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- Paper: Public sector unionization, segmentation and professions as determinants of unionization in the public sector – Denmark as a case

- Research question:

- Why is the level of unionization in the public sector often higher than in the private sector?

Table 1. Union density, public versus private sector, selected countries, in percent of labour force within sector			
Country	Year	Private sector	Public sector
Germany	2010	14,1	31,9
Spain	2009	15,1	32,4
Denmark	2008	64,5	83,4
Austria	2010	21,8	51,6
Netherlands	2008	18,7	27,2
Norway	2008	43,2	67,5
UK	2011	14,0	56,4
Source: ICTWSS database, 4. edition, variable DZ and EA			

- Why do employees join a trade union? Why can we observe changes in level of unionisation in the (post) industrialised countries? Theoretical perspectives trying to understand changes in level of unionisation:

- Three theoretical perspectives:
- 1) A structural perspective/theory (macro).
- 2) An individual perspective (micro – rational choice theory)
- 3) Social custom theory (norms, normative pressure)

- Will focus on 2) rational choice theory and 3) social custom theory.
- Rational choice theory is not so useful in explaining the high level of unionisation in public sector: Generally low level of individual incentives to join a union (working conditions are generally independent of union membership status)

- Can we use social custom theory and how?

- The social custom theory argue that membership of a trade union is not only motivated by immediate calculations about advantages and disadvantages of membership among the single employees. It is instead argued that membership considerations are embedded in a broader social context depending e.g. on workplace or occupational characteristics

- Occupational characteristics relating to the public sector: High level of presence of professions (or semi-professions) related to institutions like: hospitals, schools, administration, police etc.

- Will try to estimate effects of presence of ‘professions’ in the public sector on level unionisation, using Danish register data.
- A logistic regression analysis with ‘trade union membership’ as the dependent variable
- Data: register data covering all full time employees at the Danish labour market (around 2 million individuals) , year: 2006-2007

- As a Proxy for estimating presence of professions I use ‘level of mobilty/level of segmentation’ out of industry (using Nace codes – 113 level coding).
- Labour marked segmentation can be seen as a characteristic that relates to professions
- Professions (especially in public employment) have often specialized function that reduces their capability of chancing sector/industry
- Level of segmentation is measured using ‘level of mobility out of industry’.
- Low levels of mobility indicate high levels of segmentation.

Table 2. Trade unions membership**, full time employed, 2006, descriptive data			
Sector	Non member	Member	Total
Public	92.977	665.337	758.314
	12.26%	87.74%	100.00%
Private	374.721	937.868	1.312.589
	28.55%	71.45%	100.00%
Total	467.698	1.603.205	2.070.903*
	22.58%	77.42%	100.00

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. logistic tradeunionmember levelofsegmentation i.gender age ageinsecond i.sector yearsofeduca
> tion

Logistic regression                                     Number of obs   =    2037107
                                                        LR chi2(6)      =  113744.69
                                                        Prob > chi2     =     0.0000
Log likelihood = -1021897.1                             Pseudo R2       =     0.0527
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tradeunionmember	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
levelofsegmentation	.0598485	.0015097	-111.63	0.000	.0569615	.0628818
1.gender	1.101388	.0040392	26.33	0.000	1.093499	1.109333
age	1.119359	.0011387	110.84	0.000	1.117129	1.121593
ageinsecond	.9988348	.0000124	-94.19	0.000	.9988106	.9988591
sector						
Private	.4066602	.001786	-204.87	0.000	.4031747	.4101758
yearsofeducation	.975897	.0007216	-33.00	0.000	.9744837	.9773124
_cons	1.179059	.0248355	7.82	0.000	1.131373	1.228754

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. margins, at ( levelofsegmentation = 0.05 levelofsegmentation=0.10 levelofsegmentation=0.2 le
> velofsegmentation = 0.3)

Predictive margins                                  Number of obs   =    2037107
Model VCE    : OIM

Expression   : Pr(tradeunionmember), predict()

1._at        : levelofseg~n    =          .05

2._at        : levelofseg~n    =           .1

3._at        : levelofseg~n    =           .2

4._at        : levelofseg~n    =           .3
```

	Margin	Delta-method Std. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
_at						
1	.8335672	.0005133	1624.05	0.000	.8325612	.8345731
2	.8138967	.0004028	2020.54	0.000	.8131072	.8146862
3	.7695373	.0003007	2558.73	0.000	.7689479	.7701268
4	.7186278	.0006509	1104.06	0.000	.7173521	.7199036

- Overall level of mobility/level of segmentation in the public sector versus the private sector is 13.63% versus 17.75%

- Estimation focusing on public versus private sector separately:
- Effect of ‘job mobility out of sector’ on trade union membership is also high in private sector.
- Effect of education (measured as ‘years of education’ differs in private and public sector.
- In private sector: Long education decreases the likelihood of trade union membership.
- In Public sector: Long education increases the likelihood of trade union membership.
- This is in line with the hypothesis that professionalisation increases the likelihood of trade union membership.

- Conclusion

- The presence of professions in the public sector can explain (part of) high level of unionisation in the public sector (compared to the private sector).