

Electoral Politics and The Corporate System: The Question of Support*

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Introduction

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So a dual system has emerged: Powerful interest organisations coexist with political parties. Traditionally, interest groups were seen as outsiders trying to put pressure on the political authorities. Today, however, interest organisations are often considered as coopted into the state-system. Hence it is hardly any longer true that parties in contrast to interest groups seek to win seats/offices. They rather seek different kinds of power positions.

This dual system may bring the party system in a new situation. The school of 'new corporatism' normally stresses smooth collaboration between interest organisations and state. This cooperation may be of importance not only for daily political management, but for the stability of the

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political system as well: If citizens identify strongly with their interest organisations, cooptation of interest groups may dampen potential discontent. Thus Wilensky points to corporate linkages as a factor which, under certain circumstances, diminishes the likelihood of anti-welfare/tax protest, (Wilensky 1976).

But at times conflicts emerge. Farmers quarrel over low prices or poor subsidies, and prime ministers want to curb wage-increases. If the interest organisations were weak, such conflict-situations would hardly cause serious problems. The party in power would have its will.

Today, however, a different scenario may be relevant:

- parties are mass organisations and they depend on mass support on election day.
- they are confronted with interest organisations which are of vital importance for the daily business of government.
- at the same time, interest organisations are quite often mass organisations too (trade-unions, farmers' organisations, etc.).
- thus, conflicts with interest organisations may endanger both daily business and electoral prospects. Reversely, cooperation with interest organisations may ensure the stability of political life.

Interest organisations have become more important at top level politics. But with respect to a possible threat to parties on election day — or with respect to the stabilizing effects, mentioned by Wilensky — the important question is whether they are important at the mass level too. Not only as caretakers of concrete interests in concrete situations (legal advice by trade unions, arrangement of trips by motor organisations, etc.), but in a more affective sense relevant for formation of political opinions.

If interest politics has priority over party politics (for the voters), the parties face an electorate of citizens-as-organisation identifiers instead of an electorate of citizens-as-party identifiers.

Some arguments

A number of arguments may be cited in favour of an emphasis on the potential impact of interest organisation on mass opinion.

On the one hand, the growing importance of trade-unions, farmers' organisations etc. may be perceived by the citizens, and therefore they may take more interest in interest organisations at the cost of interest in party life.

Further, some party systems have been in great trouble, and much analysis has pointed to high levels of political distrust. Distrust might make it more difficult for the parties to make themselves heard and induce citizens to consider interest organisations as their true spokesmen (Dahlerup et al. 1974).

All this *may* be the case, but a number of contrary arguments may be cited too.

First, a corporate system is a product of a long process, during which many of the early characteristics of interest groups may have become outdated. So, in the labour market, Danish corporatism seems to rest on a very high organisation-percent. It is a fair guess that the founding members of the trade-unions were strongly class-conscious workers. But as enrollment has moved from 10 to 90 or 100 per cent, it is probable that many become members because they have to and not because they want to. And it may further be suggested that frictionless cooperation between state, unions, and employers would be difficult if the members identified too strongly with their organisations. In sum, corporatism is most likely to come into existence if and when identification with interest organisations is weak.

Next it is commonplace that not all changes and developments in the political system are perceived by the public, at once and in all their facets. Citizens may still believe that elections completely determine what is going to happen, and consequently belittle the role of interest organisations. Thus, organisations are not least active in the administrative sector, and much of what goes on, goes on behind closed doors.¹ Even if interest organisations have achieved a more crucial role, this is not immediately visible to the general public. And even if the public knows that interest groups play a crucial role, it is far from certain that the public know the role they play, what their policies are, etc. In contrast, parties still play a prominent role in the more dramatic parts of government (elections, parliamentary disputes, etc.)

Further, increased cooperation with public authorities may by itself widen the gap between top and bottom inside the organisations. Within the organisation, efficiency in dealings with administrators and politicians presupposes a certain amount of professionalism, centralization, etc. All this may damage internal communication (Egeberg et al. 1978).

To this should be added that the growing impact of interest organisations is often associated with a development towards a 'segmented state' (Egeberg et al., *op.cit.*). Inside each policy field — agriculture, fishing etc. — problems are mostly coped with by sectoral interest organisations, specialised politicians and the administrative institutions responsible for that

sector, without much interference from other organisations and political institutions.²

If the cooptation of interest organisations in each case is confined to a few sectors, the role of the organisation should mostly be known to those citizens that are affected by those factors and not many others — even when many citizens may have a more vague feeling that interest organisations have great power.

In short, it is a matter for empirical investigation whether parties or interest groups actually command greater public support.

The Structure of Political Sympathies

The Amount of Affective Orientations

If (to the public) interest organisations had replaced parties as the dominant actors of political life, they should, *ceteris paribus*, be more visible, arouse more affective (pro and contra) feelings and be more salient than parties.

Whether this is the case may be partially illustrated by a set of questions in the Danish 1979-election study. The respondents were asked to evaluate a number of objects by means of the now conventional sympathy barometers ranging from +100 to -100. It may be hard to tell the difference between, say, +60 and +40, and therefore some scepticism about the measuring instrument is justified.

The evaluated objects included both parties and major interests organisations, and so a comparison can be made. Five interest organisations were included: The Trade-Union Congress (LO), The Teachers' Union (Danmarks Lærerforening — DL), The Agricultural Council (Landbrugsraadet), the Association of Employers (Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening — DA) and the Central Organisation of Professionals (Akademikernes Centralorganisation. — AC). These are all economic organisations, linked to production and employment. Further, the TUC (LO), the Agricultural Council, and the Association of Employers (DA) are the three most important interest organisations in Danish politics.

In the election-study it is partly possible to identify members of some of the organisations.³ The first and most important finding is that people like the party they vote for, and that they like the organisation to which they are affiliated. People may grumble about many aspects of political life. But they are not unsympathetic towards all political objects.

In theory, people may vote for a party because it is 'the least evil'. In that case, voters should have low opinions of their own party, and even lower opinions of other parties. In view of the 'protest' character of recent Danish elections, this would be likely. The argument by Dahlerup et al. that the voters have turned away from the parties and use organisations as channels for furthering their interest seems to rest on the premise of widespread 'negative voting' (Dahlerup et al. 1975). And it has also been suggested that the supporters of the new protest parties — especially the Progress Party — voted primarily against the old parties and not for the new party.

Table 1. Sympathy for preferred parties and own organisation

| | Scores given by voters to own party | Scores given by members to | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | Agricul. Council | Teachers ass. | TUC. (LO) |
| | | Per cent | | |
| Positive | 95 | 84 | 75 | 59 |
| Neutral, no opinion | 4 | 15 | 22 | 29 |
| Negative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 12 |
| N = | 100 1631 | 101 67 | 100 36 | 100 556 |

Own party: Party for which the voter voted at the election. Only those who actually voted are included in the first column.

