

TRADE UNIONS

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

VOL. 14

# Global and European Trade Union Federations

A Handbook and Analysis of Transnational  
Trade Union Organizations and Policies

Hans-Wolfgang Platzer and Torsten Müller

PETER LANG

# TRADE UNIONS

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The continuing advance of globalization, together with deepening European integration, has increased the significance of the transnational level of trade union organization and action. This study offers a comprehensive overview of the development, structure, and policies of global and European trade union federations to serve as a reference work on all the key trade union movements operating globally and in Europe. It presents an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing these organizations and their strategic and policy responses.

As a handbook, this volume provides extensive and systematically presented data on transnational sectoral trade union federations. Applying an analogous structure in the presentation of both global and European levels, the study features extensive organizational profiles, portraits, and overviews. This empirical material serves to reveal recent innovations in cross-border policy instruments and strategic approaches since the 1990s. The changing profiles of international trade unions – as measured against a set of functional criteria drawn from political science – and key developments in transnational trade union activity since the start of the new century are also investigated.

HANS-WOLFGANG PLATZER has been Professor in the Department of Social Science and Cultural Studies at the University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Germany since 1992. He holds the Jean Monnet Chair of European Integration, *ad personam* and is Director of the European and Global Industrial Relations Research Group at the University of Applied Sciences, Fulda, Germany.

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# Global and European Trade Union Federations

# Trade Unions Past, Present and Future

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EDITED BY CRAIG PHELAN

Volume 14



PETER LANG

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Trade Union Organizations and Policies

Hans-Wolfgang Platzer and Torsten Müller

In cooperation with Stefan Rüb, Thomas R. Oettgen and Matthias Helmer



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### *Note on the English edition*

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Agreements (IFA) and EU sectoral social dialogue – both of which saw a number of interesting developments during 2010/11. The English edition draws on English-language versions of the internal documentation of the trade union federations wherever possible. Much of this documentation is either now archived or only available to affiliates, and the authors and translator are grateful for the cooperation of federation officials in making much of this available. In circumstances where documentation was no longer accessible, German-language references have been retained and translated where appropriate. Other German-language sources have also been translated, without this being expressly noted on each occasion. The references for the individual trade union federations are given at the end of each of these chapters. References for works cited in the other chapters (Chapters 1–4, 23–26) are at the end of the volume.

We also thank the editorial staff at Peter Lang Publishing Group for their assistance in the publication of the English edition.

April 2011  
For the project team  
Hans-Wolfgang Platzer  
Torsten Müller



## List of Abbreviations

ACC	American Chemistry Council
ACFTU	All-China Federation of Trade Unions
ACI	Airports Council International
ACT	Association of Commercial Television in Europe
ACTE	Association des Collectivités Textiles Européennes
ACV	Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond (General Confederation of Christian Trade Unions – Belgium)
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEA	Association of European Airlines
AER	Association of European Radios
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations
AMICE	Association of Mutual Insurers and Insurance Cooperatives in Europe
APEP	Association des Producteurs Européens de Potasse
APRC	Asian Pacific Regional Committee
APSRC	Asian Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee
ARCC	African Regional Consultative Council
BAT	British American Tobacco
BDA	Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (Confederation of German Employer Associations)
BHI	Bau- und Holzarbeiter Internationale (see also BWT)
BI	Bildungsinternationale (see also EI)
BIAC	Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD
BIE	Bildungsinternationale Europa (see also EI)
BIPAR	European Federation of Insurance Intermediaries

BKIW	Beratende Kommission für Industriellen Wandel
BWI	Building and Woodworkers' International
CAEF	The European Foundry Association
CANSO	Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCMB	Centrale Chrétienne du Métal de Belgique (Christian Metalworkers' Union of Belgium)
CEA	European Insurance and Reinsurance Federation
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEC	Confédération Européenne de l'Industrie de la Chaussure
CEEMET	Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology Based Industries
CEEP	Centre européen des entreprises à participation pub- lique et des entreprises d'intérêt économique général (European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services)
CEFIC	Conseil Européen des Fédérations de l'Industrie Chimique
CEFS	Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre
CEI-Bois	European Confederation of woodworking industries
CEPI	Confederation of European Paper Industries
CEPI	Coordination Européenne des Producteurs Indépendants
CER	Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies
CESA	Community of European Shipyards' Associations
CESI	Confédération Européenne des Syndicats Indépendants
CFCT	Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail
CGE	Compagnie Générale d'Electricité
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Confederation of Labour – trade union confederation)

CGIL-FILTEA	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Tessile e Abbigliamento (CGIL affiliate for the textile and clothing industry)
CGIL-FLFP	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – Federazione Lavoratori Funzione Pubblica (CGIL affiliate for public services)
CGT	Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labour – France)
CGT-FO	Confédération générale du travail-Force Ouvrière (France)
CICA	Confederation of International Contractors' Associations
CIS	Commonwelath of Independent States
CISL	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (General Confederation of Italian Workers' Trades Unions – Italy, Christian tradition)
CLEPA	European Association of Automotive Suppliers
CLR-N	Construction Labour Research Network
CMB	Centrale de l'Industrie du Métal de Belgique (metal-working affiliate of the Belgian trade union confederation FGTB)
CNV	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond in Nederland (National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands)
CoESS	Confederation of European Security Services
COPA	Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles
COTANCE	Confederation of National Associations of Tanners and Dressers of the European Community
CREA	Coordinador Regional del Espectáculo de las Américas (Regional coordinator of the IFM for Latin America)
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility

CUT	Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (central trade union confederation, Brazil)
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Confederation)
DJSI	Dow Jones Sustainability Index
EACB	European Association of Co-operative Banks
EAEA	European Alliance for Entertainment and Arts
EAGISE	Europäische Aktiengesellschaft
EAL-IUL	Europäischer Ausschuss der Lebensmittel-, Genussmittel- und Gastgewerbe-gewerkschaften in der IUL
EBF	European Banking Federation
EBR	Europäischer Betriebsrat (EWC, European Works Council)
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
EC	European Community
ECA	European Cockpit Association
ECB	European Central Bank
ECEG	European Chemical Employers' Group
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPI	European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates
ECSA	European Community Shipowners' Association
ECSEE	Energy Community of South East Europe
ECVM	European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers
EDF	Electricité de France
EEA	European Entertainment Alliance
EEC	European Economic Community
EFA	European Federation of Agriculture Trade Unions
EFBH	Europäische Föderation der Bau- und Holzarbeiter (see EFBWW)
EFBWW	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers
EFCGU	European Federation of Chemical and General Workers' Unions
EFCI	European Federation of Cleaning Industries

EFFAT	European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
EFIC	European Furniture Industries Confederation
EFJ	European Federation of Journalists
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EFTA-TUC	European Free Trade Association – Trade Union Congress
EGF	Europäische Grafische Föderation
EGI	Europäisches Gewerkschaftsinstitut (see ETUI-REHS)
EGÖD	Europäischer Gewerkschaftsverband für den Öffentlichen Dienst (see EPSU)
EGV-TBL	Europäischer Gewerkschaftsverband Textil, Bekleidung und Leder (see European Trade Union Federation of Textiles, Clothing and Leather, ETUF:TCL)
EI	Education International
EICTA	European Information, Communications and Consumer Electronics Industry Technology Association
EIF	European Industry Federation
EIM	European Rail Infrastructure Managers
ELF	European Landworkers' Federation
EMB	Europäischer Metallgewerkschaftsbund (see EMF)
EMCEF	European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation
EMF	European Metalworkers' Federation
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENPA	European Newspaper Publishers' Association
EO-IFCTU	European Organization-International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
EP	European Parliament
EPSU	European Federation of Public Service Unions
EPSUCOB@	EPSU's collective bargaining network
EPZ	Export Promotion Zone

ERA	European Regions Airline Association
ERO	European Regional Organization
ERP	European Recovery Programme
ESA	European Software Association
ESBG	European Savings Banks Group
ESO	European Skippers Organisation
ESPA	European Stabiliser Producers Association
ESU	European Students' Union
ETF	European Transport Workers' Federation
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
ETLC	European Trade Union Liaison Committee on Tourism
ETNO	European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUI-REHS	European Trade Union Institute – Research, Education, Health and Safety
ETUF-TCL	European Trade Union Federation of Textiles, Clothing and Leather
EU	European Union
Eucob@n	European Collective Bargaining Network
EUPAN	European Public Administration Network
EURATEX	European Apparel and Textile Confederation
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
EURELECTRIC	Union of the Electricity Industry
Eurocadres	Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff
EUROCOAL	European Association for Coal and Lignite
EuroCOP	European Confederation of Police
EUROFEDOP	European Federation of Public Service Employees
EUROFER	European Confederation of Iron and Steel Industries
EUROGAS	European Union of the Natural Gas Industry
EURO-IUF	European regional organization of the IUF
EuroMetaux	European Association of Metals

EUROMINES	European Association of Mining Industries
EVA	Europäische Akademie für umweltorientierten Verkehr (European Academy for Environmentally Sensitive Transport)
EWC	European Works Council
FAB	Functional Airspace Block
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBE	Fédération Bancaire Européenne
FERCO	European Federation of Contract Catering Organizations
FERPA	European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FIA	International Federation of Actors
FIAPF	Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (International Federation of Film Producers Associations)
FIEC	Fédération de l'Industrie Européenne de la Construction (European Construction Industry Federation)
FIET	Fédération Internationale des Employés, Techniciens et Cadres (Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees)
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFPro	Fédération Internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels
FIIC	Federación Interamericana de la Industria de la Construcción (Inter-American Construction Workers Trade Union)
FILLEA-CGIL	Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Legno Edili e Affini – Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL-affiliate for construction and woodworkers).
FIM	Fédération Internationale des Musiciens
FIM-CISL	Federazione Italiana Metalmeccanici – Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (CISL affiliated trade union for metalworkers)

FIOM-CGIL	Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici – Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL-affiliate for metworking)
FITTVCC/ORI	Federación Internacional de Trabajadores del Textil, Vestuario, Cuero y Calzado / Organización Regional Interamericana (Regional organization of the ITGLWF for America)
FLM	Federazione lavoratori metalmeccanici (Italian met- alworkers' federation)
FNCTTFEL	Fédération Nationale des Cheminots, Travailleurs du Transport, Fonctionnaires et Employés publics du Luxembourg
FNPR	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (Federation of Trade Unions of the Netherlands)
FOC	Flag of Convenience
FOM	Fédération Confédérale Force Ouvrière de la Métallurgie (metalworkers' section of Force Ouvrière)
FPC	Fair-Practices-Committee
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
FTM-CGT	Fédération des travailleurs de la métallurgie – Confédération générale du travail (Belgian metal- workers' trade union)
GAPS	General Agreements on Public Services
GDBA	Gewerkschaft Deutscher Bundesbahnbeamten und Anwärter (German civil servants' railway trade union)
GdEÖ	Gewerkschaft der Eisenbahner Österreichs (Austrian railway workers' trade union)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	Gender Equality Committee
GEOPA	Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union
GGLF	Gewerkschaft Gartenbau, Land- und Forstwirtschaft

GHK	Gewerkschaft Holz und Kunststoff (German Wood and Plastics Trade Union)
GM	General Motors
GME	General Motors Europe
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
GTB	Gewerkschaft Textil und Bekleidung (German Textile and Clothing Trade Union)
GUF	Global Union Federation
HOSPEEM	European hospital and healthcare employers' association
HOTREC	Trade association of hotels, restaurants and cafes in the European Union
HSTF	Health Services Task Force
IACA	International Air Carrier Association
IAEA	International Arts and Entertainment Alliance
IAHA	International Aviation Handlers' Association
IAM	International Association of Machinists
IAO	Internationale Arbeitsorganisation
IBBH	Internationaler Bund der Bau- und Holzarbeiter (see IFBWW)
IBITS	Industry, Business and Information Technology Services
IBV	International Bergarbeiterverband
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Associations
ICCM	International Council on Mining and Metals
ICCP	Information, Computer and Communications Policy Committee
ICEF	Internationale Föderation der Chemie-, Energie- und Fabrikarbeitsgewerkschaften (see ICEM)
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions

