Return to Loyalty

- New patterns of cooperation in the Swedish labour market regime

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Abstract
This study aims at defining the development of the macro/meso level Swedish labour market regime during the last decade. This includes the effect of structural changes and what development tendencies exist. For this purpose three questions have been formulated:

1. How can the macro/meso level relations between the labour market organizations of the bargaining rounds since 1997 be described using the concepts exit, voice and loyalty as an interpretation of organizational choices?
2. How can the changing relations between the labour market organizations be explained?
3. Based on this, how can the present labour market regime be defined?

For this purpose the concept of labour market regimes is used. The interaction between actors in this is interpreted through a cooperative game theory coupled with the concepts exit, voice, loyalty. Exit means the actors leaving the system, corresponding to the negotiation game threats. Voice means negotiation conflict resolution. Loyalty both correspond to coalition patterns and forces keeping the regime in place. Material is informant interviews with key actors and official documents from bargaining and negotiation. The results of the study are that the relations have been stabilized by the IA of 1997, since which the development is towards increased peak-level organizational involvement. Because of labour market fragmentation this takes the form in confederation coordination between different parties. To conceptualize this I propose the concept peak-level coordinated bargaining. In this the coalition development is towards the reemergence of old loyalty patterns and the inclusion of new actors in this system. To explain this path dependency due to well established loyalties and actor continuity is suggested.
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1. Introduction

When the Industrial Agreement (IA) was struck between the labour market parties of the industrial sector in 1997 it seemed to usher in a new order in the interaction between the Swedish labour market organizations. Replacing more than two decades of conflict it marked a return to the traditionally well organized forms of cooperation, but adapted to a context of increased economic globalization and labour market fragmentation. Still, since then the Swedish labour market has doubtless seen a decade of dramatic events with conflicts taking some new, potentially even more radical forms.

The most attention has probably been given to the conflict at the school-worksit in Vaxholm and its following trial in the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Latvian construction company Laval un Partneri, hired by the Vaxholm municipality to refurbish the school, refused to sign a collective agreement with the Swedish Construction Workers Union, Svenska Byggnadsarbetarförbundet (Byggnads), referring to the Posting of Workers Directive of European Community Law. This states that when companies work cross-border the collective agreement valid is that signed in the company’s home country. The issue in essence thus became a conflict between Community Law and national legislation. The ECJ ruling confirmed the legal status of industrial actions, but still ruled this conflict illegal through being discriminatory towards a company from an EU co-member country. It was also ruled that industrial action undertaken by a union must be proportionate to the conflict’s issue. The ruling was followed by a Swedish Commission of Inquiry, which has suggested changes in Swedish Law to accommodate the system to Community Law. At the time of writing the inquiry is on referral and the outcome still uncertain.

1 Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services

2 Case C341/05, Laval un Partneri Ltd v Svenska Byggnadsarbetarförbundet, Svenska Byggnadsarbetarförbundet, avd. 1, Svenska Elektrikerförbundet, judgement of 18 December 2007

3 SOU: 2008:123 Förslag till åtgärder med anledning av Lavaldomen – Betänkande av Lavalutedningen; Stockholm 2008
However, the Laval-case is not the only instance where national collective agreements have been ruled by the ECJ. In 2005 a case where the Finnish Viking Line Company had decided to change flag of its vessel the Rosella to be able to employ workers at a lower wage rate was referred to the court. Another case from the building industry is the Rüffert-case, where a building company’s breach of local Niedersachsen legislation on collective agreements ended up in the ECJ. A third instance is the Luxembourg-case from 2008.

Apart from the at first sight fundamental importance of these cases to collective agreement regulation of the labour market, the Laval-case is also significant because the trial of Laval un partneri was financed by the Swedish employers confederation, The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv). This is remarkable both as Laval un partneri were a competitor to the organizations members and as the engagement can be interpreted as a breach of the agreement between the employers’ associations and the trade union movement.

The Laval case is however not even the only occasion where a European legal instance has been asked to decide the outcome of a Swedish labour market conflict. In 2007 the Swedish construction sector employers’ association, Sveriges Byggindustrier (BI), summoned a system of monitoring fees to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The monitoring fees aimed at measuring that salaries received by employees were in accordance with the hours they in reality had worked. 1, 5 % of the monthly salary was deducted from both union and non-union workers for financing union personnel doing this monitoring. The ECHR ruled against Byggnads because the money deducted were not in proportion to the work done and also because the union

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could not prove that part of the money had not in fact been given to the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP).  

However, the Swedish labour market has also been affected by other events that at first sight seem radical. When the economic crisis begun in 2008 turned out to threaten the activity of several of Sweden’s biggest workshop corporations the industrial sector trade union IF Metall and employers’ association Teknikföretagen (Tf) struck a deal about shortening working hours instead of salary or personnel cuts. This Crisis Agreement (CA) was heavily criticized as an industrial sector breakout from the Swedish trade union policy of wage solidarity. This is not the first time that IF Metall was in a situation where its loyalty to the Swedish trade union movement was questioned. During the 2007 wage round the organization even threatened to leave the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Landsorganisationen (LO), over a system for higher wage increases for female workers.

The latest installment in the series of dramatic events came in April the year of writing, when negotiations between the main Swedish labour market confederations on a new Main Agreement (MA), replacing the still valid Saltsjöbaden agreement of 1937, broke down when the employers’ associations left the table.

These events give rise to a few fundamental questions. How have the IA organization of the Swedish labour market been affected by these events? And to turn the question around, what has happened in the labour market to make them possible? Do they taken together in fact signal a new crisis? How the interaction in the Swedish labour market has developed since the IA was struck in 1997 is the question this essay seeks to answer.

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5 Evaldsson and Others v Sweden (2007) European Courts of Human Rights (Application no. 75252/01)
6 Överenskommelse för att överbrygga den ekonomiska krisen; Stockholm: 2 mars 2009
1.1. The problem defined

1.1.1. The labour market regime

The subject of this essay can be viewed from within the discipline of Industrial Relations (IR), basically defined by Elvander as employment relations.\(^7\) For this study, the more comprehensive definition of Murhem is further useful. She defines IR as the “interaction between owner, managers, employees and their organizations and government agencies. The interaction takes place in an environment regulated by laws and shaped by technology, markets and formal and informal institutions.”\(^8\) Based on Bruun she further narrows the classic area of research down to the social partners, negotiations and collective agreements, labour market conflicts and their solution.\(^9\)

To understand the IR system a useful concept is what Elvander calls *labour market regime*.\(^10\) Based on Elvander and Richard Hyman, Murhem defines this as “the configuration of industrial relations, i.e. actors (state, employers/employers’ associations and employees/trade unions, organized as well as unorganized) and their interaction, on local, sector and national/international level, and their institutional, formal and informal, environment.”\(^11\) This can be further understood by labeling the levels of interaction as a micro, meso and macro level. In a figure the system looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Macro | National/International | - Labour market confederation/government relations  
                               (- EU labour market relations) |
| Meso  | Sector          | - Sector organization – trade union relations       |
| Micro | Local           | - Company and workplace relations                    |

**Table 1. Labour Market Regime Levels**

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\(^7\) Elvander, 2002: 43

\(^8\) Murhem, 2003: 18


\(^10\) Elvander, 2002: 50ff

The concept of actors within the labour market regime can be understood from two perspectives: a) the functioning of institutional arrangements within the system; or b) as its participants and their aims, resources and strategies. This study uses the second perspective and what will from now simply be referred to as the actors. A basic division between these is on the one hand government and on the other the labour market organizations. On a social science level the latter can be understood as interest groups, collectively organized to increase their influence. Their function within a labour market regime is as cartels; the trade unions being sales-cartels preventing low-wage competition among wage-earners; and the employers’ associations being purchase-cartels, preventing high-wage competition among employers. The actors on the different levels can be illustrated like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Macro | - Government  
- Labour market confederations  
( - European labour market confederations) |
| Meso  | - Sector organizations  
- Trade unions |
| Micro | - Local labour market organizations  
- Corporations  
- Workplace interaction  
- Non-unionized wage-earners  
- Individuals |

Table 2. Labour Market Regime Actors

The macro level actors are government and the labour market confederations, with European labour market confederations possibly emerging as a new actor. On the meso level the actors are employers’ associations and trade unions. The micro level actors, finally, are collectively local labour market organizations, workplace unions and corporations, while individually non-unionized wage-earners and individuals can also be included.

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12 Lundh 2008, 17f
13 Ibid. 18
14 Ibid. 19-30, 33-47
15 Murhem, 2003: 18f
The development of the interaction between them can be understood as labour market regime development. Since the mid-1990’s two main perspectives have been dominant in this: changes either seen as caused by economical/political structural changes, or by the power relation between actors. Distinguishing for labour market regimes seems to be a path dependent behavior, most often traceable to patterns established during the regimes formative period.