The results in Table 1 hardly suggest that voters would be inclined to avoid the electoral channel: Nearly all voters are able to find a party they like.⁴

The basic mood is benevolent. This holds true with respect to both parties and organisations. But if anything the benevolence was greatest with respect to own party. And other differences suggest that parties more than political parties are objects of affective orientations.

First of all, the general public has an opinion about parties, but not always about organisations. In Table 2 the objects have been ranked according to the sum of neutral and missing evaluations (in the total population) as an indicator of lack of affective orientations. This reveals a striking feature:

- almost all citizens have affective orientations towards the parties, but often lack such orientations towards the organisations. The TUC (LO) (1 million members), for example, does not rank higher than the Maoist mini-party (10,000 voters), and the other interest organisations rank even lower.
- absence of affective orientations towards the parties is mostly due to neutral evaluations, but with respect to interest organisation to really

Table 2. Evaluations of Parties and Interest Organisations

| | Size at Election | Nat. of Evaluations | | | Summaries | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----|------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| | | Pos | Neu | Neg. | Mis-sing | Pos — Neg | Neutral + Missing |
| — Per cent — | | | | | | | |
| Social Democratic Party | Large | 74 | 10 | 9 | 7 | +65 | 17 |
| Agrarian Liberal Party | Medium | 58 | 13 | 20 | 10 | +38 | 23 |
| Progress Party | Medium | 20 | 13 | 58 | 10 | -38 | 23 |
| Socialist People's Party | Small | 39 | 14 | 36 | 11 | +3 | 25 |
| Conservative party | Medium | 48 | 17 | 26 | 10 | +22 | 27 |
| Communist party | Small | 14 | 18 | 59 | 10 | -45 | 28 |
| Left Socialists | Small | 26 | 16 | 47 | 12 | -21 | 28 |
| Radical Liberal Party | Small | 59 | 17 | 13 | 12 | +46 | 29 |
| Center Democratic Party | Small | 32 | 19 | 39 | 10 | -7 | 29 |
| Christian People's Party | Small | 29 | 23 | 37 | 11 | -8 | 34 |
| Maoist party | Small | 7 | 20 | 56 | 17 | -49 | 37 |
| TRADE UNION CONGRESS (LO) | *** | 40 | 20 | 24 | 17 | +16 | 37 |
| George'ist party | Small | 28 | 28 | 30 | 15 | -2 | 43 |
| DAN. ASS. OF EMPLOYERS (DA) | *** | 36 | 25 | 17 | 22 | +19 | 47 |
| DAN. ASS. OF TEACHERS (DL) | *** | 25 | 24 | 10 | 40 | +15 | 64 |
| AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL | *** | 30 | 26 | 6 | 39 | +24 | 65 |
| ORG. OF PROFESSIONALS (AC) | *** | 15 | 28 | 9 | 48 | +6 | 76 |
| Averages | | | | | | | |
| — Large + Medium parties | | 50 | 13 | 28 | 9 | +22 | 22 |
| — Small parties | | 29 | 19 | 40 | 12 | -11 | 31 |
| — left-wing + Progress Party | | 21 | 16 | 51 | 12 | -30 | 28 |
| — center parties | | 47 | 18 | 25 | 11 | +22 | 29 |
| — interest organisations | | 29 | 25 | 13 | 33 | +16 | 58 |

Only citizens entitled to vote were included (N = 1891). Party names are direct translations except for Agrarian Liberals (= Venstre), Radical Liberals (= Radikale Venstre), George'ist Party (= Retsforbundet) and Maoist Party (= KAP).

Left wing parties: Socialist People's Party, Left Socialists, Communist Party and Maoist Party.

missing evaluations. People don't know what to think about the organisations.

The latter point should not be stressed too much, but it suggests that interest organisations are less visible to the public. Under all circumstances, voters adopt attitudes towards the parties, but often fail to do so towards the organisations.

This is partly due to a 'segmented' picture of the system of interest organisations. In Table 3 subgroups with clear links to specific organisations are used for illustration.

Table 3. Affective orientation towards own organisation

| evaluated by | ORGANISATION EVALUATED TUC (LO) | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|----|
| | Agricultural Council | Teachers' Association | |
| | — Per cent neutral and — missing evaluations | | |
| — members of TUC (LO) Unions | 29 | 71 | 67 |
| — farmers | 37 | 15 | 64 |
| — teachers | 47 | 67 | 22 |
| All voters | 36 | 65 | 65 |

Only citizens entitled to vote were included (N=1891). This included 556 members of TUC (LO), 67 farmers and 36 teachers.

Clearly, the amount of affective orientation depends on affiliation to the organisations. Trade-union members have opinions on the trade-unions, farmers on the Agricultural Council, and teachers on the Teachers' Union (DL). But the members/clientele of one organisation often lack opinions on other organisations. The Focus is restricted.

If the state actually is 'a segmented' state, it is hardly surprising that citizens lack affective orientations towards organisations outside their own sector. Workers are affected by the trade unions and farmers by the farmers' organisations, but not vice versa. There is little inducement to evaluate other organisations than that to which one belongs.

