

Bachelor of Science Programme in Development Studies (BIDS)

Solidarity in Conflict

*Organised non-EEA workers, trade unions and labour
rights within the Swedish wild berry industry*

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Abstract

Every year, around 3000-6000 mainly low-income farmers, travel from Northeastern Thailand in search for wild berries in the rural parts of Northern Sweden. There has been a process of inclusion of these seasonal migrant workers into the Swedish labour market structure, since around the turn of the millennium. The aim of this study is to explore alternative answers as to why the formal inclusion process of these seasonal migrant workers has not provided sufficient outcome in relation to obtained labour rights, in terms of guaranteed income. The theoretical framework applied to the study is the *space-class conflict*, which is based on the expectation on standard of living of workers and their organisations and their will to preserve that standard of living within the constraints and preservation of the current global uneven socio-economic development. The data of the study consists of semi-structured interviews, documents, and secondary data. The result of this study shows that the main space-class conflict lies between the responsible actor's solidarity actions, and the requirement of membership. This conflict is, partly, what lies in the way of obtaining labour rights beyond the Swedish borders.

Keywords: *Labour rights, Sweden, Thailand, Seasonal Migrant Workers, Trade Unions*

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1. Introduction

Economic globalisation has increased the mobility of people and shaped space as we know it globally, increasingly so during the last decades. For example, millions of people leave their homes and families for work in other countries annually, as migrant and seasonal workers. Work opportunities are to be found by workers themselves or through recruitment agencies and job brokers. A so-called “migration corridor” has developed between Thailand and Sweden since the 1980s, due to economic incentives induced by governments, companies and the global demand for Nordic wild berries. Around 3000-6000 seasonal workers, mainly low-income farmers, travel from Northeastern Thailand, Isan, in the summer months of June through August each year to pick wild berries in the vast rural areas and forests of northern Sweden (Hedberg & Axelsson & Abella, 2019, p. 1). The workers are, alongside IT-technicians from India, the largest group of labour migrants coming to Sweden. People from Bangladesh, Vietnam, India and China have also historically been working as organised berry pickers from Asia in Sweden, but recent years have shown that the absolute majority originates from Thailand (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018). The numbers are increasing every year, even if the vulnerable working and living conditions, exploitation and lack of economic compensation for pickers has been reported by the media, and research, for years (Wingborg, 2016). There has been a process of formalised inclusion for workers within this industry, as a response to this reported exploitation. One of the largest trade unions in Sweden, the Swedish Municipal Workers Union (*Sw*: Kommunal, also referred to this from now on) was designated by The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (*Sw*: LO, also referred to this from now on) to represent the interests of all organised non-EEA (workers from outside of the European Economic Area) wild berry pickers in 2009 and onwards, and to include them in their collective agreements. Kommunal also introduced a completely new form of temporary membership for organised non-EEA wild berry pickers in 2017, with the aim to recruit to a greater extent and further strengthen the rights for organised foreign workers within this industry (Eklund, 2016). However, a recently published study has shown that this kind of formal inclusion has not worked out in practice in terms of actual outcome of obtained wages (Tollefsen et al, 2020). An alternative way of providing an answer to why this is the case, is by employing a theoretical framework that takes into account uneven spatial interest, derived from global uneven socio-economic development, that influences the work of labour rights organisations. The space-class conflict is based on the expectation on standard of living of workers and their organisations and their will to preserve that standard of

living within the constraints and preservation of the current global uneven socio-economic development (Johns, 1998).

Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to provide an alternative answer, as to why the formal inclusion process of non-EEA workers has not provided sufficient outcome in relation to obtained labour rights, in terms of guaranteed income for organised non-EEA wild berry pickers in Sweden. This study will add on to the growing research surrounding the inclusion of non-EEA workers within Swedish labour standards.

The interrelated research question(s), that will guide the upcoming research in its whole is therefore, as follows:

In what ways can a space-class conflict be discerned within the Swedish labour rights organisations that are connected to the Swedish wild berry industry?

How can a discerned space-class conflict work as an alternative answer to why current inclusion strategies fail to bring about fulfilled labour rights for organised non-EEA berry pickers?

Limitations, Significance and Scope of the Study

The proposed research will not have the main focus on workers that are not organised; people that pick and sell berries while they are on their tourist visas and work through informal networks, who mainly originate from eastern Europe. Kommunal cannot represent them against any employer, since they have no official employer. Workers that are not organised have therefore not been included in the formalised inclusion process, which is an important part of the aim of this thesis. However, it is important to bear these workers in mind when investigating issues surrounding the wild berry industry because they are also in a vulnerable position when it comes to, for example, fair pay, working conditions and general well-being (Woolfson & Thörnqvist, 2012). Therefore, would they arguably also benefit from being organised with an official employer and a trade union membership and everything that comes with it, but this is beyond the scope and aim of this thesis.

The role of the researcher

The background of the researcher will be presented here, to convey a transparent and full picture of beliefs, biases and assumptions that may have shaped the way in which this study has been interpreted and conducted.

First, the interest for this topic of research derived from a period of employment at Kommunal during the summer months of June through August in 2019, at the administrative centre for membership based in Malmö, Sweden. However, the tasks involved in this job did not entail statistical information or affiliation with the work of the trade union concerning labour rights toward members directly. Those kinds of tasks are done by the union staff from their main office in Stockholm and throughout the local offices around Sweden. The tasks I worked with exclusively involved taking calls from members concerning their monthly payments and questions regarding insurances. This background has given an insight into the internal structure regarding contact with the trade union for members, from an employee perspective within the trade union. This background has also further inspired my interest regarding labour rights and inclusion strategies. Second, I believe that trade unions have an important role in the contemporary world in which we live in, in terms of the realisation of labour rights. This is a belief stemming from the fact that I have grown up in Sweden, where there is a strong trade union culture that regulates the job market instead of the state. This belief also stems from my background within the job market, where I have partly worked with manual labour that is

strongly associated with trade union regulation. This, in combination with my study background at the university, has further led me to assume that trade unionism correlates with the realisation of labour rights.

However, the fact that I have previously worked at this trade union does not affect my ability or aim to objectively conduct this research study, guided by earlier research and the applied theoretical framework. I have had no further affiliation with Kommunal during the duration of this study conducted between Mars through May 2021.

Outline of the Thesis

Following the introduction, this thesis will present an earlier research section, divided into the following themes: South – North Migration, Global Commodity Chains (GCC's) and The Role of Trade Unions. The background relating to how labour migration, trade union and policy regulations are connected and interrelated within the Swedish wild berry industry will then follow. The fourth section will cover the applied theoretical framework. A discussion of the conceptual basis of the *space-class conflict* will be presented here. The method of the collection of data and analysis procedures will be presented in the fifth section. Constraints and limitations of the study are also included in this section. The sixth section will present the findings and analysis of the data collection related to the applied theoretical framework of the space-class conflict. The seventh, and last, section of conclusion will sum up and answer the posed research questions and aim of the study.

2. Earlier research

This section will present earlier research that is connected to the research topic and research problem at hand. Key ideas from previous literature will be tied together, in order to show their relative importance and interrelations. Following, interrelating subheadings has therefore been developed: *South – North Migration, Global Commodity Chains (GCC's) and the Role of Trade Unions*.

2.1. South – North Migration

Cross-border migration, and general mobility patterns have shaped the world as we know it for thousands of years, through the creation of linkages between places via social and economic means (Castles & Haas & Miller, 2014, p. 5). The modern era of globalisation is closely associated with mobility factors such as the revolution of the modes of transport, the growth of transnational communities and the evolution of information technology, alongside increased goods and services that tie regions and places together globally (Chetail, 2008). However, there is a body of literature that states that the era of globalisation is equally an era of restriction of movement (Blomley & Delaney & Ford 2001; Sassen 1991, 1988), where the ability to partake in the mobility is dependent on economic resources. A majority of the people in the world are therefore more or less excluded from the mobility aspect of globalisation (Bauman 2002; Doyle & Nathan, 2001). The growing research on migration patterns, and movement in general, has been conceptualised as the 'new mobility paradigm', in which the social sciences have seemed to further extent taken into consideration a world on the move (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Shamir, 2005). Mobilities create an integrated system, that can be observed at a range of scales. These scales are the family/household scale, the community scale, the national scale, and the constellation of countries linked by migration flows (King & Skeldon, 2010).

Migration between the global South and the global North is a migration flow that is conceptualised on a broad scale, and has attained more scholarly attention than for example, South-South migration. However, a larger share of the world's migration is occurring within the global South (Mahmud, 2020). The leading cause for migration from the global South toward the global North is related to socio-economic inequalities (Chetail, 2008). These socio-economic inequalities are deriving from factors such as contemporary conflicts and human rights violations, as well as past structural heritage, such as the colonial heritage shared by many countries of all continents within global south (Ibid; Mains et al, 2013). Recent years has shown

increased exclusionary practices by the countries and regions of the global north. For example, thousands of migrants and refugees have to an increased extent been met with fences and walls at the borders of Europe, after dangerous travels across the bordering seas. This has been described as “fortress Europe”, and is a result of political decisions aiming to use borders to exclude, as the demarcation between “Us” i.e., Europeans and “Others” (Fauser & Friedrich & Harders, 2019).

Labour migration

Seasonal, temporal, labour migration has seen a surge in contrast to permanent migration in recent times. It is a very common form of migration where the work is highly dependent on seasonal conditions and is only performed during that time of the year (Panda & Mishra, 2018). Seasonal migration is considered beneficial for both sending and receiving countries, albeit from an economic point of view. The destination country will meet labour requirements for production (Ibid). Remittances that are sent back from labour migrants to their home countries, are a critical source of foreign exchange for developing countries in general. The sheer volume of remittance transfers to home countries from labour migrants surpasses that of foreign private capital and official development assistance (ODA) (Oladipo, 2020). However, issues surrounding labour rights including low wages and bad working conditions are to be found almost everywhere where seasonal labour migration takes place (Thomas, 2020). The migrant recruitment network ideally provides, from an employer point of view and often through racialised depictions, skilled workers at minimal wages, without protesting as a collective or challenging the working conditions. This line of thought can be seen throughout seasonal labour migration patterns (Verma, 2019).

2.2. Global Commodity Chains (GCC's)

The world has, especially these last thirty years, seen a reconfiguration of the geography of labour with trends toward global outsourcing and precarisation of work. This trend is often a key trait to be found in global commodity chains (GCC's), which is the series of links connecting the many places of production and distribution which are then transformed into goods and services and distributed to consumers across the world. The trends of global outsourcing and precarisation of work have also contributed to delimiting the collective power of labour (Arnold, 2018). The usage of outsourcing in general for employment purposes globally, has a number of effects on the various different actors within any given industry. The

way in which employment is done is through several different regulatory regimes poses great challenges for governments and other actors who aim to regulate, or protect, migrant workers (Axelsson & Hedberg, 2018; Allen & Cochrane, 2010). The economic growth that has occurred in the world has at the same time occurred alongside a reduction in workers' share of overall wealth (Selwyn, 2015). Global capital has therefore driven migration and reshaped its patterns, directions, and forms to its own benefit through GCC's that reproduces global poverty and inequality (Arnold, 2018).

