

# SOCIAL PARTNERS AS MANAGERS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



## Multi-level Employment Relations in the Electricity sector

**Researcher/**Sara Lafuente Hernández (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

**Supervisor/** Pr. Pierre Desmarez (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

**Funding/** FP7-PEOPLE-ITN-2012 | Project number 317321 ChangingEmployment

### 1. Introduction

- Common process of liberalization, privatization and financialisation since the 80s/90s.
- Growing concentration of capital (global) versus growing fragmentation of work organizations and decentralization of collective bargaining (local)
- Emergence of a multi-level institutional framework and Europeanization in employment relations.
- Crisis as an opportunity or a constraint.

### 2. Methodology

- Multi-level perspective: top-down and bottom-up.
- Sector of Electricity: EU agenda, capital intensive, liberalization and privatization process, outsourcing.
- MNCs: strong players in the sector + paradigmatic arena of transnational collective bargaining.
- Comparative case studies in Spain/Belgium
- Qualitative: secondary data analysis; expert interviews and focus groups with actors involved.

### 3. Case in Spain

**Mediterranean welfare regime. ER Model: State-centered. Crisis impact**



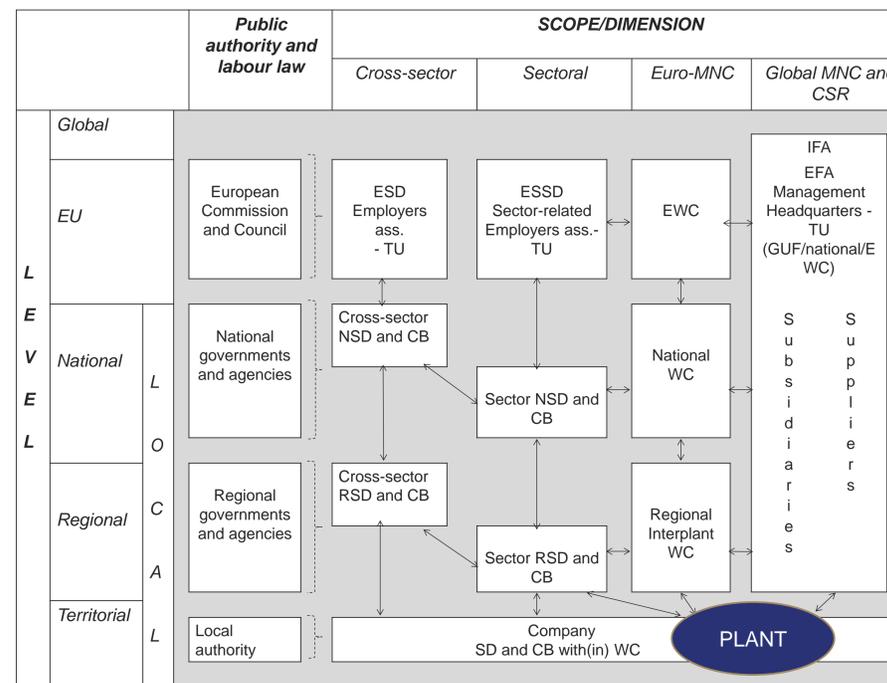
- Generation (132.427 GWh) and distribution (196.854 GWh) of electricity in EU market
- 92,06 % participated by Enel
- 11.166 workers in Spain/Portugal in 2013
- EWC based in Italy.
- Member of CEOE, UNESA, Eurelectric.

### 5. Findings

#### ESSDC– Electricity (1996-...)

- **Representativeness:** criteria are too vague and often not fulfilled → trade associations members of Eurelectric do not participate in national collective bargaining structures.
- **Sectoral definition:** differs greatly across levels and countries –NACE (Rev.2) code 35.1 hampers congruent vertical articulation and is more functional to employers' aggregation and representation of interests than to TU → platform for business lobbying.
- **Outcomes:** underdeveloped (31 joint texts) and soft in nature (no binding agreements, mostly joint opinions: "partner-lobbying") → questions the potential of ESSD as an arena for collective bargaining.

### Complex structure and dynamics of ER as multi-level governance



Adaptation based on Marginson and Keune (2013)

New opportunities and constraints for social partners at the plant level in times of crisis; what perceptions and strategies?

### 4. Case in Belgium



**Continental corporatist welfare regime. ER Model: Social Partnership.**

- Generation (42.7 TWh), retail (98.6 TWh), natural gas and energy services.
- 100 % participated by GDF Suez
- 5.151 workers in Belgium + 13.175 workers from subsidiaries
- EWC based in France
- Member of FEBEG and Eurelectric.

### 6. Discussion

- The sector declines as an arena. Do MNCs re-centralize negotiations? (Dufresne, 2012)
- Are MNC and territorial arenas more promising for future developments of employment relations?
- Does the crisis environment lead to more involvement in multi-level structures from trade unions and employers? Do their strength or loss of power at the national level explain more involvement or, on the contrary, more retreat from multi-level structures and dynamics to the plant-level?