Table 4. Affective Orientation towards Own Party

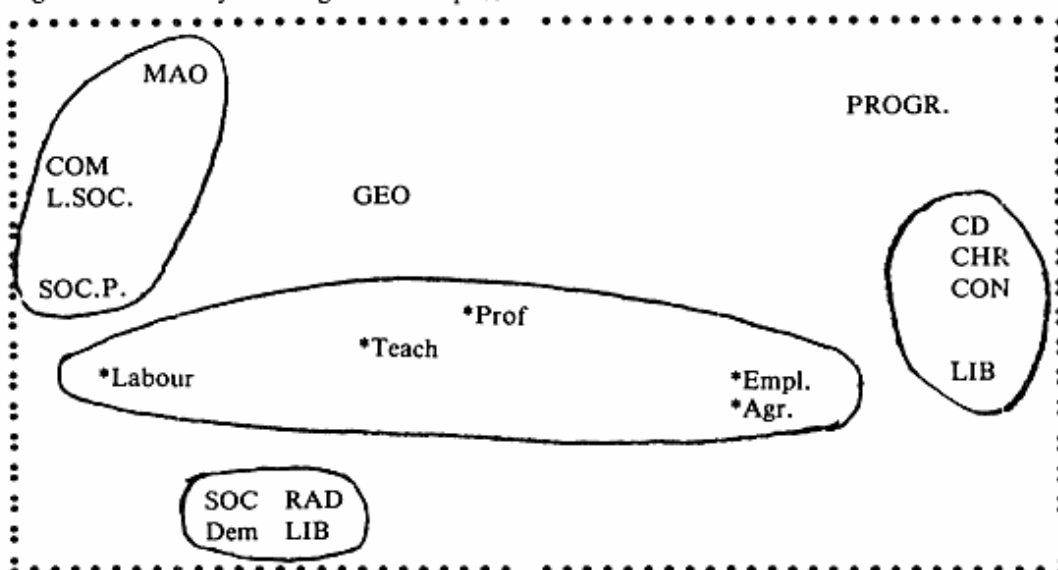
| Voters who voted for | All Voters | TUC (LO) members | | N= All | TUC | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|------|--------|-----|--|
| | — per cent neutral and lacking — evaluations of | | | | | |
| | own party | own party | TUC | | | |
| — Social Democratic Party | 3 | 3 | 21 | 658 | 257 | |
| — Agrarian Liberal Party | 8 | 6 | 28 | 231 | 32 | |
| — Progress Party | 4 | 0 | 38 | 112 | 34 | |
| — Socialist Peoples Party | 0 | 0 | 27 | 102 | 44 | |
| — Conservative Party | 3 | 0 | 25 | 232 | 32 | |
| — Communist Party (Moscow) | 6 | 8 | 31 | 26 | 13 | |
| — Left Socialist Party | 2 | 0 | 24 | 60 | 17 | |
| — Radical Liberal Party | 4 | 6 | 44 | 90 | 16 | |
| — Center Democratic Party | 6 | — | — | 51 | 9 | |
| — Christian Peoples Party | 9 | — 0 | — 40 | 32 | 4 | |
| — Maoist Party | — | — | — | 5 | 2 | |
| — George'ist Party | 3 | 7 | 36 | 32 | 14 | |
| Average all parties | 4 | 3 | 26 | | | |

But segmentation is hardly the sole explanation of the lack of affective orientations towards the organisations. In Table 4, it actually turns out that no party whatsoever is seen as a 'neutral' object by a proportion of its voters, comparable to the proportions found for the organisations (first column in Table 4). And the difference between evaluations of own organisation and own party is further illustrated by a special analysis of trade-union members (second and third column in Table 4). There are wide discrepancies: among social democratic trade-unionists only 3 per cent are without an affective orientation towards the Social Democratic Party but 21 per cent have no opinion on the TUC (LO). Among agrarian liberal trade-unionists 6 per cent are neutral towards the Agrarian Liberal Party but 28 per cent are neutral towards the TUC (LO), and so forth.⁵ It seems to be a general tendency that parties to a higher extent than organisations are seen in terms of black-and-white.⁶

Partisan Affections?

The last conclusion is further stressed by inspection of the correlations between sympathies for parties and organisations. Each correlation is calculated without including missing answers, and the results are displayed in

Figure 1. The Party and Organisation Space



Abbr. (from left top down and up again to the right): Mao = Maoist party, Com = Communist party, Geo = George'ist party, L. Soc = left Socialists, Soc.P. = Socialist People's party, Labour = TUC (LO), Teach = Danish Association of Teachers, Rad = Radical Liberals, Soc Dem = Social Democratic party, Prof = Central organisation of Professionals (AC), Agr = Agricultural Council, Empl. = Federation of Employers (DA), Lib = Agrarian Liberals, Con = Conservatives, Chr = Christian Party, CD = Center Democrats, Progr = Progress Party.

Table 5. Correlations of Sympathies
(Parties × Parties)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|-------------|-----|------------|------------|------------|-----|----|-------------|
| | Mao | Com | Left Soc. | Soc P.P. | Geo | Soc Dem | Rad Lib | Agr Lib | Con | CD | Chr P.P. |
| 1. Mao'ist Party | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Communist Party | 60 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Left Socialist Party | 59 | 65 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Soc. People's Party | 42 | 60 | 63 | | | | | | | | |
| 5. George'ist Party | 20 | 28 | 26 | 31 | | | | | | | |
| 6. Soc. Democratic Party | 0 | 8 | 12 | 30 | 16 | | | | | | |
| 7. Radical Liberal Party | 0 | 8 | 11 | 27 | 31 | 53 | | | | | |
| 8. Agrarian Lib. Party | -32 | -38 | -43 | -45 | -6 | -9 | 0 | | | | |
| 9. Conservative Party | -26 | -35 | -41 | -46 | -1 | -17 | -6 | 62 | | | |
| 10. Center Democrats | -12 | -25 | -33 | -43 | -4 | -16 | -13 | 49 | 57 | | |
| 11. Christian Party | -8 | -22 | -30 | -37 | 3 | -12 | -3 | 49 | 51 | 65 | |
| 12. Progress Party | 1 | -12 | -15 | -29 | -1 | -29 | -19 | 25 | 38 | 44 | 34 |

(Organisations × Organisations)

| | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | TUC (LO) | Teachers Ass. | Prof. (AC) | Employers (DA) |
| 13. TUC (LO) | | | | |
| 14. Teachers Association | 32 | | | |
| 15. Org. of Professionals (AC) | 22 | 63 | | |
| 16. Agricultural Council | -2 | 35 | 41 | |
| 17. Employers Association (DA) | 7 | 20 | 27 | 60 |

No opinions were treated as missing data. The computation was made on the basis of the original sympathy scores, but a former version on the basis of recoded scores (positive, neutral, negative) gave almost identical figures.

Decimal points and leading zeros have been omitted for the reasons of space.

Table 5 and Fig. 1.⁷ According to this diagram, two dimensions are present: — horizontally, the left-wing parties come first, then center parties and last the more pronounced bourgeois parties. — vertically, the governing social democrats are at the bottom and the most outspoken opposition parties (on the left: the Maoists and on the right: the Progress Party) are at the top.

So the sympathies reveal the familiar left-right and government-opposition dimensions. At first glance, the organisations fit very well into this pattern. Thus, on the left-right dimension the trade-unions are mostly to the left, next come organisations for the salaried middle-class and lastly — mostly to the right — organisations for self-employed or employers. And on the government-opposition dimension, the organisations are all placed midway between the government and the opposition parties.

The diagram, however, reveals a difference between evaluations of orga-

nisations and parties: The organisations are placed closer to each other than the parties.

This can be specified by inspection of the actual correlations (Table 5):

- in the submatrix for the parties, there is a pronounced variation in the signs of the correlations. Sympathy for left-wing parties is negatively related to sympathy for right-wing parties.
- in the submatrix for the organisations all correlations are either positive or zero, but — with one tiny exception — not negative.

