

To unionise or not to unionise the LIS sector?

**the debate now begins
in South Africa**

Reggie Raju
Rajur@ukzn.ac.za

INTRODUCTION



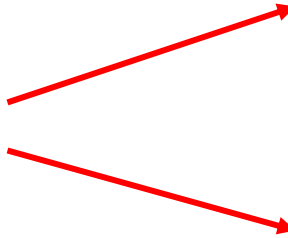
- *That LIASA seek full statutory recognition as the sole professional body for the knowledge, records management and library and information workers in South Africa (LIASA, 2004)*
- The options
- The LRA is considered by many to be very progressive (Baskin, 1996; Baskin & Satgar, 1995; Basson et al., 1998; Grogan, 2003; Slabbert & Swanepoel, 2002).
- Dual representation - by LIASA and generic trade unions - compounds fragmentation

PAPER EXAMINES

➤ Factors influencing unionisation



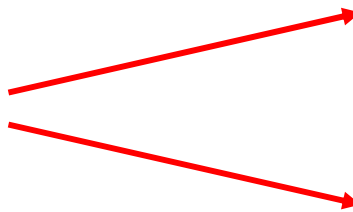
➤ Legislative support



Bain (1970)

SA's LRA

➤ Research reveals



holistic representation

fragmentation

Factors influencing unionisation at the international level

- Employment concentration
- Economic factors
- Legislative changes

Factors influencing unionisation at the international level

Employment concentration



- Employee concentration creates barriers in communication and personal contact between management and employees (Adams, 1975; Bain, 1970; Lumley, 1973; White, 1971)
- Diminished level of interaction as a result of hierarchical structures
- Literature on library unionisation (Ballard, 1982; Garry, 1977; Guyton, 1975; Oberg, Blackburn & Dible, 1976) draws attention to the power unions are assumed to have in cohering library management to share in professional decision making

Factors influencing unionisation at the international level

Economic reasons



- Human nature guided by personal gain=economic gain
- Primary reason for unionising - strengthen bargaining position
- ‘We all want better wages and working conditions and fair treatment on the job.’ Duda (1981:120)
- Negotiation for better wages and working conditions, through collective bargaining=key responsibility of any union.

Factors influencing unionisation at the international level

Legislation

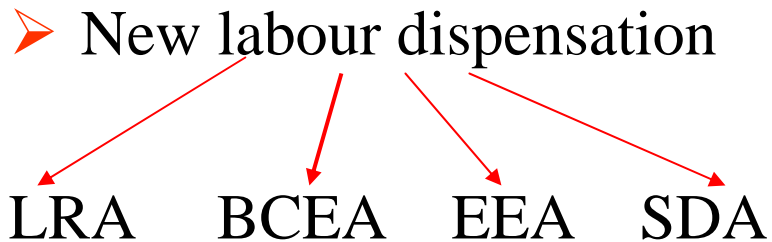


- Coleman (1988), Guyton (1975), and Mika (1980) write convincingly about the relationship between prevailing labour legislation and the growth of unionisation
- Guyton (1975: 169) argues that as protective legislation becomes more widespread and unionisation becomes a more accepted institution among all employees = more favourable conditions for union formation

Factors **negating** unionisation at the international level

- Fragmentation of the profession, effect of unions on efficiency and, women and unionisation have negated the growth of unionism (Beresford, 1983; Coleman 1988; Cunnison, 2002; Hovenden, 1972; Kusack, 1984; Raju, 2005; Raju, 2006; Schlachter, 1976).
- Lack of cohesion
 - fragmentation → retard single viable representation
- Librarians' attitudes
- Professionalism vs unionism debate

South Africa's new labour dispensation



➤ Impact of labour dispensation on unionism

- Employment concentration
- Collective bargaining

Preferred method → terms & conditions of employment
└─→ resolution dispute of interest