1.1.2. The Swedish labour market regime

The concept of a Swedish labour market regime must be understood through the development of the last 70 years. During this period three different regimes can be discerned. I have chosen to label these: a) the regime of centralized wage formation (1930-1975); b) the conflict regime (1975-1998); and c) the regime of the Industrial Agreement (1998-present).

i) The regime of centralized wage formation

The characteristics traditionally associated with the Swedish labour market regime were established during the period between 1932 and 1956. The regime can basically be seen as a macro level tripartite agreement. In 1932 an active government industrial policy was begun with the SAP/Farmers League coalition taking office. In 1935 unemployment relief was replaced by a trade union administered labour market insurance. The same year, government also pressured the confederations to the 1936-38 Saltsjöbaden negotiations, resulting in the regulation of organizational labour market relations.
be called a peak level or economy-wide system.\textsuperscript{22} Wage rounds began with bargaining between LO and the employers’ confederation, Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen (SAF), resulting in a normative agreement later to be sector adjusted through meso- and micro-level bargaining. The second round negotiations were held under an obligation to maintain industrial peace.\textsuperscript{23} Government was not a party in bargaining, but had indirect involvement through mediation and in pressuring the organizations to the table. To settle legal or agreement disputes, the Labour Court, Arbetsdomstolen (AD), was introduced as a neutral part.\textsuperscript{24}

The 1951 implementation of the Rehn-Meidner model of equitable wage policy formalized a division of labour between the parties.\textsuperscript{25} The central idea was that wage policy would be used as an instrument to increase sector development. Higher wage increases in stagnant sectors would increase modernization, while moderate in successful would allow for investments. The labour market organizations became responsible for wage formation, including having social responsibility in wage increases. Government became obliged to have active employment and inflation prevention policies to make sector transitions smooth. The system was further formalized by corporatist organizational involvement in employment policy.\textsuperscript{26}

An important part of this development was the ideological shift through what Elvander calls the ‘historic compromise’. With SAP in government, the trade union movement grew increasingly interested in the possible wage increases economic growth would allow while SAF, with the objective of long-term social democratic rule, accepted labour movement demands in return for labour market peace and the abandonment of industrial socialization policies.\textsuperscript{27} Related to this was what is often labeled ‘the mutual understanding’, that the parties recognized a mutual benefit in

\textsuperscript{22} Lindgren, 2005: 15
\textsuperscript{23} Lundh, 2002: 199-203
\textsuperscript{24} Elvander, 1969: 28f, 108ff; Elvander, 1988: 31f; Lundh, 2002: 162ff, 166, 171ff, 206
\textsuperscript{25} The essential part of this was the principle of equal pay for equivalent employment. Bargaining were to be based on a principle of hampering wage increases in successful sectors and stepping them up in weaker. This was meant to lessen the wage gap between sectors and also lead to quicker restructuring. To counter the unemployment from weak industry liquidation, government would have an active employment policy, eventually taking form in the strengthening of the Labour Market Board, Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen (AMS). The government would also actively prevent the rise of inflation. (Elvander, 1988: 32-35; Lundh, 2002: 187-194)
\textsuperscript{26} Elvander, 1988: 32-35; Lundh, 2002: 187-194
\textsuperscript{27} Elvander, 1988: 31f; Kjellberg, 2000: 173ff; Lundh, 2002: 164, 171f
economic growth which also included cooperation in industrial rationalization, workplace security and employee influence.  

**ii) The conflict regime**

According to Lundh, the regime of centralized wage formation peaked in the 1960’s and would become increasingly contested in the following decade. This period was signified by major structural changes. After 1965 the export-depending sectors found it increasingly hard to compete on the international market. As policies to stimulate growth failed and the 1974-76 wage rounds resulted in radical wage increases, a crisis became imminent. A particularly important issue was wage sliding, which reached extreme levels. With structural changes also leading to white collar sector growth, the importance of LO and SAF lessened and the peak level system thus became further contested. Most notable of the strengthened white-collar unions was The Confederation of Salaried Employees, Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (TCO).

A decisive chain of events can be traced to the political radicalization of the 1960’s. Many wage-earners found it increasingly hard to accept holding back wages while industry made high profits. Radicalization led to micro-level wage rounds often resulting in local strikes to boost wage increases. Starting with the 1969 Kiruna miner’s strike, this became common practice, meaning a breach of the industrial peace agreement. Radicalization also resulted in a second breach through a more active government involvement, mainly legislation with the most far-reaching example being the Employment Investment Funds. As a result a third breach came when SAF began an active involvement in the creation of public opinion, thus becoming a more political and ideological organization.

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28 Lundh, 2002: 173-178
29 Ibid. 223
31 Elvander, 1988: 41f; Lundh, 2002: 227f
32 Kjellberg, 2000: 188; Lundh, 2002: 246-251
34 Elvander, 1988: 43f; Lundh, 2002: 253ff 258f It can also be mentioned that Kjellberg partly blames employers, who had failed to live up to the bipartite agreements. Unions were instead forced to seek legislation. (Kjellberg, 2000: 175)
35 Elvander, 1988: 44; Lundh, 2002: 253ff
This development led to a major SAF-LO conflict in the 1980 wage rounds. In 1983 the system broke down when the industrial sector organizations decided to hold a separate wage round. As several other sectors followed, bargaining was basically moved from macro to micro level. The rule for the remainder of the 1980’s would be a mixture of peak-level and meso bargaining, on some occasions going as far as to individual agreements.

The 1980’s was also marked by public sector unions becoming more aggressive. The result was both a further increase of decentralization and the introduction of trade union competition. Still, when the 1988 wage round, without peak level authorization, resulted in far higher wage increases than considered economically durable a renewed attempt at peak-level bargaining was done. However, the overheated economy meant that the trend of extensive wage sliding continued and in 1990 SAF made a formal decision never to partake in peak-level bargaining again. The following year SAF continued by leaving all government committee boards, leading to LO representation also being abolished.

As the economy collapsed during the early 1990’s, a group, most often referred to as the Rehnberg-group, was appointed by the government with the aim of negotiating a deal for lower wage increases and bargaining coordination. Because of the economic development this succeeded to some extent. However, in the 1995 wage round relations broke down once more.

### iii) The Industrial Agreement regime

Because of the 1995 conflicts, talks were started to reconcile the industrial sector parties. In 1997 formal negotiations started on a deal about wage- and industrial development resulting in the Industrial Agreement (IA). Formally the agreement

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36 Elvander, 1988: 50-54; Lundh, 2002: 256
38 Lundh, 2002: 257f

Corporatism on labour market issues has not ended however; as other forms have emerged and active employment policy is still a major governmental responsibility. (Hermansson et al, 1999: 243)
constituted that wage increases could not be higher than international competition permitted and regulated union influence and employee benefits.\textsuperscript{40} Institutionally the IA meant the forming of the Industrial Committee, Industrikommittén, consisting of party representatives, supported on decisional matters by the Industrial Economic Council, Industriens Ekonomiska Råd (IER), and the bargaining order being constitutionally settled. A fourth part was the institution of the Impartial Chairperson, Opartiska ordföranden (OpO), to assist the parties in acute agreement disputes.\textsuperscript{41} The trade unions involved began a further cooperation through the forming of The Swedish Unions within Industry, Facken inom industrin (FI).\textsuperscript{42} The institutional development continued with the 2000 forming of the Mediation Institute, Medlingsinstitutet (MI). MI took over the tasks of the previous Government Conciliation Office, Statens förlöningsmannaexpidition, but was also strengthened with the authority to postpone conflicts and a commission to maintain a responsible wage development.\textsuperscript{43}

The 1998 wage round following this system was a success and during the following years it became a model for other sectors. The influence was both through spreading of the bargaining system but also the industrial sector collective agreement affecting other sectors’ agreements.\textsuperscript{44} This model can thus be conceptualized as pattern-setting bargaining.\textsuperscript{45} After two decades of decentralization it meant a renewed constitution of labour market party relations and stabilization of a system with sector bargaining and agreements with major margins for local adjustments.\textsuperscript{46}

During the early 2000’s several major organizational mergers were made. In 2001 SAF and The Federation of Swedish Enterprises, Industriförbundet, formed Svenskt Näringsliv which according to its bye-laws has as its only function to promote business through lobby-making, creating public opinion and advising its members.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{40} Blomqvist & Murhem, 2003: 163; Kjellberg, 2000: 195f; Samarbetsavtal om industriell utveckling och lönebildning, Stockholm, 1997
\textsuperscript{41} Blomqvist & Murhem, 2003: 163; Lundh 2002: 262ff; Samarbetsavtal om industriell utveckling och lönebildning, Stockholm, 1997
\textsuperscript{42} Blomqvist & Murhem, 2003: 163; Lundh 2002: 262ff
\textsuperscript{43} Lundh, 2002: 264
\textsuperscript{44} Blomqvist & Murhem, 2003: 163; Kjellberg, 2000: 196ff; Lundh 2002: 262ff; Murhem, 2003: 23f
\textsuperscript{45} Lundh, 2002, 266f; Lindgren, 2005: 15
\textsuperscript{47} Murhem, 2003: 24 Refers to Waddington, 2001 456f. For an overview of the events leading up to the merger see Kjellberg 2000: 199-204.
The industrial sector was the site of three further mergers. In 2004 the interest organization The Swedish Workshop Industries, Sveriges Verkstadsindustrier (VI) and the employers’ association The Swedish Workshop Association, Sveriges Verkstadsförening (VF), constituted themselves as Föreningen Teknikföretagen i Sverige och Teknikarbetsgivarna. In 2006 the two trade unions Industrifacket and Metallarbetarförbundet merged into Industrifacket Metall (IF Metall). In 2008 The Salaried Employees’ Association of the Trade Sector, Tjänstemannaförbundet HTF (HTF) and The Swedish Salaried Employees’ Association of the Industrial Sector, Svenska Industritjänstemannaförbundet (Sif) merged into the new union Unionen, creating the largest Swedish union for salaried employees.

