Chapter 2. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter develops the research design of the dissertation. Understanding and producing an analysis of union formative processes, as is the research objective of the present dissertation, is achieved through the use of processual analysis and qualitative research methods. Firstly, the advantages of a qualitative approach are revealed through engagement with current methodological debates in the social sciences literature. Next, the principles of processual research, as introduced by Pettigrew (1997), are outlined. An exploratory-explanatory case study design is then introduced. This is followed by a description of the criteria upon which the choice of case studies was based. Research methods used to collect data are discussed after which the methods of data analysis are presented. The chapter then concludes with a reflection on the limitations of the methodological approach.

2.1. Qualitative Research

Exploration and analysis of IR processes and problems are particularly well suited to a range of qualitative techniques and case study research designs (Kitay and Callus 1998, Whipp 1998). This research methodology was initially viewed as a less desirable form of inquiry; case studies have been criticised for their lack of rigorousness, their systematic handling of data and scientific generalisations (ibid). However, as a more formalised use of case study designs, which has been developed by several authors (e.g. Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, George and Bennett 2005, Yin 1994, 2009), has showed, well-designed case studies can systematically report all evidence and generalisation from their evidence is possible.

The main critiques of case study methodology are rooted in a division between 'the positivist-theory testing-quantitative' and 'constructivist-theory generating-qualitative' research (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, Whipp 1998). In the mid-1980s, Anthony Giddens responded to the division between qualitative and quantitative research by introducing the concept of "the duality of structure" (Giddens 1984, 1993). Giddens argued that, "[o]nce the point of this [the duality of structure] is understood, the idea that there is either a clear-cut division or a necessary opposition between qualitative and quantitative methods disappears" (Giddens 1984: 333).

Following Giddens' theoretical interventions, this more formalised use of case study methodology has been further developed through related methodological approaches

including the 'grounded theory' and the approach of 'theory building from case studies' (Eisenhardt 1989, Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, George and Bennett 2005, Kitay and Callus 1998). According to these approaches, the emphasis of case studies "[…] on developing constructs, measures, and testable theoretical propositions make inductive case study research consistent with the emphasis on testable theory within mainstream deductive research" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007: 25). King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 7) stress that in so far as both qualitative and quantitative research methods follow the general rules of scientific inference ("reliability, validity, certainty, and honesty of our conclusions"), the methodological and substantive differences between qualitative and quantitative research are only 'stylistic' and thus insignificant. George and Bennett (2005) only partly agree with the argument of King, Keohane and Verba. They argue that case studies are only similar to statistical methods and formal modelling in epistemological terms:

> *"Epistemologically, all three approaches attempt to develop logically consistent models or theories, they derive observable implications from these theories, they test these implications against empirical observations and measurements, and they use the results of these tests to make inferences on how best to modify the theories tested" (ibid: 6).*

George and Bennett further argue (ibid) that case studies, statistical methods and formal modelling do differ from each other methodologically. For example, differences exist in terms of the kinds of reasoning regarding case selection, the operationalisation of variables and the use of inductive and deductive approaches to draw conclusions.

The structural advantages of a qualitative research design are particularly beneficial for an examination of the process of development of worker representation by trade unions. Firstly, the use of case studies "[…] focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings" (Eisenhardt 1989: 534) and opens a possibility to study phenomenon in a real-life context (Kitay and Callus 1998, Yin 2009: 18). Secondly, qualitative research designs are better suited to understanding "the dynamics of the relationships" (Whitfield and Strauss 1998: 15). These dynamics include both 'objective' (the elements of the structure and context) and 'subjective' (values and perceptions) elements of social and economic life (Kitay and Callus 1998). In particular, subjective issues such as actors' ideas and values are indispensable for in-depth understanding of post-socialist union formative processes. Thirdly, utilisation of case study methodology makes it possible to simultaneously integrate different types of data (including both qualitative and quantitative data), different methods, and both inductive and deductive ways of drawing conclusions (e.g. Whitfield and Strauss 1998, Yin 2009). The use of multiple sources of evidence (triangulation in methodological terms) aims to increase

case study validity (Mayring 2000). Methodological triangulation is of particular importance in the FSU due to the unreliable and incomplete data which researchers are faced with. Finally, case studies provide an opportunity to collect rich empirical data. By doing so, the development of theories on the basis of case studies and empirical data "[…] is likely to produce theory that is accurate, interesting, and testable. Thus it is a natural complement to mainstream deductive research" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007: 25-26).