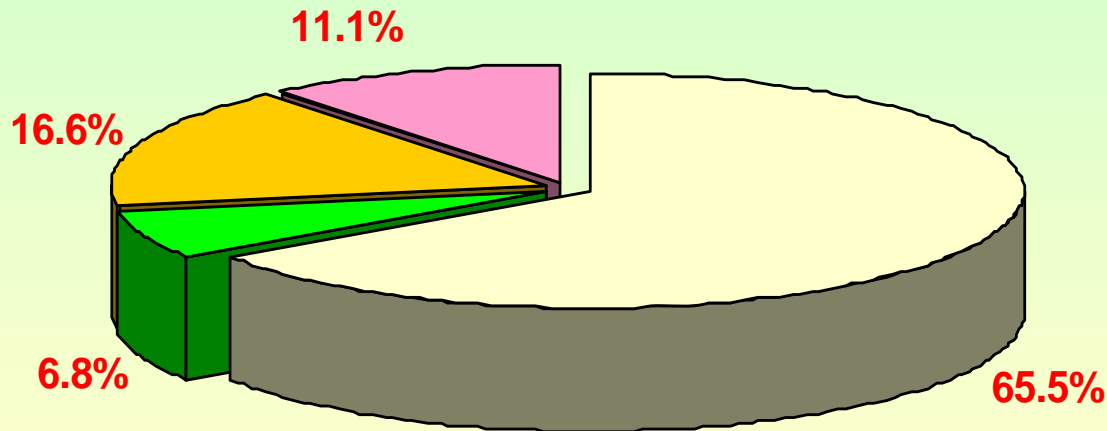
Findings of the research

- Is it necessary to have an organisation to address the industrial concerns of the sector?
- Which organisation is most capable of representing the sector?

Findings of the research:

Necessary to have an organisation to address the industrial concerns

Necessity for an organisation to address industrial concerns



Necessary

Not necessary

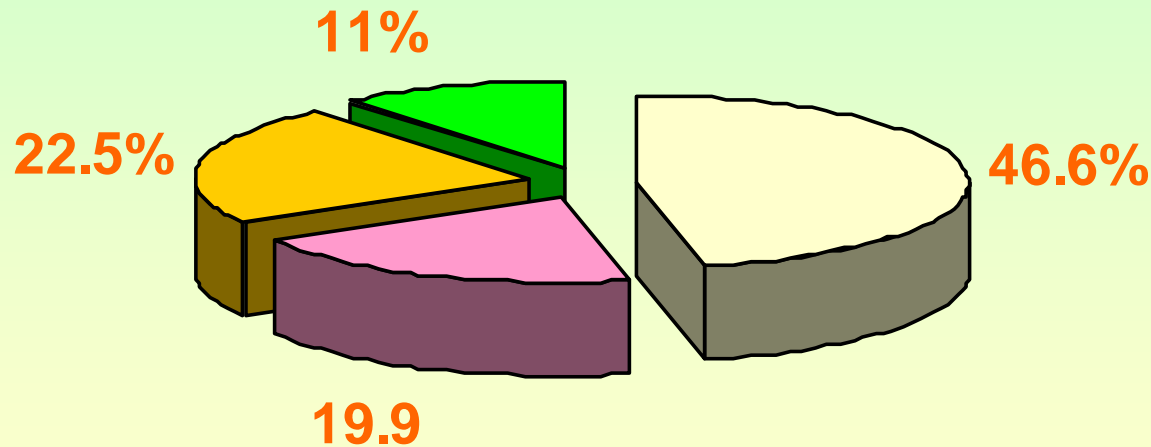
Not sure

No response

Findings of the research:

**Organisation is most capable of
representing the sector**

**Organisation most capable
of addressing industrial concerns**



□ Professional body □ Trade union □ Not sure □ No response

Conclusion

- Single representative organisation
- Necessary to have organisation address industrial concerns → professional organisation
- SA labour dispensation promotes single statutory representation
- Obligation for representative organisation have statutory status