

Attraction and Commitment

- Understanding the Individual Perceptions and Differences of Employee Representatives

NEIRE Workshop

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AGENDA

- Dialogue at work
- Theoretical framework
- The interviews
- Antecedents
- Barriers
- Conclusions
- Practical recommendations

First leg of NEIRE - DIALOGUE@WORK – In Danish context

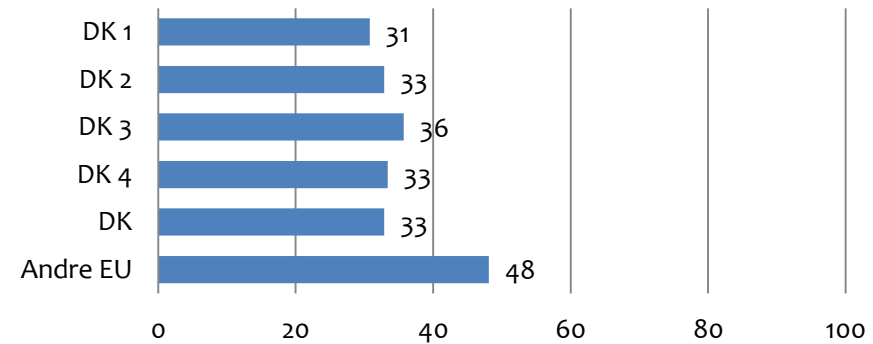
- The questionnaire further developed and adjusted
- Personal feedback is still a unique feature
- Performed by four Unions in 2010-2011:
 - One for unskilled workers: (public care and service)
 - Two for semiskilled (welfare workers, journalists)
 - One for academics
- Different strategies of implementation:
 - Survey among all members
 - Input for meetings/seminar in local sections of Unions
 - ”Feedback” point of departure for performance appraisal interview
- Danish data used for benchmark, EU benchmark for reflection

STRESSORS

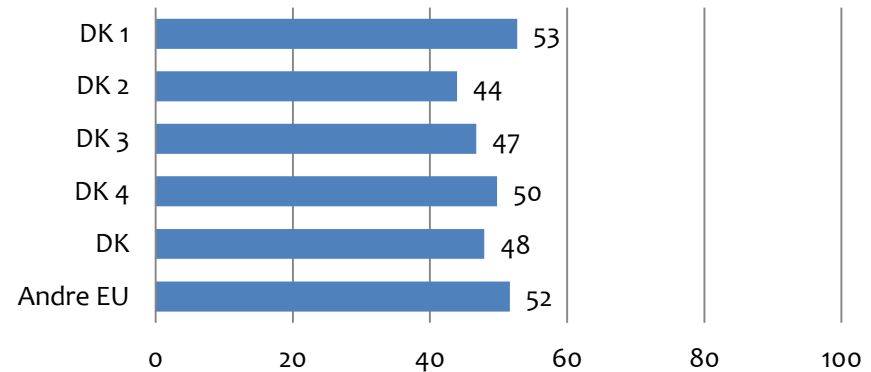
- Emotional demands lower in DK than EU
- Low variation in DK

- Work pressure as ER in Denmark equals EU
- But differs among unions

Følelsesmæssige krav som medarbejderrepræsentant



Arbejdspresset som medarbejderrepræsentant

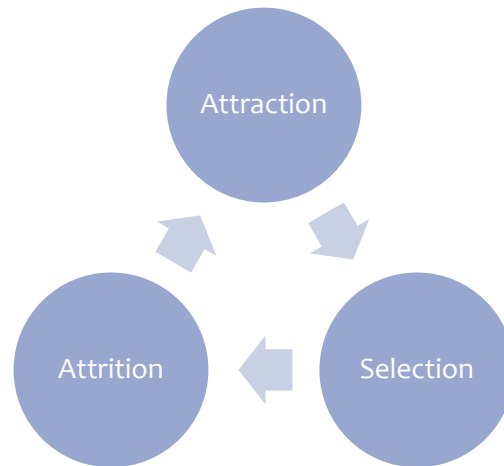


Working conditions as ER - Conclusion

- Danish ER's have in general better conditions than in the EU database
- Substantial differences between unions
- 7 – 8 % report of conditions that will make them step back:
 - Poor feedback from union
 - No perception of the quality own endeavour
 - Poor recognition of professional skills from colleagues and management
- Recognition and feedback – the main development issue ?