ICEMU	International Committee of Entertainment and Media Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFA	International Framework Agreement
IFAWPCA	International Federation of Asians and Western Pacific Contractors' Associations
IFBWW	International Federation of Building and Wood Workers
IFCTU	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
IFEX	International Freedom of Expression
IFI	Internationales Finance Institute
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IFM	International Federation of Musicians
IFPCW	International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers
IFPW	International Federation of Petroleum Workers
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IG BAU	Industriegewerkschaft Bauen – Agrar – Umwelt (German construction, agricultural and environmental trade union)
IG BCE	Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau, Chemie, Energie (German mining, chemical and energy trade union)
IG BE	Industriegewerkschaft Bergbau und Energie
IG BSE	Industriegewerkschaft Bau – Steine – Erden (German construction workers' union – predecessor to IG BAU)
IG CPK	Industriegewerkschaft Chemie, Papier, Keramik
IGF	International Graphical Federation
IGM	Industriegewerkschaft Metall
IHRA	International Hotel and Restaurant Association
ILF	International Landworkers' Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMA	Industrial Minerals Association
IMEC	International Maritime Employers' Committee
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INSI	International News Safety Institute
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IÖD	Internationale der Öffentlichen Dienste (see PSI)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPTT	Internationale des Personals der Post-, Telegraf- und Telefonbetriebe
IRU	International Road Transport Union
ISNTUC	International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres
ITBLAV	Internationale Textil-, Bekleidungs- und Lederarbeiter-Vereinigung (see ITGLWF)
ITF	Internationale Transport Workers' Federation
ITGA	International Tobacco Growers Association
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUD	Industrial Union Department
IUF	International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations
IUFD	International Union of Food and Drink Workers' Associations
IUL	Internationale Union der Lebensmittel-, Landwirtschafts-, Hotel-, Restaurant-, Café- und Genussmittelarbeiter-Gewerkschaften (see IUF)
LO	Landsorganisasjonen (Norwegian Trade Union Confederation)
LO-FTF	Landsorganisationen – Funktionærernes og Tjenestemændenes Fællesråd

LO-TCO	Landsorganisationen – Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (Swedish salaried employees trade union)
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MEF	Miners' European Federation
MEI	Media and Entertainment International
Metaal-NVV	Metaal – Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (Socialist Metalworkers Trade Union of the Netherlands)
MIF	Miners' International Federation
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NEPSI	The European Network on Silica
NGG	Gewerkschaft Nahrung, Genuss, Gaststätten (German food and hospitality workers' trade union)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOPEF	Norsk Olje- og Petrokjemisk Fagforbund (Norwegian oil and petroleum trade union)
NSFU	National Sailors' and Firemen's Union
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OIEM	Organisation Internationale de l'Énergie et des Mines
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OPZZ	Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych (All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions)
ORGALIME	Organisme de Liaison d'Industries Métalliques Européennes
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PANARTES	Pan American Federation of Arts, Mass Media and Entertainment Trade Unions
PEARLE	Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe
PERC	Pan European Regional Council

PSI	Public Services International
PSIRU	Public Services International Research Unit
PSWG	Public Sector Working Group
QPS	Quality Public Services campaign
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
RLEA	Railway Labor Executive Association
SAI	Social Accountability International
SDA	Social Development Agency
SDE	Sindikot delavcev dejavnosti energetike Slovenije (Slovenian mining and energy workers' trade union)
SE	Societas Europaea (European Company)
SEEF	South East Europe Forum
SEV	Schweizerischer Eisenbahn- und Verkehrspersonal-Verband (Swiss Railway and Transport Workers' Trade Union)
SIU	Seafarers' International Union of America
SME	Small and Medium-Size Enterprise
SNB	Special Negotiating Body
SSDC	Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee
TEN	Trans-European Network
TGP	Thomson Grand Public
TILS	Global Unions Trade, Investment and Labour Standards
TNC	Transnational corporation
TRANSNET	German Railway Workers' Trade Union
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Council to the OECD
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TUNED	Trade Unions' National and European Administration Delegation
TUSC-SASK	Trade Union Solidarity Centre – Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarisuuskeskus
TWARO	Textile Workers Asia Region Organisation (regional organisation of the ITGLWF for Asian & Pacific)
UADW	Universal Alliance of Diamonds Workers

UAW	United Automobile Workers
UEA	European Furniture Manufacturers' Federation
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
UISP	Union Internationale des Syndicats de Police
UITP	International Association of Public Transport
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNI	Union Network International
UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe
UNI-Europa	Union Network International – Europa
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union
USWA	United Steelworkers of America
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WCOTP	World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession
WCC	World Company Council
WCTE	World Committee on Tourism Ethics
WEF	World Economic Forum
W.E.M.	Western European Metal Trades Employers' Organisation
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WIFW	World Federation of Industry Workers
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

SECTION A

Political, historical and research context:  
Aims and approach of the research



## Introduction

This study is concerned with branch-level transnational trade unions at both global and European level. At the global level, these are now referred to as Global Union Federations (GUFs), but from their inception in the late nineteenth century and until the beginning of the twenty-first century they were known as International Trade Secretariats (ITS). At European level, branch-level trade union federations are now known as European Industry Federations (EIFs). The research mainly deals with the period from the 1990s until the present, and aims to provide a broad and systematic presentation of the organization, strategies, and policies of transnational branch-level union federations.<sup>1</sup>

This will involve two steps. In the first, we set out organizational profiles of individual trade union federations, outlining and analysing their key features and distinctive characteristics, current structures, and policies. The second stage involves an analysis of their main areas of activity and the development of their functional characteristics over time, in particular focusing on instruments and arenas of transnational trade union activity that have emerged or undergone major change in the period covered by our study.

Our conceptual framework and research strategy, explained in Chapter 2, includes a number of analytical tools intended to facilitate a consistent approach to the large number of organizations in the study. At the core of the study is the question as to whether and to what extent the issues, tasks, and the forms and scope of these organizations' engagement with

1 As noted in the Preface, most of the fieldwork for the study was conducted during 2006–2008: some updating was carried out in the context of ongoing research and for the English edition.

transnational problems have changed as a result of the advancing pace of globalization and European Union (EU) integration: in short, whether there has been a transformation in the *functional profiles* of global and European trade unions over the period of our research.

The significance of the various levels of transnational organization in the context of a multi-level trade union strategy, as practised within national, European and global spaces, is a key element in the theoretical discussion about the status of global and European unions as autonomous 'actors'. From the beginning of the twentieth century, this issue has also been part of the trade union and research debate on the central strategic question of how trade unions can develop an international or European trade union organizational form and strategy that constitutes an 'historically' appropriate response to the challenges and circumstances of the international economy and the international state system.

## Context and issues

The study is located in two contexts that have shaped long-standing policy discussions and theoretical debates: firstly, the issue of the shaping and regulation of globalization, customarily subsumed under the designation of 'global governance'; and secondly, issue of the 'social dimension' within the EU, and specifically employment and social policy, that has now acquired the formal designation of the 'European Social Model'.

Three basic aspects characterize each of these contexts.

- The relationship between the transnational economy, state regulation and the system of social intermediary organizations.
- The question as to which level, or within which spatial dimension – national, regional, global – governance and regulation can and should take place, and how a multi-level system of governance should be structured and where its crucial levers should be located.

- The relationship between state norm-setting and regulation, and (self-) regulation by private civil society actors.

Our study of the role of transnational unions is located at the interface between these overlapping political and theoretical sites. As a consequence, we aim to link a theorization of trade union organization with a political science perspective that draws on models and analyses of ‘governance in the EU multi-level system’ and corresponding thinking on ‘global governance’.

The study is based on the following premises and working hypotheses.

1. Advancing political and economic internationalization and Europeanization constitute significant new determinants for trade union strategy and activity at the start of the twenty-first century in that they both ‘subvert’ and ‘overtake’ national arenas.

We argue that processes of globalization and European integration have taken on a new quality over the past decade-and-a-half (see Chapter 3, below). The scope and pace of these processes increasingly call for a multi-level trade union strategy, in which new levels of engagement with issues ‘beyond the nation state’ gain in significance in addition to established national arenas. The process of ‘social transnationalization’ (Mau, 2007), or the ‘transnationalization of the social world’ (Pries, 2008a), is not only raising the significance of supra-state levels of activity in the field of union interest representation but also often injecting a new ‘political’ quality into transnational trade union relationships as a result of growing economic interdependence and changed conditions of competition.

One example can be seen in the fact that as labour markets have become internationalized, with growing competition between national locations over social standards, working conditions and pay, there has been a growing need for transnational coordination – both quantitatively and qualitatively – and a corresponding change in the conditions under which ‘international solidarity’ can be constituted and organized. Compared with traditional forms of international trade union cooperation, such as mutual support and solidarity actions,

new challenges are emerging at the transnational level of organization: these include the constant balancing of differing material interests in order to formulate common objectives and approaches to regulation and a need to represent these policies and strategies effectively within inter-state and supra-state political processes. To these can be added the need to organize and facilitate cooperation and transnational private governance under conditions of intensified competition through the development of effective norms and rules and, if needed, through agreement on sanctions to enforce compliance.

2. The relationship between globalization and EU integration is characterized by both an 'internal' linkage and a complex mutual interplay, with each process having its own specific dynamic of socio-economic development, and its own set of political framework conditions. EU integration is both a part of, and a driving force in, globalization; at the same time, the depth of economic integration (Single Market, Economic and Monetary Union) and its particular political characteristics (including supra-national lawmaking) embody a number of significant regional features not encountered elsewhere that render the EU institutionally and historically unique.
3. The 'debordering' of the national space for trade union interest representation, fostered and accelerated through EU integration and economic globalization, and the increasing need to engage with problems transnationally, is confronting both the European and global trade union levels of organization and activity with some identical and some similar challenges, but also with a number of very different requirements in terms of new problems that need to be addressed transnationally. This has led to comparable responses and common strategic approaches at both levels, involving coordination between the European and global levels, as well as to responses that differ depending on the level, and in some instances to competing approaches.
4. The assumption that might follow from this – that there should be an extension of trade unions' transnational problem-solving capacity – does not translate in a deterministic way into corresponding activity: that is, it does not necessarily lead to real growth in the significance of the European and global levels of action, and with this a growth in

the importance of transnational organizations in terms of the structures and activities of the EIFs and GUFs – for example, through their acquiring greater powers and wider scope for activity, more resources, corresponding adjustments in decision-making procedures, or other appropriate changes.

5. Rather, the transnationalization of trade union strategy is a complex and contradictory process, as more intense competition between national locations resulting from neo-liberal globalization and EU integration also induces or ‘enforces’ adaptive responses at local and national levels, including forms of concertation, such as workplace alliances, concessions bargaining, and incorporation into national modernizing coalitions, all of which (can) lead to ‘competitive corporatism’.

Furthermore, changes in the structure of (industrial) society and in the character of social problems, notably unemployment, often lead to membership losses and a weakening of trade union resources and capacities. These constellations and trends at national level can obstruct and inhibit the scope for addressing problems transnationally through EIFs and GUFs, despite the need for a ‘new’ trade union internationalism professed in trade union discourses and strategy debates or the requirement for trade unions to act transnationally, often posited as an ‘objective’ necessity by some observers: as an example, consider Ulrich Beck’s dictum: ‘Trade unions must re-invent themselves transnationally’ (Beck, 2000).

6. In critical awareness of this, we begin from the premise that the question as to the extent to which the reordering of the economic and political environment has influenced and transformed transnational trade union activity at global and European level since the 1990s can only be resolved through *empirical study*.

This multi-faceted set of empirical issues – the prerequisites and limits of a multi-level trade union strategy in the context of globalization and EU integration – will be dealt with, and bounded, as follows. The focus of the study is exclusively on observable changes in organizational strategies and the transformation of the historically-evolved functional profiles and activities of the EIFs and GUFs. The simultaneous processes of the

‘transnationalization’ of national-level unions would require a separate study, and has therefore been excluded from the scope of this research. There are, as yet, no systematic studies of the internal and strategic adaptations of national unions to the changed international environment (at the time of writing, a pilot study of the internationalization of the German metalworkers’ union IG Metall was in preparation: see Rüb, 2009).

The significance of such a research perspective – the internationalization and Europeanization of national social actors – has been underlined by more recent research into social organizations that has looked at interest representation in multi-level systems (for a summary, see Eising and Kohler-Koch, 2005b; and on employers’ associations, see Platzer, 1984). According to this approach, when national interest groups engage with international tasks (in addition to any multilateral action in and through transnational organizations), ‘autonomous’ strategies vis-à-vis national governments and a range of bilateral and multilateral strategies with selected partner organizations continue to play an important role, and in some instances – depending on the issue – a decisive one. As this also applies, with some qualification, to trade unions, a study of transnational trade union organizations can cast light on an, admittedly small, segment of a complex and dynamic process of transnationalization.