1.1.3. Structural changes in the labour market

To understand this subject it is also important to note that three main structural changes have affected the labour market during the last four decades. The breakthrough of computer technology has resulted in reorganization to slimmer, more flexible organizations and a higher importance for sub-suppliers and outsourcing.\textsuperscript{48} In the wake of this there are also labour market sector changes, most notably the service sector has gained in importance on behalf of the industrial.\textsuperscript{49} However, a blurring of the line between blue and white collar sectors and the emergence of large groups without a permanent position on the labour market can also be seen.\textsuperscript{50} The second structural change is often labeled globalization. Most obviously this affects labour markets economically, as economic markets have become increasingly intertwined and interdependent.\textsuperscript{51} A second part of globalization is the radical development in communications, most notably through information technology.\textsuperscript{52} The development of the European Common Market is the third structural change.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{48} Murhem, 2003: 231-248
  \item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid. 229f, 231-236
  \item \textsuperscript{50} Lundh, 2002: 246ff
  \item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid. 229ff
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Murhem, 2003: 15
\end{itemize}
These structural changes can be linked to several of the events related in the introduction. First, the changes in production have resulted in new organizational patterns. The division between blue and white collar sectors is no longer clear cut, and white collar organizations have achieved a greater influence. Furthermore, economic and communicational globalization has led to increased international interdependence and competition, which both the IA and the CA must be understood through. It has also resulted in an internationally more complex international ownership situation. The full effects of EU and the development of the Common Market are less obvious, but the cases of Laval and the Monitoring fees are an indication of a possible EU-level decision-making on labour market issues.

1.2. Relevance of the study

This study is relevant from three main perspectives. From an IR perspective for determining the future of the Nordic labour market regime. This includes several debated concepts, including Europeanization, globalization and liberalization. The Swedish labour market organizations are the nationally strongest and most well organized of the world, and can thus be used as a critical-case scenario. Furthermore, the Laval perspective also means it is relevant as a study of future EU labour market regulation.

A second perspective is to introduce IR fields of research to political science. Traditionally, labour market research in political science has dealt either with labour market organization involvement in government or government involvement in labour market issues. This essay means to widen these fields. Labour market relations can be seen as a political problem in several ways. Wage bargaining and employment conditions are central questions in Swedish politics and indeed in society, just as wage development is central to the economical and political system of every state. In Scandinavia this has traditionally been done by the parties of the labour market without direct government involvement, thus making the labour market organizations major level actors in the political economy. The Rehn-Meidner model took this connection a step further.

54 Kjellberg, 1998: 73-77
56 The continued relevance is shown in the interviews of this study.
The political relevance is also shown by the labour market organizations being political actors with strong ties to political parties and actively participating in creation of public opinion. LO is renowned for its close relations to SAP, including both formalized representation and supplying party officials. Svenskt Näringsliv has close connections to the conservative Moderate Party and finances party-associated think-tanks. Both organizations actively participated in the Swedish parliament elections of 2006, donating hundreds of millions of SEK to party campaigning. With the labour market trials of the European Court this as well as the political-economic relevance has increased through the energizing of the political debate on employment conditions.

Finally, this essay also has relevance from a theoretical perspective, through including several concepts of institutional theory. The labour market regime with its well established actors, institutions and organizations provides a good field for institutional research, in particular on institutional development.
2. The labour market regime in theory

To understand the functioning of a labour market regime some concepts must be introduced. First is a model of the possible organizational strategies. For this purpose, the concepts exit, voice and loyalty are used. Second, explanations for the strategic choices of the actors are sought through three hypotheses based on concepts from institutional theory.

However, the labour market regime interaction must be explained, including defining exit, voice and loyalty in this context. For this a model of a cooperative game will be briefly outlined. Hermansson defines a game theory as the interaction between rational actors. He defines three possible levels of game analysis: the game in normal form, the game with perfect information and the game in characteristic form. Of these, mainly the first is interest for the concept of labor market regimes. A game in normal form consists of a fixed number of actors with the choice of several possible strategies. Each actor has a range of payoffs, meaning the value placed in the different game outcomes.

To adapt this model to the situation of labor market regimes a further distinction need to be made. First, the labour market regime game is cooperative, a game of negotiation. This means that the actors recognize a mutual rationality of cooperating through negotiating. What differs this from negotiation in non-cooperative games is that the actors use threats to realize their preferred payoff. The more effective threats of an actor are the more influence that actor has in the negotiations.

Also important for the outcome of the negotiation are the coalitions among the actors. These aim at increasing the possible threat to the other part. Through this we can understand the labour market organizations as coalitions of wage-earners and employers and the confederations as macro coalitions of labour market organizations. This description can be further developed by further dividing the two main parties.

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57 Hermansson, 1990: 13
58 Ibid. 27ff
60 Ibid. 256f
The labour market regime at macro and meso level can thus be described as a game with two main actors, employers and wage earners. The game can be defined as strategic decision-making with several actors involved. The actors have as their goal to get the preferred payoff from the decision-making. The central issues of the game are the conditions of the employment and mainly wages, the so-called hard-core of the labour market regime. The main threats posed are the strike/blockade and the lockout. In relation to the Hirschmann/Rokkan theory the game can be defined as the structure of voice mechanisms and the threats as the possible choices of exit. The rules of the game are decided and fixed in the main agreement as well as the collective agreements. The organizational choices within this model will now be further developed upon.

2.1. Labour market regimes as exit, voice, loyalty

Three useful concepts for understanding organizational choices within labour market regimes are Albert O. Hirschman’s exit, voice and loyalty. Hirschman’s intended use for the theory was as a tool to explain choices of consumers in regard to corporations, public goods or other organizations. In this setting, exit means that the actor stops consuming a product from a certain company or leave an organization. Voice means that the actor instead chooses to try to affect the quality of the product or the service of the organization. Loyalty, defined by Hirschman as the “attachment to an organization”, is related to these options not only as a separate choice but also as a prerequisite for which choice are eventually made, as it can mean that the actor chooses not to respond at all. However, in a setting where loyalty exist the possibility that voice is the preferred choice compared to exit, is also bigger. Loyalty to some extent restores the balance between exit and voice through raising the cost for exit.

While there are also similarities, Hirschman makes a clear distinction between the areas of use for these options; exit belongs primarily to the economic sector while voice belongs to the political. According to Hirschman this reflects a fundamental difference between the consumption of private and public goods. The only way for

61 This was intended as an alternative way of explanation to the neo-classical economics theory. (Hirschman, 1970: 2f)
62 Hirschman, 1970: 3ff, 15ff
63 Ibid. 77f
64 Ibid. 80f
65 Ibid. 5
an actor to avoid the consumption of certain public goods is to actually leave the community were they are offered.\textsuperscript{66} This is, according to Hirschman, a setting were loyalty is especially common.\textsuperscript{67} He develops this difference through determining that voice is likely to be used mostly in settings were exit is not a real option.\textsuperscript{68}

This idea has been further developed by Stein Rokkan in a theory of state formation and nation building. Using exit, voice and loyalty combined with Talcott Parsons’ processes of the development of early political systems, Rokkan constructed a theory based on different types of boundary transcendence and boundary control. In this loyalties are the mechanisms forcing components to stay within a system. Voice is the mechanisms supplying information about circumstances important for the systems functioning. Exit, finally, means component’s crossing of a boundary.\textsuperscript{69} The development of political systems thus depends on the closing of exit options, making voice the preferred choice and leading to development of institutions for voice channeling. Within time the system itself might achieve a value for the actors, meaning the creation of loyalties.

This description is important for understanding labor market regimes, as they often exist both within and have close connections to the nation-state. The actors can be understood as locked in the nation-state labour market system. Furthermore, this function of exit, voice, loyalty gives valuable information of the functioning of a labor market regime. Voice represents the conflict solution using cooperation within the system. Exit means the leave of an actor from the system. Loyalty represents mechanisms keeping actors within the regime.

This can be further developed by introducing two additional concepts. First, the possible choices can also be understood in terms of the power they represent.\textsuperscript{70} According to Hirschman, voice effectiveness increases with the possibilities of a key

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid. 100ff (See further: Hirschman, 1970: 98-105)
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. 104
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid. 76
\textsuperscript{70} Power in this essay can be defined by using the definition of the ‘intuitive idea of power’ of Robert Dahl. ‘…A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do’ (Lukes, 2005: 16. Refers to Dahl, Robert (1957) “The Concept of Power”. Behavioral Science, 2, p. 201-15)
actor choosing exit. This corresponds with the negotiation game theory, where an actor’s threats are vital for its power in the negotiation.\footnote{Examples of a use of the concepts power and exit/voice in IR, in a way similar to this, can be found in Lundh, 2002: 24ff; Lundh, 2008: 21f.}

The second concept is a division of the exit choices. Some choices, for example the strike or the lock-out are only temporary but can well be seen as exits since they both mean the actual exit of the labor market regime and the realization of one of the threats of the negotiation. This can be solved by making a distinction between permanent and temporary exits.