The variation from positive to negative correlations conforms to a perception of the parties as opponents. The same hardly applies to the organisations. If trade-unions and employers association were perceived as antagonists, the correlation between sympathy for one and sympathy for the other should be expected to be negative, and not slightly positive.

Hence, it is possible to be negative towards both the employers' federation and the TUC (LO) or positive towards both. This is exemplified by Table 6. Actually 56 per cent of all respondents have qualitatively identical opinions about the two organisations.⁸

Table 6. Evaluations of Labour Market Organisations by Subgroups

| | Party-vote | | | | | | Member of | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Left Wing | Soc Dem | Minor Bourg. | Agr Lib | Con | PP | TUC (LO) | Teach- ers Union | Agr. C | All |
| Mean Sympathy (Max = +100, Min = -100) | | | | | | | | | | |
| TUC (LO) | +22 | +29 | -7 | -20 | -26 | -26 | +27 | +3 | -34 | +4 |
| Ass. of Employers (DA) | -23 | +5 | +8 | +17 | +23 | +10 | +7 | -2 | +22 | +6 |
| Same qualitative level Per cent rating | | | | | | | | | | |
| — both org. positive | 16 | 29 | 24 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 28 | 19 | 12 | 21 |
| — both org. neutral | 18 | 24 | 30 | 33 | 22 | 30 | 23 | 31 | 24 | 29 |
| — both org. negative | 8 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| Total | 42 | 57 | 64 | 56 | 44 | 48 | 56 | 58 | 39 | 56 |
| Relative preference. (Per cent down) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Most positive score given to | | | | | | | | | | |
| TUC (LO) | 65 | 46 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 48 | 31 | 5 | 28 |
| Employers association | 5 | 11 | 31 | 46 | 59 | 51 | 12 | 22 | 60 | 27 |
| Same score to both | 30 | 43 | 56 | 50 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 47 | 36 | 45 |
| N = | 100 193 | 100 658 | 100 205 | 100 231 | 100 232 | 100 112 | 100 556 | 100 36 | 100 67 | 100 1891 |

Minor bourgeois parties: Radical Liberals, George'ists, Center Democrats and Christian People's Party.

The picture naturally differs widely from subgroup to subgroup. On the political left-wing, the trade unions are preferred to the employers' federation, whereas the reverse is the case on the right wing. In the same way members of TUC (LO) trade-unions prefer their own organisation.

The main result, however, is that there are limitations on the perceptions of antagonisms in the labour market.

This may have different implications in different situations. Cooperation between organisations is facilitated by the fact that sympathizers of one kind of organisations do not systematically rate other organisations negatively. Among trade union-members, for example, there is hardly any general opposition to 'class cooperation' with employers. However, in situations in which, for example, trade unions are confronted with employers, it definitely is a weakness that a great proportion of those that are in favour of the unions are also in favour of the employers. The corollary of support for class cooperation is the difficulty in portraying employers as evil adversaries. In general, the results suggest different models of the perception of parties and of interest organisations:

- the parties seem to be seen according to a partisan model with strong affective loadings,
- the organisations in contrast are often neutral objects (few affections, few antagonisms) or — to go one step further — are seen as technical units.

Thus it may be open to doubt whether the rise of corporatism has caused a shift from parties to interest organisations as the perceived spokesmen for one's own interests. If this were the case, the interest organisations should have had more affective evaluations than the parties, not least from their own members.

Relative Preference for Parties and Organisations

Parties are more often than interest organisations objects of affective orientations. Further sympathies for different parties are more clearly patterned than sympathies for different organisations. To this an additional characteristic should be added: in most cases people rate their party higher than they rate their own organisation (Table 7).

In conflict situations, parties may count on the same or an even higher basic loyalty than the organisations. When parties and organisations cooperate, it is just as likely that organisations gain sympathy from organisations as it is that parties gain sympathy from organisations. Wilensky may still be partly right that cooperation between state and organisations diminishes

Table 7. Relative Preference for own organisation compared to own party

| | Members of Agricultural Council | Members of Teachers Association Per cent | Members of TUC (LO) |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Own Organisation rated more Positive than own party | 3 | 18 | 6 |
| Own Organisation same rating as own party | 30 | 18 | 18 |
| Own Party rated more positive than own organisation | 67 | 65 | 76 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| N = | 61 | 34 | 474 |

Only voters that actually voted are included

the risk of protest elections, as the organisations generally are positive objects for the members. But the parties are hardly so poorly evaluated that they cannot do without support from the organisations.

A special case is represented by the Trade Union Congress (LO). First, it has by far the greatest membership of all the organisations analysed in this article. Second, the TUC (LO) is strongly involved in party politics. On the one hand, it is proclaimed social democratic, and there is reciprocal representation on the governing boards of the Social Democratic Party and the TUC (LO). On the other hand, there is often disagreement between the TUC (LO) and the party. Thus, TUC (LO) heavily and publicly criticised the government coalition between Social Democrats and Agrarian Liberals in the period just before the election in 1979, and attacked the economic policy of the government. The TUC (LO) in some respects acts as a faction inside the Social Democratic Party.

The professed social democracy of the TUC (LO) is probably an annoying trait for the near-majority of its members who vote for other parties than the Social Democratic. This is especially the case for bourgeois TUC-members. Whereas 73 per cent of the Social Democratic TUC-members and 61 per cent of left-wing TUC-members are positive towards the Trade Union Congress, this figure falls below 50 per cent among bourgeois parties.⁹ And it is no surprise that non-social-democratic TUC-members are more prone to rate their own party higher than TUC. 84 per cent of them do so. But even among social-democratic TUC-members, 69 per cent are more positive towards the Social Democratic party than towards the Trade Union Congress.

From this it is nearly a foregone conclusion that the Social Democratic Party is more popular among TUC (LO) trade-unionists than the TUC (LO) itself. But it might be the case that, for example, bourgeois trade-unionists rated the Social Democratic Party lower than they rated the TUC (LO), with a similar view taken by all other non-social-democratic trade-unionists. Especially the left-wingers should be prone to agree with much of the criticism raised by the TUC (LO) against the Social Democratic Government.

To bring the conclusion home, Table 8 compares sympathies of trade-unionists for the Social Democratic Party and for the TUC (LO).