## The transnational multi-level structure of trade union organization and activity

### *The institutional and political context of the research object*

GUFs and EIFs are part of a functionally and spatially complex structure of transnational trade unionism, in terms of both organization and activity. Figure 1 sets out an overview of the overall structure of transnational union organization in order to demarcate the areas covered by this study and to clarify the ‘vertical’ connections between the levels of transnational

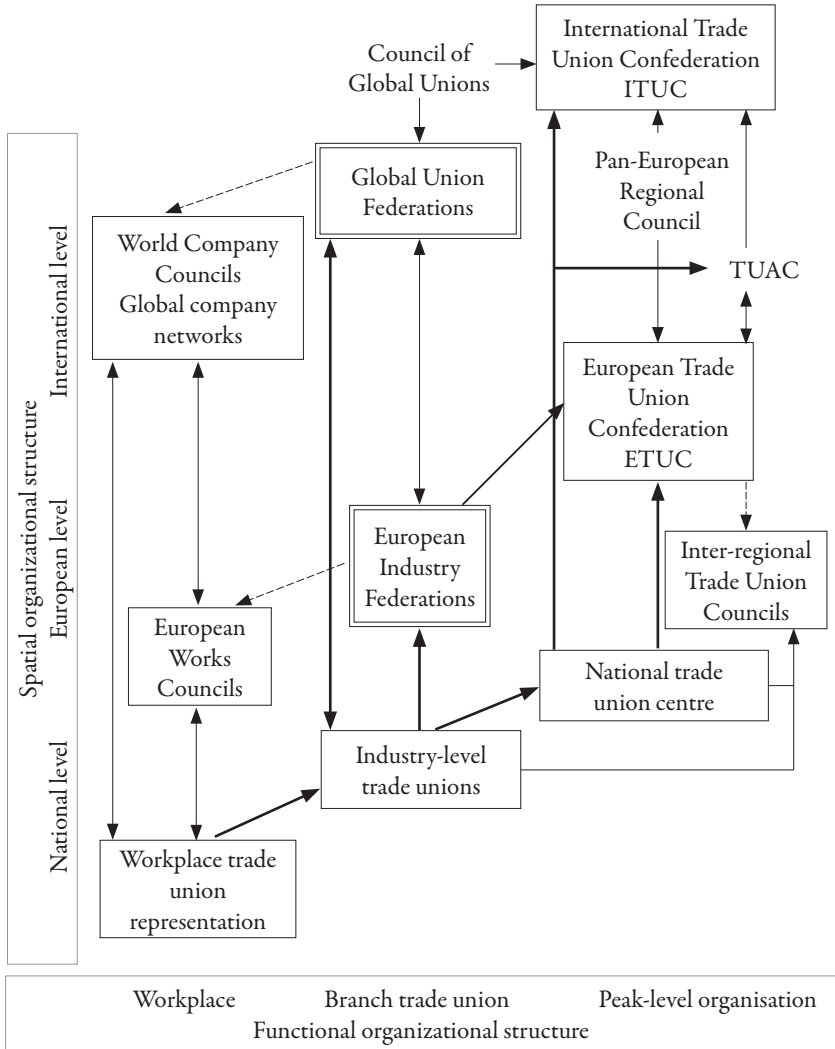
union organization and the ‘horizontal’ structural links between workplace, sectoral and ‘peak’ levels. This can only represent a snapshot of an organizational structure that has been subject to constant change for more than a century (see Chapter 4, below) and is currently, once again, passing through a far-reaching process of restructuring. Major changes in the international trade union landscape have been prompted by the historic merger in 2006 of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) to form the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). This recasting of the trade union movement reflects both the changed global political constellation that has characterized the period since the end of Cold War and the challenges posed to unions by the new character of globalization. At the same time, the reorganization and political reorientation taking place at the level of these global federations is being accompanied by organizational changes at continental and regional levels together with newly-emerging institutional structures and collaborative relations between different transnational trade union organizations. The associated questions these developments raise for our study, together with a number of unresolved problems, are outlined below.

The current multi-level structure can be outlined, at least initially, as follows. Industrial relations and trade union organization and interest-representation have emerged in national contexts at three basic levels: at workplace and enterprise level (the micro-level of industrial relations); at industry, sector or branch level (the meso-level); and at multi-sectoral or national level (the macro-level).

The significance and interplay of these levels, and roles of trade unions within them, vary substantially from country to country. This is especially the case as far as the level and the actors involved in collective bargaining are concerned (for example, a monist or dualist system of workplace industrial relations) and the structuring of national systems of industrial relations and trade union organizations (for example, competing political unions, a pluralistic system or a single non-political union structure).

As Figure 1 illustrates, this three-stage functional structure (workplace, branch, multi-branch) has been extended into and widened in the transnational area.

Figure 1: Trade union organizational structures and interrelationships: national – European – international



Organizational relationship: —▶ Membership —▶ Information-cooperation - - -▶ Coordination

The diagram shows that there are enterprise-based representative arrangements, sectoral trade union organizations, and multi-sectoral organizations at both global and European levels.

From the standpoint of a national (sectoral) trade union, this means that it is, or can be, represented directly as a member of the European and global sectoral organization which corresponds to its national sphere of representation, and indirectly through membership of a national peak-level organization and of European and global peak-level organizations, or at European level through membership in a European Industry Federation and the latter's membership of the ETUC.

In the arena of workplace and enterprise-based interest representation, there is a transnational multi-level structure that embraces, at European level, European Works Councils (EWC) and at international and global level World Company Councils and company-based trade union networks.

At European level, a substantial nexus of organizational arrangements and ongoing activity has developed based on the opportunities provided by the 1994 EWC Directive, with some 950 EWCs established by 2011. From a quantitative standpoint, the accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union has increased the number of 'community-scale enterprises' that fall within the scope of the EWC Directive to some 2,200. The coverage 'gap' between actual EWCs and the total number of companies in the Directive's scope is mitigated to some extent by the fact that EWCs have been established in the vast majority of large transnational companies operating in Europe, employing some 60 per cent of employees potentially covered by the Directive. From a qualitative standpoint, the role played by EWCs, and the substance and scope of transnational employee representation, varies considerably (Müller and Platzer, 2003). At the same time, based on their quantitative growth and potential for employee involvement and representation at transnational enterprise level, EWCs represent the fulcrum for the further Europeanization of workplace employee representation and trade union activity in the EU. In addition, some EWCs have also become platforms or channels for dealing with global problems within the enterprise, depending on the overall corporate structure. As a consequence, they have now assumed a significant role in the

strategies and activities of the EIFs (in the field denoted ‘company-related activities’ in this study).

At an international level, the absence of a legal framework means that the creation of global representative arrangements in international companies is only possible on a voluntaristic basis through negotiations with management and depends on their ‘willingness’ to establish World Company Councils (WCC) or comparable arrangements. The number of bilateral global structures is correspondingly small: there are five WCCs with a formal agreement with the employer – Statoil, SKF, Volkswagen, Daimler and ENI – and a number of ‘borderline’ cases, such as globally extended EWCs, that raise the total to some ten bodies in all.

One alternative to EWCs is the unilateral establishment and operation of global, company-based union networks. This approach has been pursued since the 1960s, coordinated by the GUFs, and continues to play an important role in their strategies. However, resource constraints have limited the number of global company networks (Müller et al., 2004).

In addition to networks and representative arrangements at global level, European and global trade unions have also recently pursued the negotiation of International Framework Agreements (IFA) with transnational companies as a strategic objective, as dealt with below.

Two aspects stand out when considering trade union sector-based transnational organization and strategy. Firstly, sectoral trade union organization and representation at supra-state level is the oldest form, extending back to the late nineteenth century in some cases. The first International Trade Secretariats (ITS) were constituted in 1889, predating the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC) (1901), which became the International Federation of Trade Unions in 1913. The European level of organization, which grew out of the ITSs (renamed Global Union Federations in 2002), has been progressively developed and acquired greater political autonomy over the course of the deepening EU integration that began in the late 1960s. And secondly, it is significant in terms of organizational strategy that the European Industry Federations are full members of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC, established in 1973), and constitute a second pillar of membership for this organization, alongside national trade union centres (DGB, TUC etc.). In

contrast, at global level, branch-level federations have traditionally been autonomous and not integrated into the international trade union centres (ICFTU, World Confederation of Labour).

The principles of cooperation between the ICFTU and the ITs/GUFs were established in 1951 in the so-called 'Milan Agreement', since amended several times.

The by no means conflict-free relationship between the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats rests on a division of labour, under which the ITs represent industrial interests and the ICFTU focuses on matters of general trade union concern. However, there is considerable variation in the scale and resilience of the ITs, as well as their programmes, which limits cooperation between them (Reutter and Rütters, 2003).

In contrast to the pattern in which the EIFs were integrated into the ETUC, the establishment of the ITUC in 2006, which brought together the ICFTU and WCL, did not lead to any comparable integration of the GUFs into the ITUC. One reason is that the ITUC founding congress in Vienna also embarked on a major organizational reform that included establishing the Council of Global Unions. Overlaying any existing informal cooperation between GUFs, and between these and international trade union centres, the Council of Global Unions was equipped with a formal institutional structure, with representation from existing GUFs, the ITUC, and the TUAC (the Trade Union Advisory Council at the OECD). Its constitution provides for an elected coordination committee to establish binding policies and actions to be financed out of a joint budget and administered by a secretariat.

As far as the trade union peak-level (or 'umbrella') organizations are concerned, we would highlight the following main aspects. Looked at in terms of other forms of global or European trade union organization, the ETUC, established in 1973, has a special, or monopoly, status as the representative centre for its affiliates, initially drawn from the EEC and EFTA and subsequently expanded since 1989 by the admission of union centres from Central and Eastern Europe. From a European perspective, its 'monopoly status' is expressed in the fact that the ETUC is the only cross-sectoral trade union centre officially recognized by the European Union,

the Council of Europe and EFTA, with only a few small occupational European-level trade union organizations existing independently of it. The ETUC is the sole body for the representation of employee interests within the framework of the EU's multi-sectoral 'social dialogue'. Viewed from a global union perspective, one expression of the ETUC's 'special status' is that it does not operate as the regional section of international union organizations (the same applies to the EIFs), as is the case with regional structures or sub-structures of the ITUC in America, Asia and Africa. Rather, it is an independent trade union centre – financially, organizationally, and politically – with its main activities, including lobbying, directed at supra-national EU policy.

The establishment of the ITUC in 2006 did, however, produce some movement in this unique European-regional arrangement. The setting up of the Pan-European Regional Council (PERC) in March 2007 – mainly at the instigation of Eastern European trade unions, and in particular the Russian FNPR, which are not members of the ETUC – created a European regional organization of the ITUC that now extends from Lisbon to Vladivostok. This step has not challenged the political independence and specific role of the ETUC, but will require a reordering of the relationship between the ETUC and ITUC, the course of which has not always run entirely smoothly.

The Interregional Trade Union Councils, positioned between the national and European level in the diagram, are a network coordinated by the ETUC within which trade unions in the EU's border regions can work together on regional and employment issues (EU regional funds, planning, border workers, vocational training etc.). The first interregional council for Saarland/Lorraine/Luxembourg was established in 1976; by 2007 there were forty-two such bodies under the aegis of the ETUC.

As the diagram illustrates, the transnational organizational thread of trade union centres is completed by the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) at the OECD. This body has its origins in 1948, when the concern was to coordinate and articulate trade union interests across national borders in the implementation of the Marshall Plan for European recovery. Currently, the TUAC represents some sixty national trade union

centres from thirty OECD member states, embracing some sixty-six million employees.

Like its counterpart, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC), the TUAC has official consultative status and participates in the OECD's numerous committees. To this end, it also cooperates with GUFs that have an interest in specific issues. As noted above, this informal cooperation will be formalized and intensified in the future through the Council of Global Unions. As nearly all European affiliate confederations of TUAC are also members of the ETUC, the TUAC sees itself as a link between the European and global trade union levels.

Finally, turning to the level of the global trade union centres, the establishment of the ITUC in November 2006 initiated developments – and marked certain changes – in a number of regions, which will also have a medium-term impact on the focus of the present research: that is, the representative and functional roles of transnational sectoral organizations and their relationship to the trade union centres. The main lines of development and possible future scenarios are outlined below.

## Transnational union frameworks in transition: New perspectives and open questions

At the point when the two international centres merged in 2006, the ICFTU represented some 230 member organizations in over 150 countries on five continents, with a total of 160 million individual members. The WCL was a considerably smaller organization, with 140 member organizations in 120 countries, and a total of 25 million members. The merger represented an attempt to overcome almost a century of ideological and confessional division, with the expectation that national trade unions that had previously stood aside from any form of international affiliation would join and add to the representativeness, legitimacy, and negotiating power

of the ITUC. This has already taken place in the case of a number of trade unions that had previously not belonged to any international organizations, such as the French CGT, the Colombian centre DUT, and the Polish OPZZ. The ending of political division at the international level might also have a positive influence on relationships between formerly competing, and in some cases hostile, trade unions at national level.

The structuring of the merger was formally and symbolically arranged to avoid giving the impression of a takeover, with each of the centres dissolving itself followed by the establishment of a new organization as a merger of equals. This step was intended in particular as a signal to trade unions in Latin America, where a number of important union centres had not joined either of the two merging confederations prior to 2006. Although, with the exception of Europe, both centres had had a regional sub-structure in all continents, the situation in Latin America was marked by representative weaknesses and regional organizational conflicts.

