



SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Possible improvements in the
standard-setting activities of the ILO****Addendum: Statistics on the
ratification of Conventions****Introduction**

The following statistical data on the ratification of international labour Conventions are intended to help ensure that discussions on possible improvements in ILO standard-setting activities¹ have a factual basis. The data are presented in graphical form to make trends more easily visible. The data can be further refined and developed according to the analyses requested by the Governing Body. For the purposes of this paper, hard figures were thought useful on the evolution of the number of ratifications of ILO Conventions and on the growth in the number of ILO member States (graphs 1 and 2) and, on the other hand, on the evolution in the rate of ratification of ILO Conventions in relation to the number of member States (graphs 3-8). This is only an initial set of statistics. Other methods of presenting the data, such as indices, could be used in any subsequent analyses.

**Graph 1: Evolution in the number of
ratifications of Conventions since 1940**

Purpose: This graph shows, for the period 1940 to 1999 and at five-year intervals, totals for the growing number of ratifications of all ILO Conventions, the number of ratifications of the fundamental Conventions and of other Conventions. The total number of ratifications stood at 6,685 at 31 December 1999, including 934 ratifications of the fundamental Conventions. As at 17 March 2000 that figure stood at 6,702, including 954 ratifications of the fundamental Conventions.

¹ GB.277/LILS/2.

Graph 2: Evolution of the number of member States since 1940

Purpose: This graph shows, at five-year intervals, the total number of ILO member States, from 1980 to 1999. As at 17 March 2000 there were 175 member States.

Graph 3: Evolution of the rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions² during the ten years following their adoption: Conventions adopted between 1940 and 1989

Purpose: This graph describes the evolution of the average rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions adopted in each of five separate periods (1940-49, 1950-59, 1960-69, 1970-79 and 1980-89), during the initial ten years following their adoption.

Method: The horizontal axis of the graph indicates the number of years following the adoption of the Convention, from 1 to 10. The vertical axis indicates the average percentage of member States having ratified those Conventions. This percentage has been calculated for each year taking into account the number of ratifications, the number of Conventions and the number of member States. The number of member States at the end of each period (at 31 December) is indicated.

Comments: There is a fairly marked difference between ratification rates, over the first ten years of their existence, for Conventions adopted between 1940 and 1949 and between 1950 and 1959, on the one hand, and the rates for Conventions adopted since 1960 on the other, which have recorded a continuous decline. During the period 1970 to 1979, the ratification rate for the five initial years after the adoption of a Convention is close to that for the period 1960 to 1969. However, it is lower than that rate for the following five years. The ratification rate of Conventions adopted between 1980 and 1989 is considerably lower than that for Conventions adopted during the four preceding periods.

Graph 4: Evolution of the ratification rate of up-to-date Conventions during the ten years following their adoption – Conventions Nos. 170 to 175

Graph 5: Evolution of the ratification rate of up-to-date Conventions during the ten years following their adoption – Conventions Nos. 176 to 182

Purpose: These two graphs cover the Conventions adopted in the periods 1990-94 and 1995-99 respectively. Because they were adopted only recently, no analysis of the

² La liste des conventions qui ont été considérés comme étant à jour par le Conseil d'administration, suite aux recommandations du Groupe de travail sur la politique de révision des normes, figure dans le tableau joint en annexe.

ratification rates of these Conventions for a ten-year period is possible. The analysis therefore covers the entire period since their adoption. The objective is to establish whether the downward trend in ratification rates illustrated in graph 3 is confirmed for more recent Conventions.

Method: The method is similar to that used for graph 3; however, these graphs show the ratification rate of each Convention adopted since 1990, and not an average rate.

Comments: The two graphs show some contrasts. Although the downward trend in the ratification of Conventions seems to be confirmed for most of the Conventions, there are a number of significant exceptions: Conventions No. 176 (health and safety in mines) and No. 181 (private employment agencies) seem to have made a promising start. Convention No. 182 has received an exceptionally high number of ratifications during its first year; adopted less than one year ago, its rate of ratification is indicated by a circle instead of a line.

Graph 6: Evolution of the ratification rate of up-to-date Conventions during the ten years following their adoption – Comparative study of four subject-areas

Purpose: Four subject-areas have been selected as examples. The analysis covers all the up-to-date Conventions in these subject-areas, regardless of when they were adopted. The aim is to verify whether, regardless of differences in age, some Conventions have been more highly ratified than others as a result of their subject-matter.

Method: The method is identical to that for graph 3, but each line represents a specific subject and not the periods of adoption of the Conventions.

Comments: The Conventions on labour administration and conditions of work are by far the most highly ratified during the period selected, reaching a ratification rate of between 20 and 25 per cent of member States after ten years. The rate for Conventions on safety and health, lying in third position, does not exceed 12 per cent. The Conventions on social security are the least ratified.