2.1.1. The Need for Qualitative Research in the FSU

Beyond all the comparative advantages of the case study research strategy, the lack of an unbiased research tradition in Soviet sociology makes a case study strategy even more suitable for research in the FSU. Existing Soviet empirical sociology lacked unbiased and well-formed traditions of empirical research.[16] The empirical research tradition in post-socialist social sciences goes back to the early 1970s. Some significant works of Western sociology that had been written in the 1950s and 1960s were translated and compiled into a research guide by the famous Russian sociologist Yadov. Almost immediately after publication and the subsequent proliferation of this methodological thought, it was abruptly interrupted in the 1970s. The major emerging sociological institute at the Soviet Academy of Sciences was then put under the control of the Communist Party (Belanovskiy 2001). The research guide published by Yadov was quickly adapted to the doctrine of 'scientific communism', establishing clearly biased positivist traditions as the basis for methodological research approaches in the Soviet Union. Central to this biased positivist tradition was the core premise of scientific communism: that in the working class' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat replaces and makes impossible any interest antagonisms.

[16] Soviet and post-Soviet social sciences were deeply biased by the ideology of socialism and 'scientific communism'. Scientific communism is a component of Marxism-Leninism, which is concerned with the disclosure of the general laws, methods, and forms of the class struggle of the proletariat. Formulated by Marx, Engels and Lenin, the most relevant category of scientific communism for IR is the dictatorship of the proletariat and thus the absence of any conflict of interests among the working class, the Party-State and enterprise administration. More specifically, general laws of scientific communism include 1) the conscious character of social transformations and the scientific character of the management of social processes under the leadership of the working class and a Marxist-Leninist party; 2) the general laws "[…] of the harmonious, balanced, and planned development of social processes and of all aspects of social life, which replaces […] the antagonisms […] and class inequality"; 3) the emergence amongst people free from exploitation of genuine collective practices; 4) the law of the emergence of social homogeneity with the comprehensive development of the individual and the increased independence, initiative, and activity of the masses; and 5) the law that social evolution takes place without political revolution. Thus, the laws and categories of scientific communism have a methodological application in particular sciences that study socialism and communism. Scientific communism has been taught as a scholarly discipline in the higher educational institutions of the USSR since 1963 (Bol'shaya sov'etskaya entsyclopediya 1969-1978).

This methodological basis of sociology has hardly been revisited since the collapse of socialism. Whereas neither qualitative methods nor case study research have had firm traditions in post-Soviet research practice (Belanovskiy 2001, Kozina 1997), qualitative methods, where recently applied, have been limited to certain commercial research in marketing, advertisement and policy consultancy (ibid). Although it has become possible to conduct unbiased fieldwork in the region of the FSU, quantitative data has continued to remain incomplete and unreliable. Hence, the proliferation of case studies and field research as practiced in Western sociology reflects a need to fill the gaps in both qualitative and quantitative data and knowledge relating to post-socialist IR.

2.1.2. The Problem of Applying a Qualitative Research Strategy in Post-Socialist Contexts

While qualitative research has been particularly valuable to post-Soviet social sciences, many authors have argued (e.g. Avdagic 2003, Clarke 2005, Kubicek 2004, Kurtan 1996, Thirkell, Scase and Vickerstaff 1995) that the theoretical assumptions accumulated in the Western social sciences and IR research are not appropriate given the specific conditions of the post-socialist countries. The recognition of the need for country-specific practices, which have not been researched before, implies that study designs have to be developed on the basis of theoretical assumptions different fromo those of the Western social sciences. The nature of these assumptions, as Crowley and Ost (2001: 10) have argued, "[...] will only become clear in the course of concrete empirical investigations". This need for qualitative empirical research within the context of an absence of a theoretical tradition poses significant challenges when developing appropriate research strategies in the post-Soviet states.

As a way to address this problem, Ost (2005: 4) argues that, "[s]ocial scientists should enter a rapidly changing transformative political moment not with a fixed set of research questions but ready to learn whatever new questions the new situations compels one to ask". Flexibility in terms of research questions, designs and strategies, however, does not imply a need for heuristic methodological designs, as it might appear on first sight. Rather, a researcher's flexibility refers to the possibility to shift or change the research questions as the research process is unfolding, while preserving the same initial *focus* of the research (Berg 2009). As Eisenhardt (1989: 539) notes, "[...] this flexibility is controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness of a specific case and the emergence of new themes to improve resultant theory".

Integrating flexibility into the research design in the sense advocated by Berg and Eisenhardt, the approach adopted in the present dissertation is built on the principles of processual analysis. Processual analysis itself is built on Giddens' understanding of the duality of structure. Distinctly though, processual analysis emphasises the importance of time, history and mechanisms shaping processes and explaining outcomes under analysis. Thus, processual analysis provides a methodological approach that enables one to trace some processes in the sense of a historical institutionalist analysis.