Since the creation of the ITUC was also intended to lead within a year to the restructuring and strengthening of regional organizations in all continents, including Europe, the question raised in Latin America, given the locally complex and fragmented trade union landscape, is whether this will in fact succeed (Wachendorfer, 2006), and whether the new regional structure in Europe (PERC) will develop under the aegis of the ITUC and in cooperation with, but demarcated from, the ETUC.

The decisions made at the unification congress provided for the following.

The ETUC continues to concentrate on EU-related matters and ITUC-PERC addresses aspects of importance to Europe as a whole. The search for a solution to the resulting jurisdictional problems has produced a salutary formula: for a transitional yet open-ended period of time the ETUC Secretary General will also serve in parallel as the Secretary General of the ITUC-PERC. Simultaneously, a 'gentlemen's agreement' has been reached to the effect that the PERC President, currently the President of FNPR Russia, should come from a non-EU country. (Traub-Merz and Eckl, 2007: 4f.)

In addition to the objective of strengthening the regional-continental sub-structure of the new federation, the second key decision was to establish

the Council of Global Unions (see above), the task of which was to put cooperation between the ITUC, TUAC and the GUFs on a new footing. From the standpoint of elaborating and implementing a coherent global strategy of cooperation on trade union development and activity in developing countries, this new organizational arrangement is evidently a sign of the realization that trade union cooperation and priorities in these areas was less than optimal in the past. However, a number of difficulties and unresolved questions have remained. Not least the initial administrative structures and the volume of the budget, intended to cover joint offices in Washington and Hong Kong, were contentious and led to the fact that the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) refused ratification and attended the founding meeting of the Council of Global Unions in January 2007 only as an observer.

In the longer term 'the annual action programme and its funding, and especially the development of a common position towards the Chinese ACFTU will demonstrate whether the Global Council is able to reach an internal consensus or not. This could require striking a new balance between the interests of the GUFs, which are primarily focused on transnational enterprises, and the global governance perspective of the ITUC' (Traub-Merz and Eckle, 2007: 6).

From the standpoint of global trade union unity, the ACFTU, with its 150 million members – equal to the rest of the ITUC combined – represents the greatest unknown quantity. Whether the state-controlled ACFTU could link up with other 'parastatal' trade unions to form a counter-pole and adversary of the ITUC remains uncertain. The key terrain here, in relation to the external economic and diplomatic strategy of China and its aspiration to 'great power' status, is Africa. These imponderables have generated differing strategic emphases between the ITUC, which has sought to delineate itself ideologically and politically from the ACFTU, and individual GUFs, which have focused on promoting the freeing of Chinese unions from state dependence through cultivating cooperation with ACFTU sectoral affiliates.

The process of reorganizing the peak-level associations outlined here will also have consequences for the structures and policies of individual GUFs and for relationships between them. As far as membership is

concerned, this applies most immediately for those potential GUF affiliates attracted by the 2006 merger. It will also apply to the new institutional and financial demands and scope for political action which might follow from the newly-created Council of Global Unions.

What remains unresolved is the question as to whether and to what extent decisions already made will lead to a greater regionalization of ITUC sub-structures and corresponding changes in the GUFs. This issue is especially salient in Europe, where the establishment of PERC requires a response from the GUFs and EIFs.

The current structure and relationships of transnational trade union organizations is unlikely to change in terms of its multi-level structure and foundations in European and global sectoral unions and peak-level federations. At the same time, there are a number of dynamic processes underway that could lead to organizational changes and shifts in areas of activity, both within and between transnational union federations.

Whether these processes will accelerate the current trend towards mergers between transnational sectoral unions at European and global level cannot be conclusively answered within the framework of this study. In the past, a range of factors in the 'inner world' of trade unions (such as preceding mergers between major affiliates, declining branches with falls in membership, and consequent resource considerations and financing problems) as well as forces for change in the 'external' environment (sectoral developments at international or European level, changes in the structure of lobbied organizations) have led to mergers between once independent transnational trade secretariats. For example, there were thirty-three ITSs before the First World War. Mergers, which began in the inter-war period, have since continued at a steady pace, and the most recent wave of mergers, which started in the mid-1990s, has reduced the number of GUFs to eleven.

One, admittedly, ambitious, merger scenario centred on the two major 'docking points' of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and Union Network International (UNI) has been outlined by Traub-Merz and Eckl in the following terms.

It is quite conceivable that one large global industrial union might develop as a single manufacturing GUF, grouping together the IMF, the International of Chemical, Energy and Mineworkers (ICEM), the small Textile Workers' International (ITGLWF) and possibly the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI). A working group arrangement could test whether such a structure would be feasible. It is also conceivable that smaller GUFs might find a home within UNI. (Traub-Merz and Eckl, 2007: 5)

As discussed below, a number of mergers between transnational sectoral trade unions also took place at European level over the period of this study: in some cases, these were influenced by decisions made by the GUFs. These steps also raise the question of the future autonomy of smaller sectoral organizations, as in the textile industry.

This overview of the structures, organization and interactions of transnational trade unions, and the initial consideration of the dynamics of recent change, also serves to demarcate the framework for the empirical element of this study of sectoral transnational trade union organizations.

## Aims and structure of the research

By focusing on the branch or sectoral aspect of international trade union organization, our research is intended to take account of the fact that the literature in this area is much less extensive than in the field of transnational companies or peak-level trade union organizations (see Chapter 2 below for a discussion of the desiderata and current state of research). In addition, the choice of a sectoral approach is based on the premise that, given the advance of globalization and deeper EU-integration, new challenges to transnational trade unionism are being posed specifically at branch level.

The study embraces all the existing transnational trade union organizations 'recognized' by the ITUC and/or ETUC: that is, the eleven GUFs and twelve EIFs. The standard for 'recognition' is not simply a formal one,

as expressed in the criteria that organizations have to meet, but also, and indeed principally, a political one. That is, it refers to organizations that can claim a high degree of global or European ‘representativeness’ in terms of their capacity to aggregate, articulate and advance employee interests vis-à-vis the EU or within the UN system, and that these organizations are also (virtually) the sole agents in the process, with the exception of a few small occupational organizations (such as pilots) with a comparable role at European level and a small number of minor politically-based trade union organizations at global level.

Our decision to include all ‘recognized’ European and global trade union organizations (in the double sense of ‘recognized’ and ‘politically relevant’) not only opens up a number of opportunities for analysis but also raises the inevitable issue of the trade-off between the depth and breadth of research.

The intended breadth of the study – that is, the aspiration to ‘completeness’ – could only be realistically pursued, given the limited resources available, by being selective in terms of the issues and depth considered in the case of each organizational study. A triage approach was applied that envisaged different degrees of depth of treatment, depending on the type of organization, at both global and European level.

In a first group of federations, we analyse their development, organization and activities using a theoretically-grounded approach (see Chapter 2 below), with the empirical study not only providing a descriptive profile of the organization but also allowing the formulation of explanatory or generalizable propositions about the transformation in the function of transnational unions. We denote this category ‘analytical profiles’.

This is followed by a second group in which the analysis has somewhat less depth, and which we refer to as ‘descriptive profiles’.

Finally, for a third group, there is an ‘organizational overview’ that simply outlines the key organizational features and cites examples of forms of activity. Although this categorization was mainly determined by the need to allocate limited resources, the choice of organizations and their allocation to particular categories nonetheless has a logic.

Five union organizations were chosen for the category ‘analytical profiles’ – for both the European and global organizations – that represent

the ‘major’ sectors of industry and services, and which, by virtue of their particular historical development and/or current organizational structure and approach (possibly because of their ‘pioneer role’) offer both a ‘representative’ and varied picture of the functional logic and roles of transnational trade union organizations. The organizations selected for the category of ‘descriptive profiles’ – three European and three global in corresponding sectors – rounded off the picture. In the third category, for which only an overview of the key organizational features is offered, the organizations selected represent particular *occupational* groups at transnational level (teachers, journalists, artists, police).

This structure is intended to enable the study to meet two aims. Firstly, it is a reference work, offering information on the organizational and political characteristics of European and global trade union federations (Part B), albeit with varying degrees of comprehensiveness. Secondly, the empirical material and its analysis is used to explore a number of central political and theoretical issues related to the transnationalization of trade union strategies and policies (Part C). With a view to both trade union practice and theoretical reflection on it, we hope to be able to make a contribution to research in a field that has suffered some neglect in recent years. With this in mind, the final section draws on the empirical research to engage with a number of wider questions related to the development of transnational sectoral trade unions, and the conditions, possibilities and limits of transnational trade union strategy and action.

The comparative analysis focuses in particular on those fields and arenas of transnational trade union activity, and those instruments and approaches adopted by global and European organizations, which have emerged during the period covered by our study. This allows us to propose a number of empirically-based perspectives that can, hopefully, facilitate further progress in theoretical debates in this field and also give some indication of whether, and in what ways, a transformation has taken place – and is taking place – in the organization, activities and policy instruments of transnational trade union organizations, in particular given the far-reaching changes and new challenges of European integration and globalization that have taken place during the period covered by our study.

In addition to outlining the research design, the introductory section (Section A) includes two chapters which provide a historical backdrop and analytical context for the research. The first of these deals with the changed context for transnational trade union activity as a consequence of the new quality of globalization and European integration (Chapter 3), and the other offers a historical overview of the main lines of development of global and European trade unions (Chapter 4).

## Research strategy and conceptual framework

### The current state of research

Although the existence and impact of individual trade union international organizations and trade secretariats extends back to the late nineteenth century, with the European federations now able to look back on some fifty years of activity, as yet there has been no fully elaborated theory of transnational trade unionism and no theory of the trade union internationals. The title of Ramsay's 1999 contribution – 'In search of international union theory' – exemplifies this, frequently lamented, theoretical deficit.

According to Gumbrell-McCormick's characterization of the course of research in this field (*idem.*, 2001), analysis of the international trade union movement has coincided with phases of intensified international trade union activity that have been triggered by major changes in the global political economy. Accordingly, the first analyses of the international trade union movement emerged in the 1920s: the dominant approach was normative and prescriptive, aimed at formulating strategies for the development of a cosmopolitan internationalism (Fimmen, 1924; Lorwin, 1929). Levinson (1971, 1972) proposed a three-phase model for the development of international collective bargaining with the objective of confronting multinational companies with international trade union countervailing-power: this approach can also be placed in the normative tradition. Despite criticism of its implicit economic determinism, according to which the growing internationalization of the activities of multinational firms would create 'objective conditions' from which trade union internationalization would follow virtually of necessity, Levinson's work was highly influential, both in terms of trade union politics and among researchers. In response

to Levinson's 'evolutionary optimism' (Ramsay, 1999: 195), a number of more pessimistic accounts emerged, rooted in a focus on the structural and interest-based impediments to trade union internationalism. This research encompassed both normative management-oriented studies (such as Kujawa, 1975; Northrop and Rowan, 1979) and Marxist and adversarial perspectives (such as Hildebrandt, Olle and Schoeller, 1976; Piehl, 1974; Tudyka, 1974; Tudyka, Ety and Sucha, 1978).

As diverse as these analyses are, both in terms of their prescriptions and theoretical assumptions, they all share three basic characteristics. Firstly, the main focus is on the economic and political conditions that favour or impede international trade union activity. Secondly, they concentrate overwhelmingly on the development of international trade union strategies vis-à-vis multinational companies, with the development of multinational collective bargaining (or at the least, the transnational coordination of national collective bargaining) constituting the primary criterion for evaluating the progress of trade union internationalism. And thirdly, these studies understand trade union internationalism as meaning the intensification of the international activities of national trade unions within the context of greater transnational cooperation. Although some consideration is given to the role of international trade union organizations, this is not expressly dealt with in terms of organizational strategy or trade union theory. Moreover, the intense concentration on multinational companies means that the wider activities of international trade union organizations are often overlooked.<sup>1</sup>

It is only in the more recent period – with the exception of Windmuller (1967), which adopted a descriptive and pragmatic empiricism – that international trade union organizations have been systematically researched.<sup>2</sup> Examples of detailed studies of international peak organizations include

- 1 This focus on the corporate level also characterizes the contributions of practitioners during this earlier period: see for example Bendiner (1974, 1975), who was responsible for coordinating World Company Councils in the automotive industry for the International Metalworkers' Federation.
- 2 The anthology edited by Olle (1978) is one exception, with wide-ranging contributions on the historical development and problems of the International Metalworkers'

Dølvik (1997), on the European Trade Union Congress (ETUC), and also Gumbrell-McCormick (2001) and Carew et al. (2000) on the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). A number of detailed studies of sectoral organizations at global level emerged from a research project concluded in 1995, the results of which were incorporated in overviews of the activities of the Global Union Federations (GUFs; Reutter, 1997; Reutter and Rütters, 2003) as well as more detailed publications on individual sectoral organizations such as the International Union of Foodworkers (IUF; Nyström and Rütters, 1989; Rütters, 1989, 2001a), the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF; Reutter, 1998) and the Miners' International Federation (MIF; Rütters, 2001a).<sup>3</sup> The study by Croucher and Cotton (2009), based on experiences of practical organizational work, is the first to consider the GUFs as a whole and deal with a number of selected problems connected with their development. The study of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) by Koch-Baumgarten (2003) is both profound in terms of its historical perspective and empirical research as well as rich in its observations and theorization.