Graph 7: Evolution of the ratification rate of Conventions since 31 December 1949

Graph 8: Evolution of the ratification rate of Conventions since 31 December 1949 (up-to-date Conventions)

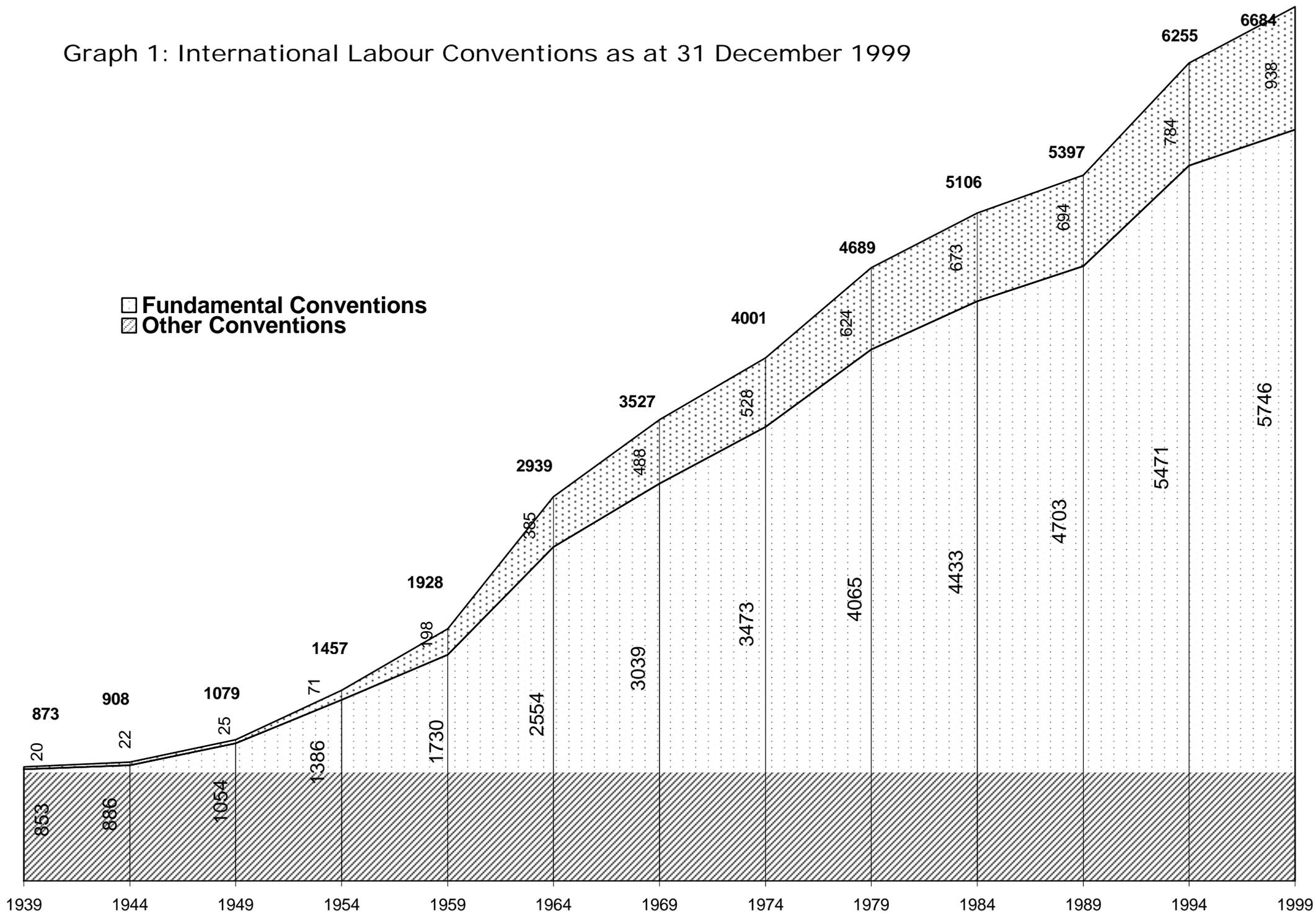
Purpose: These two graphs show – for the fundamental Conventions and for Conventions in four other fields chosen as examples (those used in graph 6) – the evolution of ratification rates not for the initial ten years after their adoption, but for the entire period from 31 December 1949 to 31 December 1999. Graph 7 includes all the Conventions in the selected categories, whereas graph 8 covers only Conventions regarded as up-to-date by the Governing Body.

Method: The calculations were made over five-year intervals starting at 31 December 1949; these intervals are shown on the horizontal axis. The number of member States is indicated for each reference year. The vertical axis indicates the percentage of member States that had on average ratified these Conventions as at 31 December 1949, 31 December 1954, and so on until 31 December 1999. It should be noted that in certain fields the up-to-date Conventions were adopted after 31 December 1949. Thus, in graph 7 the line for social security starts in 1954, and that for safety and health in 1964.

