



A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ANDREA BELLINI (University of Florence)
ALBERTO GHERARDINI (University of Turin)



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A FIRST DISTINCTION

- ❖ **SERVICING** as service ethos
 - **ORGANIZING**
 - **SERVICING** as service supply

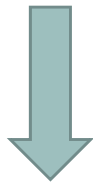


{ **STRATEGY** }

THE “STRATEGIC CHOICE” PERSPECTIVE

Boxall, Haynes 1997

- ❖ NEOLIBERAL ENVIRONMENT (assumptions similar to those of the convergence theory)
 - The State does not support trade unions
 - The States impedes some strategical options of trade unions



MANAGERIAL IDEOLOGY

(declining role of trade unions in
the regulation of economy)



STRATEGIC CHOICES

(towards both workers and
employers)

WHAT IS A “STRATEGY”?

- ❖ The framework of critical choice in respect to ends and means of an organization
- ❖ Choices are “critical” when...
 - they are determinants of the success or failure of an organization
 - they explain the variations in the performance of an organization

❑ To be distinguished from... strategic planning
(strategy can exist also in the absence of planning)



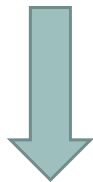
Effective actions need
effective strategies

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTEXT

❖ In some contexts, trade union can mobilize more easily interests and resources for collective purposes and negotiate with the employers (e.g., to act as “strategic actors”)

□ Important dimension: LEADERSHIP

(the role of DOMINANT COALITIONS in influencing the courses of action)



□ Complex situation in trade unions: bureaucracy vs. representation

EFFICACY OF UNION ACTION

- ❖ Union action is effective when it meets WORKERS' EXPECTATIONS
(when it satisfies their BASIC NEEDS: retribution, working conditions, etc.)
 - It depends also on how trade unions relate to employers
(a union that understands workers' needs but is not able to influence employers' behaviours is ineffective)

A CRITICAL CHOICE

ORGANIZING vs. SERVICING

A lively community
(WE are the union)

Workers as “consumers”
(THEY are the union)

A trade union entirely focused on service
supply is not a threat for the employers
(COMPLEMENTARITY)

MODELS OF STRATEGIC CHOICE

Note: The unit of analysis is the single trade union (not the whole movement)

❖ Four models:

- CLASSIC UNIONISM > Servicing + Organizing | Conflict
- PAPER-TIGER UNIONISM > Servicing | Formal conflict
- CONSULTANCY UNIONISM > Servicing | Routine conflict + cooperation
- PARTNERSHIP UNIONISM > Servicing + Organizing | Conflict + Extended cooperation

SOME CRITICAL DIMENSIONS

See also Heery, Kelly 1994

- ❖ Role of union members and union bureaucracy (but also dominant coalitions)
- ❖ Workers' (and union members') needs and the ways to meet them (critical choices)
- ❖ Power relations (particularly with the employers)

- ❖ But also, very importantly...
 - Growing role of external experts (e.g., consultants)
 - Changed target groups
 - Unionists' training as a critical aspect