The studies by Reutter, Rütters and Koch-Baumgarten all link issues raised by organizational and trade union theory with conceptual frameworks drawn from political science (in the case of Koch-Baumgarten, theories of 'international regimes') and open up analytical perspectives that reflect the interdependencies between the internal and external worlds of organizations, drawing on these as forces to explain the development of the structure and policies of international trade union federations.

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Federation, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation, and the International Graphical Federation.

- 3 Remarkably there are fewer detailed case studies of international trade union federations at European level. One example is the research by Stöckl (1986) and Platzer (1991). The latter offers an integrative approach, which explains the transnational role and strategy of European trade union federations by reference to the interaction between the internal membership structures and the change in the external environment. There are also some overviews, such as Reutter and Rütters (2003), Schulten (2000), Lubanski (2000) and Andersen (2000).

These more recent studies, and the analytical approaches they incorporate, have also engaged productively with a methodological problem that has characterized this research tradition, formulated as follows by Hyman (2002: 1):

Given that international trade unionism, as understood today, is essentially a construct of national trade union organizations, underlying all of these is the question whether internationalism is essentially an extension of national experience, or whether in key respects it can be regarded as a distinctive social phenomenon.

Our approach is based on the view that trade union internationalism is initially characterized by a desire on the part of national trade unions to ensure that their traditions and practices are effectively transported into transnational contexts and supra-state settings. At the same time, multilateral processes of inter-trade union ‘interest clearing’ serve to ‘filter’ national interests and are accompanied by the assignment of specific tasks to transnational organizations, with the tasks to be allocated shaped, to a considerable degree, by the exigencies of the international environment. Under these conditions, the transnational level of organization and action, including transnational union federations, does become a ‘distinctive social phenomenon’.

As a consequence, and against this backdrop, our concern has been to elaborate a research approach that avoids both ‘methodological nationalism’ and ‘domestic analogy’ by drawing on and developing the concept of ‘multi-level governance’ for the analysis of transnational trade union organization and policies (Jachtenfuchs and Kohler-Koch, 2003; Scharpf, 2000; Zürn, 1998).<sup>4</sup>

4 For an analysis of transnational workplace industrial relations using a multi-level approach, see Müller and Platzer (2003) and Müller, Platzer and Rüb (2004).

*The environment and logic of constitution of transnational federations*

The issue of the ‘organizational environments’ of international trade union organizations and the logic through which they are constituted has played a significant role in recent research in the field. One approach that seeks to integrate elements of organization theory, political science and political economy, together with a theorization of associations, has been elaborated by Schmitter and Streeck (1981, 1999) for their analysis of ‘the organization of business interests’. This approach, together with the range of concepts developed to pursue it, has had an enduring influence on subsequent research and can be found in studies of interest intermediation through associations in the EU (Eising and Kohler-Koch, 2005a), and also studies on international trade union strategy (Reutter, 1998; Koch-Baumgarten, 1999).

Based on this approach the tasks, domains, functional profile and degree of autonomy of an association (irrespective of which type or level of aggregation) are both determined, and explicable, by the mutual interaction of, and tensions between, its ‘logic of membership’ (internal environment) and its ‘logic of influence’ (external environment). Using this approach and applying it – albeit at a very general level – to the subject of transnational trade unions, it is possible to derive the following attributes and environments. Transnational trade unions are associations or federations of associations of (national) associations. That is, they are ‘second order’ associations that act at inter- and supra-state levels.

The following parameters are of particular relevance for the logic of membership and the internal environment of a transnational trade union federation:

- The development of the number of membership organizations (including national mergers) and the geographical range of members represented (for example, membership growth of the GUFs as result of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s; membership growth in GUFs and EIFs in the wake of the transformation in Central and Eastern Europe since the 1990s).

- The identities and traditions of national trade unions. Following Hyman's 'concept of identity', these can be divided into three ideal, but not rigidly demarcated, types each associated with a distinctive ideological orientation: business unionism, integrative unionism, and radical-oppositional unionism (Hyman 2001)
- The interests and relative power potentials of national trade unions in interactions at the level of transnational organizations.

The 'logic of membership' also includes the support that affiliated unions provide to organizations at the supra-state level: these include the provision of resources, mandating transnational organizations, and willingness to comply with jointly-agreed resolutions. Finally, affiliates place demands on organizations – such as the requirement for collective goods or selective services.

For the 'logic of influence', which is characterized by exchange with the external environment, the following parameters are of relevance:

- The overarching architecture of global governance (international governmental organizations, international regimes) and the political-institutional structure of the EU, including transnational civil society and other associations (NGOs, competing organizations).
- The sectoral political and institutional circumstances of the EU and/or the global environment, with the specific institutional and procedural opportunities for and limitations on transnational trade union activity.
- The economic dimension, including sectoral market structures, the framework of industrial-, commercial-, and competition policy together with global and regional corporate developments.

Analysis of this dual constitutive logic – that is, the description and explanation of the development and change of a transnational trade union through the multi-faceted interactions between its 'internal' and 'external' environments – poses the question as to the depth and detail in which these environments should be explored empirically. This is also relevant for the individual case studies. It is raised particularly acutely given the large

number of cases in the present study and requires, firstly, some limitation in the number of dimensions, and, secondly, minimizing the complexity of both sets of environments.

One initial analytical step to deal with the complexity issue is to draw on the findings of relevant studies on the relationship between the 'logic of membership' and the 'logic of influence' of transnational trade unions. Furthermore – as outlined below – a number of assumptions as to the key common features and differences between the scope of European and global trade unions can be derived from an organizational and governance perspective.

The key step in dealing with the complexity of the two 'environments' is the development of a research approach (see below) that can enable some degree of selectivity to take place.

In addition, the approach should also ensure that it excludes potentially erroneous analogies when analysing transnational trade union associations. For example, the notion of an 'intermediary' character or role is implicit in the Schmitter and Streeck model, noted above, which was developed to analyse national-level associations. An intermediary role could be said to be present if associations are able to organize 'processes of political exchange' in which they assume a dual mediating role: firstly, vis-à-vis third parties (the state or other actors) through entering into binding commitments, and secondly vis-à-vis their own memberships by committing them to the outcomes of political exchange. As a rule, although national trade unions exhibit this characteristic – to varying degrees depending on the national system of industrial relations (see Müller-Jentsch, 1997, 1999, 2007) – it is not generally true of transnational trade union federations, except for a few exceptions and then with a number of reservations.

In terms of the 'logic of membership', the functions of transnational trade unions, as with national unions, consist in organizing, aggregating, articulating and representing heterogeneous interests. This foundational activity, which rests on a number of important presuppositions, undergoes a change when translated to the international level such that, compared with national trade unions, international federations:

are much more dependent on their affiliates, if not exclusively so. International trade secretariats do not fulfil an ‘ordering’ function: they are not in a position to contribute to the legitimacy of decisions with universal impact through institutionalized participation in decision-making processes or to offset the operational deficits of an international system through assuming ‘public tasks’. (Reutter, 1998: 18f.)

Furthermore, power relations within trade unions, such as the ‘exit option’ of dominant organizations (the North vis-à-vis trade unions from developing countries), mean that stabilizing these relations occupies a key role and hence ‘those fields of activity directed “internally” at the maintenance of the existence of the organization and its development are especially important for the trade secretariats’ (ibid: 19).

Finally, lobbying and seeking influence in the form of institutionalized participation at international level:

are influenced by the logic of membership in two ways, and become effective through them. Firstly, whether attempts to influence intergovernmental organizations succeed depends, for example, during the decision-making process on the ability of affiliates to represent the demands of trade secretariats at national level and influence their governments in line with this. And secondly, decisions made at international level usually require national implementation. In this phase too, trade secretariats are dependent on their national affiliates. (ibid.)

There is a systematic link between the ‘logic of membership’ and the ‘logic of influence’. ‘Organizational power vis-à-vis the institutional environment can only be mobilized through the membership, and exercising influence contributes to stabilizing membership relations and the existence of the organization’ (ibid: 19f.). These parameters also apply – with some qualification – both for European as well as for global trade unions.

In addition, there is a more central and generalizable difference: the larger number of affiliates in GUFs, the greater the heterogeneity of identities, interests and national resources and scope of member trade unions. This makes it more difficult for GUFs to aggregate interests, or at the least, it implies that undertaking this task successfully requires a larger number of preconditions to be met than is the case for EIFs. Although the three ‘trade union identities’ suggested by Hyman (2001) have all been encountered in Europe, the current dominance of the movement towards ‘integrative

unionism' by EU trade unions means that the breadth of these types is much narrower and the core identity much more 'homogenous' than when viewed in a global perspective.

As far as the 'external environment' is concerned, the research literature suggests that, compared with the national level, it is not only greater differences of economic interest between affiliates that render transnational collective action more problematic, but also the political context.

For industrial relations, the international level lacks a relationship to a counterparty, the existence of institutions with the requisite capacities to take action or interests of the two parties to establish stable contractual relations. Equally, the other prerequisites of an internationally functioning system of free collective bargaining are also absent – such as norms set by labour law and in particular a state authority that could guarantee compliance with collective agreements, regulations and the procedures of industrial relations. (Koch-Baumgarten, 1999: 36f.)

As far as trade union lobbying is concerned, international governmental organizations offer 'at best marginal opportunities for representation and participation' (*ibid.*).

Given the changed environmental conditions that have influenced transnational trade union activity since the 1990s, there are now grounds for looking at these basic propositions in a more nuanced way.

Many of the contextual factors cited here apply at both the global and European levels. However, the EU-level has recently seen the emergence of institutional incentives (including the sectoral social dialogue promoted by the European Commission), financial incentives (including a substantial assumption of costs for international consultative activity by the EU) and arenas of activity mediated through supra-national law, notably European Works Councils (EWC). These EU-specific conditions have created some movement towards 'a relationship to a counterparty' (via the actions of the 'state actor' of the Commission) as European business associations, which previously only represented economic interests, have been 'forced' into the role of a European social partner and employer association (Platzer, 2010). Compared with GUFs, the 'logic of influence' and the conditions under which EIFs operate have also changed significantly in other areas of activity and the two now differ considerably.

Whereas the 'logic of membership' has determined the operational profile of most GUFs in a specific and dominant way, in the case of the European trade unions there has been some shift of emphasis in which the 'logic of influence' has had a much greater impact on the EIFs' functional attributes and profiles. Recent criticism of this approach has gone as far to contend that the EIFs have been captured by EU institutions and reduced to the role of a simple 'labour diplomacy':

Trade union action at European level has always involved a tension between 'logic of membership' and 'logic of influence' (Dølvik 1997; Traxler and Schmitter 1995). Indeed trade unionism at any level involves a delicate interaction between the tasks of expressing the views and aspirations of those represented, and adapting the form and content of their representation to the preferences of the counterparts in negotiation. But at supranational level, simply because the distance of representatives from the membership is greater, and the resources available are often more limited than at national level, the logic of influence typically acquires greater force. This logic can easily push unions into a mode of 'labour diplomacy' (...) which distances them from their constituencies and strengthens their dependence on acceptance by their interlocutors. (Hyman 2007: 33f.)

The assumption of different logics of influence, depending on the level, can also be deduced from factors in the political-institutional and economic context.

EIFs have much greater scope for influence at European level than GUFs possess at global level, due to the higher degree of institutionalization of European Union governance. At the same time, given the relatively high density of regulation at EU-level, the areas of potential transnational trade union activity are more pre-structured at EU than at global level. In the regulatory fields of employment, social policy, and information and consultation, there are – to put it with deliberate directness – on the one hand options for 'hard' regulation (EU Regulations and Directives) as well as EU-specific forms of governance (open method of coordination) and, on the other, the 'soft'-law character of international standards (ILO core labour standards, OECD Guidelines etc.), which predetermine and influence the conditions under which transnational organizations can articulate interests and influence policy. Finally, in the sphere of political

economy, differing degrees of market integration (the fairly high degree of liberalization of the EU internal market compared with the world economy more generally), and in particular European Monetary Union (EMU), pose specific challenges, such as the 'necessity' for transnational collective bargaining coordination. Common or comparable challenges at European or global level can be found in those spheres that have become subject to efforts at a re-regulation of transnational economic spaces (such as social standards in international trade regimes).