In relation to labor market organizations in a labor market regime this theory can be defined like this. Exit means the exit from the regime, or more specifically the realization of threats in the negotiation game. As mentioned the possible choices of exit also correspond with power of an actor in regards to another. Cooperation, or voice, takes place because the actors view it as the most rational alternative from a utilitarian perspective. If the actors are locked in a system of strong boundaries, such as Rokkan’s nation-state, cooperation is the preferred choice because there is no possibility of exit or only a very costly one.

The trade union organizations can not leave the system. The threats of the trade unions instead rely on the temporary exit, most obviously the strike or blockade. The use of sympathetic industrial action between the trade union organizations gives a further dimension to this. The employers associations’ can not either leave the system. Traditionally the most important exit option is instead the temporary exit through lock-out.

However, the increasingly interdependent global economy may have introduced a theoretical change. Multinational ownership and production mean that employers are not as dependent on nation state labour market. The emergence of a new European political level also means that actors can choose to take their problems to another level of political and legal authority.

As a basic understanding of the labour market regime system and its mechanisms now
has been developed, we must further seek to understand what possible explanations can exist for what choice are made by the actors. For this, three concepts from institutional theory will be presented.

2.2. Labor market regimes in institutional theory

Until now, labor market regimes have been interpreted from theoretical perspectives based on individual actors, however the concept needs to be understood from an institutional perspective. The definition of institution used in this essay is found in Svensson/Öberg, 2005 and relates the concepts institution and power. The first is thus defined as “codified rules or formalized organizational arrangements but also government policy and the distribution of power among organized interests”. The concept of institutions is related labour market regimes in several ways. First, the regime in itself is an institution. Second, the actors on all levels can be seen as institutionalized interest aggregation structures.

The key to understanding decision making within institutions is that the setting affects the actor’s possibilities to act. Three perspectives relevant can be found in the major theories of institutional decision-making. The first, rational choice has already been touched upon. The basis for this theory is the assumption that events can be understood through actors’ calculated decisions and goals. The actors thus function as rational value-maximizers, choosing the alternative with the highest egoistic utility. The actors acknowledge that their objectives can be most effectively realized through the institutional channel and that it further limits other actors’ possibilities as well.

A second perspective of institutional decision-making is normative institutionalism, introduced mainly by James G. March and Johan P. Olsen. March & Olsen instead emphasizes the routines or rules of behavior within institutions. They specify these as the repertoire of routines, roles, strategies and technologies the institution has at its disposal. Which are eventually chosen depends on the beliefs, paradigms, codes,

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73 For an overview of institutional theory Peters, 2005 was used.
74 Peters, 2005: 48f
75 Allison & Zelikow, 1999: 17f; Peters, 2005: 47
76 Or re-introduced. (March & Olsen, 1989: 5)
cultures and knowledge that support and surround the roles and routines.\textsuperscript{77} This can be further understood through the concept of \textit{logic of appropriateness}. The rules and routines are followed even when they do not appear rational for the interest of the actor. According to March and Olsen, the rules are transmitted among its members through a process of socialization.\textsuperscript{78} For this essay logic of appropriateness is most obvious through a culture of ideology and party statements.\textsuperscript{79} The logic of appropriateness can also be likened in some aspects to the concept of loyalty in that it creates and maintains structures of trust and expectations.

A third way of interpretation is found in historical institutionalism and the concept of \textit{path dependency}. Path dependency lacks a substantially agreed definition; however it can in its original form be interpreted simply as that decisions made during an institutions formative period will affect its future choices.\textsuperscript{80} This is not meant to be interpreted as an unchanging nature of institutions; rather the suggestion is that the change that actually occurs is affected by decisions made during the formative period.\textsuperscript{81} This does not mean that the development of institutions and organizations is deterministic and can only have one possible outcome.\textsuperscript{82} Instead the explanations use a concept of increasing returns and costs for keeping actors on an emerged path.\textsuperscript{83} The concept of path dependency is well established in IR, as labour market regimes has been categorized as having a path dependent behavior.\textsuperscript{84}

A slightly different concept of path dependence is reactive sequences. In a simple definition this means a sequence of events, all of which are connected to the previous as a causal reaction. Instead of a mechanism for the reproduction of earlier patterns it means an event which sets in motion a chain of other events.\textsuperscript{85}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} March & Olsen, 1989: 21f, 24f, 37f
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid. 22ff
\item \textsuperscript{79} Peters, 2005: 125f
\item \textsuperscript{80} Bennett & Elman, 2006: 251f; Mahoney, 2000: 507f, 510f; Peters, 2005: 71; Pierson, 2000: 252
\item \textsuperscript{81} Peters, 2005: 74, 76-80
\item \textsuperscript{82} Bennett & Elman, 2006: 252; Mahoney (2000), 511
\item \textsuperscript{83} Bennett & Elman, 2006: 256f; Pierson (2000), 252f, 257, 263ff
\item \textsuperscript{84} Lundh, 2002: 36 For a discussion see Lindgren, 2005: 14, 31-35
\item \textsuperscript{85} Mahoney, 2006: 256f
\end{itemize}
3. Aim & Questions

3.1. Aim & Questions
This study aims at describing the development of the Swedish labour market regime on the macro/meso levels since the implementation of the IA in 1997. This is limited to the interaction between the labour market organizations, particularly during the bargaining rounds, which the IA most clearly relates to. It also includes the effect of structural changes and what tendencies of development exist. For this purpose three questions have been formulated:

1. How can the macro/meso level relations between the labour market organizations of the bargaining rounds since 1997 be described using the concepts exit, voice and loyalty as an interpretation of organizational choices?
2. How can the changing relations between the labour market organizations be explained?
3. Based on this, how can the present labour market regime be defined?

3.2 Variables of the study
To make these questions usable the variables of the study need to be defined. The dependent variable is the changing party relations; with the specific aim to study the macro and meso levels. This limit has been done because of the decentralization of bargaining, because the meso level has been center for several major events and to also include the internal structures of the parties as a perspective. The sectors have been limited to building and industry, as these traditionally are major sectors in the Swedish economy and because they particularly powerful organizations. Tf has corporations like Volvo, Saab and SKF among its members, while BI has Skanska and Peab. IF Metall and Byggnads also have among the largest memberships in the trade union movement. The organizations included thus are Svenskt Näringsliv and LO on the macro level and Tf, BI, IF Metall and Byggnads on the meso.

The theories used to explain the relations are concepts from institutionalism. The first, the rational actor model refers to the organizations acting from viewpoint of structural changes in their environment. The second, logic of appropriateness refers to acting
from the point of ideology or organizational cultures. The third, path dependency refers to institutional development being affected by historical decisions. The choices of the actors are defined using the concepts exit, voice and loyalty.

3.3. Disposition
In the next chapter the material and method of the study are presented and defined. Following that in the fifth chapter, the analysis is presented through exit, voice, loyalty used to present three key parts of a labour market regime. Exit represents the power relations, voice the mechanisms for cooperation and loyalty the mutual agreement between the parties. In chapter six the results from this are placed within the game theoretic model, while in chapter seven the three hypotheses are used to explain the results. Finally some topics for future research based on this study are presented in chapter eight.
4. Material and Method

4.1. Material
Two sources of material have been used: official documents related to bargaining and negotiations as well as qualitative interviews with key actors from the organizations. The official documents are either organizational byelaws or documents of mutual understandings decided by the parties before wage rounds. As they are used to find information mainly about the structures of bargaining they can be categorized both as narrative and remnant sources. To the extent that they relate the actual procedure of bargaining and its characteristics they are narratives, while as they indirectly provide information about the party relations they can also be seen as remnants.86

The interviews can be categorized as informant interviews, as their purpose is to gather information that can not be found elsewhere.87 The informants are organization officials involved in bargaining or negotiation, including three Heads of Negotiation and three centrally placed negotiators. Two of these also have work tasks related to EU issues. As the Laval-case is both complicated and contested one journalist covering EU politics was also interviewed. The choice to only interview one informant is not a major problem since the interviews are informant and as all of the informants have very central positions within their organizations.