2.3. The Role of Trade Unions

The relationship between trade unions and migrant workers has often been conflictual, due to tensions between notions of international solidarity and increasing competition on the national labour market. Many modern market reforms in the global North have given rise to dualised labour markets, where traditional workers ("insiders") attain higher levels of job security and general labour rights. Atypical workers ("outsiders") are a part of the flexible margin on the labour market that has been subject to deregulation after labour market reforms (Durazzi, 2015). Outsiders attain considerably less protection. Trade unions have in this context, been viewed as being conservative in their actions. It is argued that trade unions systematically protect the interests of insiders, and through these systemic actions further contributes to the dualised labour markets (Lindbeck & Snower, 1984, 2001; Rueda, 2005, 2006). However, many trade unions in both United States and Europe have in more recent times stopped calling and lobbying for restrictions on work immigration, instead actively seeking to organise migrant workers (Thomas, 2020). This process entails a lot of work and flexibility on the part of the trade unions. The inclusion strategies are dependent on the work migrant's socio-economic status, qualification levels, country of origin and previous trade union experience. The inclusion strategies will usually take the form of routinised cross-border relations between different trade unions, relations based on service provision and a gradual socialisation to trade unionism and an engagement with different or other union cultures and experiences. Integrating migrant workers into trade unions is a complex social trust process made up of adjustments, confrontations on different levels and alterations of trade union cultures (Ibid).

The inclusion of migrant workers into trade unions, especially in terms of member recruiting, is generally considered difficult and has historically worked out to varying degrees. It is argued that trade unions need to employ equality and diversity aims into their recruitment practices in

order to engage migrant workers and to reduce their vulnerability in the labour market. A strategy increasingly used by trade unions in the UK is to employ a learning approach, external to the workplace, as a key factor in connecting with the broader needs of marginalised communities and work migrants (Alberti & Holgate & Tapia, 2013). Studies of trade union strategies in the Netherlands and Italy have shown that procedures that are based on a participatory form of democracy have a positive effect in terms on inclusion for migrant workers, rather than a top-down and centrally driven procedure (Perrett et al, 2012; Marino, 2015).

It is argued that from a participatory perspective, it is possible for trade unions to strike a balance between aims of solidarity and democracy even if the interests of members are increasingly differentiated. This balance would then be built internally within the union, by encouraging and engaging with direct participation and guaranteeing a democratic platform for both the promotion and development of internal changes. To be able to achieve this internal balance, it is needed for trade unions to be strong at a central level while also having and allowing mechanisms for grassroots participation. Trade unions need to reflect on new and different forms of mechanisms and procedures to guarantee the incorporation of grassroots demands in the general union policies and practices (Hyman, 1997; Marino, 2015)

3. Background

The following chapter will present contextual and prerequisite information that is essential to understand the way in which Thai-Swedish labour migration, trade union and policy regulations are connected and interrelated within the Swedish wild berry industry.

3.1. Seasonal Labour Migration: The Case of the Swedish Wild Berry Industry

Seasonal European migration

Wild berry picking in Sweden relies heavily on the Swedish Right of Public Access. This right allows anyone from the public to pick wild berries, mushrooms and certain plants that grow on public and private land. This has made wild berries available for free to use for commercial purposes and has given everyone present in Sweden the right to pick the berries (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2011, pp. 5-7). This right further stipulates that anybody has the right to sell the gathered wild berries, mushrooms, or plants to any buyer, either domestic or international - for up to SEK 12,500 per person without having to pay taxes (Wingborg, 2011, p. 40). Wild berries have been picked commercially for over 100 years, historically small-scale by local populations within the northern region of Sweden. (Axelsson & Hedberg, 2018). Labour migration from both Poland and the Baltics, where the workers picked freely without any official employer on tourist visas started to emerge during the 1970's - 90's. This trend slowed down when labour from Eastern Europe and the Baltics gained access to other job opportunities that were more lucrative (Eriksson & Tollefsen & Lundgren, 2019). However, there are workers still migrating from within the European economic area. It was estimated that around 5 percent were picking and selling on tourist visas in 2013, the rest were employed, i.e., organised pickers coming from Asia. It is hard to detect the number of workers coming on tourist visas, since they are moving freely across the borders without having to apply for a work visa, which can be linked to the wild berry industry directly. Therefore, it has also been estimated that the tourist pickers are accounting for as much work as the organised pickers coming from Asia (Wingborg, 2013, p. 4; 2016, p. 8).

Seasonal Asian migration

Thai nationals started to come to Sweden for berry picking through social connections back in the 1980's, via Thai women that were married to Swedish men. This first generation of Thai nationals that picked berries in Sweden stayed with relatives and sold gathered wild berries to local buyers, following the Swedish Right of Public Access. The Swedish state did not impose taxes on any form of berry picking then. It was also possible at this time to recruit foreign workers without working permits. However, this has changed since then. Employed workers within the industry has since the beginning of the 2000's migrated from Asia, first and foremost from the Northeastern region of Thailand, Isan (Hedberg, 2013). Isan is a region consisting of twenty provinces (See Figure 1) and is the largest and most populated region in Thailand, with the lowest per capita income. Although the region is a major producer of agricultural products, poor soil and lack of irrigation is making farming a challenge, as does the fluctuation of crop prices (Lao et al, 2019). The work of wild berry picking in Sweden is done by farmers from this region, mostly men, however, there are women who also migrate to Sweden for berry picking purposes. Another contributing to factor to why farmers from the region are able to migrate during the summer months is because this is not colliding with the harvesting or planting season back home. The income derived from berry picking in Sweden is used for daily consumption and investments in farming, housing, and children's education (Hedberg & Axelsson & Abella, 2019, pp.VI, 11-12).

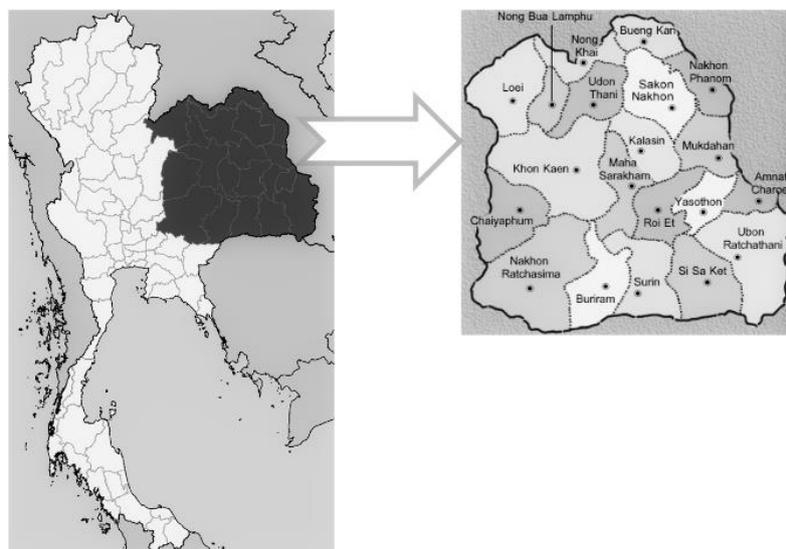


Fig. 1: Map showing the Isan region in Northeastern Thailand, consisting of twenty provinces. Derived from Kerdprasop (2016).

This group of workers is the one that this study first and foremost is focusing on, due to them being a part of the Swedish labour market system through their employment contracts. Workers now coming from Thailand has expanded outside of social ties to relatives and friends in Sweden, and accounts for the largest group of non-EEA workers, alongside IT technicians from India, coming to Sweden (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018). Around 3000-6000 migrate each year in the summer months between June and August, to work within the rural parts of the northern counties of Sweden (*See Figure 2*). The number of workers has increased since 2009, however, there were significantly fewer labour migrants coming to Sweden due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions in the 2020 season (RIR, 2016; Swedish Migration Agency, pp. 10-11, 2020).

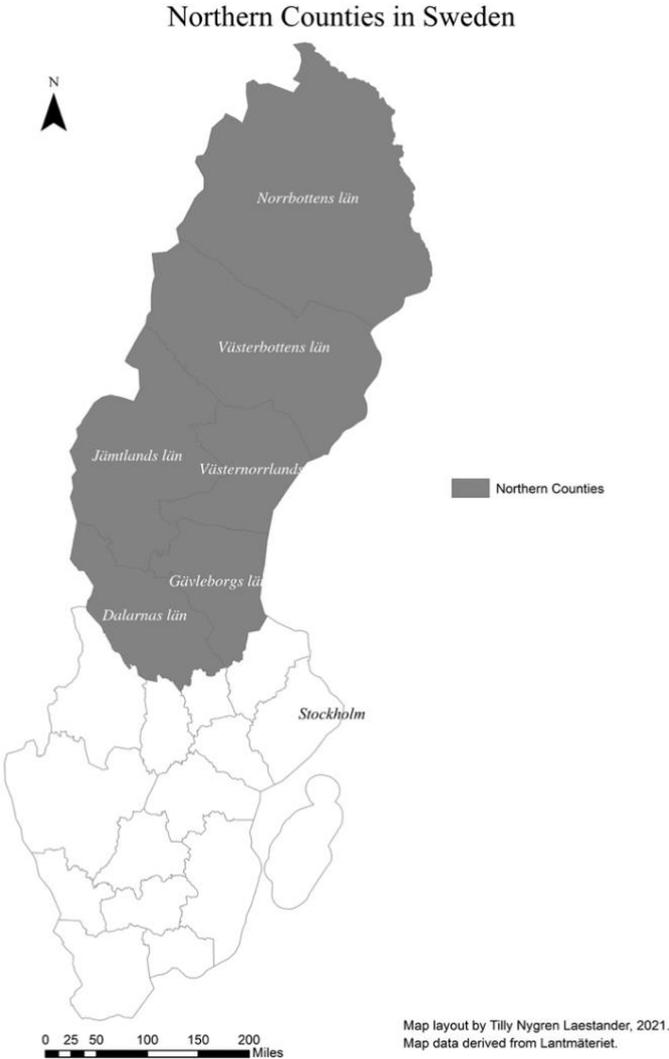


Fig. 2: Map showing the Northern counties of Sweden.

3.2. Structure and Actors within the Swedish Wild Berry Industry

Transformation of the industry

The Swedish wild berry industry has gone from irregular and small-scale production to regularised and large-scale production. This transformation has been driven by an increase in the global demand for wild berries, especially in the 1990's and 2000's when the market value increased due to high levels of antioxidants found in the wild berries from the region (Hedberg & Axelsson & Abella, 2019, pp. 12-13). The main part of the wild berries is used for health products in countries such as Japan, the United States and Europe. Sweden and Finland are the main providers of wild berries to the global market. Around 25,000 tons of wild berries are picked each year in Sweden, where the largest sum is to be found in the bilberry health industry, where the estimated turnover is between SEK 10-15 billion per year (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018).