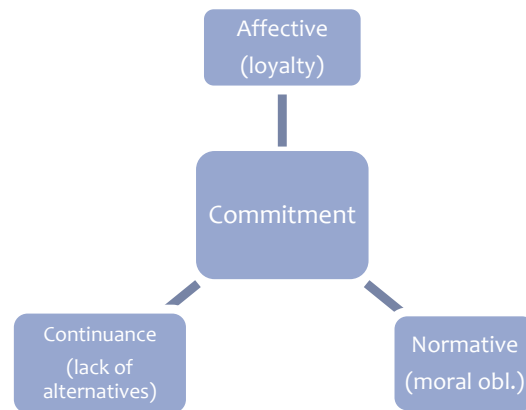
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Scarce academic literature on attraction and commitment of ER's
- Attraction (company): Attraction-selection-attrition cycle



Catanzaro et al., 2010

- Commitment (company):



Torka et. al., 2010

THE INTERVIEWS

- **Research question: *Which circumstances attract the ERs to the function? And how can their commitment be retained?***
- **Conclusions are limited by context specific issues:**
 - There are no clear distinction between attraction and commitment in the interviews
 - Country specific answers (A matter of 'real' national differences or a diverse approach/focus in the countries?)
 - Within country differences - a complexity of reasons/explanations
 - Attraction and commitment of ER's cannot be clearly separated from attraction and commitment of TU members

ANTECEDENTS TO ATTRACTION AND COMMITMENT

- Moral obligation or loyalty (feeling of injustice or pressure from colleagues/oneself)

“My personal motivation is my belief in the ER-system, and the fundamental value, that somebody has to stand up for those persons, that are trampled on. So when no-one else volunteers for the ER-position I do.” (ER, male, private company, Denmark)

- Protection against rounds of layoff (new sort of continuance commitment?)

“(..) After a period where recruitment was a hard task, we now experience several contested elections, although it is not that many.” (Focus group, Denmark)

- Influence and easy access

“..there is no other position in a company where one has that easy access to the most exclusive information from all levels in the company about what is going on, that close interaction with and much shorter ways to the management (...). Most importantly, you feel that you personally can indeed influence something” (Focus group, Germany)