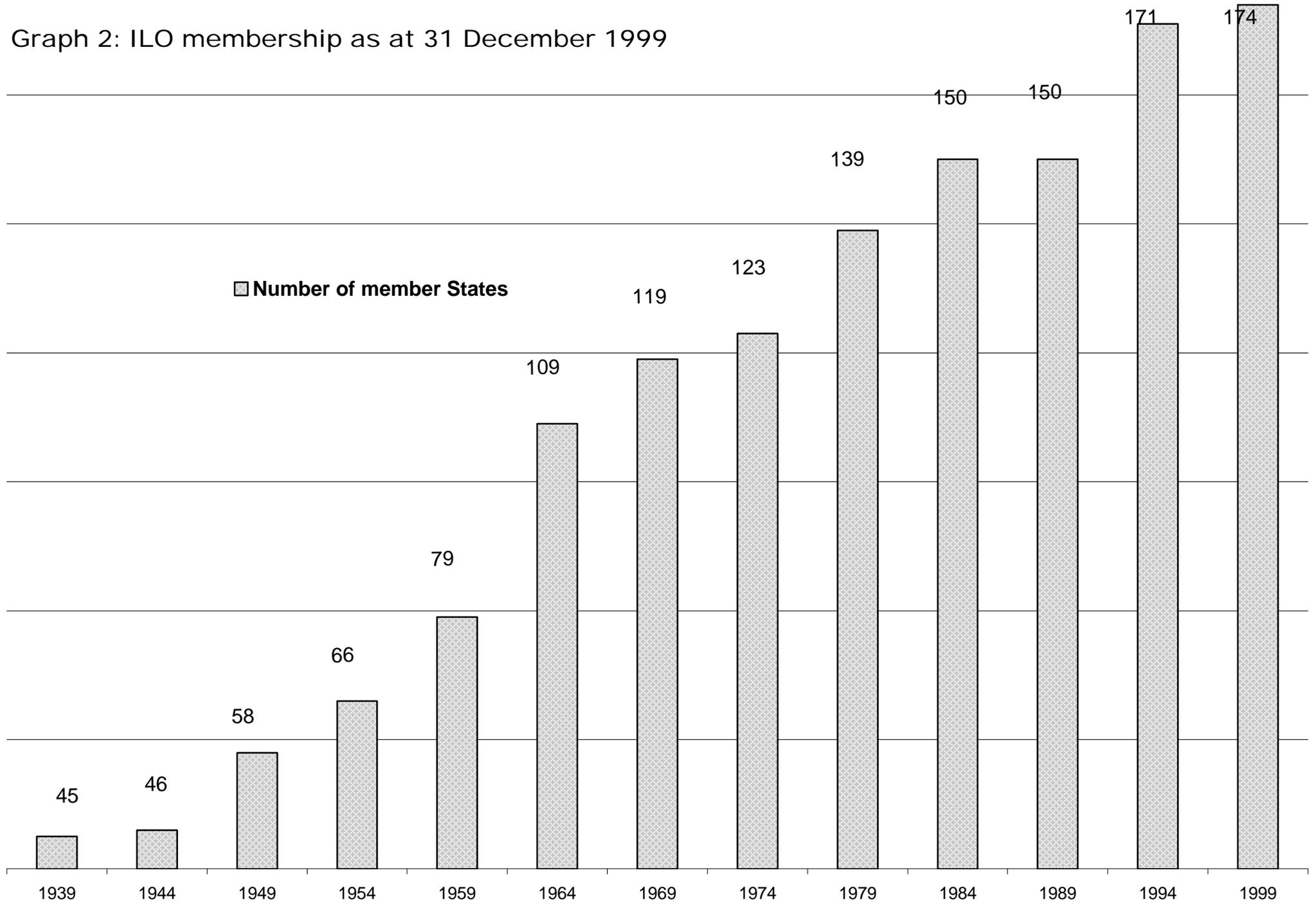
Comments: There is a clear difference between the rate of ratification of fundamental Conventions and that for other Conventions, regardless of subject-matter. It can also be noted, with regard to labour administration, that the results obtained by limiting the sample to up-to-date Conventions are better than those for all the Conventions. In 1999 the rate is close to 40 per cent for the former and slightly less than 30 per cent for the latter. By contrast, with regard to social security and health and safety, it seems that the up-to-date Conventions have secured fewer ratifications than all the other Conventions together. As regards conditions of work, the ratification rate of Conventions is clearly declining. Nevertheless, it remains higher than that for social security and health and safety Conventions, and seems slightly higher for up-to-date Conventions compared to all the Conventions. The Conventions on social security and health and safety show stagnant ratification rates. Any subsequent analysis of these trends should take into consideration, with regard to conditions of work and occupational safety and health, the fact that many of the Conventions were adopted less than ten years ago (conditions of work – Conventions Nos. 171, 173, 175 and 177; safety and health – Conventions Nos. 170, 174 and 176) and therefore have not yet been able to receive many ratifications.