4.2. Method
The method used for the documents can be categorized as a qualitative text-analysis. However, not similar to any of the systematic methods88; rather the information of the documents was simply read and interpreted. Since they were organizational byelaws or agreements the contents was fairly straightforward. As the interpretation was fairly simple, the main problems with such a use the value of the information provided. This can be seen as satisfactory since they are close in time to the events examined and are balanced, while not complete impartial. There is little reason to doubt the

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86 Classification was based on Esaiasson et al., 1999: 304ff
87 Esaiasson et al., 1999: 253ff
88 Ibid. 234-238
contents as they can be seen as remnants of the bargaining procedure and as they were accessed via the official organizational homepages.\textsuperscript{89}

As the interviews are informant interviews it also means that they are qualitative, they aim at finding the information necessary to answer the questions rather than accessing quantifiable data.\textsuperscript{90} Furthermore, that the interview subjects are key actors in this particular setting means that they also are elite interviews.\textsuperscript{91}

To its form, an interview can have a range of structures, from unstructured everyday conversations to structured professional interviews.\textsuperscript{92} This study has used semi-structured interviews, loose and spontaneous while still fixed to a basic structure.\textsuperscript{93} The structure was as a conversation where the subjects spontaneously explained their views, while the interviewer had a basic supervision to keep the interview on subject and make sure all topics were covered. This was done using an interview protocol with the central themes and suggestions for questions.\textsuperscript{94} The questions were mostly open, as these allow the subjects to answer free and extensively.\textsuperscript{95}

The interviews were done over telephone, which is problematic as it increases the difficulties of establishing a relation with the subject and misses central aspects of non-verbal communication as body language, mimic and gestures.\textsuperscript{96} The reason why I still chose this was economic. Compared to the financial issues of repeated long-distance travelling using a telephone seemed a methodologically reasonable alternative. However, during the study I found that it functioned satisfactorily. The interviews were recorded with my notes and not using any recording device. As I had no access to a permanent telephone I could not use any technology. However, I found this method also functioning well.

\textsuperscript{89} Esaiasson et al, 1999: 307-313
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid. 113
\textsuperscript{91} Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 147
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid. 14
\textsuperscript{93} Andersson, 1994: 76ff; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 27
\textsuperscript{94} Esaiasson et al, 1999: 289-293; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 27 The protocol is included as an appendix. The interviews did begin with me establishing the themes and then putting focus on specific issues during the conversation. The themes were the development of party-relations during the last decade, focused especially on wage rounds and including an EU perspective. The interview protocol was used as a backbone, to make sure no topics were forgotten and to highlight the most important.
\textsuperscript{95} Andersson, 1994: 73f
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. 169f
Still, there are some problems with qualitative interviewing that must be mentioned. The first relates to its craft-like nature as a study can go wrong due to mistakes in several ways. The social nature of interviewing also has epistemological consequences. This can be further understood by Kvale/Brinkmann's characterization as the production of information in the interplay between two parties. This information is then further developed alone by the interviewer during analyses. General solutions to these problems are hard to find, due to the unstructured nature of qualitative interviewing. I have chosen to deal with them by being open in relating the procedure and attentive to potential problems and risks.

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97 Andersson, 1994: 171
98 Ibid. 53f, 82
99 Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 15ff, 99f, 84-88 Research interviewing is only learnt through practical experience according to Kvale/Brinkmann.
5. The Mechanisms Applied

5.1. Voice

The pattern of voice channeling in the Swedish labour market of the early 2000’s is complicated, as the two-party structure of peak-level bargaining has been replaced by more fragmented organizational relations and structures. The IA means the establishment of an alternative overlapping system reinforced with institutions for cross party- and cross trade-cooperation. The focus on meso level bargaining has also resulted in the complex relation structures of this level getting a larger effect on the entire system.

This also applies to the internal party structures. The wage-earners’ party structure is more complicated; with the emergence of strong white-collar unions LO is no longer the obvious focal point, a competing structure has been established with FI and the increased trade union influence of the 1990’s still affects the system.  However, the IA has also led to the establishment of a new system for coordinating bargaining within the LO organization.

The structure of the employers’ party also seems more complex, mainly due to structural changes. Reasonably foreign ownership and company-wide agreements in multinational companies must affect the Swedish employers’ movements’ status as a bargaining partner. All the while companies have the possibility of also being members directly in the confederation, besides the sector organization. At least according to the informant from LO, there are also ideological differences within the organizations, possibly corresponding to the segmentation suggested by Kjellberg.

However, despite fragmentation the system is still signified by order, with a strong development towards increased peak-level involvement in bargaining. This is most notably in the wage-earners party, were LO officially coordinates bargaining demands, holds pre-bargaining meetings and supply trade unions with information during negotiations. According to the informant from LO: “Coordination can look
different. During the 2004 and 2007 wage rounds we developed a relatively coordinated structure. Today we find that we have largely recreated a form that was lost when employers left peak-level bargaining in the late 1980’s.” That centralization has increased was also confirmed by the Tf informant, who saw the system reverting back to centralization, partly because of rules for a peak-level system still being in place but also because of LO strategy. The LO informant confirmed that centralization indeed is a strategy for the organization.

During the last decade LO has officially participated in three wage rounds, in 2001, 2004 and 2007. The LO influence is most clearly seen in the documents of recommended mutual understandings and demands relating to these. While the 2004 document has not been made public the other gives several insights into the system. The documents from 2000 details a structure with profound peak-level involvement but focus on cooperation rather than centralization. The trade unions are recommended to coordinate their bargaining with the principle of helping each union to reach the recommended demands, including higher wage increases for low-wage sectors. The margins for wage increases are related in detail, as well as factors that must be taken in consideration such as inflation and industrial competition. It also includes general recommendations for trade unions on how to relate to employer demands on for example employment security and collective agreements.104

The document from 2007 is a lot more concise and detailed. It contains less argumentation about the benefits of coordinated bargaining and instead mostly establishes the coordination process and demands. It is obvious that the system of coordination developed greatly between the 2001 and 2007 wage rounds. “The experiences of coordination in previous wage rounds are mostly good, but difficulties seem larger for the wage round which is coming. Because of this there are reasons for a more detailed coordination starting from clearer rules and more precise common demands.”105 The system is defined as a cross between peak-level and sector bargaining.106 The process as it looks in the document is dominated at the preparatory stage by the LO board and a Council for Agreement Issues. Negotiations are done

104 Landsorganisationen i Sverige: Rekommendation till förbunden med gemensamma krav inför Avtal 2001
105 Gemensamma krav inför Avtal 2007: 2
106 Gemensamma krav inför Avtal 2007: 1
individually by the trade unions, but these have an obligation to inform the confederation about all events. The demands are related in detail, the most obvious special issue is the equality pots to lessen the gap between male and female employees.

A new important factor is that the first agreement struck is declared normative for the rest of the agreements, after the LO board has discussed with the Council for Agreement Issues. According to the IF Metall informant, it is tradition that the industrial sector bargains first; the industrial sector is thus leading and defining the wage formation.107 According to the LO informant: “The productive sector stands for much of what the welfare society is built upon.” This view on the importance of industry is confirmed by the other union subjects. The IA bargaining procedure is also considered normative by him. An important factor is thus still what can be called the Rehn-Meidner model.108 However, some disagreements can be felt on this, most likely from the public sector organizations.

Coordination is further complicated as FI means the existence of a parallel bargaining structure. FI has issued its own document of mutual demands during the 2007 wage round. This document is a very detailed account of both common understandings, structural conditions for bargaining and wage increases.109 According to the informants from LO, IF Metall and Tf, FI cooperation has become more complicated because of the merger of Sif and HTF into Unionen, since it presently is the largest FI wage-earner organization. The LO informant described a situation where “the civil servant organizations of FI don’t want to hear that LO are deciding their demands, and we honestly don’t really like to hear the opposite either.” The process of coordination was characterized by him as “sowing together common demands.” Still both he and the informant from IF Metall described increasingly better relations with the white collar unions, especially within FI. There are also benefits with the new organizations according to the informant from LO: “Unionen are not as tightly connected to the IA as Sif was. This makes our cooperation with them easier. The LO
informant finally described the development as a process “where we step by step has learnt to coordinate ourselves better during the three latest wage rounds”.

Svenskt Näringsliv actively coordinates bargaining as well; however according to the organization informant they do not aim at a dominating role. Instead their function is to discuss mutual demands and supply information during bargaining. According to both him and the Tf informant traditional peak-level bargaining is impossible due to the difference between sectors.

Still the Svenskt Näringsliv byelaws have inherited much of SAF’s centralized power and give the impression of a structure where all activity happens with the board’s knowledge and participation. It can be mentioned that the board has the right to demand every kind of information from members, leave prescriptions on the contents and procedure of collective agreements, that micro and meso level bargaining without the knowledge and participation of the confederation is forbidden and that violations of byelaws are punishable with fines of up to 3 % of the corporations entire wage cost. While this represents extensive formal power for the Svenskt Näringsliv board, it does not necessarily correspond to real power. As mentioned, several actors said there is little ground for deeper cooperation. This was partly agreed by the LO informant, who is certain that Svenskt Näringsliv tries to realize the power of its byelaws, but that organizational divisions has made it impossible to the degree they want. He cited mainly ideological differences and increased company influence as the reasons. The ideological division can be felt to be between officials with a neo-liberal agenda and those with a pragmatic view on cooperation. He also mentioned the trade sector breakout of 2007 as an important event. “At that moment employer coordination broke down, and they still have not recovered.”

110 Göran Larsson, LO; Svante Rudeborg, Svenskt Näringsliv
112 Ibid. 18
113 Ibid. 18
114 Ibid. 23
115 That this might really have some bearing can be seen in Kjellbergs studies of the SAF organization.
The industrial sector has been the stage for the biggest changes. As has been mentioned there has both been organizational mergers and creation of new cooperation forms. All informants agreed that the IA has been very important and that it was necessary, since all parties had entered a dead end. After the IA, wage rounds have been a lot easier. According to the Tf informant: “Now wage rounds are predictable. Previously there was always a conflict stage, which we had to include in the planning.”