The differences that characterize these various levels impact on and influence forms of lobbying, the degrees and forms of institutionalized social partner interaction, company-related activities, and the need for a 'transnational self-regulation' of trade union policies (such as collective bargaining coordination). The case of company-related activities, which constitutes one of the research areas of this study, illustrates the assumption that there are logics of action that embrace all levels but which can also be specific to a single level, as we outline below (see Müller et al., 2006).

EIFs and GUFs have developed and pursued company-related strategies (in some cases since the 1960s) that have been influenced by a number of political developments and preconditions, especially those that have emerged since the mid-1990s. Whereas at global level, at best, instruments of 'soft' governance (ILO provisions, OECD Guidelines, UN Global Compact etc.) have created a context that allows the development of employee representation at global corporate level through negotiations on a strictly voluntaristic basis, within the EU the establishment of transnational structures of workplace interest representation have been 'pre-structured' and can be legally enforced as a result of the 1994 EWC Directive. This has led to differences between the European and global levels not only in the number and institutional form of such bodies, but also their functions and tasks and, with this, the associated scope for and problems of the EIFs and GUFs.

The contextual cross-sectoral factors at European and global level noted here are dealt with in greater detail below (see Chapter 3) and establish a comprehensive framework of reference and interpretation for the analysis of individual transnational trade union organizations. A more detailed consideration of these sector-specific political and economic contextual

factors that goes beyond the underlying governance structures is possible to only a limited extent, given the large number of units of analysis. In essence, we are only able to take account of sectoral conditions through the individual examples that we consider in our study of the arenas and instruments of transnational organizations' activities.

The 'inner world' of trade unions can also only be explored with a limited degree of depth, above and beyond the basic parameters of the 'logic of membership' set out above. As we discuss in the research design, outlined below, in addition to quantitative variables, such as membership levels and turnover, this will entail some consideration of indicators from the area of 'affiliate-focused activity' (that is, relationships with national affiliates and, on occasions, their individual members) and organizational indicators (decision-making structures etc.) in order to be able to gauge the significance of the 'inner organizational world' of a transnational trade union federation for its roles. This has two implications for the empirical aspect of our study.

Firstly, the key issue is what has been politically 'materialized' at the transnational level in the form of discernible policy outcomes as identified through research. This 'positivistic perspective' also applies to decision-making procedures, strategic approaches, forms of action, and policy instruments. In turn, analysis of outcomes offers an indication of the extent to which there has been a change in, and possibly a growth of, the significance of the transnational level over the period covered by the study.

Secondly, and by contrast, the question as to which internal constellations of interests and power relations, and which concrete processes of negotiation, exchange and discussion, can explain particular decisions, or non-decisions, will not be systematically considered. Rather, at most, these aspects will be looked at in specific instances, based on qualitative data derived from interviews with trade union officials.

## Research design: Functional profiles of transnational trade union federations

### *Background and key concepts*

The literature offers a rich set of organizational attributes and characteristics to differentiate transnational trade unions and characterize their role and functioning. In searching for an appropriate characterization Hyman (2002), for example, distinguishes a number of, initially dichotomous, categories that highlight particular functional characteristics of transnational unions: they are ‘agitation – organization’, ‘movement – bureaucracy’, and the ‘diplomat model of trade union internationalism’. Reutter (1998) moves along a continuum that specifies the ascending transnational ‘quality’ of an organization, and notes the following functional characteristics: a transnational trade union as ‘instrument’, used either continuously or case-by-case by dominant groups of members; as a ‘forum’ for formalized information exchange and coordination; and as an ‘actor’, with a capacity for aggregating and mediating interests that will vary, depending on the field of activity. In terms of the development of international trade unions, Reutter suggests a movement from ‘forum’ in the 1960s and 1970s to ‘actor’ since the 1980s and 1990s.

A historically more selective differentiation has been proposed by van der Linden (2001: 310ff.) who notes a transition from a ‘pre-national’ to ‘national internationalism’ at the close of the nineteenth century, and a second shift, a century later, to a ‘transnational internationalism’.

Attempts to characterize or classify organizations using the concepts of ‘instrument’, ‘form’ and ‘actor’ can also be found in EU organizational research.

A European interest organization can be an actor on the European stage and possess autonomy vis-à-vis its member organizations. It can be a forum for communication and reconciling the interests of its members. It can also simply be an instrument used by individual members or official actors. These are not mutually exclusive roles. An organization can act autonomously on some issues, and serve simply as a forum for

members in others. The role that it exercises can also vary over time. (Eising and Kohler-Koch, 2005: 29)

Furthermore, the 'quality of being an actor' is also measured using an (implicitly) hierarchical model, depending on whether the supra-state level also possesses 'steering capacities' that are positioned above those of the national level. And finally, 'actor-quality' is often linked to the resources and autonomy of the transnational secretariat.

In order to avoid the difficulties inherent in this approach, notably the supposition that transnational trade unions can be regarded as 'actors' but only if they possess the capacity to mediate interests and enjoy 'autonomy' in relation to their members, we have opted for an approach that avoids such narrow attributions. Instead we propose a conceptual and analytical scheme based on the following criteria.

A research framework to encompass global and European trade unions – expressed in terms of the logic of a trade union multi-level strategy, the level at which global and European problems are dealt with – should meet two criteria: first, it must be able to embrace the organizational and functional characteristics shared by all transnational union organizations; and second, it must be able – with an appropriate degree of discrimination – to capture specific features of union organizations by level and sector.

The framework should also be able to yield answers to the central question posed in this study: whether, and to what extent, the new quality of globalization and European integration seen in recent decades has been expressed in a changed, and possibly expanded, role for transnational trade unions. With this objective in mind, and linking this with the initial theoretical considerations and research findings noted above, we then locate these in a governance theory perspective, drawing on the concepts used to analyse 'multi-level systems'.

These approaches offer concepts and criteria that enable two critical dimensions determining the character of international institutions to be analysed: firstly, the degree of the intensity of their engagement with transnational problems together with the extent to which institutions (and their members) enter into binding obligations when dealing with such issues; and, secondly, the modalities through which this takes place.

When transposed to trade unions, these concepts offer criteria that can be used to create a classification of organizations ('functional profiles') and, when grouped (as in Table 1), allow transnational trade union organizations to be allocated within this taxonomy, depending on the nature of their activities. At the same time, and following from this, this also allows trends and patterns of development within the overall spectrum of transnational trade unions to be empirically captured in terms of their role and functional transformation.

To begin, we define all EIFs and GUFs as transnational trade union organizations. The question as to whether and to what extent an organization possesses the specific qualitative characteristics of a transnational 'actor' (and of which type) is ultimately an empirical question to be resolved by an overall assessment of the various functional profiles it exhibits, according to its distinctive fields of activity. In terms of their organization and policies, EIFs and GUFs are affected by the 'internal' and 'external' organizational environments noted above and – as indicated by the literature – characterized in specific ways by the 'logic of membership' and the 'logic of influence'.

As transnational organizations, they exercise specific tasks within a multi-level logic of union interest intermediation that goes beyond national frames of reference, and have resources and powers that have changed (and can change) over time. As a consequence, the functions of a transnational secretariat can be transformed over time and vary, depending on the area of activity. A secretariat can be:

- purely administrative,
- an active moderator in the process of internal policy- and decision-making,
- a strategic initiator of transnational trade union policies.

A transnational federation represents national unions at supra-state levels – either European or global – the number and organizational structures of which can also vary. Change in the membership structure of a transnational organization can be manifested, or triggered, by:

- changes in occupational and sectoral representation (change or expansion in occupations and sectors as result of changes in the scope and definition of branches or union mergers),
- changes in the geographical scope of national affiliated organizations (decolonization, globalization, end of the political division of Europe),
- changes as a result of transformations in historical ideological and confessional divisions (such as the inclusion of Christian or formerly communist trade unions).

In these cases, it can be assumed that changes in occupational, geographical or ideological structures of representation in turn influence and (can) change the organizational and operational profile of transnational organizations.

### *Forms and degrees of intensity of engagement with transnational issues*

In order to arrive at a grid that can be used to generate a more detailed determination of organizations formally denoted as ‘transnational actors’, using a set of ‘qualitative’ characteristics, we make use of the following governance-theory perspective. In this, problems of governance or problem-solving above the level of the nation state play a significant role both in the political science debate on global governance and research on the EU (‘governance in a multi-level system’).

Drawing on the logic and configuration of political processes in multi-level systems, Scharpf (2000: 11ff.) proposed an approach to facilitate the analysis of various levels and modes of decision-making. Based on policy-making in the EU, he distinguishes four modes for the coordination of social action: ‘mutual adjustment’, ‘intergovernmental negotiations’, ‘joint decisions’, and ‘hierarchical direction’. Based on Rüb’s (2009) adaptation and development of this approach, and underpinned by historical and empirical experience of transnational trade union strategies, the following modes and ‘degrees of intensity’ of engagement with international issues and problems can be identified from the standpoint of the multi-level logic of trade union interest intermediation.

### Mode 1: Competitive mutual adjustment

In this mode, national affiliates manage their own strategies without any form of transnational agreement or any aspiration to practical coordination. However, they do so in reaction to and anticipation of developments in other countries or in reaction to developments at supra- and international level. Such national interest-based strategies pursue a competitive logic, such as ‘competition oriented collective bargaining’ through wage moderation and concessions bargaining, or through local pacts to retain operations and secure employment. Processes of convergence mediated through competition can be fostered by this mode in some substantive fields of trade union policy, without incurring the intervention of a transnational federation. Its essentially short-term perspective and ‘beggar my neighbour’ approach can also hinder the development of a cross-border strategy and transnational organization. At most, the transnational federation serves as the level for information exchange and case-by-case cooperation.

### Mode 2: Mutual communication and exchange

This mode represents an advance beyond unmediated mutual adjustment and includes communication and exchange by national actors to improve mutual understanding: this can take place within or outside of the level of transnational organization. This mode aims to facilitate exchanges of information and experience that might offer a foundation for coordination and mutual agreement on policy positions. The transnational level serves to promote mutual learning and rapprochement between national affiliates. Seen historically, this mode was typical of European and global ‘trade union diplomacy’ over a considerable period.

### Mode 3: International negotiation of non-binding decisions

In this mode national strategies are coordinated and standardized by means of agreement, such as coordination rules or guidelines, at European or global level. This presupposes a high level of mutual understanding and requires a somewhat more advanced degree of institutionalization of processes for

establishing agreement, for which transnational organizations create the framework. However, individual national actors retain full control over both the decision-making process and execution. Compliance with agreed provisions is voluntary and commitment essentially ‘moral’ in nature.

This mode of dealing with problems of interdependence has characterized attempts to coordinate national collective bargaining by a growing number of EIFs since the late 1990s. In the case of this strictly voluntarist approach, European trade union organizations have ‘neither the legal nor the political power to commit their national affiliates to a particular collective bargaining position. From a legal standpoint, the European coordination rules are no more than “declarations of good will” or the expression of a “moral commitment”’ (IG Metall, 2003: 33), compliance with which relies on the political support of national trade unions.

As trade unions act in the national arena in the first place, and also draw on their bases of power and legitimacy as defined in the national context, the political authority of European trade union organizations is rather weak vis-à-vis their national member associations. This holds especially for the core task of collective bargaining. Accordingly, all the resolutions about European coordination of collective bargaining are careful to emphasize the bargaining autonomy of the national trade union association. The European trade union organizations have no instruments at their disposal, with which they could impose ‘hard’ sanctions and punish any violation of the mutual agreements by one of the national member associations or even put a stop to this ‘misconduct’ on the part of this national union federation. (Schulten, 2005: 282)

At the same time, this mode does represent a substantial ‘upgrading’ of the transnational level as it is associated with a significant intensification of communication and systematic information exchange, with the EIF becoming the ‘locus’ for the setting of objectives, consultation and monitoring.

Mode 4: International negotiation of binding decisions (‘joint decisions’)

This mode links elements of ‘horizontal’ coordination between national actors with ‘vertical’ elements of supra-state centralization of decision-making processes. The transnational organizational level takes on a greater significance, institutionally as the framework for binding negotiations

and procedurally as a permanent level of governance and joint control. Moreover, the transnational organization moves to become the primary, or sole, trade union actor in representing such ‘joint decisions’ vis-à-vis state institutions and civil society organizations at European and global level. Its control and oversight functions are also retained when the addressees are not supra- or international governmental organizations but where implementation takes place primarily at national level.