Geneva, 20 March 2000.

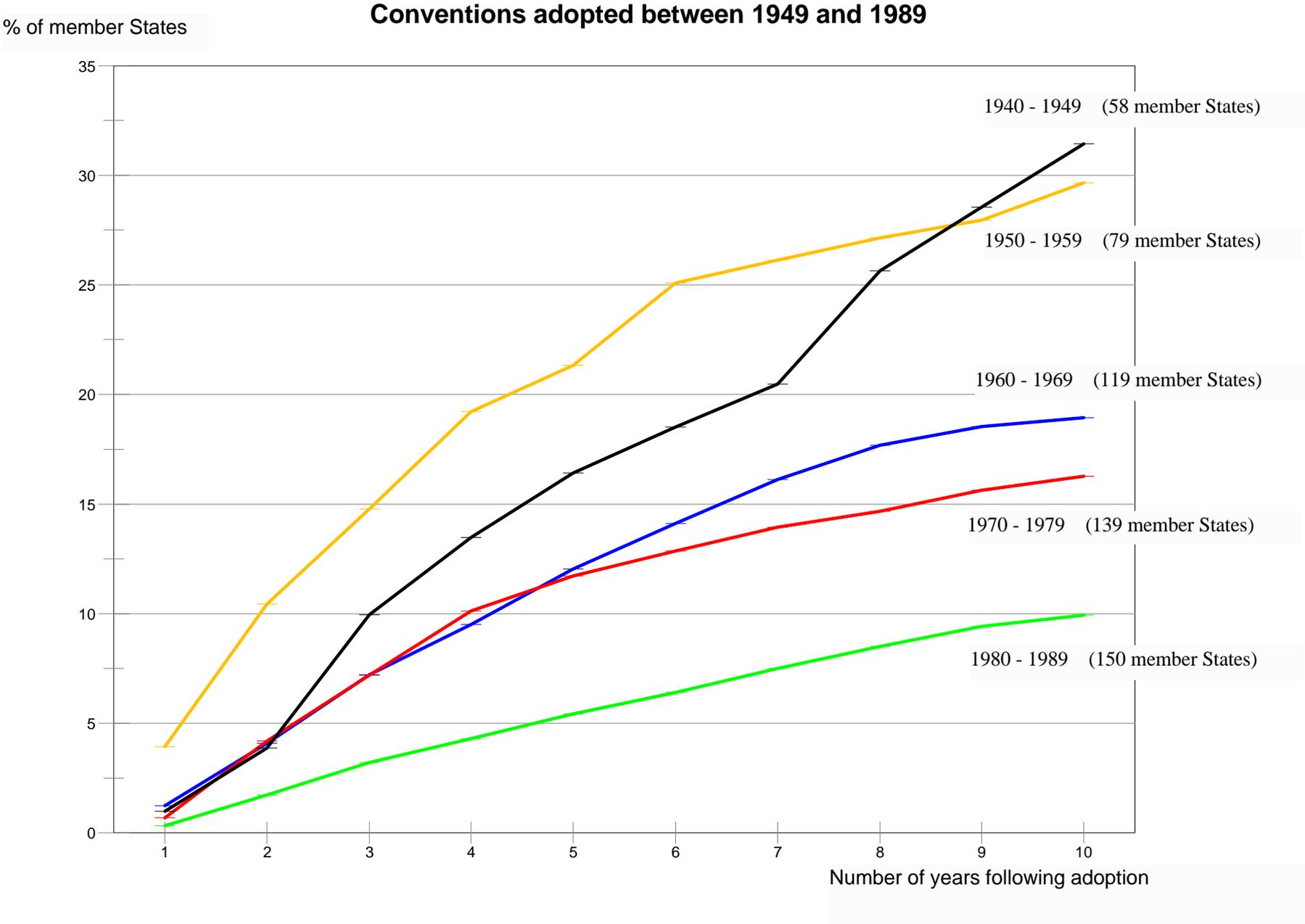
Graph 1: International Labour Conventions as at 31 December 1999