It is obvious that the industrial sector has a unique place in bargaining, both in defining the conditions for the rest of the labour market and in having a relatively high degree of freedom from the peak-level involvement. Notable is also the European connection. According to the informant from IF Metall a major part in deciding wage increases is the European development: “We have a policy of being in step with Europe in our bargaining.” Bargaining is done on a company level, with agreements struck company-wide in multinational corporations and a system of workplace councils all over Europe. This connection can also be seen in emerging European trade union cooperation in this sector. However, the informant from IF Metall emphasized that the international activity is still only in a formative phase.

The building sector is an exception to this pattern, however. Starting with the 1999 wage round it has been characterized by conflict, despite attempts to better relations. To understand this it is important to note that the building sector in several ways is an exception on the Swedish labour market. First, bargaining has always been decentralized. Second, the wage system uses piecework rates instead of hourly wages. The conflict is based mainly on BI wanting replace the latter with a payment-by-results-system. In 1999 a compromise was struck on mixed system, but due to intriguing it instead ended in the parties falling out. According to the Byggnads informant, however, the conflict also includes another dimension: “Essentially we have had local negotiations. Where opinions differ between us and the employers is that, while they want to negotiate individually with employees, we want the negotiations to be with a local union official.”

116 Tomas With, IF Metall
117 Mats Åkerlind, BI; Torbjörn Johansson, Byggnads
What can be discerned on the subject of voice-channeling is thus that the pattern-setting bargaining established after the IA has been replaced with a mixture of peak-level and pattern-setting bargaining. The degree of peak-level involvement has increased during the last decade and continues to do so, especially in the trade union movement. The IA however, also means that an overlapping bargaining structure has been introduced. Together with a stronger position for white-collar unions this has resulted in LO no longer being the uncontested central point. It has also given the industrial sector a very central and somewhat independent position. However, relations between white- and blue collar unions are getting increasingly better and new forms of cooperation seem to be developing, with LO still playing a central part.

The employers’ party has at least a high possibility of centralizing their bargaining. However, despite attempts this does not seem to be functioning because of internal divisions.

Still, the bargaining system is mostly established and functioning; a development that is likely to continue since the breakdown of the 1990’s and the rebuilding through the IA.118

5.2. Exit

All informants agreed that exit possibilities have changed, however not as is often said to the benefit of the employers’ associations. Of the two most powerful weapons of industrial action the strike and the lockout, the cost for the latter has increased compared to its gains, at the same time as the cost for strike has been lowered.119 The BI informant explained it like this: “The unions have strike pots that have been filled to the brim during the better part of a century. For us, on the other hand, the lock-out is like shooting yourself in the foot…During the 1930’s the costs for using the weapons of industrial action were different. There were no unemployment insurances, and no welfare. The lockout had a real effect back then, while the strike had a higher cost.”

[118] However, the continuation is not certain as the system still seems to be at a decisive point. As the LO informant described it: “The 2010 wage round will be important. It is the largest in a very long time. Nearly all collective agreements in both the public and private sectors are expiring. I think it is about 4 million wage earners who are affected. This also comes at a very critical point in time due to the crisis; it is very likely that it will have gotten worse by that point in time.”

[119] Mats Åkerlind, BI; Anders Weihe, Tf
Sympathy actions are especially stated as a reason for the union advantage. According to the Tf informant: “A conflict in any small part of a sector can lead to the breakdown of the entire chain… Any obscure conflict can lead to the union movement going into general strike.”

The union informants had a different view. According to the LO informant: “Industrial actions mean different things in different sectors. A strike in some sectors might not really have any major effects. That’s were we find solidarity between the organizations natural. Unions with stronger weapons lend a part of their power to the weaker so that all may have a wage increase.” The Byggnads informant agreed: “What makes us strong and what has built our strength and influence on the labour market is that we have stuck together.”

The international economy and structural changes are not seen as a large threat. The Tf informant explained: “Of course the conditions for corporation activity might lead to flight, and I know that it sometimes is a factor for companies when deciding investments and localizations. But that has nothing to do with employers’ associations.” Quite possibly, it has the opposite effect through multinational corporations not being as dependent on national employers’ associations. The Swedish corporations also have a struggle in keeping up with the increased international competition. According to the Tf informant: “We all want the industry to stay in Sweden; no one has any interest in them leaving.” This also affects the decisions of industrial unions according to him: “Metall and Metall’s members realize the connection between costs, employment and keeping activity in Sweden… Because of this they are in a strange position of not being able to wield their power fully.” According to him unions are still not prepared to abandon this position of power fully though: “The unions have an almost sacred attitude to the labour market rules. They see it as some sort of holy relics, a position of power they got from the Social Democratic government in the 1970’s that must be nurtured and passed on to the next generation.” Most sectors are also unaffected by both economic globalization and the European common market. In the industrial sector the European level has on the contrary strengthened unions and given them new levels for acting.

120 Mats Hallgren, journalist
121 Tomas With, IF Metall
The European posting of workers-directive has neither affected the party relations in any major way according the Byggnads informant. The same thing is essentially agreed by both the LO and Svenskt Näringsliv informants and the journalist. According to the latter: “It only affects a small part of the labour market…It is basically a conflict that was built into the EU agreements, because of a complicated system of compromises.” To some extent according to him the conflict was because the collective agreement of the building sector is so complicated, something that was agreed to by both the subjects from BI and LO. He continued: “I would also say that the conflict got as far as it did because it was so tense.” His guess was that the next step would be that government would try to implement the Stråth-inquiry.

The LO informant does neither seem particularly worried and sees legal changes as the probable solution. “We don’t know what will happen. The Stråth-inquiry is on referral now. The question is also in the European parliament at the moment. And it seems increasingly likely that Ireland will get an opt-out.” According to the Byggnads informant: “The Laval-case was not really about our actions. Our actions were in accordance with Swedish law; it was Swedish law that was in the trial. The logical conclusion is thus to change the law. But what we most would like to see is of course the posting of workers-directive changed…and that is a presently ongoing process.”

Neither of the LO, Svenskt Näringsliv, Byggnads or BI informants sees any radical changes in their strategies or the party relations. BI as an organization was against Svenskt Näringslivs support of Laval. But the subject also said that he personally could feel some understanding for it due to the treatment of Laval.

According to the informant from LO: “The Laval case opened up our eyes to the fact that we have to work on a new level. This was somewhat shocking because we were promised in 1995 that the EU membership would not affect us. We have had to develop awareness of how to work on a European level and also of how collective agreements have to be locally in this new environment. However, while we were beaten in the Laval-trial, which I can acknowledge we were, I can also say that it has become a lot easier for us to strike local collective agreements with foreign corporations. Laval was liquidated and that showed that you shouldn’t challenge Swedish organized labour. Companies generally don’t want any fuzz so they rather
sign an agreement than enter into conflict.” The informant from Byggnads agreed: “I can’t really say that the Laval case has affected us negatively, on the contrary in some ways it has strengthened us. Since then we have not had any case of blockade, before we had 10-20 each year. It also served to reunite the trade union movement and showed what we are capable of when we are united…Their challenge both served to reunite us as a movement and made people realize the value of collective agreements and unions. It has revitalized the trade union movement to some extent.” Instead the trial about the monitoring fees seems to be more concerning to him.

The trade union side thus has a clear power advantage in the game, something that all parties agreed. However, while both the BI and Tf informants described an extremely asymmetrical situation the LO subject spontaneously stated: “Of course we have power, but not nearly as much as some of them like to say.” Still he admitted: “During the last 13-14 years we have had constant increases in the real wages for nearly the entire labour market. If trade union power is to be determined by a factor like this, we have to admit that we have been successful. You have to return to the 1950’s to find a development like that.” However, he continued: “What has potentially weakened the organizations is SAF/Svenskt Näringsliv leaving the corporate system. The organization does not have the same weight in agreements with government as when SAF was included…What is most threatening for our side is the role of politics. If they retreat from their part of the Rehn-Meidner model it will affect us a lot. The changes in the unemployment insurance have made things harder. The government has taken two steps back from their responsibility. What they are doing is essentially opening up for an Anglo-Saxon labour market model, with a quickly mobile low wage segment. So government has not really interfered, but rather retreated.”

Exit possibilities for the actors are asymmetrical, with the temporary exit of the trade union movement being the strongest industrial weapon. The lock-out is on the contrary a very expensive choice with little effect. Despite the structural changes presumably affecting established boundaries no permanent exit options has emerged. Despite the EU trials what is significant is a continuation of established systems. Still, a consequence of this seems to be the strengthening of the industrial sector trade unions. A factor that might possibly change this situation is a change of government policy away from that established with the Rehn-Meidner Model.
5.3. Loyalty

With the regime reverting back to centralization changes in the loyalty patterns can be expected. Union loyalties mostly seem have been strengthened, possibly from outside pressure due to an offensive employers’ associations strategy. The same reasons can also be found for the closer relations between white- and blue collar unions within FI and the IA, which seems to be spreading to the confederation level, and possibly into other sectors. Emerging new loyalties can be felt in all union interviews as well as a rising awareness that increased cooperation between white- and blue collar organizations is needed.