The 1990's marked the Swedish transition from national to a global, neoliberal form of capitalism. Thai berry pickers were to be crucial for the berry industry in this transition due to their existence as informal workers since the 1980's. The 1990's economic transition was also an end point of the process of dismantling the welfare state in the Swedish northern regions where the berry picking takes place. This meant that people from these regions to a large extent moved, and in some cases chose to stay and create their own support and growth. This is argued being one of the contributing factors to why the berry picking industry quickly grew when the demand for Scandinavian wild berries increased (Eriksson, Tollefsen, 2013; 2018). However, a number of labour rights violations and scandals has occurred within the industry, which has been reported by the media as well as through manifestations conducted by the workers. Workers have been left with no salary payment, been charged with unnecessary fees, which has resulted in huge debts with immense implications for their well-being and financial state back home (Vogazides & Hedberg, 2014). There have been instances where the workers have been living in extremely harsh working and living conditions in Sweden, packed in small cabins without electricity and working without proper tools and clothes (Yimprasert, 2014). Some have argued that these workers are victims of trafficking, deceived into coming to Sweden to work under slave-like working conditions (Vanaspong, 2012; Herzfeld Olsson, 2018). These kinds of reported scandals contradict the Swedish self-image, as one of the leading countries in the world in regard to labour rights (Woolfson & Fudge & Thörnqvist, 2014). Several laws and regulations have therefore been put in place in with the aim to restructure the industry since around 1999.

Regulation of the industry

A number of laws and regulations has been put into place since 1999, in order to restructure and officialise the work and industry surrounding wild berries in Sweden (*See* Table 1). The aim and outcome of these will be presented here.

Table 1: Timetable over laws and regulation changes related to the wild berry industry. Compiled by me.

1999	Work permit implementation (The Swedish Migration Agency)
2005-2007	Taxation of the labour (The Swedish Tax Agency)
2008	New labour migration law (Government Offices of Sweden, Bill 2007/2008:147)
2009	Trade union representation (Kommunal and LO)
2011-2012	Extra procedures and checks (The Swedish migration Agency)
2014	Additional regulation (The Swedish Migration Agency) A new collective agreement (Kommunal)

The initial regulation implemented within the industry, the taxation and work permit implementation, aimed to officialise the work of berry picking on a large scale as work (Jonsson & Uddstål, 2002; Wingborg, 2013, p. 10). This led to a re-altering of the employment strategies used by wild berry companies in Sweden, who began to outsource employment to Thai recruitment agencies to avoid paying employer contributions, this solution was accepted by Swedish authorities. The companies could therefore rely on the 183-day rule, which states that employees can be freed from paying taxes if they are hired by international recruitment agencies and that the work performed in Sweden do not exceed 183 days (Wingborg, 2013, p. 10; Swedish Migration Agency, 2020, p. 14).

The new labour migration law and trade union representation

The new law on labour migration aimed to further open up the opportunity for more non-EU nationals to migrate to Sweden for work. The aim of the reform was to meet present and future challenges in the Swedish labour market, depicting that an aging population would present

pressing challenges in the future in certain sectors, such as the health care sector¹. The biggest change that came with this law was that market tests were abolished. It is now the employers, instead of the government agencies or trade unions, that depict whether or not there is a need for workers coming from abroad in order to fill the job market needs. The only conditions that were included was that the wage should make the worker able to support oneself, and that the terms of employment should not be worse than the terms of the collective agreements or standards in the occupation and industry. Unions were able to look and comment on the terms of the contract, but they had no veto (Emilsson et al, 2014). Kommunal was designated by LO to represent the interests of all organised non-EEA within the wild berry industry, to include them in their collective agreements. The first collective agreement was concluded with the Federation of Swedish Forestry and Agricultural employers, also referred to as the staffing agreement (Kommunal, 2009, pp. 11, 31).

LO has directed critique against the 2008 law on labour migration. The critique has mainly been directed at bad wage and living conditions that has occurred since the introduction of the law, due to the format and regulations that follow the law. The way in which the employer is allowed to recruit anyone from around the world without the interference of agencies or trade unions has lowered the standard of employment in Sweden for migrant workers, according to LO. This has opened up the opportunity for employers who aim to recruit cheap labour, and to provide working conditions way underneath the standard that anyone coming from Sweden, or nearby countries, would want to work in. LO further argues that human capital shortage should be the only basis for labour migration to Sweden (LO, 2013, pp. 4, 26-27).

The Swedish labour market system

The Swedish labor market is based on the 'New Swedish Model'. The New Swedish model is in its turn partly based on the 'Swedish model', sometimes called the 'Nordic model', which in its essence aimed to compromise between capitalist interests of economic growth and profitability and social policy equalisation efforts, between the 1930's and mid 1970's. In the 1990s, Sweden experienced an economic recession, that was accompanied by a growing budget deficit and rising unemployment, which grew from 1.7 per cent to 8.3 per cent between 1990 and 1993. Following the economic recession was the development of the 'New Swedish Model'. It contrasted deeply with the previous model by facilitating a thinning-out social policy

¹ Government Offices of Sweden, Bill (2007/2008:147)

equalisation efforts (Mešić, 2017, pp. 24-25). However, a key trait stemming from the era of the 'Swedish Model' still exists in the contemporary Swedish labour market, namely the power balance based on compromise and consensus solutions between the trade union organisations and the high degree of organisation on the employer side. The collective agreement and party regulation are still more important than state regulation for the Swedish labour market model. There is, for example, no legislation on minimum wages or on the general declaration of collective agreements. The Swedish labour market model is characterised by a combined centralisation, consisting of central agreements, central organisations and trade unions, and decentralisation, consisting of trade unions and local negotiations. Several collective agreements in all sectors are discussed and signed by both parties periodically and has a high coverage and a prominent role in regulating working conditions (Elvander, 2002; Kjellberg, 2019).

Additional regulation

In order to curb cheating and exploitation in the industry that occurred after the new migration law were introduced, additional administrative procedures and extra checks was decided upon by the Swedish Migration Agency in regard to the wild berry industry. Employers now needed to demonstrate sufficient funds for salaries before a work permit is granted. The employee must earn at least SEK 13,000 per month to be able to live on his or her salary, this would not however represent a full-time wage. To renew a work permit, the employee must present pay slips and control information. Furthermore, The Swedish Migration Agency demanded that the international recruitments agencies were to register a branch in Sweden, the reason for this was that it would be possible for workers and authorities to get hold of a responsible employer when needed. However, reports of abuse were still reported after the introduction of these regulations. Additional regulations were therefore introduced in 2014. These would allow control of employment conditions and the ability to impose penalty-sanctioned information obligation for employers regarding conditions of employment, and direct access for the Swedish Migration Agency to certain government registers and additional provisions for the withdrawal of work permits (Wingborg, 2013, p. 16). Additional specific terms for berry pickers were also added to the collective agreement ahead of the 2014 season by Kommunal, that would complement the existing collective agreement set in place with the Federation of Swedish Forestry and Agricultural employers (Wingborg, 2014, p. 10). Kommunal also introduced a new form of membership ahead of the 2017 season, a temporal membership, with the aim to further

incentivise non-EEA berry pickers to become members and to strengthen their positions (Eklund, 2016).

3.3. Study Background

The introduction of the collective agreements and work contracts has improved the labour standards within this industry in Sweden. Sweden is also the only country to employ such standards within this type of industry. The general opinion of the trade union organisations (Kommunal and LO), the industry (the berry companies/firms) and government agencies are that there have been problems historically, but that necessary steps has been taken to improve the labour standards. However, recent research has shown that even if the migrant workers, the organised non-EEA berry pickers, has the right to negotiated wages and are formally included, they still are in a subordinated position on the labour market in practice. They are argued to be in a subordinated positioned since the actual outcome for a substantial amount of the workers, in terms of wages and protections, are well below the guaranteed collective agreement. This is based on interviews and original survey data conducted with 165 non-EEA migrant workers in 2016 within this industry, specifically focusing on acquired wage. The result of the survey showed that around one third of the workers earned less than the guaranteed wage according to the collective agreements (Tollefsen et al, 2020). This study aims to provide a possible answer to why the formal inclusion of non-EEA workers has not been realised in practice, in terms of obtained minimum wages according to collective agreement.

4. Theoretical framework: The space-class conflict

The theoretical framework of this upcoming research is based on the theoretical framework of the space-class conflict, formulated by Rebecca Johns (1998), based on the theoretical work of Harvey (1982; 1989) and Smith (1984; 1990).

The theoretical framework presented by Johns (1998) was first formulated in the context of *international* labour solidarity, e.g., international solidarity projects by trade unions in the global north with the main aim to lessen the capitalist competition between the higher paid workers in the global north and the lower paid workers in the global south. This framework has its basis in the conflict between space and class. This conflict arises from material interests that are a result of the unique locality and hierarchy, which is caused by uneven socio-economic development. This uneven spatial interest divides workers, making it hard to form an international solidarity movement solely based on nearly universal class interests including employment, a fair and living wage (and so forth). The space-class conflict is based on the expectation on standard of living of workers and their organisations and will to preserve that standard of living within the constraints and preservation of the current uneven development around the globe (Johns, 1998). I argue, having the background of the Swedish wild berry industry in mind, that this internationally based theoretical framework can be implemented *within* countries. This is due to the increased number of seasonal, temporal, workers coming from abroad to work within countries that are having completely different prerequisites in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, derived from uneven socio-economic global development.

The theoretical basis of the space-class conflict will be presented in a first section. A discussion of the concept of space and class, deriving from the work of Harvey (1982; 1989) and Smith (1984; 1990) that lay the basis of Johns (1998) theoretical framework is included, including the main critique against the concepts. The operative part of the theoretical framework will then be presented, where criteria has been developed to be able to classify the action of labour rights organisations into performing either no form of solidarity, accommodationist or transformatory solidarity.

4.1. Concepts, Ideas and Critique

The ability of *capital* to shape space to its advantage has been thoroughly studied on by geographers. David Harvey's theories regarding uneven geographical development and the production of space under capitalism, where capitalistic processes have embedded needs to overcome for example spatial barriers, open up new markets, speed up production cycles and to reduce the turnover time of capital are essentialist Marxist accounts of uneven development (Harvey, 1989, 1982). Additional literature, also essentialist Marxist and an extension of Harvey's conceptualisations, by Neil Smith (1984, 1990) has further explained the role of *workers* in the production of space. It is argued that patterns of uneven development create a hierarchy of places, in which some places are privileged, while other places suffer from lack of capital, few and insecure jobs and wages that are low. This creates, in its turn, a hierarchy of labour, in which some groups of workers stand above others in a more privileged position. Globalisation has increased capital mobility at the global scale, increased integration of places into the world economy and given rise to conflicts in terms of class interests. The space-class conflict arises due to the growing international class consciousness and solidarity movement that sometimes collides with regional and national, local, class alliances that are grown directly out of the uneven development inherent to capitalism (Harvey, 1982, p. 44. Smith, 1984, 1990. Johns, 1998). These interrelated and connected conceptualisations of Harvey and Smith lay the foundation of Johns (1998) theoretical framework of the space-class conflict.

