

Dominique Andolfatto, Dominique Labbé*

The Future of the French Trade Unions**

This article investigates the transformations of the French unionism and of the French system of industrial relations over the last years and their probable future. It shows: an evolution from a militant unionism to a professionalized trade unionist system; the decline of collective actions; the increase of negotiation, especially at plant level; the dependence of unionists on their employers for their funding, their resources and their careers. This evolution marks a shift towards a new system which is very different from a “unionist Latin model” depicted in traditional literature on French unionism.

Key words: France, trade unions, de-unionization, strikes, collective bargaining, union budgets (JEL: J50, J51, J52)

* Dominique Andolfatto, Université de Bourgogne.
E-mail: Dominique.Andolfatto@u-bourgogne.fr.

Dominique Labbé, PACTE (CNRS & Université de Grenoble).
E-Mail: dominique.labbe@iepgrenoble.fr.

** We thank Edward Arnold (Centre for European Studies, Trinity College, Dublin), for his valuable comments and for his careful reading of a previous version of this paper, and the anonymous reviewer who made us many helpful remarks.

Article received: September 12, 2012

Revised version accepted after double blind review: December 12, 2012.