Still, as has been mentioned the pattern is complicated. First FI means the existing of two overlapping loyalties. Second, the new salaried employees unions, most obviously Unionen, means LO’s role as the central point wage-earner organization is no longer obvious. However, the relations between these seem to be good and increasing.

Still this process, as well as the emergence of possible European loyalties, is described as gradual. The IF Metall informant stated: “It is a question of learning to understand each other and speak the same language.” The cooperation has this far reached the furthest development with organizational representatives from Germany and Belgium being observers during wage rounds. “This has really emphasized the differences between our systems. I can relate a story of a Belgian who has been here close to 20 times and still during the last visit discovered things he had misunderstood.”

The Tf informant stated that in his mind the trade unions were trying to partly move bargaining to a European level. The IF Metall informant denied this: “The differences between the national bargaining systems and the associated cultures are too large to find common demands or something that can be decided for the entire European industry… As far as I know there might have been very tentative discussions, but there is certainly no agenda.” However, he still claimed that the cooperation was very useful. “Our opposing part likes to claim that certain agreements have been made in other countries. Now we can contact our counterparts there directly and get a picture that is more balanced so to speak.”
The Rehn-Meidner model is widely agreed upon and can therefore be seen as a major part of the loyalty. The IA agreement has been fitted into this system and its importance is clear in all of the trade union interviews. Still, while the new IA and the industrial sector trade union cooperation by many were seen as a departure from LO loyalty\(^{122}\) the trade union movement has so far been able to coordinate bargaining.\(^{123}\) This procedure has even become easier. “An interesting consequence of the MA negotiations was that we developed very good relations with PTK… Not really a mutual understanding, but more like similar views on influence. This will be very useful in the next wage round.”

Neither is the crisis agreement seen as departure from loyalty by the LO and IF Metall informants. According to first: “It is a misconception that this means lower wages, though it might mean a 20 % reduced income. It is a temporary agreement on shortage of work hours. Hourly wages are kept as well as employments. Previously there was something called the permittent institute in Sweden…This was abolished during the 1990’s crisis, something that was regrettable. What has been done in the industry sector is a permittent agreement.” “From the point of view of the Rehn-Meidner model, at first sight this seems like a clear break. However, there is a difference. This is a general crisis in the entire economy, in such a situation it can rather be productive to strike an agreement like this…The industry is also different from other sectors; if production is closed or decreased when it opens again it might very well be somewhere else entirely. That would be a very unfortunate consequence.”

Within the employer party loyalties are less obvious. It has been shown that Svenskt Näringsliv has inherited much of the centralized power of SAF, still the coordination presently is close to a failure. According to the LO informant: “The MA negotiations showed the divisions among the employers…” The employer informants confirmed that there really are no circumstances which make close cooperation possible. The new loyalty patterns that seem to be developing are instead related to the separate role of member corporations within the confederation and the internationalization of corporate ownership.

\(^{122}\) Göran Larsson, LO & Tomas With, IF Metall
\(^{123}\) Göran Larsson, LO
Cross-party relations mostly seem very good. All informants agreed that the Swedish labour market is mostly a peaceful place with good relations and understanding. The Svenskt Näringsliv informant can be quoted: “I think relations are mostly good, the forms of bargaining and cooperation have mostly fallen in place during the last years.” Asked about what effect the organizations participation in the Laval-trial had resulted in he answered: “There might have been some tension but I can not say that relations have become sore since that in any way.”

The most contested issues in the conflicts that exist are wages, which employer informants uniformly agree are too high, and the rules of industrial actions, which is also agreed to be too extensive especially in regards to sympathy action. A third disagreement is the level of negotiations; the unions want centrally coordinated unions while the employers want to bring them down to a workplace or individual level. As the MA negotiations failed, Svenskt Näringsliv instead wants to use legislation to get their demands realized. Their position is unique however, as no other informant agreed. Not even the informant from Svenskt Näringsliv seemed very enthusiastic: “We do not view any means of regulation as better than any other. The rules are what matters; our members don’t really care where they come from.”

The MA negotiations also showed that there are common interests, however. According to the Svenskt Näringsliv informant: “We felt they understood our point of view somewhat, but couldn’t meet us due to organizational expectations.” The LO informant instead basically cited internal employer divisions for the breakdown: “We had stated very clearly that we were not prepared to meet with their demands on two issues. We could discuss changing the rules to make it easier and less risky for them. The problem was that we soon understood that some of them had promised their members unrealistic things like a strike-ban or the abolishment of LAS. What we wanted was rather an extension of the IA, so it would be valid on the entire labour market. It would be an enormous advantage if the rules of the IA applied to every sector and there where some employers who realized this. As the economic crisis and the CA came they saw a better option, however. The CA signaled that they could pick us one by one, while the economic crisis by itself would discipline us.”

324 Därför sprack förhandlingarna om ett nytt huvudavtal. Document refered to by the Svenskt Näringsliv informant
The LO informant sees the conflicts to a large part emanating from a more political leadership in Svenskt Näringsliv/SAF: “The reason for them leaving the established system was the entrance of neo-liberals in power in the 1980’s. Many of these are still there. They actively tried to remold the system after Thatcher and Reagan’s ideas…. I rather long for the return to power of the pragmatic wing… But today we are beginning to find our way back to a balanced system.”

The most obvious exception to this however is the construction sector. When asked about the mutual agreement between the parties, the Byggnads informant answered: “Presently I can’t say that there is any point where agree.” According to the BI informant, the building sector was never part of the same loyalties as the rest of the labour market. Instead it was a sector with significant government involvement, most obviously through the subsidies of the 1960’s/70’s Million Program. The extensive building-programs also led to a major shortage of workers. “It has been said that bakers, blacksmiths and butchers all were remade as builders during this era… The result was very high wages.” For the SAP it was important to win the support of these construction workers, something that led to Byggnads having a large influence on government. “It is of course an overstatement, but the chairman of Byggnads during the 1970’s has been said to have been more powerful than the prime minister. If decisions were made he was never more than a phone-call away…The position for Byggnads, as well as the high wages, is today seen as the normal state by the builders, while the conditions of the market have changed and the subventions have gone.”

However, according to the Byggnads informant the cause for disagreement is the BI actions. “They have tried to crush us during the last decade. All the misery began with the compromise in 1999. Shortly after the agreement we got our hands on a letter they had sent out to their members urging them not to agree to the piecework system… Then when they couldn’t beat us through negotiations they tried to undermine us by going directly to our members. They gave a brochure to employees which said that they wanted to negotiate directly with them. Now, they have found a new way by going to the European legal level. Still apart from the ruling on Monitoring fees, we have come out of every conflict winning. The fees have never been as popular among the employees as today. During the 1990’s we had to talk people into liking them.” He continued: “We have made several extensive attempts to clear our differences up,
however. We originally made a compromise, but since it was a compromise it meant that everyone were dissatisfied. In 2005 we decided to hold educations both for our members and theirs on the new wage system. This was to be done in mixed groups to lead to better relations. After two years were nothing happened this was finally realized, and extensively so. Still, the same year things again fell apart in the wage round.”

The main causes for the disagreements are according to both subjects the wage system, the high wages and the wage check fees. However, the Byggnads informant also said that personal indifferences are at the bottom of the repeated failures. The BI informant denied that the organization is trying to crush its opponent and instead cited claims structural changes and a desire for harmonization with the rest of the labour market as reasons for wanting to change the system.

Still, mutual understandings never seems far away as all subjects also described situations where the opposing part would understand their point but not being able to make concessions. The furthest in this went the subjects from Svenskt Näringsliv and surprisingly BI, the later stating that even while the present situation was hopeless “still in some ways I think we are getting to a point of understanding, we must do that.” Asked about the potential for mutual understanding he said: “Yes, of course. There is plenty. We have lots of points where our interests are coinciding.” The issues were loyalties were described were mostly economic growth, but also a basic standard for employments. The LO informant described it like this: “We are basically wage earners cartels; we want to sell our labour as expensive as possible but without it affecting our surrounding world negatively. They on the other hand want to buy labour as cheap as possible, but still in rational way.”

Despite disagreements, nearly all informants mentioned peace and order as distinguishing of party relations. The Svenskt Näringsliv informant went the furthest: “The relations have stabilized and found their form…The IA was very important for this through defining the normative rules. On a company-level relations are generally very good, with a few exceptions… We are used to having disagreements by now. We have become hardened so to say. Not even the Laval case has affected us on an everyday basis.”
The traditional pattern of loyalties both between and within the parties is still obvious and has been strengthened, most obviously in the trade union movement. There have been some serious break-downs in cross-party relations, but generally these have not resulted in any radically worsened relations. The white and blue collar unions seem to have developed a closer cooperation and having bettered their relations through the IA. Instead old patterns of loyalties are reemerging while, new are being created between old and new actors. In this, new loyalties seem to follow the basic structure of the old. As the labour market is more fragmented today however, and also because an overlapping structure has been established in the IA, loyalties are instead focused on cooperation.
6. Explanations

The mechanisms’ development during the last decade can be summed up as following. Exit options have not really changed, nor been affected by the crisis events. Instead an obvious union advantage is preserved. Changes are rather found in voice and loyalty patterns. The labour market regime of the 2000’s can be defined as a complex system of sector relations, with strong peak-level coordination. The central point of voice is at the meso level, still macro level influence continues and has been radically strengthened, most obviously in the trade union movement. Even as LO due to white-collar union strengthening is not necessarily the central point of the movement, new patterns in establishment maintain a central position for the confederation. The same can be seen in loyalties, with traditional blue-collar union loyalties reemerging and new loyalties developing between the white and blue collar organizations following the established pattern.