However, there are critiques against these conceptualisations to be found. Kerr (1996) directs critique against the ideas and work of Harvey (1982), implying that the theoretical framework of capital accumulation and the production of space lacks the scope that is needed to explain the phenomena of class struggle. It is not clear, according to Kerr, what constitutes the class struggle or where it has come from in order to react against the effects of the capital accumulation and the production of space. Kerr then further argues that the capital accumulation and production of space is just a part of the movement of the class struggle (Kerr, 1996). Massey (1993) further outlays critique against Harvey's (1989) conceptualisation of capital as the main driver of relations, experiences and communication across time and space. Massey adds an additional parameter into Harvey's conceptualisation, which argues that the notion of *power* influences the way in which we are able to take public transport, venture out at night, take a specific job, move from country to country (etc.). Factors such as gender, ethnicity, physical disabilities are all determinants on whether you are able to partake, and not necessarily

a direct product of capital accumulation but rather a product of power imbalances due to, for example, colonialism, ex-colonialism, racism and unequal gender relations (Massey, 1993).

4.2. No form of Solidarity, Accommodationist and Transformatory solidarity

Johns (1989) has developed a criterion for differentiating between various solidarity campaigns and actions by trade unions, into either performing or/and acting through no form of solidarity (protectionist view), accommodationist or transformatory solidarity. The latter, transformative solidarity, attempts to prevent capital from using space to weaken workers organisations, with the aim to alter the labour-capital relationship in fundamental ways. Accommodationist solidarity seeks to *level* social conditions, however, the end goal is not to equalise capital investment. The core idea of international solidarity, i.e., solidarity with workers around the world regardless of nationality and geographical location, with the focus on common interests, has been increasingly harder to uphold in larger groups that are involved. The core ideas of international solidarity are easily competing against conflicting interests from within the organisations (Ibid).

The space-class conflict will theoretically result in either no form of solidarity, accommodationist or transformative solidarity of trade unions, which affects the outcome for those affected by it, in this case the non-EEA workers within the wild berry industry. The differences between the three forms of solidarity can be discerned through an examination of tactics and activities within the solidarity agendas in practice. Broad criteria have been developed and are used to rate the solidarity of organisations on a scale from zero to three. Level zero represent a protectionist view, without any solidarity. Level one represents accommodationist solidarity. Level two represents transformationist solidarity, and level three, still transformationist, represents a group that completely views itself as a part of the international working class with the aim to transform global capitalism, with no national allegiance. Table 2 shows the developed criteria related to level zero to three. Additional explanation of the different levels and what they entail follows.

Table 2: Definition of solidarity levels defined by Johns (1998), altered by me to fit into the context of the Swedish wild berry industry.

Criteria	Level: Zero	Level: One	Level: Two	Level: Three
Spatialised agenda - Recognises spatial divisions and uneven development as critical to workers struggles and seeks to transform capitals spatial agenda.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Definition of interests - Equates national workers with non-EEA workers	No	Interests seen as separate	Interests overlap but are not identical	Yes
Development policy/Full employment - Advocate's development policy to alleviate spatially uneven development; includes harmonising social relations upward and equalising investment	No	No	No	Yes
Capital retention/Repatriation - Seeks to improve working conditions while demanding that capital remain in foreign countries	No	Seeks capital retention in own national country	Yes	Yes
Level of activity - Numbers of protracted and thorough campaigns	Low	Medium	High	High

Explanation of the levels

The different levels represent fundamentally different views, actions and practical actions conducted by labour rights organisations. Level zero represents a protectionist view, where labour is defined by geographic belonging (i.e., workers are Swedish). The trade union align itself with Swedish capital, building a nationalist (and sometimes xenophobic/racist) sentiment among its members. Foreign competition is seen as the threat toward Swedish workers and lives of Swedish people both within Sweden and abroad. Level one solidarity sees the interests of their members as separate from the interests of workers from other countries. They see

solidarity as a useful mechanism for achieving the protection or improvement of their own standard of living through the elimination of pools of cheap labor that “lure” capital to other countries. Groups at this level of solidarity seek to reestablish the advantage of national workers in the global hierarchy of uneven development. These groups may join together with workers in other countries and assist foreign workers in their attempts to organise, while having an identity that remains national. Level one is accommodationist in character. Level two sees that the interests of workers abroad and nationally overlaps and interconnects with one another. However, the interests are not equal or identical. A solidarity group at this level will identify themselves as both national, i.e., Swedish, while also as a part of the international working class. Programs and campaigns are built on solidarity that are based on *shared* interests. The goal is to diminish spatial divisions between groups derived from global socio-economic uneven development. This level of solidarity is considered transformatory. Level three represents the highest level of solidarity, which represents groups that see themselves as a complete member of the international working class. This group work to assist workers everywhere, with the goal to undermine capital's spatial advantage of people and their lives, there is no national allegiance (Johns, 1998).

4.3. Application of the space-class conflict within the wild berry industry

The theoretical framework of the space-class conflict, that are resulting in either no form of, accommodationist or transformatory solidarity of labour rights organisations provides the analytical basis for this study, as well as guidance for the data collection procedures. The analytical procedure will in practice, within the findings and analysis chapter of the study, focus on the *descriptions* of the levels in relation to the criteria presented in Table 2, as explained under *Explanation of the levels*. These descriptions are in this study considered more important in relation to the findings, than to combine all criteria into a single form of solidarity. This has opened the opportunity to look at the different criteria separately, and to discern which kind of solidarity that fits each criterion. This will in turn, more clearly, show how the actions of labour rights organisations in relation to the wild berry industry in Sweden operates through different kind of solidary forms, depending on which criteria you look at.

5. Methods

This chapter will outline the research design, the procedures of data collection and validity procedures. Furthermore, limitations of the collected data will be discussed, and finally, it will be outlined how the following analysis has been performed.

5.1. Research Design

The study is carried out with the framework of a single qualitative case study design, in order to build an in-depth, contextual understanding of the Swedish wild berry industry and trade unionism (Bryman, 2012, pp. 66-68). The study follows a deductive theory approach, where the basis of what is known in previous literature and previous theoretical considerations of the space-class theory has shaped the research problem and aim, as well as the operational structure of the study. The final reflection concerning the findings states how the study contributes to existing knowledge surrounding the wild berry industry in Sweden and trade unionism, as well as how the study contributes to the theoretical conceptualisations of the space-class theory (Bryman, 2012, pp. 24-25).

Ontological positionality

The study takes the ontological position of social constructivism. Constructivism implies that social phenomena and categories are under constant state of revision, i.e., constructed by social actors. Change is therefore inevitable in the social world and in the meanings implied and used to understand it. This implies that the social actors participating in this study is in their turn constructing the knowledge surrounding the topic at hand, the Swedish wild berry industry and trade unionism, and that the researchers own accounts of the social world are equally constructed. This means that this study will represent a specific version of the reality of the topic at hand, and not a reality that can be regarded as definitive (Creswell and Poth, 2018, pp. 24, 35).

5.2. Data Collection

A common data collection practice within case studies is to include multiple information sources. This study has therefore used semi-structured interviews, documents and a secondary source as data.

Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted with key informants, derived from both the central and local level of Kommunal, and with experts on the subject of berry picking and trade unionism in Sweden and abroad. The overall sampling of research participants followed the form of purposive sampling, where participants were contacted due to them being relevant to the posed research questions that guides the study in its whole. Another aim of the purposive sampling has been to enhance variety in terms of the resulting sample, in terms of key characteristics and experiences related to the Swedish wild berry industry and trade unionism (Bryman, 2012, p. 418).

Key informants from LO could not participate, due to difficulties in terms of finding time for the scheduling of interviews. Three interviews were conducted with relevant union staff within Kommunal, that works or have historically worked with the organising of berry pickers and the relating collective agreement. The interviewed staff of Kommunal consisted of the current responsible person for the collective agreement on the central level, a local “berry coordinator” and a former ombudsman that have worked with these issues up until 2012 but are currently working at Kommunal as a human resource manager. Two interviews have been conducted with external experts on the subject of berry picking and trade unionism in Sweden, one with a journalist that has followed this subject and published reports annually since 2011 and one with a human and labour rights activist that has worked with the issues surrounding berry picking in Sweden and Finland since 2010 (*See* Table 3 for demographics). The inclusion of external experts on the subject has been a useful way to counter the bias of only including participants that are connected to Kommunal, which are the key organisation detected in this study (Parson & Knight, 2015, p. 96).

The interviews were set in the context of telephone or online video, since this was considered the most reasonable and safe seen to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, geographical distance, and time at hand. All of the interviews were conducted in the spring of 2021. Each interview took about 45 minutes – one hour and were transcribed directly afterwards. The audio-recordings derived from the interviews were transcribed manually. The process of transcription is selective. This is shown in this study through the filtering out of repetitions while transcribing. Manual transcription was used to avoid losing any data, and to reflect on the interview once again during the process of transcription (Davidsson, 2009).

Languages used were Swedish and English and did not require any translator (*See* Table 3). The interview conducted in English was with a respondent without English as a first language, which is the case for me as a Swedish native as well. This required several follow-up questions to fully understand each other and might have distorted the meaning and thoughts that would have been conveyed if we were to conduct the interview in both of our first languages. The age of the interviewees ranged between 55-64. Three of the interviewees were men and two were women. The main advantage with the semi-structured interviews, is that they are specifically connected to the research question and relating aims, and that it gives a rich and intimate understanding of reliability. Some of the limitations of the interview method in this case is that the researcher's presence might bias responses and that all respondents are not equally articulate (Adams, 2015).

The interview method required a thorough understanding of the topic beforehand, and an understanding of how the responses are filtered through the respondents' frames and understanding of issues and events. Semi-structured interviews are, to a degree, open-ended. It allowed respondents to talk freely, while staying on the topic at hand during the interview. This has opened up the opportunity for both the respondents and researcher to conduct the interview in an almost conversational setting, to explore thoughts and beliefs regarding the subject. A few, predetermined questions guided the interviews. These questions are connected to the research objectives at hand, in order to successfully be able to answer the posed research questions that guides the research in its whole. Two interview guides have been developed, one for respondents from Kommunal (*See* Appendix A) and one for the external experts (*See* Appendix B). Two interview guides were developed in order to differentiate between the thoughts and internal organisational information and the thoughts and experiences deriving from the external experts on the subject. However, it turned out that during the process of interviewing, new issues and thoughts were raised which required a number of follow-up questions. These follow up-questions are not included in the beforehand developed interview guides (Bryman, 2012, p. 471).

Table 3: Demographics of the respondents. Compiled by me.

Participant	Country of residence	Current position	Interview Type, Date, Language Used
A – Expert	Finland	Labour and human rights activist	Telephone (Signal), 14.4.2021. English
B – Expert	Sweden	Journalist and researcher	Telephone, 15.4.2021. Swedish
C – Kommunal officer	Sweden	Local Officer	Telephone, 16.4.2021. Swedish
D – Kommunal officer	Sweden	Central Officer	Microsoft teams, 21.4.2021. Swedish
E – Kommunal officer	Sweden	Human resource manager	Telephone, 28.4.2021. Swedish

Ethical considerations

Several incentives have been considered when recruiting individuals for an interview beforehand, as well as to safeguard research ethics. The incentives for the staff of Kommunal, as well as for those contacted at LO, is that the study is directly related to their work. Any expert that has been contacted have had direct insight into the subject and surrounding issues, in order to be considered a valid informant for this study as well as to safeguard their integrity as an expert. Every transcribed interview and recorded material have been directly stored in an external flash drive, in order to ensure that the information is safely stored and anonymous. A consent form that has stated the objectivity of the research (*See Appendix C*) as well as the aim of the study (*See Appendix D*), and the role of the participant in the study, has been sent out before-hand as well as been read out loud in the beginning of the interviews. Participants were informed about confidentiality. They were further informed that participation was completely voluntary, and that the participant should feel free to not answer any questions or stop the interview at any given time (Scheyvens, 2014, pp. 63, 84). A follow-up question regarding anonymity was sent by email the 7th of May 2021, to ensure that the participants felt confident with the way in which they are referred to. Replies were received between the 8th - 10th of May 2021. One of the respondents asked to further anonymise their name and position, which was complied with. The rest of the respondents stated that it was okay for them to publish their

names and positions, however, to create a logic and clear structure, all the respondents has been to a degree, anonymised.

