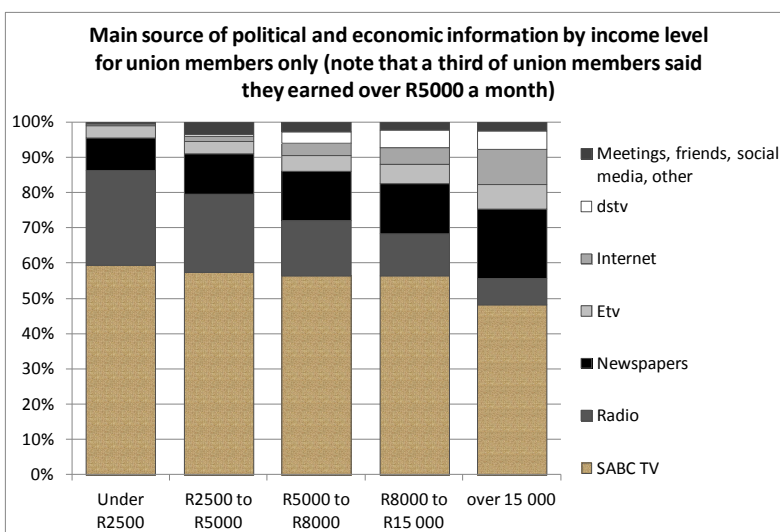
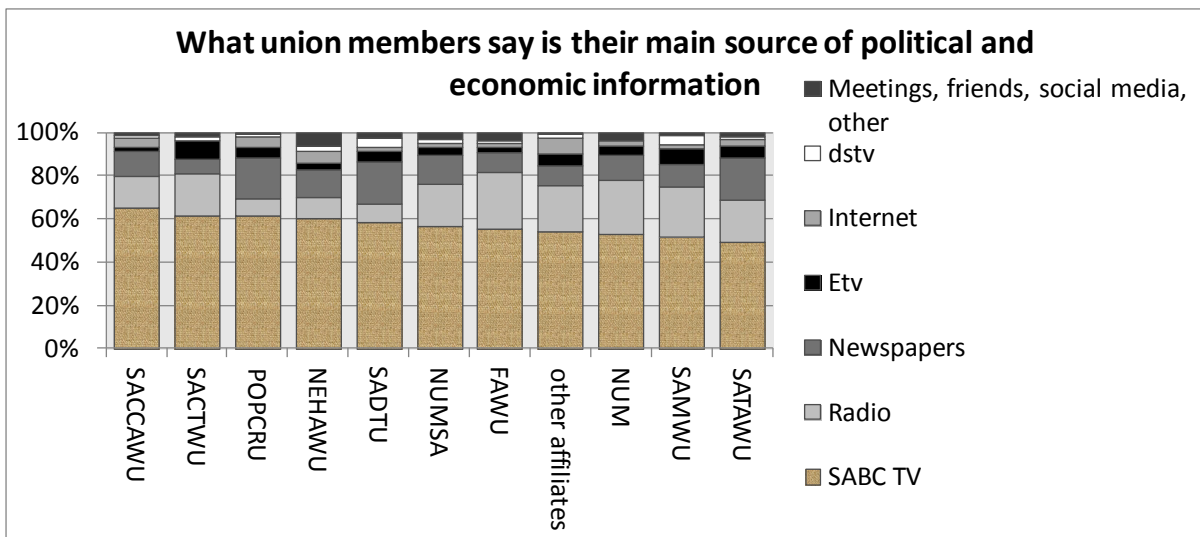


## 8 Sources of information

Over half the workers surveyed said their main source of economic and political information was SABC television, with another one out of five relying on the radio and over one in ten on newspapers. Only a relatively small share of the urban workers in the sample said they relied on private, more technologically advanced and expensive technologies such as DSTV and the internet.



In no affiliate did the share of members relying on private or web-based media exceed 20%, and in most the share of these media was closer to 10%.



SABC television was the main source of political and economic information for all union members. Workers at higher income levels tended to rely more on newspapers as well as private and web-based media. These workers, however, only constituted a relatively small share of union members. Lower-income union members depended more on radio.

## VII. Some issues arising from the survey

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The COSATU Survey provides a wealth of information on workers' perceptions of the labour movement, their workplaces and social concerns. The findings suggest areas that unions should focus on to strengthen their reach and effectiveness. This section draws out a few critical takeaway points from the survey.

Overall, satisfaction with union services is fairly high, although there is room for improvement. This contradicts the widespread perception that members find union services inadequate. The survey also shows that for most workers, union membership is not a full-time transformative activity but rather a way to obtain representation.

The survey demonstrates that most non-members are not hostile to unions, but rather work in a small enterprise, in a temporary job, or for a labour broker. A few affiliates have managed to reach these workers, but most remain focused almost exclusively on larger employers that have long had a union presence.

There are good reasons to extend organisation beyond the traditional strongholds of permanent workers in large companies. Workers in smaller enterprises and non-standard employment are often most in need of union support. Moreover, given the fall in the share of union membership in the private sector in the past ten years – mostly as a result of the decline in mine employment – finding new areas for organisation is important for the labour movement as a whole. But reaching these kinds of members requires innovative approaches to organisation and to services as well as more vigorous recruitment campaigns.

The survey also points up the need for better information on strike violence as well as for a more open discussion about it. There is clearly an exaggerated view of the extent of strike violence even amongst members, with actions labelled as “violent” – such as threats or verbal abuse – that involve no actual physical contact. Moreover, it is a problem that there is far less media coverage of violence from police and management than from strikers, although workers experience similar levels of violence from both sides. Finally, a substantial percentage of workers think both sides engage in unjustified violence.

As in 2006, the survey suggests that women in the unions continue to face challenges. The main problem is not overt discrimination or sexual harassment. Rather, it is the undermining of women's competency as shopstewards and leaders and the failure to listen to women members. These weaknesses appear in the answers given both to why there are fewer women in leadership and to whether women members feel they can influence their shopstewards.

Overall, the findings should improve the understanding of office bearers, organisers, shopstewards and members about their strengths and weaknesses. They should of course be understood together with other kinds of information about workers and unions – from activists' engagements to more qualitative research to statistics on employment conditions from official sources. We hope that the information provided here, as well as further analysis of the survey data, will enrich debates about how to strengthen COSATU as well as the labour movement as a whole.