#### Mode 5: Hierarchical direction

In this mode, national affiliates transfer competences in some fields to the European or global level. Although national actors are still involved in joint decision-making, implementation and control takes place entirely through the transnational organization. In this option (which Scharpf identifies as characteristic of the decisions of the European Central Bank and the European Court of Justice), the legitimacy of the decisions and the associated measures rest on the shared belief that joint norms, values and objectives can be better realized through supra-national regulations, institutions and procedures than through other (decentralized or horizontal) forms of ‘governance’.

If this option were to be extended not only to individual transfers of competence in specific, and often marginal, fields of activity, but to core trade union activities, it would be the equivalent of establishing European or global trade unions. This far-reaching option of trade union internationalism was represented by Levinson’s notion of implementing central collective bargaining at international level. It also emerged as early as 1925 with Edo Fimmen’s strategic perspective when he (as secretary of the ITF) forecast that ‘the trade secretariats would take on the “leadership of the economic struggle” from the national sectoral trade unions and confederations and become the “bearer” of the international trade union movement’ (Rütters, 1989: 9). Finally, in his view, international trade secretariats would restrict national trade union centres to the role of providing ‘administrative services’, akin to the tasks performed by local trade union branches.

The many barriers to the hierarchical option have been amply set out in the literature on trade union internationalization, and such initiatives

are not currently on the agenda of transnational unions. However, the fact that this option has prevailed in the past, at least at national level, suggests that it should not be entirely excluded. Should Modes 3 and 4 grow in significance in transnational decision-making and governance, this would strengthen the significance of the supra-state organizational level and, at the same time, promote the creation of transnational societal spaces by functional elites in the unions involved.

When considering the modes of the multi-level forms outlined above, we proceed on the premise that in the majority of cases, the forms and degrees of intensity of trade union multi-level policy, and with this the roles of transnational trade union organizations, range between Modes 2 and 4.

Whereas Mode 5, when measured against the current level of development of trade union organizations, can at best be described as an option for the future, where there are issues of dispute – such as conflicts rooted in economic competition or political and ideological differences – then Mode 1 best describes how national trade unions operate, and hence directly or indirectly influence transnational organizations. Although Mode 1 plays a role in an interdependent and interconnected multi-level system (as in the discussion of the EU as a ‘competition state’), a more detailed analysis of it lies outside the scope of this study, mainly as it would require a systematic and comparative treatment of national trade union strategies. At most, we can consider indirectly, and only on specific issues, the degree to which it has influenced the development of transnational trade union organization.

## Functional profiles of transnational trade unions

The varying scope and quality of transnational coordination and problem-solving – especially in view of the question as to whether and to what extent this impinges on the ‘core business’ of collective bargaining and company policy – can be expressed in a staged classificatory schema that sets out the various functional profiles of transnational trade unions. The development

of such a model rests on abstractions that are necessarily 'ideal typical'. That means, just as the modes outlined above will not necessarily exist in their pure forms, that the functional profiles derived from these are not always clearly demarcated from each other in reality.

Given these limitations and qualifications, based on organizations' central functional characteristics, we propose the following model.

- Where the characteristics of Mode 2 are present (with some 'subliminal' effects of Mode 1), the international organization exercises the role of 'international service provider'.
- Where Mode 2 is associated with the exercise of some degree of 'orientation function' for establishing transnational positions that guide the practice of affiliated trade unions, the organization can be designated a 'forum'.
- Where the organization has the characteristics of Mode 2 and, in some respects, Mode 3, it can be designated a transnational 'coordination platform'.
- Where the features of Mode 3 and, in particular, Mode 4 are evident, the organization acquires the character of formalized 'associative governance' (*Steuerungsverbund*).<sup>5</sup>
- If the characteristics of Mode 5 are either present or dominant, then this would represent a qualitatively new stage of trade union transnationalization and, ultimately, a new type of organization, which we designate a 'supranational trade union'.

5 In searching for a term to describe this level and type of activity, the authors drew on the German concept of *Steuerungsverbund*. This is based on the terminology constructed by the German Federal Constitutional Court to capture the unique form of inter-state association in the EU in its judgment on the compatibility of the Maastricht Treaty and Lisbon Treaty with the German Basic Law. The court rejected the term 'confederation' (*Staatenbund*) as too loose and 'federal state' (*Bundesstaat*) as too strong, and opted to coin a new term *Staatenverbund* to denote an intermediate level of association between these two. In the context of this study, in such organizations governance is 'associative' rather than directly hierarchical: there is a formalization of rules, but the sacrifice of autonomy by members is conditional.

Table 1: Functional profiles of transnational trade unions (GUFs and EIFs)

Functional profile	Character of decision-making and scope of transnational activity
5. Supranational trade union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hierarchical control</li> <li>– Wide-ranging powers and mandates</li> <li>– Continuous autonomous exercise of core trade union functions, such as collective bargaining and relations with employers.</li> </ul>
4. Associative governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establishment of binding joint decisions;</li> <li>– Standardization of operational objectives (e.g. collective bargaining and/or coordination rules on relations with employers)</li> <li>– Case-by-case limited mandate (by topic or time) for transnational negotiations</li> <li>– Establishment of mechanisms for implementing and monitoring decisions</li> <li>– Establishment of internal procedures and transparency.</li> </ul>
3. Coordination platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Negotiation of non-binding decisions</li> <li>– Regulated and structured agreement on joint positions</li> <li>– Standardization of operational agreements (e.g. model agreements)</li> <li>– Agreements on positions with ‘soft’ orientation for affiliated organizations.</li> </ul>
2. Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regular and formalized exchange of information</li> <li>– Continuous agreement and communication of positions</li> <li>– Scope for exchange to improve mutual understanding.</li> </ul>
1. Information provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Information exchange;</li> <li>– Limited and issue-specific cooperation and agreement on positions.</li> </ul>

This taxonomy can be looked at both diachronically as well as synchronically: that is, it can serve in historical terms to categorize the development of an individual trade union organization and its key functional profiles in central policy fields. It can also be considered synchronically as a means for comparing the stages of development and characteristics of organizations in the present, either in overall terms or distinguished at the global and European level.

One particular functional profile – functional profile 1 – can be seen in sectoral terms and at a low level of transnational economic and political interconnectedness as the appropriate organizational ‘response’ to a need for transnational activity. It can also be a manifestation of structural barriers and internal blockades that reflect different interests which – despite a greater need for transnational activity – prevent any extension and development of the organization’s competences.

In order to be useable for empirical analysis and concrete application, this model – as a heuristic – needs one further stage of operationalization. That is, specific indicators for each field of activity need to be defined to allow the activities of international trade unions to be assigned to the functional profiles. This is particularly significant as the modes and scope of transnational problem-solving, and hence the functional profiles of the organization, can vary depending on the field of activity. Concretely, this means, for example, that an EIF might exhibit characteristics of ‘associative governance’ in the field of collective bargaining, whereas the same EIF might operate as a coordination platform for company-related activities. As a consequence, the next stage is to operationalize these characteristics for specific fields of activity.

The empirical analysis of the trade unions in the study will be structured in accordance with the scheme set out in Table 2. This focuses on three central fields of activity: affiliate-focused activity (which may also on occasion embrace direct relations with individual members), company-related activity, and sectoral policy. These can be further sub-divided into specific themes and arenas of activity. Table 2 also clarifies the different characteristics according to level (global or European). If this structure is combined with the functional profiles outlined above, then – as Table 3 shows – it is possible to determine functional characteristics based on the main arenas of transnational trade union activity.

Table 2: Areas of activity of transnational trade union federations  
by European and global level

Affiliate-focused activities		Company-related activities		
Services provided by federations for affiliated organizations	Organizational policies (recruitment and training etc.)	Campaigning	Policies for developing transnational structures	Policies for developing transnational norms
<i>European Industry Federations (EIF)</i>				
Services provided by federations for affiliated organizations	Organizational policies (recruitment and training etc.)	Primarily in connection with cross-border corporate restructuring	EWC, SE and other Directives impinging on company strategies	Company-level bargaining (through EIFs/EWCs)
<i>Global Union Federations (GUF)</i>				
Services provided by federations for affiliated organizations	Organizational policies (recruitment and training etc.)	Primarily dealing with 'hardliner' companies	Establishing GUF networks	Initiation and implementation of IFAs, response to CSR initiatives

Sectoral-regulatory policies			
Employment and social policy	Industrial policy	Collective bargaining	
European norm-setting: influencing EU institutions and/or social dialogue	European industry policy: Influencing EU institutions (lobbying) and/or negotiations via sectoral social dialogue	European collective bargaining, in particular unilateral transnational collective bargaining coordination	
Lobbying international official organizations to achieve minimum standards: joint initiatives	Lobbying international trade and commercial organizations: dialogue with global employer associations	Initiatives to develop global collective bargaining	

Table 3: Operationalization of transnational trade union functional profiles

	<i>1. Service provider</i>	<i>2. Forum</i>
Organizational resources and institutional prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Financial/staff resources, organization of the secretariat and, on occasions, regional bureaux</li> <li>➤ Decision-making procedures of political control bodies</li> <li>➤ Internal organizational differentiation in branch/sectoral committees or GUFs for regional organization</li> <li>➤ Number and operational procedures of topic-based working parties</li> </ul>	
<i>Fields of activity</i>		
<i>1) Affiliate activities</i>	<i>Service provider</i>	<i>Forum</i>
a) Organizational services b) Trade union organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of information material and implementation of training in connection procurement of external resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information exchange for representatives of national unions.</li> <li>➤ Financial and organizational support during disputes or union organizing.</li> </ul>
<i>2) Company activities</i>	<i>Service provider</i>	<i>Forum</i>
a) Campaigns b) Capacity building c) Norm-setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of information by transnational union on current company issues. Activities and international political institutions.</li> <li>➤ Creation of centralized databases to support information exchange by representatives of national trade unions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information exchange by representatives of national affiliates on structures and norms of employee representation at company level and on scope for political regulation by international institutions.</li> </ul>

	3. <i>Coordination platform</i>	4. <i>Associative governance</i>	5. <i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<i>Coordination platform</i>	<i>Associative governance</i>	<i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creation of subject working parties to develop joint approaches (e.g. union organization).</li> <li>➤ Transnational union coordinates support services of affiliates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National unions agree binding guidelines on providing support services.</li> <li>➤ Existence of a control mechanism to ensure compliance with agreed guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transnational trade union as a membership organization, recruiting members directly supported by national unions.</li> <li>➤ Transnational trade union may instruct affiliates on the provision of support services.</li> </ul>
	<i>Coordination platform</i>	<i>Associative governance</i>	<i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Formation of company-based committee/working group/network on specific issues.</li> <li>➤ Creation of support structures for company-level representatives under the aegis of transnational federation.</li> <li>➤ Model agreements on company-level representative bodies.</li> <li>➤ Formulates joint positions vis-à-vis international institutions.</li> <li>➤ Days of action/campaigns by transnational federation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishment of a binding procedure (in terms of content and operations) for negotiations in the field of capacity building and norm-setting.</li> <li>➤ Creation of mechanisms for compliance with binding guidelines, and sanctions for breaches.</li> <li>➤ Transnational body has a case-by-case mandate for negotiations with TNCs and representation of trade union interests vis-à-vis international institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National trade unions transfer competences in the field of company activities to transnational trade unions, with a general mandate for negotiations with transnational companies.</li> <li>➤ Negotiating outcomes have a direct effect at national level.</li> </ul>

3) Sectoral activities	Service provider	Forum
a) Employment and social policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of information by the transnational trade union on current employment and social policy activities of international organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information exchange by representatives of national trade unions on employment and social policy developments.</li> </ul>
3) Sectoral activities	Service provider	Forum
b) Industrial policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of information by the transnational trade union on economic developments; for example sectoral/branch reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information exchange by representatives of national trade unions on economic developments in individual branches</li> </ul>
3) Sectoral activities	Service provider	Forum
c) Collective bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transnational trade union can support information exchange via centralized databases and reports on developments in different member states.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Information exchange by representatives of national trade unions on national collective bargaining structures, developments and contextual data.</li> </ul>

	<i>Coordination platform</i>	<i>Associative governance</i>	<i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishing working parties on employment and social policy topics.</li> <li>➤ Agreement on common employment and social policy priorities and minimum standards.</li> <li>➤ Formulation of common positions vis-à-vis international institutions.</li> <li>➤ Organizing campaigns and days of action under aegis of the transnational union.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transnational trade union granted case-by-case mandate on jointly agreed employment and social policy interests vis-à-vis international institutions and employer bodies and, on occasions, for negotiating IFAs.</li> <li>➤ Devolved implementation of framework agreements with transnational trade union oversight.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ National unions transfer employment and social policy competences to the transnational trade union with a general mandate to set substantive and strategic priorities and for external representation of employment and social policy interests; for example international agreements with a direct effect at national level.</li> </ul>
	<i>Coordination platform</i>	<i>Associative governance</i>	<i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishment of branch committees to develop and strengthen strategic perspectives.</li> <li>➤ Agreement on priorities for industrial policy (sectoral programmes, action plans and opinions vis-à-vis international bodies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishing mechanisms for compliance with action plans and programmes; for example, annual evaluation of progress by national unions in implementing industrial policy programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transnational union has general mandate for representation on industrial policy vis-à-vis international and employer bodies.</li> <li>➤ Affiliates participate in formulating industrial policy programmes; decision-making power on content and strategy rests with transnational union.</li> </ul>
	<i>Coordination platform</i>	<i>Associative governance</i>	<i>Supranational trade union</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishment of common substantive priorities, aims and strategies; for example, 'bargaining guidelines' with substantive prescriptions and minimum standards for national bargaining.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Procedures for compliance with coordination rules (national reporting requirement/evaluation by transnational union).</li> <li>➤ Sanctions for non-compliance, from 'soft' mechanisms (naming and shaming) to financial sanctions/expulsion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transnational trade union conducts collective bargaining with employer bodies at transnational level, embracing issues such as pay and working time.</li> <li>➤ Negotiating outcomes have direct effect at national level.</li> </ul>

## Research methods

The methodology of this study combines qualitative research with documentary analysis. The documents analysed are those dealing with all the GUFs and EIFs included in the study. This was supplemented for a number of organizations, limited on time and cost grounds, by interviews with a range of individuals; the organizations included were all those for which 'analytical profiles' – that is, more detailed studies – were prepared, together with those for which 'short portraits' were written, where, despite the interviews, a more concise presentation was prepared.