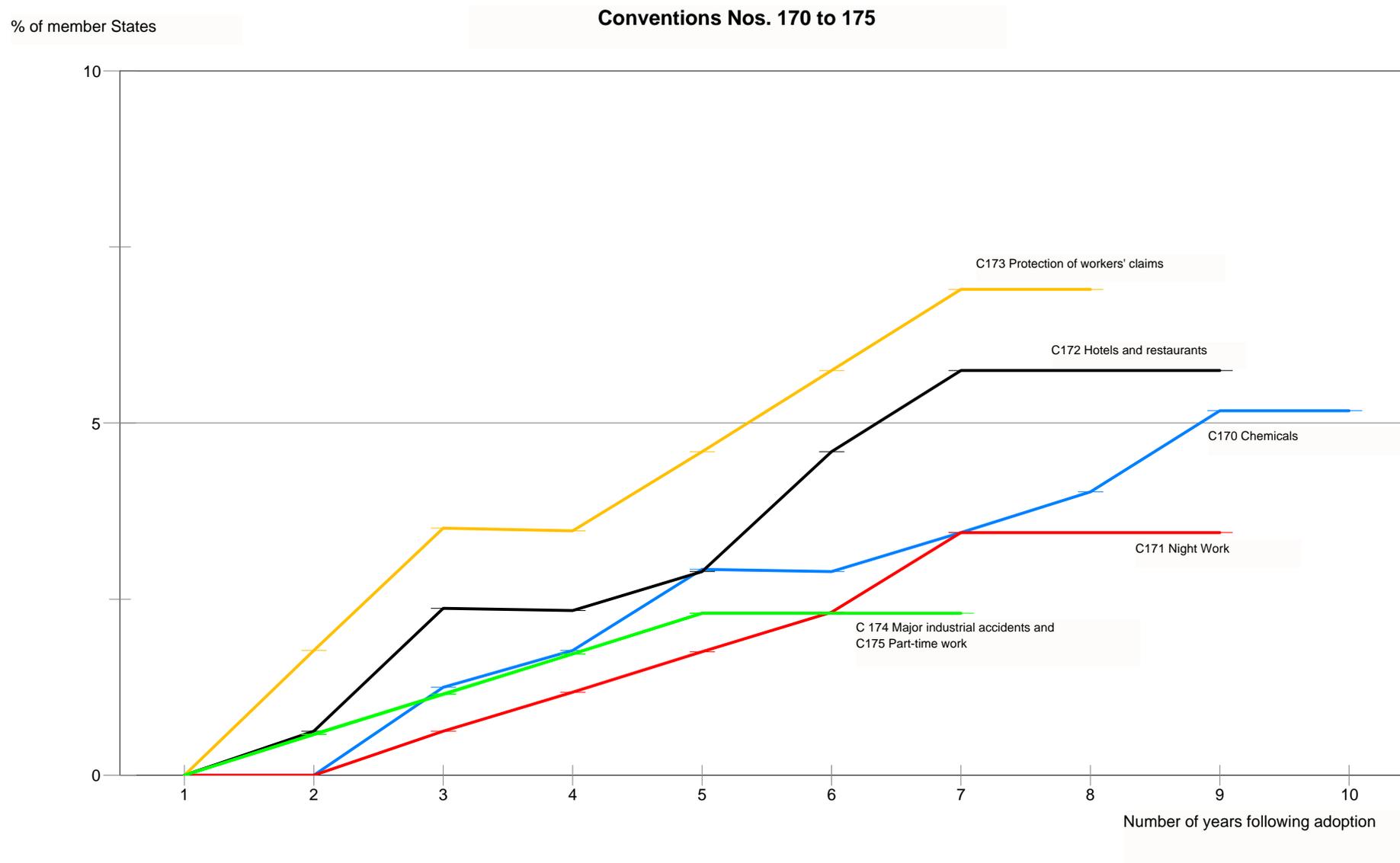
Graph 2: ILO membership as at 31 December 1999