Table 8. Sympathies of Trade-Unionists for Unions and Soc. Dem. Party

| | Left Wing | Soc Dem | Minor Bourg. | Agr. Lib | Cons | Progress Party | All |
|---|--------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| TUC (LO) rated more positive than Soc.Dem.Party | 29 | 6 | 23 | 13 | 25 | 24 | 15 |
| Soc.Dem.party rated more positive than TUC (LO) | 43 | 69 | 61 | 63 | 53 | 53 | 58 |
| Same Rating | 28 | 25 | 16 | 25 | 22 | 24 | 26 |
| N= | 100 76 | 100 257 | 100 43 | 101 32 | 100 32 | 101 34 | 99 556 |

Only members of Unions affiliated to TUC (LO) were included.

Computations were made on the basis of original scores. (No opinion recoded as neutral).

It seems that the Social Democratic Party is markedly more popular than trade unions, even among trade-union members, despite the fact that a great proportion of these vote for other parties.

Hence, the Social Democratic Party seems to have a good starting position in such conflicts. It may be the imagination of left-wingers that the workers back their union-leaders against the reformism of social democratic government.

Discussion

Thus, political parties may have a good starting position vis-à-vis interest organisations in conflict situations. And, conversely, it is open to doubt whether support from interest organisations through corporate linkages is of prime importance for the stability of the system.

In addition to this, however, the results may raise the question whether it

is parties or interest groups which citizens see as the better representatives of their interests.

An obvious problem for interest organisations is that they can hardly take care of all the interests of their members. In this article the focus is on occupational interest organisations. But the citizens have many other individual interests. Thus, the housing question has on certain occasions had a prominent position in Danish politics, dividing, for example, trade-union members in groups (house-owners and tenants) with diverging interests (Esping-Andersen 1979, 493—501). And citizens may emphasize collective goals (economic growth, fighting pollution etc.) as much as individual self-interests.¹⁰

It may be an asset for political parties that they have to combine policies in different fields. They are forced to take account of different types of interests. It might be argued, however, that it is even more important whether interests (in a single policy field or in a number of fields) are articulated clearly and without reservation, or reversely aggregated and modified in order to take account of the interests of other groups. A common-sense assumption would be that most citizens prefer that their interests should be presented without reservations.

In a two-party system in which organisations act as pressure groups it is probably true that parties must appeal to the interests of many groups in order to win a majority, at the same time as interest organisations are without responsibility for public affairs.

In a multi-party system in which organisations are partners in policy-making, it might just as well be the other way round. Many parties can never hope to win 50 per cent of the vote and can thus profit from articulation of claims from special subsections of the population. At the same time, interest organisations have to modify their claims for the sake of cooperation and to enforce agreements even against the will of their members.¹¹ So the Danish left-wing parties are more pronounced articulators of militant trade-unionism than the TUC (LO).

Finally, and most important, the sympathies of the individuals are more likely to depend on the interests *as seen by the individuals themselves* than on their interests as seen by others. Consequently, the result may partly be due to the fact that people are free to choose which party they want to support, whereas often membership of an interest organisation is compulsory. Voluntary agreement is a criterion for party-choice, but not for organisational membership.

Opinions about The Labour Market: A Test

Popularity per se, however, is only an indicator of possible influence on public opinion. Popularity ensures a basic sympathy towards the political messages of interest organisations. But it is still a possibility that interest organisations are more able than the parties to get messages accepted on own merits because they are more able to fit the content to the life-situation of the members.

In order to test for this eventuality, a number of questions dealing with labour market policies were chosen. The labour market affects a great proportion of the population quite directly. And there should be good reasons to expect trade unions and employers' federations to have an impact on the views of their members in this field.

The questions used are listed in appendix A1. Broadly speaking, the distributions reflect a clear status-quo orientation. There is no support for wild-cat strikes, and only a few believe that there is room for wage-increases, even when they want to preserve the present wage-level. There is no massive support for schemes of industrial participation. Finally most people endorse the traditional system, according to which labour-market conflicts are handled primarily by the organisations, and hence oppose state-interference.

In general, the correlations between questions are positive, when the questions are given the same direction (positive-responses favouring wage-increases, militant action, industrial democracy, and opposition to state intervention). However, some of these correlations are of small numerical magnitude, and hence the questions have been divided into four groups:

- wild-cat / illegal strikes.¹²
- wage-level
- industrial democracy/participatory schemes
- government interference with the labour market

For each section, additive indices were constructed.¹³

As a first step it was calculated how much of the total variance each of a number of factors explained — that is without taking account of other factors — and next, what the impacts of the different factors were in a multivariate explanation. Results are given in Table 9.

What stands out is the dominant position of party choice. Organisational sympathies, however, rank second, whereas membership of labour market organisations are at the bottom. In general, the more fixed variables of age, class, and — in a system with 'closed shop practices' — organisational membership are less important than the more changeable party vote and

Table 9. Explanation of Views on Labour-Market Policies

| | Dependent Variables (indices) | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | I Illegal Strikes | II Wage-Level | III Industrial Democracy | IV Government Intervention |
| Bivariate Analysis | | | | |
| Pet. variance explained | | | | |
| — by party vote | 18 | 26 | 20 | 22 |
| — by org.sympathies | 8 | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| — by class | 3 | 10 | 5 | 9 |
| — by org.membership | 2 | 9 | 3 | 9 |
| Multivariate Analysis | | | | |
| Betas of the predictors | | | | |
| — party vote | .35 | .37 | .31 | .31 |
| — org.sympathies | .15 | .17 | .24 | .20 |
| — class | .08 | .12 | .04 | .09 |
| — org.membership | .05 | .13 | .06 | .14 |
| Pet.variance explained by all predictors com- bined | 20 | 32 | 25 | 30 |

The results are based on the MCA-procedure of the OSIRIS-package, that is a regression in which the categories of each predictor is used as a dummy predictor. Party vote had five categories: Left-wing, Soc.Dem. Minor bourgeois parties (Rad.Liberals, George'ist party, Center Democrats and Christians), Agrarian Liberals + Conservatives, Progress Party and no party.

Organisation sympathies were measured by the relative sympathy for TUC (LO) and Employers Association. (TUC (LO) rated highest, Employers Association highest, same score to both.)

Class is measured by the respondent's employment or — if unemployed — by the employment of the head of household. Five categories were used: Worker, salaried employee, farmer, self employed and others.

Organisational membership had four categories: TUC (LO) union, other trade union, branch/employers' association and no organisation. In the procedure procedure, 'beta' is a parallel to partial correlation coefficients.

sympathies.¹⁴ It should also be noted that this is in no way changed by control for other variables in the multivariate analysis.