The documents evaluated for all the organizations in the study – principally for the period from the early 1990s to the present – encompass official trade union publications together with internal documents (statutes, annual reports, congress reports, minutes of executive bodies, programmes, and political position papers and opinions). Many of these documents are held by the library and in the Archive of Social Democracy (*Archiv der sozialen Demokratie*) of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn. Others were made available by the secretariats of the organizations themselves. Information was also obtained from the Internet, and in some cases access to organizations' intranets was granted.

The qualitative element of the research was based on structured interviews. In some instances, these were exploratory in nature (such as searching for information not available in documentary form) but in most cases were used to gather data on the perceptions of the participants (perspective on problems, evaluations, and judgements), which, in turn, focused on the core questions raised by the study's working hypotheses. The information and opinions obtained in the interviews have been incorporated into the organizational profiles without explicit comment or attribution. In the case of all the transnational trade union organizations, the general secretaries were interviewed; in some cases, these interviews were supplemented with interviews with other senior officials.

The aim of this form of qualitative research was to enable the study to meet its overall objective: to ascertain the characteristics and transformation

of the functions of transnational union organizations, and offer an overview of their roles. In contrast, other potential avenues of research were left unexplored, or at least considered only in specific instances: these included theorizing organizational influence (such as the capacity of transnational union organizations to prevail in specific areas of conflict in international and European policy fields) or deeper theoretical institutional analysis (ideologies, interests, power relations, 'arguing and bargaining' within the framework of internal decision-making processes).

Our choice of interviewees invariably raises a methodological problem that could be dubbed 'secretariat bias.' In order to counter the risks of overly positive self-description, and conduct 'control interviews', but at the risk, of course, of adding an additional bias for an international readership, we also interviewed the heads of the international departments of German industry unions, and notably those who are also members of the transnational trade unions included in the 'analytical organizational profiles.'



## Globalization and EU integration: The institutional and economic context and new trade union challenges

### Introduction

The development and transformation of the international economic system and international state policy have always been central determinants of the context for cross-border trade union activity, as we also discuss in Chapter 4 below on the development of transnational trade union organizations. Notions of ‘trade union internationalism’ and ‘cross-border class solidarity’ have never been sufficient, on their own, to create the basis for sustainable transnational organization and activity. Rather, the need for international trade union activity ‘beyond the nation state’ and the forms it has taken have been significantly defined and preconfigured by developments in the international and supranational polity – that is, the institutional structures, powers and decision-making processes of international governmental organizations (such as the UN system, the EU etc.).

A second set of ‘external’ factors influencing the potential tasks of international trade union organizations are the forms and degrees of market internationalization, the relative densities of international economic linkages, and the resultant competitive relationships and interdependencies that these imply for employment and policies in the field of labour regulation.

This chapter sets out the political and economic contours of globalization and EU integration for the period covered by this study. Given the vast scale of the literature on globalization and EU integration, this will inevitably call for some limitations.

One of our basic premises is that there is no monocausal or straightforward deterministic relationship between the ‘objective’ structures and processes of economic and political transformation associated with globalization and EU integration and the changes experienced by transnational trade union organizations. Rather, the link between ‘structure’ (external political and economic framework conditions) and ‘action’ (the range of activities and political profile of a transnational trade union) is a contradictory one, characterized by multiple, filtered and recursive interactions between the national and transnational levels, in which a specific view of globalization (or Europeanization) and a corresponding notion of interest representation is ‘constructed’, leading to a concomitant assignment of tasks to transnational trade union organizations (on the theoretical and methodological issues associated with this, see Müller et al., 2003). Moreover, given the enormous diversity in the political and economic environments of individual branches all that can be realistically achieved here is an outline of current research on the underlying framework common to all branches. This entails, firstly, setting out those trends that highlight the premise of this study – that is, that over the past two decades the process of globalization and of EU integration have acquired both an unprecedented and powerful momentum and a new quality; and secondly, an elaboration of the specific and distinct frameworks for transnational industrial relations at both global and European level.

This analysis, with its primary focus on the changes that have taken place since the early 1990s, will serve as a basis for elaborating the changed frames of reference for transnational trade unionism at the start of the twenty-first century. The period during which this research was conducted coincided with the outbreak and initial intensification of the global financial and economic crisis. At the time the English edition was concluded, a modest economic recovery had begun in the western industrialized countries, in some cases, and notably Germany, built on export demand from Asian economies. This was accompanied by major and unresolved problems with the construction and operation of European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), largely but not entirely triggered by the banking crisis.

Against the backdrop of this global crisis, a number of scenarios are conceivable. Firstly, both at the global and EU levels, economic disruption

and dislocation could resume, leading to greater inter-state conflict, and an enduring crisis. It is also conceivable, as a number of observers hoped and expected, that the crisis of shareholder-value capitalism and neo-liberalism might favour political solutions that lead to a global and European economy that is more regulated and more socially 'embedded' transnationally: at the time of writing, this expectation has remained largely unfulfilled. Within the EU, the specific problems of the eurozone could lead to new forms of cooperation between member states and via the institutions of the EU and EMU, ranging from short- and medium-term steps to sustain EMU to the institutionalization of new forms of economic governance (or 'government'), with or without a 'social' content. Any of these three scenarios, which could and probably would pull in contradictory directions, would influence and reshape the agenda, circumstances and forms of transnational trade union cooperation.

## The global dimension: Globalization and global governance

The academic debate on globalization turns on three major issues: firstly, the scale, scope and dynamics of globalization, both over the longer term as well as in the context of post-war development; secondly, the remaining scope for national policy; and thirdly, the conditions and possibilities for tackling the problems raised by globalization through political or social regulation 'beyond the nation state'. In addition, and as it were oblique to these issues or enveloping them, there is the further question of the structures of hegemony within a globalizing world. There are a number of positions on these issues.

Proponents of a 'strong' globalization thesis, the so-called 'hyperglobalizers' (a term coined by Held et al., 1999), see globalization as a process of economic, social and political transformation that embraces the entire world, as an advancing process – both in terms of scope and dynamics – of the increasing interlinking and networking of media and communications,

of a reduction of spatial and temporal distance through new transport technologies and, in particular, an ‘unleashing’ of capitalism following the demise of ‘really-existing socialism’ and the ‘disembedding’ of capital and financial flows (Altvater and Mahnkopf, 1996: 107; Glyn, 2006). In the course of this process of ‘global neo-liberal restructuring’ (Marchand and Runyan, 2000: 3ff.) – largely driven by transnational companies – national borders have become increasingly irrelevant and national or locally embedded forms of social and employment regulation and politics have been undermined and degraded.

This view can be counterposed to a more ‘sceptical’ position, which advances a less dramatic view of the dynamics and scope of globalization and its consequences for the powers of national governments, and, by implication, the social forces tied to these. In particular, one argument has been that the current scale of cross-border economic activity is not without precedent (Hirst and Thompson, 1998: 2), and that in many respects the world economy at the apex of the Gold Standard was possibly more integrated than today (Rodrik, 2000: 14). Despite high and rising growth rates of world trade, direct investment and financial transactions, little has changed for the nation state. Around 80 per cent of all goods and services continue to be produced and consumed within national borders. And even if the gross volume of international financial transactions has increased, net capital flows have barely grown and around 90 per cent of all production facilities remain in national ownership.

The ‘transformationalists’ (Giddens, 2000; Held et al. 1999) occupy an intermediate position between these two arguments. In contrast to the ‘sceptics’, the current process of globalization is seen as historically unprecedented and as the driving force behind a sustained transformation (‘shake out’) of economic and social systems, and of institutions of governance. Compared to the ‘hyperglobalizers’, and their view of an unstoppable shift to a global market and a ‘flattening’ economization of all social relationships, the transformationalists see the direction of globalization and transformation as open, contradictory, and subject to periodic fluctuations (Nahamowitz, 2002: 22).

At the heart of the transformationalist position is the view that the current period of globalization is recasting the power and functions of

national governments and constituting a 'new regime of sovereignty'. State sovereignty is less a territorially-defined barrier

than a negotiating resource in the political process of transnational networks made up of multinational companies, international governmental organizations, and transnational social movements. This contradicts both the thesis of the death of nation state advanced by the 'hyperglobalizers' and the 'sceptical' view that not much has changed in terms of the steering capacities of the nation state (ibid).

Within globalization research, a more recent branch of research under the rubric of 'transnationalism' (Pries, 2002: 270) sees itself as an extension of, rather than a replacement, for globalization research. In contrast to macro-structural theories of globalization, transnationalism emphasizes the following:

Based on an action and actor-centred perspective, transnationalization focuses on social processes and the emergence of transnational social formations and transnational social spaces ... At the heart of transnationalization analyses lie the everyday networks of relationships and cross-border interactions of subjects and groups of actors 'from below' and not the formation of global macro-structures or world-systems (ibid).

Analyses of globalization have led to a related political and academic debate under the rubric of 'global governance'. Research in this field has gained in both breadth and intensity following the publication of the report of the Commission on Global Governance in 1995, but still has many of the characteristics of a 'process of search in order to reconstruct the transformation of politics under the conditions of globalization, locate this theoretically, and develop proposals for solutions for new sets of problems' (Messner, 2003: 292).

Social science research into global governance (Messner and Nuscheler, 1996; Rittberger and Zangl, 2003; Scherrer, 2003), which has concentrated on processes and strategies of collective action aimed at resolving cross-border and global problems, has been advanced primarily by theorists of international relations (interdependence analyses in the 1980s, regime analysis in the 1990s, and current global governance approaches). At the same time, global governance theories also embrace and combine theoretical

approaches from a number of social science disciplines (*Steuerungstheorie*, policy and network analysis etc.). This is in no small measure due to the attractiveness of the idea of the coordination or ‘self-steering’ of political systems, given the absence of a regulative centre (‘global governance without a global government’).

However, despite a number of efforts in this direction (Hewson and Sinclair, 1999), it is not yet possible to speak of a theory of global governance. However, global governance research, with its foundations in social and political science, does share a number of premises and empirical observations. These core elements, on which global governance approaches have constructed their basic coordinates, are: diversity of actors, multi-level governance, and pluralism of governance forms (Messner, 2003: 296). Analyses of ‘complex global governance’ (Zürn, 1998) focus in particular on the following dimensions and problematics:

- The development of multi-level governance structures from the local to the global level.
- The relationship and interplay of governance by government, governance with government, and governance without government, and the role of transnational actors and international institutions.
- The varying modes of (state) governance and (civil society) self-regulation, depending on the political field and objects of regulation, for resolving problems of international interdependence.
- The prerequisites, scope and relations of ‘negative’ regulation (that is, market-creating) and ‘positive’ (market-correcting) regulation of the transnational frameworks of social action and their impacts on governance and distribution (Zürn, 1998: 225; Messner, 2003: 297).

Finally, debates on global governance have also embraced notions of ‘global’ or ‘transnational’ civil society. This approach analyses the prospects and limits of cooperation between non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and the state in a variety of constellations. These include alliances between NGOs and trade unions, forms of dialogue between companies and NGOs, and networks and alliances between the state, civil society and international organizations. Depending on the policy field, the