Documents

Organisations generally produce a lot of documents, and this is the case for Kommunal as well. Documents that have been included as data was obtained by one of the respondents as a complement to the semi-structured interview. The documents are made up of parts of internal meeting protocols, sources of experience and short notes and is therefore not accessible for the public (Bryman, 2012, p. 550). However, these documents were not sent in their whole due to their cheer size, and parts have been purposively sampled by the respondent. Therefore, are these documents are viewed in the context where they were produced and who their implied readership might have been directed to originally (Bryman, 2012, p. 554). These documents are in this study viewed as representing a reality in their own right, and a compliment to the interview, rather than an insight onto the whole social and organisational reality of Kommunal.

Secondary data

In order to still include the view and opinion of LO in this study a podcast was included, publicly accessible and conducted in 2019, included as secondary data (Persson, 2019). The podcast broadly covers the topic of labour migration to Sweden since 2008 up until 2019, and one of the participants in the podcast were, and still is today, the responsible labour market researcher from LO that specifically works with issues and developments regarding labour market and migration issues and obstacles. This has been checked with a telephone operator at LO, at the 7th of Mars 2021. The podcast was recorded by Dagens Arena, which is a web-based news agency owned by Arenagruppen. Arenagruppen is a politically independent and progressive opinion-formation organisation that collaborates with popular movements and citizens to stimulate a future-oriented public debate (Arenagruppen, 2020). The main disadvantage with the usage of this secondary data is that it is not directly connected to the research questions and aims in the way that the semi-structured interviews are (Bryman, 2012, p. 312). However, this podcast cover topics closely related to posed research questions and aim, namely labour migration and exploitation on the labour market related to the migration law of 2008. Furthermore, the inclusion of the thoughts and ideas deriving from LO was considered as important in in the early onset of this study, this is an attempt to stay true to that, while still including material that is up to date.

5.3. Validity of the Study

Several validity procedures have been employed in order to demonstrate the credibility of the study. The ones that have been used are researcher reflexivity, member checking and a coding tree. Qualitative studies are interpretative, and therefore guided by the interpreters strategic, ethical and personal characteristics. Therefore, a result of the identifying process of these has been included in the beginning of this study, to convey a transparent picture for the reader (pp. 2-3). Two main points has been included, which are past experiences, and how past experiences shape interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 183-184). This validity procedure stems from a critical paradigm, with the purpose to include a reflection on how social, cultural, and historical experiences influences the interpretation of data (Guest & MacQueen & Namey, 2012, pp. 93-94). Member checking is a validity procedure where the main focus shifts toward the participants in the study, in this case the respondents that has been interviewed. It consists of taking the data and semi-finished interpretation back to the participants so that they can confirm the credibility of the information. This has been done by a presentation of the findings to the respondents who were willing to do so, for them to comment on their accuracy. An email was sent to all the respondents on the 24th of May 2021 and two meetings with two of the respondents was conducted via telephone on the 25th and 27th of May 2021. The respondents had the opportunity to either read the analysis or findings chapter or discuss it via telephone, both choose the latter. No additional comments were added during or after these meetings (Creswell, Miller, 2000). Further explanation of the coding tree as a validity procedure is outlined under *Data Analysis*.

5.4. Limitations of the generated data and the study

The main limitation of the study in its whole is that it is not possible to generalise the findings, due to the study being a single qualitative case study with the focus on the wild berry industry and trade unionism in Sweden. Furthermore, the participants in this study are few in number and purposively sampled. This means that one cannot derive general beliefs of whole populations depending on this data (Bryman, 2012, p. 406).

The study is an attempt to provide a possible answer as to why current inclusion strategies do not work out in terms of obtained working rights and correct wages according to the collective agreement for non-EEA migrants in the wild berry industry in Sweden, by focusing on the work

of relevant trade union structures, which in this case is Kommunal to a larger extent, and LO to a lesser extent. The data in this study cannot represent the views, thoughts or beliefs of non-EEA migrants themselves since they are not a part of the collected data. However, the whole aim and posed research questions of the study is based on earlier research on the topic where this group has been thoroughly included through various questionnaires and interviews (Ibid).

5.5. Data Analysis

The data obtained for this study, both from relevant documents, secondary data and the semi-structured interviews, have been analysed thematically in order to sufficiently be able to applicate the theoretical framework of the space-class conflict. Thematic analysis emphasises identifying, analysing and interpretation of data into patterns/codes of meaning. The thematic strategy to be used for this purpose is repetition. Repetition is a common theme-recognition technique and is based on the premise that if a concept reoccurs throughout and/or across transcripts, it is likely a theme. The number of repetitions needed to constitute a theme is not set in stone and is a function of the themes relevance to the research aims, objectives and judgment of the interpreter (Guest et al, 2012, p. 66; Bryman, 2012, p. 66). A coding tree has been developed (See Fig 3), that has two aims. First, to aid and be the basis of the analysis, second, to enable the reader to follow the analysis and research process. The additional function of the coding tree is therefore to further uphold the validity of the research (Nelson & Woods, 2011, p. 113). The following analytical procedure and discussion will follow the Definition of the solidarity levels (See Table 2) and the following *Explanation of the levels*, to capture the variety of information and to sufficiently categorise the work, actions, and campaigns by Kommunal, and to a lesser extent LO, into either performing no form of solidarity, accommodationist or transformatory solidarity, deriving from the discerned space-class conflict. Parts deriving from the earlier research and background will be included within the discussion as well. All quotes from respondent B-E (See Table 3) are translated from Swedish to English. The interview data deriving from respondent A did not require this since the interview was conducted in English.

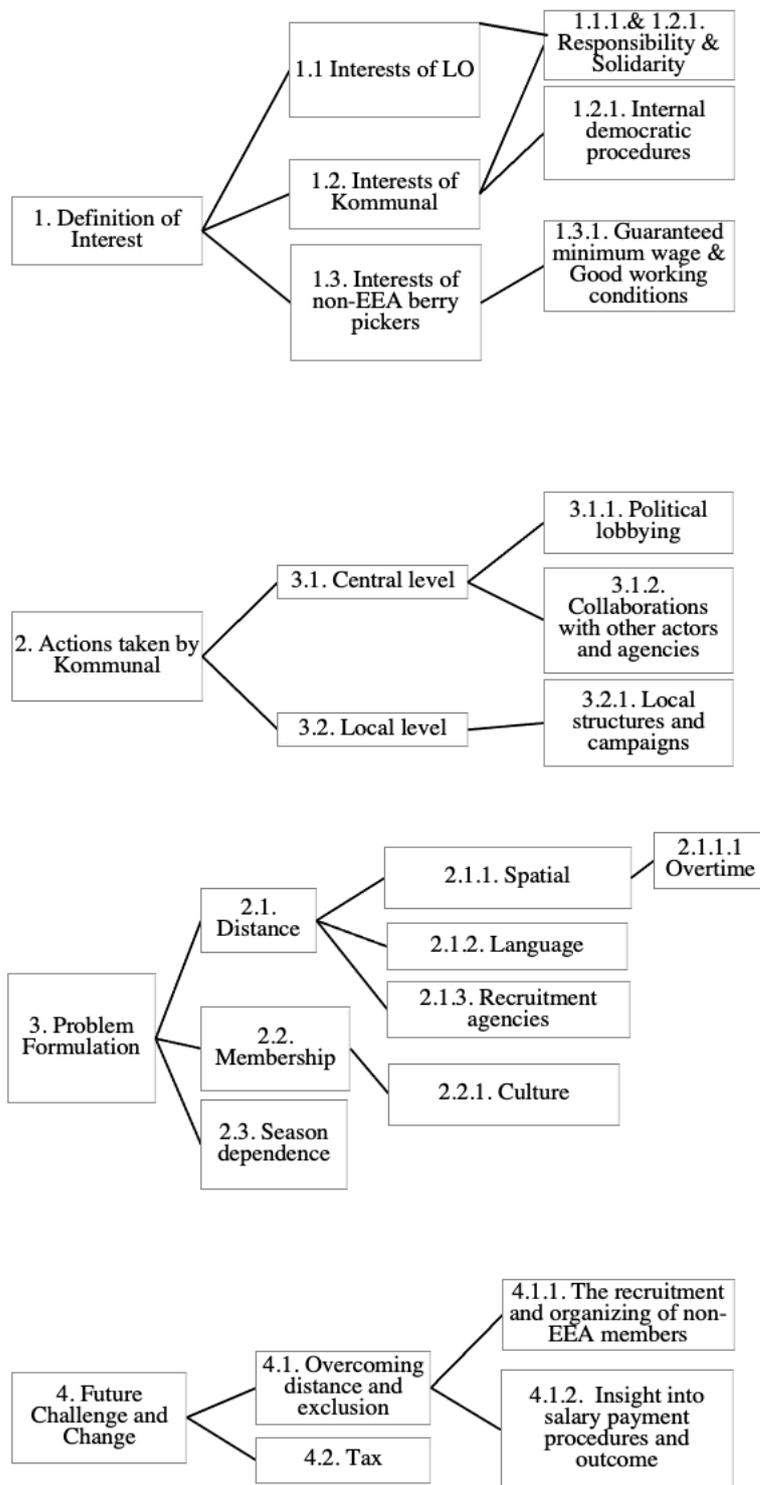


Fig. 3: Coding tree. Four themes and related categories. Compiled by me.

The coding tree (*See* Figure 3) is made up of four interrelated themes. The themes 1-3 are constructed with the basis in the theoretical framework (*See* Table 2). The fourth, future oriented theme is added since the majority of the participants in the study emphasised these aspects as important.

Explanation of the themes

Theme 1. *Definition of Interest* relates to the internal group and organisational interests of the different groups and organisations considered important for this study, that guides actions and standpoints taken by these groups and organisations. 2. *Actions taken by Kommunal* is related to theme number one, in the sense that the actual outcome of defined interests highly influences the work and actions of Kommunal in relation to non-EEA workers. 3. *Problem Formulation* is related to theme 1-2 since it is based on descriptions and experiences of problems that is considered to hinder the interests, actions and *reach* of groups and organisations. 4. *Future Challenge and Change* is a theme related, but to an extent detached from theme 1-3 since it is based on outcomes that *might or could possibly* in the future alter the current structure within the industry.

6. Findings and Analysis

The result of the coding and the analysis process is presented in this chapter. This includes the main findings of the collected data, discussed in relation to the background, existing literature, and the theoretical framework of the space-class conflict.