Table 10. Average Net-majorities
+100 indicates maximum and -100 minimum militancy.

| | Illegal Strikes | Wage Level | Industrial Democracy | Gov.inter- vention | N= |
|---|--------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| ORG.MEMBERSHIP | | | | | |
| TUC (LO) | -42 | - 1 | + 9 | + 35 | 559 |
| Other Trade Union | -40 | -12 | - 1 | + 17 | 235 |
| Branch or Employers Association | -68 | -43 | -21 | -18 | 108 |
| No membership | -56 | -31 | -17 | - 3 | 989 |
| Differences between members of TUC and of Branch or Empl. Ass. | | | | | |
| | 26 | 42 | 30 | 53 | |

This should be substantiated. In Table 10, voters have been grouped according to organisational membership. All indices have further been quantified to go from + 100 (maximum trade-union militancy) to -100 (minimum militancy). Actually, there are some differences between TUC-members and others.

These differences can be shown, however, to be rather minimal. The citizens have also been classified according to party-vote, organisational sympathies, and class. This has been done for (a) all voters and (b) for TUC-members (See Table 11).

Table 11. Average Net-majorities (continued)

+ 100 indicates maximum and -100 minimum militancy.

| | Illegal Strikes | | Wage Level | | Industrial Democracy | | | Gov.inter-vention | | | N = | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------|------------|--------|----------------------|--------|---------|-------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|-----|-----|
| | All TUC | Dif 1) | All TUC | Dif 1) | All TUC | Dif 1) | All TUC | Dif 1) | All TUC | Dif 1) | All TUC | Dif 1) | | |
| Party | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Left-Wing | 16 | 18 | +2 | 34 | 40 | +6 | 38 | 31 | -7 | 66 | 74 | +8 | 193 | 76 |
| Soc.Dem | -51 | -49 | +2 | -9 | 1 | +10 | 15 | 25 | +10 | 27 | 43 | +16 | 658 | 257 |
| Min.Bourgeois | -66 | -69 | -3 | -34 | -26 | +8 | -15 | -19 | -4 | 2 | 27 | +25 | 205 | 43 |
| Agr.L + Cons. | -73 | -75 | -2 | -51 | -30 | +22 | -44 | -35 | +9 | -26 | -8 | +18 | 463 | 65 |
| Progress Party | -67 | -59 | +8 | -42 | -22 | +20 | -53 | -41 | +12 | -13 | 2 | +15 | 112 | 35 |
| Org.sympathies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Highest rated: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TUC (LO) | -29 | -28 | +1 | 7 | 13 | +6 | +29 | 29 | 0 | 46 | 53 | +7 | 537 | 264 |
| No difference | -50 | -53 | -3 | -22 | -11 | +11 | -10 | -3 | +7 | 6 | 20 | +14 | 850 | 224 |
| Employers Ass. | -75 | -63 | +12 | -48 | -26 | +22 | -43 | -28 | +15 | -21 | 13 | +34 | 504 | 71 |
| Class | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Worker | -44 | -41 | +3 | -6 | 3 | +9 | 4 | 9 | +5 | 27 | 38 | +11 | 648 | 335 |
| Sal.Employee | -53 | -43 | +10 | -22 | -7 | +15 | -7 | 10 | +17 | 9 | -32 | +23 | 737 | 205 |
| Farmer | -70 | | | -57 | | | -36 | | | -34 | | | 166 | 4 |
| Self-Employed | -67 | | | -44 | | | -37 | | | -13 | | | 166 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Range 2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Party | 89 | | 85 | | 82 | | | 92 | | | | | | |
| Class | 23 | | 51 | | 41 | | | 40 | | | | | | |
| Org.Sympathies | 46 | | 55 | | 72 | | | 67 | | | | | | |

1) The differences are calculated as the score among TUC (LO) members minus the score in the total population. 2) The ranges are calculated as the numerical differences between: (a) party: Left wing voters and voters of Agrarian Liberals + Conservatives (b) sympathies: Those rating the Federation of Labour highest and those rating the Employers Association highest, (c) class: workers and self-employed.

The first point is that the differences associated with these other factors in the total population (bottom of each column) are greater than the former differences associated with organisational membership.

Further, if TUC-members (in each row) are compared with all voters with the same party-vote, the same organisational sympathies and the same occupation, many of the differences become very minimal. The former differences between TUC-members and others are more or less a product of such other factors.

To some extent, the minor impact of membership may be due to the very obvious explanation that the organisations have never tried to influence members towards any other standpoints than those held by the 'average Dane'. Trade Union leaders have, for example, been strongly against wild-cat strikes. So, in this case, the lack of impact of organisational membership first of all indicates that there hardly exists a large militant group among the members.

In other fields, however, the organisations, and especially the trade-unions, have actually had a very salient policy. The TUC (LO) has fought for maintaining the present wage-level. And it has conducted campaign after campaign for different participatory schemes (not least for the proposal of 'economic democracy'). Finally, both trade-unions and employers federation are strongly against government intervention. But irrespective of the particular field of policy, Table 9 showed only small variations due to organisational membership. This implies that trade-union membership is a poor predictor of militant views, compared to, say, being a voter of a left-wing party.

Concluding Remarks

Many of the results and some of the arguments may fit into a speculative but simple model. The discussion below is restricted to occupational interest organisations. First it might be argued that frictionless cooperation between organisations and state authorities — not least administrative institutions — is facilitated:

- if the members of the organisations do not perceive all their interests as strongly linked with their occupational interests, and with the furthering of these interests at the political or collective level.
- if they do not see other interests as antagonistic to their own.

In such a system there is room for relaxed give-and-take. If, on the other hand, none of the conditions are fulfilled, it is more likely that organisations will conflict with each other. In short, corporate decision-making is more likely to exist, if there is weak crystallisation of interests around (occupational) interest organisations.

Second, smooth cooperation at the elite level is likely to affect the mass level. If organisations conflict with each other and combat state policies, each organisation can present its claims in a clear and spectacular manner by means of demonstrations, resolutions etc.. But if they negotiate and much is done behind closed doors, technical reports are just as important as resolutions. Further, as noted by Egeberg et al., external efficiency in dealings with others often results in professionalization, centralization¹⁵, etc., at the cost of internal democracy.

These mechanisms are not likely to be completely neutral with respect to the identification of members with their own organisation, nor with the degree to which organisations are seen as relevant for one's own interests.