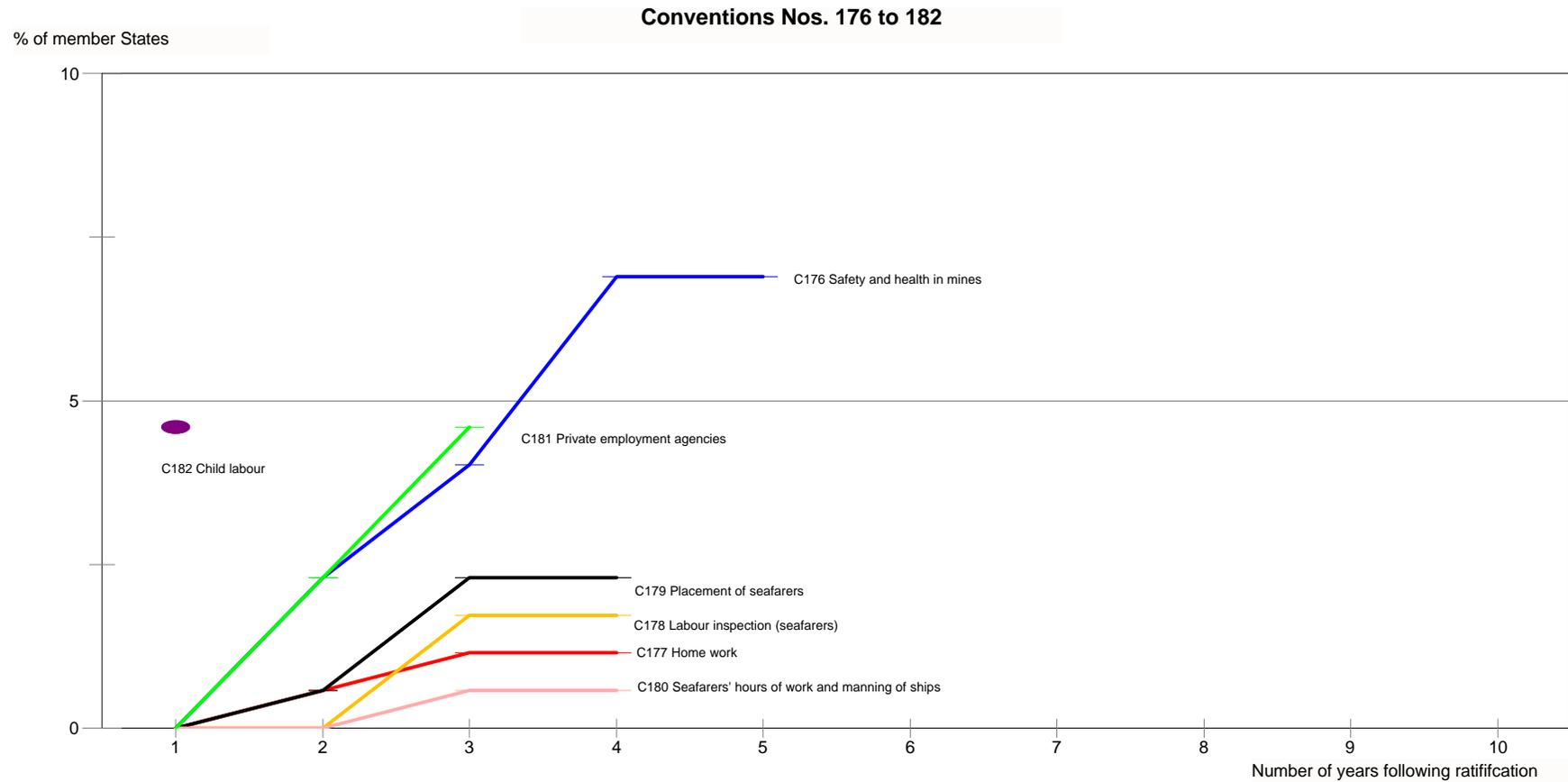
Graph 3: Rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions in the ten years following their adoption



Graph 4: Rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions in the ten years following their adoption



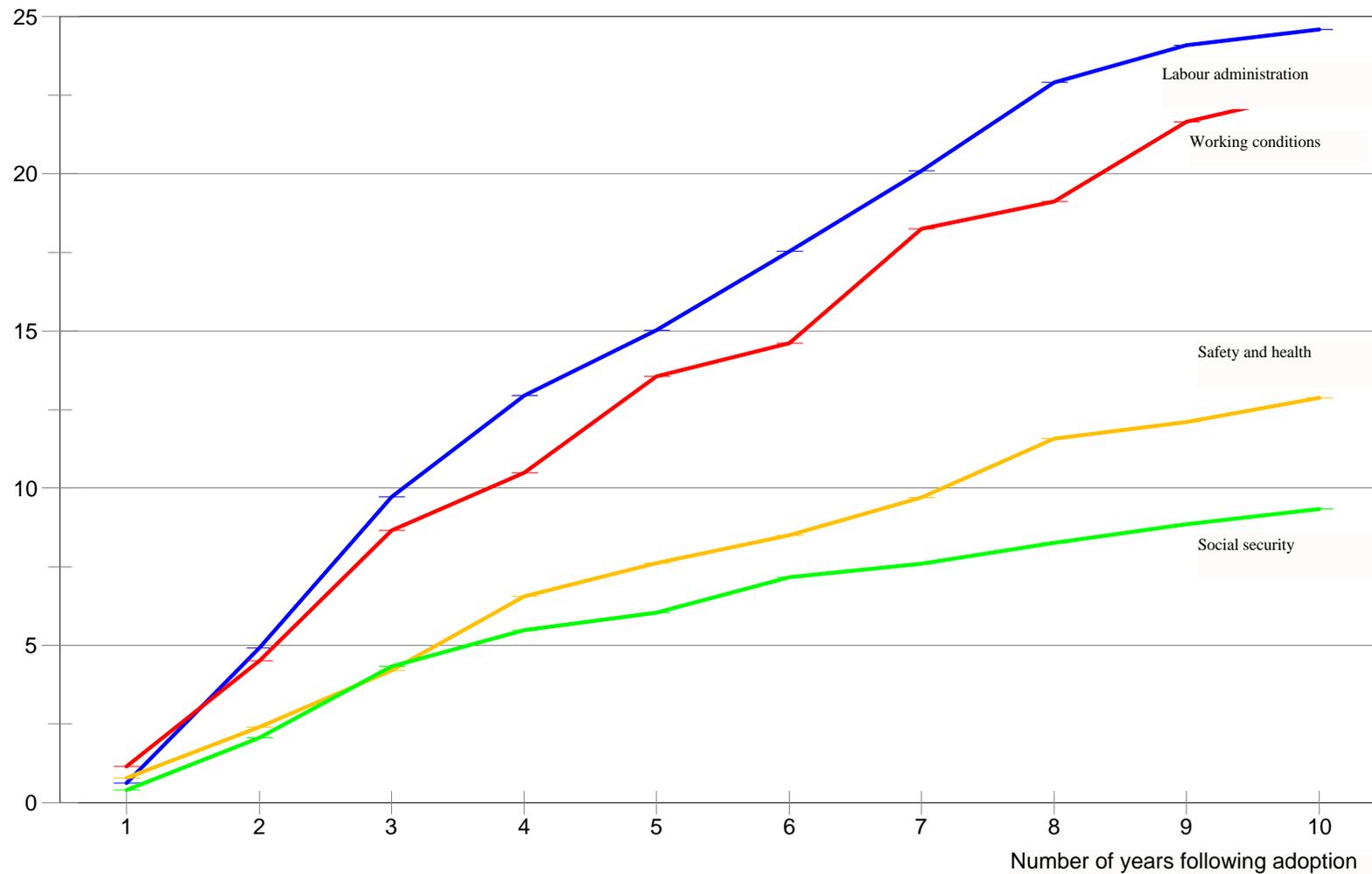
Graph 5: Rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions in the ten years following their adoption



