Strategic trade union responses to European integration

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“Nordic trade union strategies between institutional complementarities and multilevel governance”

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Outline of the presentation

1) Globalization and European integration: trade union challenges and strategies
2) Theoretical overview: institutional, sociological and organisational approaches
3) An integrated model
4) An empirical study of the Nordic countries: objectives and preliminary impressions
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4) The Nordic countries: empirical study and preliminary impressions
Challenges to trade unions

Globalization
- Asymmetries and hegemony
- New international division of labour
- Regulatory competition

Europe
- Institutionalized asymmetry
- Dilemma of scaling
- Dilemma of framing
- Dilemma of legitimacy (2x)

+ Structural and demographic challenges
Trade union strategies in Europe and beyond

- Hyman (2004): between “no, because” and “yes, and”
- Erne (2008): trade union responses between democratic renationalisation and euro-corporatism
Trade union strategy and institutional levels

A complex dependent variable: developing a matrix of trade union strategies and institutional levels...

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<th>Exemples des stratégies syndicales :</th>
<th>Exemples de recherches empiriques et de stratégies, européennes et au-delà de l’Europe</th>
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Trade union strategy and institutional levels

A complex dependent variable: clusters of trade union strategy concerning Europeanization and globalization.

Six grappes de stratégies syndicales en Europe :

- Micro-corporatisme
- Néo-corporatisme
- Euro-corporatisme
- Organisation locale
- Syndicalisme de mouvement social
- Syndicalisme de mouvement social international

Corporatisme

Démocratisation

Decentralisation / Désarticulation

Renationalisation

Internationalisation
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2) Trade union strategies: a dependent or independent variable?
3) Theoretical overview: between institutional analysis and strategic capabilities
4) An integrated model
5) The Nordic countries: empirical overview and preliminary findings
Structural and institutional approaches

- Functional spill-over (Haas, Dunlop 1958), isomorphism and diffusion of best practices
- National institutions as determinants or moderating variables (ex. Thelen 2001, Frege & Kelly 2004)
- Exposedness to trade (ex. Bieler 2006) and integration into EMU (ex. Traxler 2003)
- Structure of the sector, standardization of production and motives of FDI (ex. Meardi et al. 2010)
- TU identities (Hyman 2001) and repertoires (Tilly 2006)
Sociological approaches and institutional change

- Network governance, decentring and overlapping memberships (Rhodes 2007)
- Transnational norm-building (Mückenberger 2008)
- Institutional entrepreneurship (Streeck & Thelen 2005, Rüb 2009)
- Institutional *bricolage* and translation (Campbell 2004)
- TU structure, ideas and leadership (van der Maas 2006)
- Strategic alliances, political/electoral action
- Organizing and “expanding the union zone” (Haiven 2007)
Organizational approaches and strategic capabilities

- Capabilities: Mobilization of resources and resourcefulness (Ganz 2002)
- Discursive capabilities and internal union democracy (Murray & Levesque 2003)
- “Transformation experience” (Hyman 2007)
- « Syndicalisme référentiel » (Dufour et al. 2010)
- Scaling, coordination between institutional arenas and levels
- Framing and agenda setting (Levesque & Murray 2010)
Avoiding the snakes, running for the ladders?
A question of strategic capabilities
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An integrated model

Five main elements:

1) Market integration (exposedness to economic integration)

2) Impact of national IR institutions and self-reinforcing mechanisms (path dependency)

3) Possibility for critical junctures and institutional entrepreneurship in a multilevel setting

4) Policy networks (horizontal & vertical)

5) Importance of strategic capabilities (scaling, framing, learning)
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Research question

How do trade unions respond strategically to economic integration in Europe and to globalization?

- Are trade unions a strategic actor in the context of European integration and globalization?
- What capabilities enable trade unions to respond strategically to European integration and globalization?
- How do trade unions in the Nordic countries react to European integration and to globalization?
Objectives

• Understand and explain trade union responses to European integration and globalization
• Approach trade union strategy from a non deterministic point of view
• Shed light on organizational variables (repertoires & capabilities) and interplay between institutional and organizational factors
• Gain a better understanding of trade unionism in the Nordic countries
Why the Nordic countries?

- Similarity of IR institutions and union identities = variance probably due to other variables ("matched comparison"; Locke & Thelen 1995)
- Even within institutional framework and similar exposedness: considerable intra-model variance
- Labour and services mobility: a critical juncture?
- High level of resources = minimizes the impact of sunk costs and path defying behaviour
- Tensions between discourse & action...
- Exporting the Nordic model (ex. flexicurity...)?
Ongoing research

- Qualitative research design
- Possibility for QCA
- Field research based in Brussels and Copenhagen 2009-2010
- Countries selected: DK and SE
- Level of analysis: national and branch-level unions
- Additional levels: Europe, confederation & large firms
- Sectors selected: construction, banking, HoReCa (also considering former parastatal sectors)
Mange Tak!