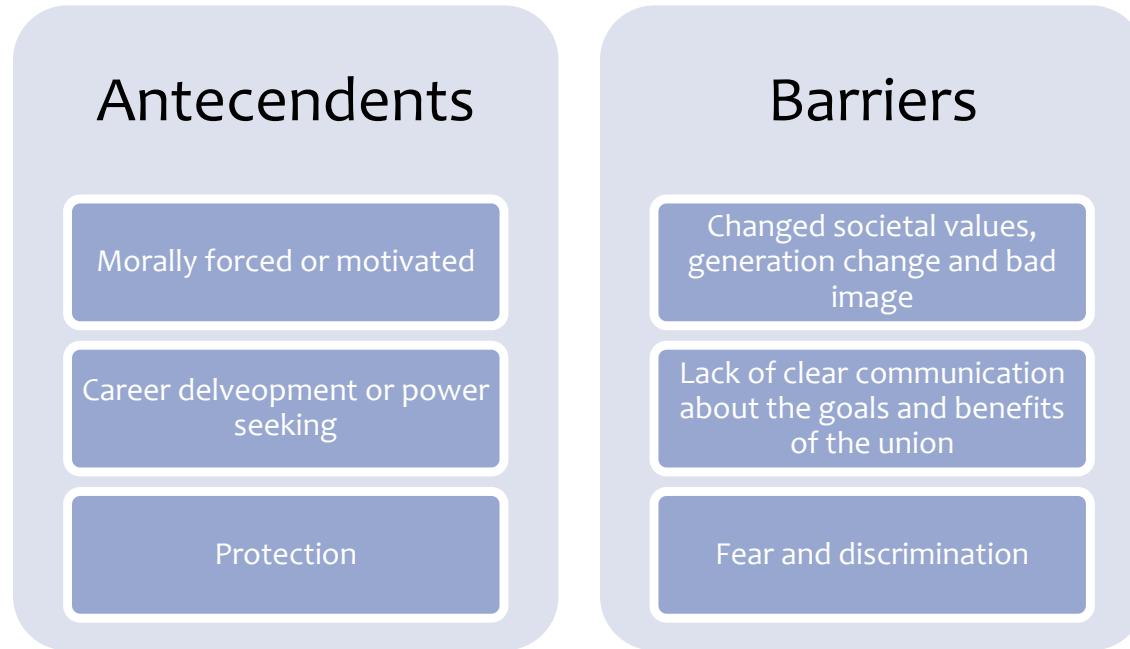
- Career and self-development

“I don’t get any material benefit, the benefit lies more in getting leadership experience” (ER, female, sanitary sector, Estonia)

BARRIERS TO ATTRACTION AND COMMITMENT

- Bad image of the union & lack of acknowledgement of ERs
 - "..TU secretaries twenty years ago were treated with great respect when they visited a company. Today, this respect is gone."*
(Focus group, Belgium)
- Changed Society Values: Individualization and Flexibility
 - "Due to individualization, there is less interest in ER work. It's the same with union membership, which is decreasing as well"*
(Union consultant, male, the Netherlands)
- Generational change
 - "So the union itself and particularly the manner in which it presents itself and communicates could be an obstacle in attracting younger generations as ERs."* (ER, male, education sector, Denmark)
- Lack of communication (about benefit of membership)
 - "The employees feel that things are OK anyway and the TU isn't needed. A lot of people feel that the salary just comes on its own."* (ER, female, education sector, Estonia)
- Fear, discrimination & bad conditions for the career development
 - "... TUs should take the feeling of fear away from employees. In Estonia people are afraid to tell their employer that they belong to a TU"* (ER, female, commercial sector, Estonia)
 - "Well, today we are faced with a problem. The prosecution in business is growing and we know that in many situations we cannot elect more ER and leaders because they are in fact discriminated in relation to premiums. And nowadays companies cannot afford to give pay increases but have money to give premiums and sometimes if workers accept to become ER they are discriminated in relation to the premiums, in relation to their careers and therefore we have this limitation."* (Union leader, female, Portugal)
- W-L-Balance problems

CONCLUSION



- Paradokses and dilemmas (conflicting motivation factors and conflicting barriers and antecedents)
- Need for new theoretical framework about attraction and commitment of ERs

RECOMMENDATIONS: 'DO'S'

- Ensure new member-involvement methods
- Provide good communication and communication strategies
- Make the need for and performance of the union/ERs more visible
- Ensure qualified and competent ERs (role models)
- Develop the ideological dimension and attend the battle for values (e.g. solidarity)
- Provide good ER recruitment tools and forums (e.g. youth committees)
- Reduce the fear of being organized/ER
- Facilitate and train promising ERs and their substitutes
- Define the objectives of the ER more clearly (e.g. the work assignments)
- Provide opportunities that allow integration of ER - and careerplanning
- Provide good work conditions (e.g. time consumption and salary) for ERs

RECOMMENDATIONS: 'DONT'S'

- Do not implement new initiatives as if all ER's were driven by the same motivating factors – ERs are often driven by more than one motivating factor
- Do not implement the new initiatives as if the problems were similar in all EU countries. The findings suggest that some initiatives are more urgent in some countries than in others.
- TU should not per-se criticize and reject potential ER's who are primarily driven by a career development perspective or other individual perspective
- TU should not hesitate to highlight the solidarity aspects of the union – however, a more modern form would be preferable
- TU should be more sensitive to the societal changes and demands
- The TU should avoid creating (traditional) stereotypical pictures. Since a more complex and nuanced approach might attract more ERs/member