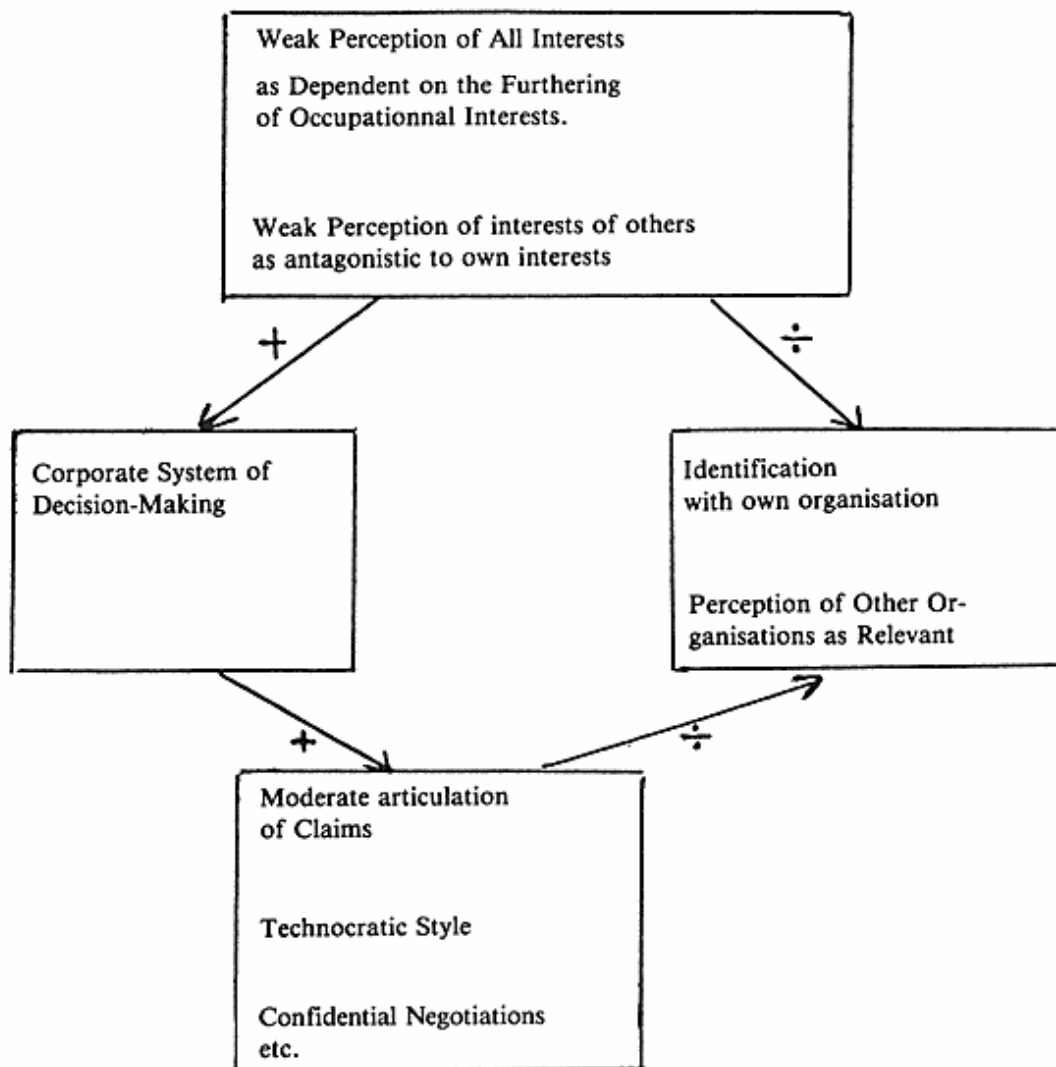


Figure 2.

First, a weak crystallization of perceived interests around organisational interests may facilitate corporate decision-making but at the same time weaken identification with own occupational organisation and weaken perceived relevance of other organisations.

Second, the operation of corporate decision-making, its technocratic style etc. may reinforce such tendencies.

Both factors are only partial explanations. As mentioned above, the party system has an impact too. However, to the degree that the factors play the above-mentioned role with respect to identification, they point to limitations in the generality of the results in this article. Parallel results are less likely to be found in a system — or in situations — in which conflicts between different occupational groups are strongly felt.¹⁶ Furthermore if organisations are able to present their policies in a clear and straightforward manner, members may still identify strongly with their organisation.

NOTES

- 1 Damgaard and Eliassen point out that interest groups also contact parliamentary committees (Damgaard and Eliassen 1978). In Denmark, parliamentary committee-meetings are not open to the press — not even to other members of parliament — and hence the general conclusion still seems to be that interest groups work in more quiet arenas.
- 2 It should be noted, however, that there is some variation in the degree of segmentation. Thus Fivelsdal et al. found that the Danish agricultural organisations were represented mainly on boards and commissions set up by their sector ministry, whereas the labour market organisations were represented on boards and commissions of a wider range of ministries, even if the ministries of labour and education were the most important (Fivelsdal 1979, 54—62).
- 3 In the study, people were directly asked about membership of (a) a trade-union affiliated to the TUC (LO), (b) another trade-union, (c) an employers' or a branch organisation. Hence members of the TUC (LO) can be identified directly. Further, by combining rather detailed information about occupation and information about trade-union membership, it is possible to identify members — if not all members — of the Teachers' Union and The Association of Professionals (AC). Finally it can be safely assumed that economically active farmers are members of one or more cooperatives, associations etc. which have the Agricultural Council as an umbrella organisation.
- 4 The amount of positive evaluation towards own party is also highlighted by the fact that 42 per cent gave their own party the maximum score of +100, and 29 per cent the second highest +80. Only 1 per cent had a low +20. Any interpretation of scores as absolute values is dubious, but this very skewed distribution towards the utmost positive ratings indicates genuine positive evaluations.
- 5 Among farmers, 5 per cent had no opinion on their own party, but 15 per cent no opinion about the Agricultural Council. And among teachers all had an affective orientation towards their own party, but 22 per cent had no opinion on the Teachers' Union.
- 6 This, of course, does not imply that all citizens are positive towards all parties. Table 2 indicated that all organisations had a small surplus of positive over negative evaluations. In contrast, the more extreme parties had surpluses of negative evaluations. But the centre parties — especially the governing Social Democrats — had a strong majority of positive evaluations, much stronger than for example the TUC (LO).