6.1. Spatialised Agenda

Overtime

The ‘spatialised agenda’ (Johns, 1998), the capitalistic processes embedded within the wild berry industry, has created the migration corridor now existing between Thailand and Sweden where between 3000 to 6000 people from Thailand, Isan, migrate each year in search for work as berry picker in the rural parts of Sweden (Hedberg & Axelsson & Abella, 2019, p. 1). Furthermore, the industry has gone from small scale to large scale due to the berries being attractive on the global market. Sometimes called the ‘midnight sun’, the sun that never really sets during the summer months in the Swedish northern regions, creates a higher level of antioxidants in the berries. Furthermore, the purpose of the berries, traditionally seen as a food product to combine with pancakes and other dishes, has been distorted. The demand from the beauty and medicine industry has opened a large global market for these berries instead (Kommunal Officer D & E). The berry pickers are the ones that lay the groundwork for this to be realised, often working long hard shifts way above the recommended work hours, between 12-16 hours per day (Expert A). As acknowledged by a respondent from Kommunal:

“They get paid per kilo when they pick. And of course, they're here in two months approximately and pick. They start by picking cloudberries, then they move on to blueberries then to lingonberries. And of course, they're here for two months, and the more they pick, the more they earn. So, they want to pick the bright hours of the day. It is quite bright up there during the summer.” (Kommunal Officer D)

It is acknowledged by the representatives from Kommunal through the interviews, from both the local and central level, that it is hard to detect this overtime because of both the ability of workers to pick late at night because of the summer sun, and because of the distance and size of the workplaces of the pickers, i.e., huge forest areas detached from local communities, from northern Dalarna County and upwards throughout northern Sweden (Kommunal Officer C & D & E). This creates flexibility on the part of the pickers:

“The berry pickers control their time very much themselves. Even if the employer tells them that you should be in this area and pick, it's like this, they hear that there is a lot of berries in one place, these people can travel 20 – 25 Swedish miles to pick these berries.” (Kommunal Officer C).

Seasonal dependence and debt toward recruitment agencies

Seasonal migrant workers coming from abroad is in general stressed when it comes to earning enough, to be able to make a profit to bring to their home communities and to make the whole process worthwhile (Oladipo, 2020; Verma, 2019). This is the case for the berry pickers coming from Thailand to work in Sweden during the wild berry season as well, as described by a respondent who is an expert and activist concerning the subject:

“They always stress that they will have no money to bring home. They drive themselves so much to work as hard as possible which is inhumane [...] they were counting the days and the cost. That drives them to work like robots and machines, because they are heavily indebted with the companies” (Expert A)

This debt is referred to the large costs that the Thai-based recruitment agencies, who are the employers, derive from the pickers each year. These costs include the flight tickets, living expenses (etc.), and is covered by a loan that the pickers take out in Thailand. As explained by an additional expert on the subject:

“All these berry pickers take out a loan to be able to get to Sweden and pick berries. The first month you work to repay this loan and the other month you can make money. This is a bit rough because it depends on availability of berries and kilo price and so on” (Expert B).

The availability of berries is a crucial part that depicts the profit for the workers, which creates a heavy dependence on the quality of the season. This dependency is also seen in other parts of the world where seasonal, agricultural, work takes place (Panda & Mishra, 2017). The quality of the season is also something that is impossible to predict beforehand, as argued:

“Because there is no way you can know of if it's a bad year or good year until June or July. The picker has already paid everything by then, they are prepared to come already, so they cannot decline that. You can't predict the abundance of the berries, a good year or bad year, this is one of the key indicators of long loss of profit for the pickers until now. This has always been and continuing to be a problem.” (Expert A)

And:

“2020 most recently, there were a lot of berries, then most people made more money than guaranteed in the collective agreement, the summer before 2019 it was very dry and then it was very tough for the berry pickers [...] these pickers have had to take a large part of the risk and a smaller part of risk has been taken by the berry companies” (Expert B).

A collective agreement without counterpart

The collective agreement is the main tool used to monitor and control the realisation of labour rights for the pickers by Kommunal, as it is legally binding, and is currently used as a guiding tool for the Swedish Migration Agency when accepting employer applicants within this, and other, industries (Kommunal Officer D). A collective agreement process is usually conducted with an employer organisation or a counterpart, however, a counterpart in Sweden could not be found in 2009, when the first collective agreement was set in place. A different way of setting the agreement was used instead, as explained:

“It turned out that we developed an agreement that we used in other sectors, within agricultural and green industry and so on. And then we translated it into berry picking. Then we drew it with each company separately, so they drew it locally with us, you could say. The basis was that they had to have a guaranteed salary. That was the most important thing there was, that you did not sit there without money, but you controlled what the minimum wage was.” (Kommunal Officer E)

The minimum pay is the guaranteed pay you are to receive as an organised berry picker in Sweden through the collective agreement. This sum is currently at SEK 22 674 per month. Any berries that you pick that exceeds this sum in total will be added to your pay. Additional regulations were added to the collective agreement and utilised in the 2014 season, that further regulates living and working conditions (Kommunal Officer D). However, despite the collective agreement set in place, it is the abundance of berries and the season that largely depicts the sum that the berry pickers receive as pay in the end, as explained:

“What Kommunal has done with it has been of great importance with the collective agreement and that you are out on all these facilities [...] this money that goes to the pickers later, it is paid out and comes out then in Thailand as Thai baht. And how to behave, to check that these salaries have been paid properly, it's like, and it's just a paycheck that every single picker gets, and these recruitment agencies have no obligation to show payrolls and such. In addition, if they were to send payrolls, it is very easy to fake them. You should really need to check this out on the spot. You know that there are individual pickers being deceived and there is a lawsuit in Thailand today, since 2019, where a number of pickers

say that they did not receive a salary according to the collective agreement, when it was worse with the berries.” (Expert B).

The pay that the pickers receive do not always match with the minimum pay, as explained by respondents and the earlier study concerning this subject (Tollefsen et al, 2020). This is in general blamed on the work of the recruitment agencies by the respondents, both by the experts and the representatives from Kommunal, who are accused of either deceiving or deducting too large sums from the workers (Kommunal Officer D & E, Expert A & B). The distance between Sweden and Thailand, alongside the currency change, and the inability to check the actual pay from the bank is argued to be some of the reasons as to why Kommunal is unable to thoroughly check what the pickers receive in Thailand from the recruitment agencies (Expert B). This problem is usually found in GCC’s, such as the wild berry GCC, where the usage of outsourcing of labour recruitment diminishes the level and reach of actors who aim to protect the workers. It is a way of delimiting the collective structures imbedded within trade union structures (Axelsson & Hedberg, 2018; Allen & Cochrane, 2010).

It can happen that Kommunal are able to meet representatives from the recruitment agencies locally in person since this was introduced as a requirement (Kommunal Officer C). However, the main communication and collaboration exists between Kommunal and the berry companies, (called the “clients”), in Sweden that receive the workers from the recruitment agencies in Thailand each year. As explained by the respondent currently responsible for the collective agreement:

“We do not have much contact with the employers, the recruitment agency, but we mainly have the contact with their clients in Sweden. Maybe that's why it worked well for a couple of years now, because now we have had a few, there are about ten clients here in Sweden usually. And they have been with us a couple of years now too, so they also know what applies, they have to take care of themselves, otherwise they go out as well. And they have to pay, it's a collective agreement like, they have to pay contributions to pensions and stuff, and if they do not do that then they get nothing approval by us the following year”.
(Kommunal Officer D).

However, one of the experts on the subject brought up that, as it is very hard to get insight into the salary payment process, it is equally as hard to detect responsibility and proof of that responsibility. As explained in relation to the earlier mentioned 2019 season:

“The Swedish berry companies pay the recruitment agencies. The recruitment agencies must pay salaries to the pickers. [...] but what is very difficult to prove and know about is that if the Swedish berry companies paid a lower remuneration to the recruitment agencies. Are they also involved in this? Or are the mistakes made only by the recruitment agencies. The Swedish berry companies deny all knowledge of this. It is very difficult to be able to prove anything in a case like this.” (Expert B)

The reason why the berry companies in Sweden uses recruitment agencies in the first place was that this was introduced as a solution to avoid paying tax in Sweden, a solution accepted by Swedish agencies and authorities. However, this system might change now, as it is now decided by the Swedish government that the industry will be taxed from the 2021 season and onwards, which is heavily criticised by the berry companies. A probable outcome will be that the price of the berries will rise, and that the companies will attract fewer pickers coming from Thailand, and even increase the usage of “free pickers”, pickers from the EU that picks and sell without having an employer, that are outside of the reach of Kommunal and the collective agreement because of this (Kommunal Officer D). The working conditions for free pickers are described by both the local representative from Kommunal, and from one of the external expert respondents, as being well below the standard of work that the Thai berry pickers currently have. The free pickers are even argued being subjects to labour trafficking (Kommunal Officer C & Expert B). One way to avoid this outcome would be to introduce fair-trade marking of the berries, according to the responsible representative for the collective agreement from Kommunal, as explained:

“Yes, some kind of certified berries. Those who buy them should make sure that there has been right working conditions for the pickers. That should be it. This is something that grocery retailers and other organisations should include, the right salary and good working conditions and such as well.” (Kommunal Officer D).

The representatives of Kommunal does recognise the spatial divisions, deriving from global uneven economic development, as critical to the struggles and incentives of the seasonal workers coming from Thailand, as well as for the “free” pickers from the EU. It is explained that the berry picking activity works as an important source of income for the workers coming from Thailand, something that has contributed to the development of their home region. This is something that is shared by many labour migrants and developing areas around the world (Oladipo, 2020). Many are therefore returning year after year. As explained:

“But I can say, they come here, it really is about the same people, about ten percent of them are replaced every year. [...] The profit on this is good in relation to their wages in Thailand. It can also be seen in this area they come from, from northeastern Thailand, it's rice farmers and so on. The area has begun to flourish. It's new schools, it's fun to see.” (Kommunal Officer D)

And, while explaining that native Swedes are uninterested of the hard work and relatively low wage of the berry picking, another claim is made:

“Poor countries take every straw to get the little extra. You are attracted here because you can make money. [...] There is no competition out there in the labor market in any case.” (Kommunal Officer C)

6.2. Definition of Interests

Conflict between solidarity and the requirement of membership

The main conflict that can be discerned within the solidary work of Kommunal toward non-EEA workers is between the will and effort to help, and the recent requirement of membership decided upon by the members of Kommunal. It was decided during the last congress, which is the highest deciding democratic platform of Kommunal, in 2019, that a membership should work as an insurance, where you need to be a paying member of Kommunal before something happens at your workplace or in relation to your work to get individual help with a case (Kommunal Officer D). A membership in a trade union is not something that is negative per se, on the contrary, it is argued as the key to increase inclusivity and further democratise the trade union, by earlier research (Hyman, 1997; Alberti et al, 2013; Marino, 2015), and by respondents in this study. However, despite several campaigns launched by Kommunal to recruit non-EEA members from the berry picking industry, there has not been one recruited as a member before labour rights violations has occurred. Non-EEA workers have historically been recruited as members when labour rights violations *have* happened, not before (Kommunal Officer D). Campaigns has included material printed in Thai, that explains the temporal membership as well as the aim and work of Kommunal overall. This has been distributed at the accommodation sites where the workers live in Sweden, and by the embassies both in Sweden and in Thailand. Kommunal also added a clause to the collective agreement, in order to be able to still reach the workers, as explained,

“According to MBL², you must have members in a company to be able to visit the workplace as a workers' organisation, we have written this off in this agreement. We do not have to have some members to get there, we can get in anyway” (Kommunal Officer D).