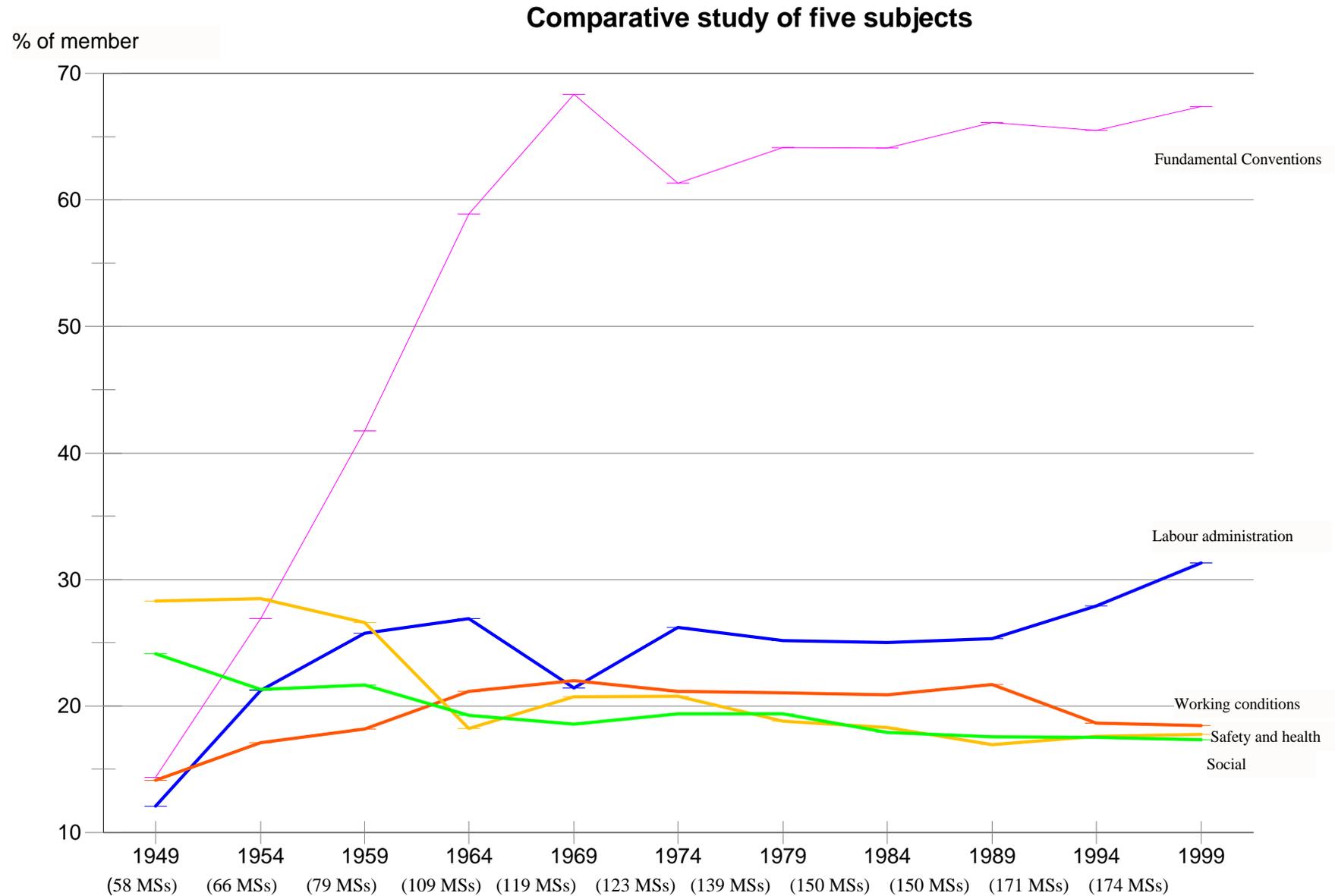
Graph 6: Rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions in the ten years following their adoption