- 7 The spatial presentation was made by the Minissa-program. This programme maximises the fit between the order of correlations and the order of spatial distance. As the maximum correlation is at the 0.50 level, pairs of parties with this intercorrelation are placed close to each other, even if there is no perfect (1.00) correlation.
- 8 The term 'qualitative' should be stressed. People giving the TUC (LO) a +60 and the Employers Federation a +40 are placed in the same cell.
- 9 Especially among Agrarian Liberal, Conservative, and Progress Party TUC-members there is only a small difference between the number who are positive and the number who are negative towards the Trade Union Congress.
- 10 As long as perceptions of different types of interests were strongly correlated with occupation this would only constitute a minor problem for occupational interest organisations. However there are indications — at least in the field of voting behaviour — that occupational position and other social characteristics no longer have the same impact on the individual's political behaviour (Worre 1980). If this can be generalized, occupational interest organisations may be in a difficult position: either they can try to aggregate different interests and perceptions of interests, or they can choose to focus solely on occupational interests.
- 11 Dencik and Madsen argue that the trade-union elite is in a dilemma between a militant base on the one hand and state authorities and employers on the other. In order to continue cooperation with state and employers the trade-union elite has to modify radicalism at the base (Dencik and Madsen 1977).
- 12 In Denmark all strikes are against the labour code if the job is covered by a labour-market or a law that substitutes such an agreement. However, as violations of this rule are brought to a court set up by the labour market organisations, there is some dispute whether the term 'illegal' is justified. Often the term 'strikes violation agreements' is preferred, not least by trade-unionists and left-wingers, to specify that striking workers are not criminals ('illegals').
- 13 The answers were coded as follows: Question 1: +1 = agree with A, -1 = agree with B. Question 2: +1 = disagree, -1 = agree. Question 3: +1 = disagree, -1 = agree. Question 4: +1 = disagree, -1 = agree. Question 5: +1 = c and d, -1 = a and b. Question 6: +1 = d, -1 = a and b. Question 7: +1 = agree with A, -1 = agree with B. Question 8: +1 = agree with A, -1 = agree with B. Question 9: +1 = agree, -1 = disagree. Question 10: +1 = b + c, -1 = a. Question 11: +1 = agree with B, -1 = agree with A. Question 12: +1 = agree, -1 = disagree. Question 13: +1 = agree, -1 = disagree. Question 14: +1 = agree with B, -1 = agree with A. The remaining answers were coded O.
- 14 In one perspective, this may raise a number of methodological questions: are sympathies for different organisations causes of certain standpoints or rather the effects? But allowing for even the most serious objections in this respect, the results hint that sympathies and standpoints actually are linked together.
- 15 Centralization points to the problem of hierarchical level. It is quite common that evaluations of political institutions differ from one level to another. Thus, Olof Petersson found in Sweden that a majority thought that the major national trade-unions (LO and TCO) had too much power, at the same time as a majority also thought that the local unions had too little power (Petersson 1978, 110—111). And in Denmark, evaluations of local politicians are systematically more positive than evaluations of national politicians (Nielsen 1981). If such results can be generalized, evaluations of both interest organisations and parties should be more positive at the local level. Centralization may be a dangerous process, moving power from a more 'popular' to a less 'popular' level.
- 16 In this context, it should be mentioned that Allardt found (in 1972) that Danes and Norwegians more than Swedes and Finns perceived conflicts in society to be moderate (Allardt 1975, 128—133). When the questions were replicated in the election-study in 1977, a vast majority said that there were strong conflicts between capitalists and workers, but less than a majority agreed that there were such conflicts between employers and wage-earners

(this result conforms with the results partially reported by Allardt, op.cit. table 42). The capitalist-worker dichotomy is probably not synonymous with the distinction between employers and wage-earners. Or, put in another way: not all employers are seen as 'capitalists'.

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Appendix 1: Standpoints to Labour Market Policies

SECTION I: WILD-CAT STRIKES

1. . . . suppose that parliament has made a decision concerning the labour market, with which the wage-earners have good reasons to be discontent. How should they react:
A SAYS: The wage-earners ought to go on strike, even when the strike would be illegal.
B SAYS: Neither wage-earners nor employers should disobey a parliamentary decision concerning a labour dispute, not even when they have good reasons to be discontent.
(Dominant Tendency: 60 per cent agree with B)
2. It should be impossible to get advantages by means of an illegal strike. (Dominant Tendency: 70 Agrees).

SECTION II: WAGE—LEVEL

3. There is no room for wage-increases in the present economic situation. (Dominant tendency: 69 per cent agrees)
4. It is necessary to have a complete wage-stop. (Dominant tendency: 57 per cent agree)
5. The automatic adjustment of wages to rise in prices is frequently discussed. The card shows some of the views, often heard. Which point of view is closest to your opinion?
 - a. The system should be abolished

- b. The system should be continued, but without compensation for increases in import-prices
 - c. The system should be continued in its present form
 - d. the system should be improved to give full compensation. (Dominant tendency: 56 per cent says kept as now or improved)
6. There is much discussion about unemployment benefits. Some think that they are so high that people do not want to work, others that the benefits are too low as it is unjust that people's living-standard should suffer through involuntary unemployment. I have a card showing different opinions. Which is closest to your own?
- a. unemployment benefits are far too high
 - b. unemployment benefits are a little bit too high
 - c. unemployment benefits are just at the right level
 - d. unemployment benefits are far too small
- (Dominant tendency: 49 per cent say 'far too high' or 'a bit too high').
7. Then a question about the real wages of the wage-earners.
- A SAYS: The wage-earners should be content with smaller real wages in the present economic situation.
- B SAYS: The economic problems of the country should be solved in a way that does not imply cuts in real wages for ordinary wage-earners.
- (Dominant tendency: 57 per cent agree with B).

SECTION III: INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

8. Next a question about the influence of the wage-earners at their place of work.
- A SAYS: The wage-earners should have far more influence than they have today on important questions at their place of work.
- B SAYS: The amount of influence by wage-earners is sufficient as it is today.
- (No dominant tendency: 39 per cent agree with A and 40 per cent agree with B).
9. It should be obligatory that the firms had a system of profit-sharing. (Hardly a dominant tendency: 31 per cent agree and 40 per cent disagree).
10. It has been discussed whether wage-earners should be co-owners of their firms by a scheme for economic democracy. There are three possibilities.
- a. no economic democracy
 - b. economic democracy, but without a central fund
 - c. economic democracy, including a central fund
- (Dominant tendency: 41 per cent say no, and 28 per cent yes to some form of economic democracy)

IV. STATE INTERVENTION

11. . . . next a question about how the state should react in a situation in which a great labour market conflict is threatening.
- A SAYS: The state should intervene to prevent strikes and lockouts.
- B SAYS: If the workers have rejected a proposal of mediation, they should of course be allowed to strike in order to press their claims. (Dominant tendency: 34 per cent agree with A and 42 per cent agree with B).
12. Parliament should under no circumstances intervene in labour market negotiations. (Dominant tendency: 48 per cent agree).
13. Neither collective agreements nor other rules should limit workers' right to strike. (Dominant tendency: 42 per cent agree and 34 per disagree).
14. . . . next a question about police action against workers blocking the entrance to firms.
- A SAYS: The police should be much firmer against pickets.
- B SAYS: The police should not intervene in conflicts at the labour market, and under no circumstances should it be firmer than the case is today.
- (Dominant tendency: 47 per cent agree with B and 36 with A).