These developments are remarkable as the established regime could be said to have too many obstacles for this to be possible. The structural changes suggests that the basis of the established actors would be altered, while the white collar unions and overlapping IA/FA structures would suggest new actors challenging the old. Furthermore, the system has already broken down suggesting that fresh patterns could emerge.

The most obvious explanation for this is the path dependency concept. That path dependency is a force in labour market regime development is often stated, however the extent of this still seems to be underestimated. As has been said, both peak-level influence and traditional loyalties are reemerging. The difference is mainly that the structures instead focuses on cooperation and coordination. This change can be interpreted as the old regime getting adapted to the new environment.

Why is path dependency so important? A suggestion might be that the regime continues to consist of the same actors and institutions. The new actors entering the system adapt themselves to the pattern of the established actors. That most sectors does not seem to be heavily affected by structural changes can possibly increase the feeling of an established system.
Another possible explanation is that loyalty works as a force for path dependency. Loyalties around some basic ideas within the blue-collar unions seem to be holding their cooperation together and keeping LO in a central position. The strength of established loyalties also seems to affect the function of new organizations, which find their place within the existing system rather than to challenge it. The same applies to the established actors working within the IA/FI. Rather than exiting from the loyalty to their traditional confederation they choose a way of balancing the two systems. Possibly, this can in turn be related to the logic of appropriateness concept. Loyalty can also be a possible explanation for why LO has managed to strengthen its position, while Svenskt Näringsliv has failed to do to the same degree. The interviews strongly suggest that there are more unifying concepts in the trade union movement than in the ideologically and structurally divided employers’ party.

It must also be emphasized that rationality seems to be an important motivation, as all informants displayed a high awareness of economic conditions and continually explained development with this. There is also a power aspect to the rationality, since the actors seeks to challenge each others positions. In this the employers’ associations take the lead, likely since the trade unions have the upper hand.
7. Towards a 21st century Labour Market Regime

The present labour market regime is mostly characterized by a continuity of patterns established before the 1990’s breakdown. The central issues of the game have not changed but continue to be wages, employment conditions and others related to the hard core. There is also a power aspect to the issues, as the right to industrial action, level of bargaining and legislation are contested issues. The main actors of the game are also mostly the same, even as the focus of the game has moved from the peak-level confederations to the meso level organizations and new actors have been established. The pattern-setting bargaining system established with the IA has already been replaced by a structure of bargaining coordination, which can best be described as a mixture between peak-level and pattern-setting bargaining. The main level is still the meso, but with the introduction of a system for peak-level confederation coordination. To conceptualize this type of regime I propose the concept *peak-level coordinated bargaining*. This can be illustrated like this:

![Figure 3. Peak-level Coordinated Bargaining](image-url)
The degree of peak-level involvement has radically increased and continues to do so, especially in the trade union movement.

The coalitions of the game seem to be changing, as new and old sectors establish patterns of cooperation, most notably cross-trade. First of all the meso level naturally has more complicated patterns due to the complex organizational relations. The traditional main actors, the wage-earner and employers’ parties, have been complemented by an increasingly stronger white collar party. An alternative, overlapping structure has furthermore been introduced with IA and its institutions. This has also given the industrial sector a somewhat independent position. The pattern thus created is more complex and fragmented than during previous regimes. Together with a stronger position for white-collar unions this has led to LO no longer being the uncontested central point. Instead however, the organization seems to be moving towards a leading role within a system of confederations. What is developing is a pattern of coordination, with LO functioning as a coordinator of demands while also upholding the system of equitable wage policy. In this the white collar confederations and unions are beginning to get incorporated and also seem to become part of the traditional blue collar union loyalties.

Svenskt Näringsliv, on the other hand, also has at least a high possibility for centralizing bargaining. This does not seem to be functioning however, because of internal divisions within the organizations. The difference compared to LO can be explained through the loyalty concept, as trade union movement loyalties seem stronger.

Contrary to what could be expected from the dramatic events related in the introduction, the Swedish labour market seems to be a mostly peaceful place with a well-established system of actor interaction. The main exception in this is the construction sector. Despite the crisis the events suggest, the most obvious characteristic of the present regime is continuity. After the major breakdown of the 1990’s the development has continually been towards increased peak-level coordination and stability. The event marking the start of this development is the IA of 1997.
Placed within a historical timeline the development looks like this:

Fig. 4 Swedish Labour Market Regime Development

Within this context, the events of the introduction can be understood in a different way. None of the events signal a major crisis for the system. The conflict between the national and European systems suggested by the European trials is limited to only affecting small parts of the labour market. In regards to the Posting of workers-directive the actors expect a solution either through changes in the Swedish legislation or in the directive itself. It might not be insignificant that these events happened in the construction sector, unique both in structure and level of conflict. While the trials seem to suggest a new exit-option for employers’ associations, this was not seen as a major change. A possible explanation for this is that opportunities to realize this threat might be few.

The events within the industrial sector must also be understood within their context. The CA, while criticized, is not seen by most actors as a breakdown of trade union loyalties. Rather it is an exception which ensures the systems survival at critical point. In the same way IF Metall’s threat to leave the LO organization must be understood
from the context of two overlapping structures. It might be seen as a severe threat, but as it was overcome and relations are being established between the two systems today the crisis could be well be seen as passed.

The breakdown of MA negotiations is harder to interpret, not least because it is still very recent. The outcome is uncertain and the economic crisis makes it even harder to make predictions. A breakdown seems unlikely however, as relations are well established after more than a century of organizational interaction.

While economic structures and power competition plays a major role in the regime, the best explanation for the development seems to be the path dependency concept. This can be seen to lead to the establishment of a kind of peak-level regime within a very fragmented labour market and a complex economy. After the crisis of the 1990’s and the first insecure steps of the IA regime the development instead leads to the returning of old patterns of loyalty and the creation of new to fit new actors into the established institutional setting. The labour market regime of the first decade of the 2000’s can thus in many ways be described as a return to loyalty.
9. Suggestions for Future Research

This essay suggests several possibilities for further research. First, the loyalty patterns within the party merits some attention. Both the reemerging and the new loyalties have theoretical relevance for studying the concepts of loyalty and path dependence, including their possible interaction. A second subject in this is the effect of organizational structures and actors on institutional development, suggested by the possibility that a stable set of actors leads to a path dependent behavior.

From an IR perspective deepening the understanding of the new bargaining pattern and organizational cooperation would be useful. Industrial sector cooperation in particular offers several fields. This means both the new forms in the Industrial Committee and FI, the international cooperation and company-level activity in workplace councils and company-wide collective agreements.

Another area that should be developed is the IA effect on micro level bargaining. This also includes the relations between the different levels of the labour market regime and how they interact.

Finally, as was mentioned in the first chapter, the labour market organizations political influence is an area that should be developed upon. Despite the formalized political involvement of the organizations it seems to be somewhat forgotten. This political influence can also be studied on all levels, as formal patterns exist, most obviously for the trade union movement, on all levels of Swedish political life.
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Literature


Appendix 1. Interview Protocol

How would you describe the wage rounds since the IA?
- Development?
- Differences?
- Explanations?

How would you describe party relations since the IA?
- Development?
- Differences?
- Explanations?

Is there any mutual understanding?
- On what issues?

How has the power relations between the parties changed since the IA?
- Explanations?

Which arenas does the parties interact on?
- Macro
- Meso
- Micro
- Europe

How has the structural changes affected your relations?

How has the internal party relations changed since the IA?

How has the IA affected your organization?
- The Relations?

Has the roles of government changed?
- How?

Organizational specific topics:

LO, Svenskt Näringsliv – MA-negotiations
Byggnads, BI – Laval
IF Metall, Tf – IA, CA
Appendix 2. Abbreviations

AD – Arbetsdomstolen (the Labour Court)

AMS – Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen (the Swedish Labour Market Board)

BI – Sveriges Byggindustrier (the Swedish Construction Federation)

CA – Crisis Agreement

IA – Industriavtalet (the Industrial Agreement)

IR – Industrial Relations

LO – Landsorganisationen i Sverige (the Swedish Trade Union Confederation)

MA – Main agreement

MI – Medlingsinstitutet (the Mediation Institute)

SACO – Sveriges akademikers centralorganisation (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations)

SAF – Svenska arbetsgivareföreningen (the Swedish Employers’ Confederation)

SKL – Sveriges kommuner och landsting (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)

TCO – Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)

Tf – Teknikföretagen (the Association of Swedish Engineering Industries)