Comparative study: four subject-areas

% of member States



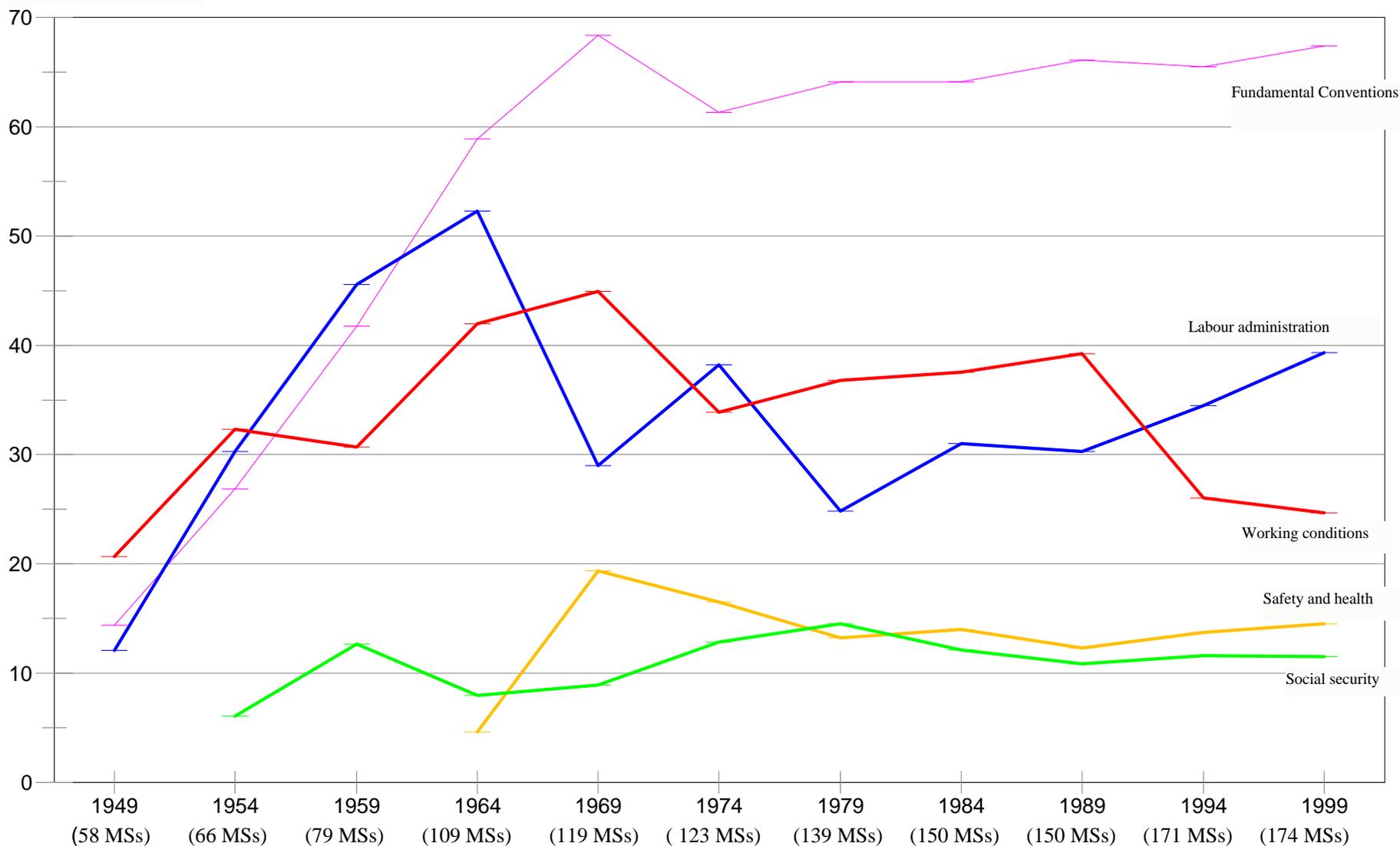
Graph 7: Evolution of the rate of ratification of all Conventions since 31 December 1949



Graph 8: Evolution of the rate of ratification of up-to-date Conventions since 31 December 1949

Comparative study of five subjects: up-to-date Conventions

% of member States



Appendix

Summary tables