It is further explained by both respondents at the central level of Kommunal, that the collective agreement is the main tool used in relation to the pickers, regardless of whether there are members at the workplace or not, as explained:

“If you break the collective agreement, then we will probably always react. [...] then it is the individual, whatever problem that might entail, our Congress has decided that you cannot come in retrospect.” (Kommunal Officer E).

It is further explained that a membership is important to attain, especially for the individual, but also for Kommunal in order to detect and be able to react fast if anything happens. As explained:

“For a while we were thinking that we would write something in the collective agreement, that the employer would ensure that virtually everyone becomes a member. But it would be difficult, it is a freedom of choice, one cannot force anyone into a union. Then we would have the strength in, when whatever happens, we can dispute it right away. Because they would be members with us.” (Kommunal Officer D)

Problem formulation

The general answer by all the respondents in the study has been that problems in the wild berry industry have declined significantly since 2014, when additional regulations were set in place. The respondents from Kommunal describes how a significant share of resources have been, and are being, put toward this industry by Kommunal. It is explained that the internal structure of Kommunal is made up of thirteen regions, where 5-6 regions are working with questions concerning the wild berry industry (Kommunal Officer D & E). This includes extensive local supervision and collaboration between the region's local offices, called “sections”, local and central collaboration with concerned agencies, central and local political lobbying, and so forth (Kommunal Officer C & D & E). Additional codes of conducts derived from the berry companies in Sweden has contributed as well (Kommunal Officer D). One of the internal meeting protocols derived from Kommunal regarding the wild berry industry shows that there is an internal process that aims to improve the work of Kommunal, in terms of future planning

² MBL is the Co-Determination in the Workplace Act in Swedish law (Law 1976:580).

and collaborations between sections and regions (Internal Meeting Protocol, 2015). However, several factors are put forward that are contributing to the problems still existing, which is the lack of members and the compromised regulatory reach.

Problem formulation – Language barriers

The fact that the workers, as well as the representants from the recruitment agencies, almost exclusively speaks Thai, creates a high dependency on interpreters (Kommunal Officer C & Expert B). This is explained as being a hard technicality to always attain, and alternative methods has therefore been used, as described:

“During these years, we have learned a little about gestures and everything. Sometimes it's almost a little circus for both us and berry pickers when we talk to each other. But they recognise us when we come.” (Kommunal Officer C)

Problem formulation – Cultural differences

The main explanation by the respondents from Kommunal to why it is hard to recruit members is in a speculative format, centered around the experience and habit of trade union work, structures and culture deriving from each country. As explained:

“The Swedish model is strong. People in many other parts of the world may not even understand what it means to be part of a union. In many places there are corrupt unions that are just trying to get members to get money. So, the culture is, it is very different.” (Kommunal Officer D).

And,

“It can be easy to become complacent [...] I thought we did a lot so that they could be involved and so on, but it is not always certain that all countries have the same view of what a trade union organisation is, which we in Sweden have. They can associate it with other things than that, with us it is still on such a way that it is quite peaceful to join the union.” (Kommunal Officer E).

One of the experts, that has experience from trade union organising in Thailand, further explains that there is no trade union or democratic structure in Thailand that are actively aiming to protect these workers. As explained, during a discussing on the topic of membership:

“Scandinavian trade unions are still the strongest in the world, to be the safeguards of labour rights. And they have shown that they did, and they can, but they have stopped from further attempts [...] because having people organised as members will give them ability to negotiate, and the only way to secure protection and improvement of the working life.” (Expert A).

Problem formulation – LO vs. Kommunal

The attainment of membership, a guaranteed pay for the workers and the responsibility are the key traits deriving from the interviews with the respondents from Kommunal. Kommunal does not seek to diminish the quantity of workers coming from Thailand, but rather make sure that there are good working conditions for the workers while they are working in Sweden under the Swedish model, which intersects with the capital retention aspect to be found in the space-class conflict (See Table 2) (Kommunal Officer C & D & E). Kommunal has, alongside LO, criticised the labour migration law from 2008, stating that workers from third countries are being the victims of wage dumping, since there are workers already in Sweden that are able, and willing, to work in these sectors, with good working conditions and fair pay. One of the experts, as well as the central representatives from Kommunal state that this does not apply to the workers within the berry industry, implying that enough has been done to safeguard their rights and that there is no competition on the labour market concerning this occupation (Expert B & Kommunal Officer D). However, a representant from LO stated that, in comparison to the argumentation of Kommunal, when asked about their stance and critique against the labour migration law in relation to berry picking that:

“LO believes that, picking berries in the forest, newcomers can do” (Nandorf, 31.09-13, in Persson, 2019).

LO is referring to the large number of refugees (the newcomers) that arrived in Sweden in 2015, called the “2015 wave”, and to the debate regarding “simple jobs”, that followed. LO is implying and having the stance that the work of berry picking is an occupation, amongst other occupations, that should go to the newly arrived refugees in Sweden, instead of making up additional, unnecessary simple occupational alternatives (Nandorf, 5.36-6.26, in Persson, 2019). The difference between LO and Kommunal is clear here, in terms of the problem formulation regarding the labour migration law and the berry picking industry. LO is, when employing the framework of the space-class conflict, employing a national, bordering onto protectionist view of solidarity toward workers within Sweden. Kommunal, on the other hand, does not view the current structure of the berry industry as a part of the larger critique against

the labour migration law, but rather as an exception where labour rights have been able to be largely realised through efforts from Kommunal, governmental agencies and changes within the industry (Johns, 1998). It is described by all of the respondents from Kommunal that there is no competition on the Swedish labour market, since the work is in general considered tough, low-paid and has in general a bad reputation in the media due to the number of labour rights violations that occurred, in general before, additional regulations were employed. Kommunal does not seek to attach this occupation to any certain group, however, it is important, regardless of who you are, that you are to attain the rights stated in the collective agreement (Kommunal Officer D & C). The main critique is directed at the usage of “free pickers”, as described under *A collective agreement without counterpart*.

Problem formulation – Resources

It is further explained that it is a question about resources for Kommunal, as explained:

“I think we in Kommunal have done what we could, as far as we can, because they are not members even. Yes, we probably won’t get much further.” (Kommunal Officer D).

Additionally:

“You should acknowledge that there is a tension here because then you have other groups in Kommunal, assistant nurses, preschools and so on, lots of different groups that have tough working conditions [...] but there is still tension as well, if it takes too much time it can affect other member groups in Sweden, who might say that you do not have time with us and you devote yourself to people who are not even members” (Expert B).

6.3. Form of Solidarity

This part of the result and analysis chapter will categorise the result of the discerned space-class conflict of Kommunal into either performing no form of solidarity, transformatory or accommodationist solidarity. Each criterion of the theoretical framework (*See Table 2*) will be answered separately, based on the info presented up until now within the results and analysis chapter.

Spatialised agenda - Kommunal does recognise the spatial divisions deriving from uneven global development as critical for non-EEA workers struggles, and incentives to partake, within

the wild berry industry. It is argued that the aim and need to earn as much as possible, spurs the workers to stretch the working hours above recommended working hours, which is hard for Kommunal to detect due to the work being remote and hard to reach. However, it is hard to argue that the aim of Kommunal is to transform the agenda of capital, i.e., the structure of the industry, besides the will to ensure that working rights, including salaries according to the collective agreement, are being followed *within* Sweden, under the Swedish Model. This is shown when the main communication and collaboration occur between the “clients” in Sweden, the berry companies that hire the labour from the recruitment agencies. The employers, the recruitment agencies, are often the subject to critique, and harder to reach due to communication and distance barriers, according to Kommunal. However, there is no attempt from Kommunal to alter the relation between the non-EEA workers and the recruitment agencies abroad, which is where the main problems have emerged in terms of salary payments, as shown in this study as well as through previous studies on the subject.

Definition of interests - It is in the interest of Kommunal to organise and recruit members, to faster detect problems and be able to directly dispute it. It is also decided by Kommunal, since 2019, that you need to be a member *beforehand*, which goes against the practice historically employed for the workers within the wild berry industry. Additionally, there has not been a single one non-EEA worker recruited as a member beforehand despite a number of efforts being made to do so in regard to the wild berry industry. An internal conflict can be discerned within Kommunal here, which is the conflict between the solidarity toward non-EEA workers within the wild berry industry, and the democratic will to ensure that the ones who are receiving this solidary are paying members. Another, interrelated, conflict of interests can be discerned between Kommunal and LO, which is the way in which the work of berry picking is subject to competition on the Swedish labour market or not. The argument of LO is that refugees, who are looking for work in Sweden, should be the ones who receive the work as wild berry pickers. Kommunal on the other hand, do not share this view. Kommunal state that there is no competition on the Swedish labour market and that the work of picking wild berries is in general considered hard, and therefore relatively low-paid in this regard. The main critique of Kommunal is directed at the usage and condition of work for free pickers, who Kommunal is unable to represent. The general view of Kommunal is that the interests of the non-EEA workers do overlap with the interests of native Swedish workers and Kommunal, in terms of willingness to work under good working conditions with guaranteed minimum pay. However, the interests of Kommunal to only dispute cases with paying members does not overlap with the degree of

recruited non-EEA members. The reason for this is argued being that the act to become a member in a trade union is not viewed as peaceful by the non-EEA workers as it is viewed by native Swedish workers under the Swedish model. This view is argued being derived from *cultural differences*, highly dependent on where you originate from. It is, for example, argued that trade unions in other parts of the world are viewed as being corrupt which might, according to the respondents from Kommunal, have translated onto the view of Kommunal in Sweden by non-EEA workers. However, there is no attempt to further develop the strategies regarding member recruiting by Kommunal, besides the attempts already put in place. Additionally, the way in which MBL has been written of within the collective agreement is a clear disincentive regarding the recruitment of non-EEA members, as explained on page 38, since Kommunal can still work with issues surrounding the wild berry industry without having the need to recruit members from this group.

Development policy – Kommunal does not seek to alleviate spatial uneven development, when looking at the dependency pattern of workers coming from Thailand, Isan. The aim of Kommunal is to ensure that working rights, according to the collective agreement, is being followed in Sweden regardless of where you come from. Kommunal is critical to the migration law, that has given rise to exploitation in the Swedish labour market. However, it is argued by Kommunal that this critique does not apply on the wild berry industry, since various changes has been made and since the workers have received a substantial amount of solidarity, in terms of resources, campaigns and through the restructuring of the system. There is no stated will or aim to equalise social and economic development between workers in Thailand and Sweden. Furthermore, there is no stated effort to overcome the structural problems inherent within the usage of the recruitment agencies abroad.

Capital retention/Repatriation – Kommunal does not seek to keep capital, deriving from the work of wild berry picking within Sweden, by for example, restricting work for workers within Sweden, as in the case of LO. The aim of Kommunal is to ensure that labour rights are following the collective agreement for any worker who works in the industry, including that the minimum pay, the earned pay, is received by the workers. This has, however, been difficult to detect and regulate due to seasonal dependencies, distance, lack of resources and lack of recruited members.

When taking all the above answered criteria into account and applying them to the Definition of Solidarity (See Table 2), combined with the *Explanation of the levels*, one can discern that the solidarity will, aim and action of Kommunal toward organised non-EEA members is mainly accomodationialist and to some extent, transformatory. That is first, Kommunal is recognising the struggles of organised non-EEA members as being derived from uneven global development and is, to some extent, aiming to shape the agenda of capital in terms of the application of the collective agreement. However, there are no stated act to further *change* the structure that enables labour rights violations in terms of too low salary payment for the workers, even if there is a general understanding of these problems. Second, the interests of Kommunal, and native Swedes, are overlapping with the interests of organised non-EEA workers in terms of the will to work under good working conditions with guaranteed pay according to the collective agreement. However, there are factors that are contributing to conflictual interests here. These factors concern membership and whether there is competition on the labour market or not. Third, there is no stated will or aim of Kommunal to alleviate spatial (global) uneven development through the solidary actions toward non-EEA workers, besides the will and aim to ensure that the collective agreement is followed within Sweden. Fourth, there is no will of Kommunal to restrict the occupation of berry picking to native Swedish, or nationally based, workers. The intention of Kommunal is to ensure that labour rights are obtained via the collective agreement and through membership, the latter has not however been realised due to the conflictual interests.

Transformatory solidarity is a solidarity form which sees that the interests of workers abroad overlaps and interconnects with the interests of workers, nationally based. However, the interests are not equal or identical (Johns, 1998). A solidarity group, in this case Kommunal, identifies as both national, i.e., Swedish, simultaneously as a part of the international working class, in terms of the aim and work to represent the interests of non-EEA workers against the employers. Programs and campaigns are built on solidarity that are based on shared interests. The goal is to diminish spatial divisions between working groups that create the global uneven development (Ibid), which in this case do apply to an extent. The goal to apply Swedish work standards to curb exploitation within the wild berry industry has, according to Kommunal, worked. However, there are factors contributing, deriving from global social and economic uneven development, that still prevails and hinder this development. The way in which the aim and work of Kommunal fails to include these factors makes the solidarity work more in line with accomodationist solidary, which is a lower level of solidarity that seeks to just *level*

social conditions, not to transform the agenda of capital (Ibid). This includes the continuous acceptance of recruitment agencies which are, partly, beyond the reach of Kommunal, the conflict between the solidarity of Kommunal toward non-EEA workers within the wild berry industry and the recent change regarding membership, communication and spatial barriers, and possible conflicting cultural attitudes toward the role of trade unions in general. These factors testify that, similarly to earlier research on the subject presented in this study (Alberti et al, 2013; Perrett et al, 2011; Marino, 2015) it is difficult to include migrant workers into existing structures of trade unions, especially in terms of member recruiting. The argument presented by these studies is that trade unions need to employ equality and diversity into their recruitment practices, in to order to engage migrant workers. These studies have shown that a participatory form and learning approach is to be preferred, rather than a top-down centrally driven procedure. The work of Kommunal toward non-EEA workers, in terms of inclusion, might require a similar approach of learning, through participatory practices. This could help ensure that the rights stated in the collective agreement is followed beyond the Swedish borders, which would reflect a *transformatory* form of solidarity.

7. Conclusion

This study has explored alternative answers as to why the formal inclusion process of non-EEA workers has not provided sufficient outcome in relation to obtained labour rights, in terms of guaranteed income. The theoretical framework of the space-class conflict has guided both the formulation of the research questions as well as the analysis of the findings. This approach has enabled a global perspective on the work and activities of labour rights organisations, considering the interrelated issues deriving from global uneven development in relation to workers' rights for foreign workers. In the introduction, two research questions were posed, these where: *'In what ways can a space-class conflict be discerned within the Swedish labour rights organisations that are connected to the Swedish wild berry industry?'*, and *'How can a discerned space-class conflict work as an alternative answer to why current inclusion strategies fail to bring about fulfilled labour rights for organised non-EEA berry pickers?'*. The questions will be answered separately followed by some concluding remarks.

The main space-class conflict that that can be discerned within the solidary work of Kommunal toward non-EEA workers is between the will and effort to help, and the recent requirement of membership decided upon by the members of Kommunal. Despite a number of launched campaigns by Kommunal to recruit non-EEA members from the berry picking industry, there has not been a single non-EEA worker recruited as a member before labour right violations has occurred. This is something that directly affects the degree to which non-EEA workers will be able to attain help for individual cases, and indirectly affects the level of insight that Kommunal will be able to gain insight into the industry. The decision to view the membership as an insurance is excluding non-EEA workers, as it is now. Therefore, this is a question about inclusivity, but it is also a question about uneven global socio-economic development according to the theoretical framework of the space-class conflict. Uneven global socio-economic development has enabled the Swedish labour market to develop the Swedish Model, where workers have attained a strong tradition of labour rights, through collective action, i.e., through the membership within trade unions. This tradition has been described as culture, by the respondents. The reason as to why the non-EEA workers is recruited to such a low extent is equally described in cultural terms, however, one can discern through the theoretical framework of the space-class conflict that this is something derived from uneven socio-economic development.

To answer the second research question, one needs to consider several factors that contribute to the extent to which Kommunal can detect and regulate violations against the rights stipulated in the collective agreement, in relation to the discerned conflict regarding membership. Non-EEA workers are employed by recruitment agencies, based in Thailand. It is difficult for Kommunal to gain insight into the salary payment process due to this distance. It is also difficult for Kommunal to detect overtime, since the workers are working in remote forest areas. Non-EEA workers also have the incentive to work overtime, due to having large loans to repay and a will to go home with revenue. Another contributing factor to this is that the workers are highly dependent on the condition of the season, where the berries are abundant one season, and few in the other, which is impossible to predict beforehand. The condition of the season is directly linked to when recent problems regarding the salary payment have occurred, when looking at the 2019 season. Additional factors detected are language barriers, and to a degree, a question about the view of trade unions derived from previous experiences. However, these are factors that might, arguably, change if the degree of attained memberships by non-EEA workers are to be raised and utilised correctly. A participatory approach to the recruitment process might be a way forward, instead of a centralised top-down approach, as shown in studies conducted in similar contexts. Inclusive practices that attract non-EEA workers as members could be the way forward, and a way forward beyond the borders of Sweden.

Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to conduct larger studies on inclusion strategies employed by trade unions in relation to seasonal migrant workers, as well as to include the perspectives from seasonal migrant workers themselves. One aspect to further include here should concern regional differences of the work conducted by trade unions covering large areas, such as Sweden. This might provide a more in-depth understanding as to why the degree of recruited members are low, and how to change this. Additionally, further research is needed about the dependency on the condition of the season, and how to develop and employ strategies to avoid this being a serious risk for seasonal workers.

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APPENDIX A (TRANSLATED FROM SWEDISH TO ENGLISH)

INTERVIEW GUIDE KOMMUNAL

General background information:

Gender?

Age?

Name?

Position within the organisation?

Kommunals role in relation to foreign berry pickers

How is the situation for foreign berry pickers in Sweden today, according to your knowledge and expertise?

How has Kommunal worked to include organised foreign berry pickers in collective agreements since 2009?

Follow-up question 1: To what extent has Kommunal experienced that these collective agreements are complied with?

Follow-up question 2: To what extent has Kommunal worked to ensure that collective agreements are complied with?

Follow-up question 3: To what extent have berry pickers been involved in the drafting of the collective agreement?

What does a membership in Kommunal entail?

Follow-up question 1: Is there a difference between the regular membership in Kommunal and the temporary one for seasonal workers that was introduced in 2017?

Follow-up question 2: In your opinion, how has it been for the temporary membership in Kommunal so far?

Follow-up question 3: What is the purpose of the temporary membership in Kommunal?

Hur ser Kommunal på avregleringen av arbetskraftsinvandringen 2008 i relation till organiserade utländska bärplockare i Sverige idag?

How does Kommunal view the additional restrictions and regulations introduced after 2008?

Has Kommunal carried out any / any special campaigns aimed at organised foreign berry pickers?

Follow-up question 1: What were the reasons for these campaigns?

Follow-up question 2: What goals were set for these campaigns?

Follow-up question 3: Does Kommunal consider that the goal of the campaigns has been achieved?

Interests of Kommunal

How does Kommunal safeguard the interests of its members in general?

Would you say that the interests of Kommunal coincide with the interests of organised foreign berry pickers today?

Further questions

Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B (TRANSLATED FROM SWEDISH TO ENGLISH)

INTERVIEW GUIDE EXPERT

General background information:

Gender?

Age?

Name?

Position within the organisation?

The role of trade unions vis-à-vis berry pickers in Sweden

How is the situation for organised berry pickers in Sweden today?

How have the Swedish unions handled the labour rights issues surrounding berry picking in Sweden since 2009?

How have the Swedish unions handled the labour rights issues surrounding berry picking in Sweden before 2009?

To what extent can the Swedish trade unions ensure that working conditions are good and complied with for berry pickers who come to Sweden today?

What obstacles are there that make the Swedish unions able / unable to ensure that working conditions are good and complied with for berry pickers who come to Sweden today?

The interests of trade unions in Sweden

What is the general role of trade unions in Sweden today?

How do the Swedish unions safeguard the interests of their members?

Do the interests of Swedish trade unions coincide with the interests of organised berry pickers today?

The ability of trade unions to influence working conditions globally

What is the role of the Swedish trade union movement internationally today?

Is there a difference between the interests of organised trade union workers abroad versus in Sweden?

In what way has uneven global economic and social development affected the work of trade unions in Sweden?

In what way has uneven global economic and social development affected Swedish unions' work abroad?

Do Swedish trade unions want to reduce global uneven economic and social development?

In what way do Swedish trade unions work to reduce global uneven economic development?

Further questions

Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX C

VERBAL CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

The study: Organised non-EEA workers, trade unions and labour rights in the Swedish wild berry industry

To the participant of the study:

Your involvement in this recorded interview is voluntary. You may, therefore, withdraw your consent at any time during the interview or refuse to answer any question that you may feel uncomfortable with. All of your responses will be kept confidential and will be reported only in aggregated form. The collected data will not be shared with any other parties.

This research has no commercial value and will be used for my university degree only.

Thank you in advance,

Tilly Nygren Laestander

APPENDIX D

Purpose of the study

This study is a thesis in the subject of human geography at Lund University. The name of the study is “Organised non-EEA workers, trade unions and labour' rights in Swedish wild berry industry” and is written in English.

The purpose of the study is to look at the role of Swedish workers organisations for organised foreign berry pickers. This is done by interviewing people from different organisations who possess relevant insight and knowledge in the subject. By organised I do *not* mean the so-called "Free pickers", as today they are not covered by requirements for trade union memberships.

For further questions, do not hesitate to contact me at

Phone: XXX - XXX XX XX

Mail: ti3261la-s@student.lu.se

Sincerely,

Tilly Nygren Laestander

Student, Lund University