2.2. Processual Analysis

According to Pettigrew (1997: 339), processual analysis is the analysis of a process in which "events and chronologies" are the "crucial building blocks" of the analysis. However, simply describing events and chronologies is not sufficient to achieve the analytical purpose of processual case studies. "The aim in a processual analysis is not to produce a case history but a case study. The case study goes beyond the case history in attempting a range of analytical purpose" (ibid). The analytical purpose of the analysis means that within the framework of the processual analysis the processes that led to the emergence of the investigated phenomena should not only be identified and explored in connection to its context and outcome, but their effects should also be generalisable beyond the cases. Hence, a case study methodology being used for a processual analysis should 1) identify and possibly compare the patterns in the process, including the character, incidence, and shape of patterns; 2) identify underlying mechanisms shaping the process; and 3) combine the inductive and deductive logics of research (ibid).

Yet how exactly can a researcher trace complicated processes of union formation in order to explain the present state of worker representation? This question becomes a highly relevant question when the research focuses on a field as dynamic and uncertain as that of post-socialist transformation. In methodological terms, Geddes (2003) recommends a division of big questions into a series of smaller mechanisms causing the investigated phenomenon.

There is no agreement in the literature on what exactly a 'mechanism' is. Nor is there any unanimous definition of the term 'mechanism'. Pettigrew speaks about 'the underlying mechanisms which drive the process' more generally:

> *"Such mechanisms may be directly observable, indeed part of the conscious intentions of key actors in this process. They may also be a feature of the immediate or more distant context and not part of the sensibility of local actors. The mechanisms may also be elements in the interactive field occasioned by links between levels of process and context around the primary process stream under analysis" (Pettigrew 1997: 339).*

As this citation shows, in processual analysis mechanisms are understood in terms of actors' intentions and the elements of context as well as interactive fields, i.e. the interaction between actors, a process and its context. As far as the research objective of this dissertation is concerned, a processual research approach allows for an integration of structural (objective) mechanisms shaping worker representation, such as the institutional infrastructure for example. Simultaneously, when applied to this case, processual analysis requires engagement with the strategic intentions of unions and their (inter)actions, and thus also helps to integrate subjective mechanisms of union formative processes that shape the structure of worker representation.

In developing this broad understanding of mechanisms, this processual analysis helps to overcome the dualism between the structure and actors' agency as such an understanding of mechanisms integrates the premises of the duality of structure as suggested by Giddens (1989). Notably, processual analysis envisages that actors' actions or agency alone cannot explain the processes at hand. Beyond actors' agency, context is a necessary part of the investigation in processual analysis. Pettigrew has noted that the context itself cannot be discussed without human agency given that the context is, essentially, "a nested arrangement of structures and processes where the subjective interpretations of actors perceiving, learning, and remembering help shape process" (ibid: 341). This understanding of a context is explicitly built on the assumptions of 'the duality of structure'; perceiving context in terms of the surrounding structure but also, crucially, in terms of actors, their ideas and behaviour as well as their interaction with the structure itself and ultimately other actors. This understanding of mechanisms and contexts allows both the reorganisation and co-existence of different trade unions to be integrated into the processual analysis as essential mechanisms behind the development of worker representation.

In order to navigate the complexity of the context, Pettigrew recommends differentiating between an outer and inner context. Outer context refers in Pettigrew's understanding to the economic, social, political, etc. environments. While inner context includes the structural, cultural and political environments within an organisation. Using the example of firms, the organisational changes of which Pettigrew has himself investigated, this implies that the explanation of actors' performance should be linked to

> "[…] *higher levels of analysis (sector changes and alterations in national and international political and economic context), and lower levels of analysis (the drivers and inhibitors of change characteristic of different firms' culture, history, and political structures). There is also the recognition that there are processes at different levels of analysis […] and also multiple processes at the same levels of analysis […] A source of change is the asymmetries between levels of context…*" (Pettigrew 1997: 340).

Indeed, the context of post-socialist IR changes has constantly been characterised by such 'asymmetries' between levels of context because the installation of the institutional framework from the top preceded (re)organisation of trade unions. In light of this 'asymmetry' between the pace of institutional changes and actors' formation, the processual perspective offers a well-suited strategy to examine how conflict-based worker representation has formed within the new institutional context.

2.3. Research Strategy

There is no agreement on whether research strategy should begin with theory (as Yin 2009, for example, stresses) or whether theory should be developed following empirical research, as expressed by Georg and Benett (2005) for example. In this context Berg (2009) suggests a model, which allows this disagreement to be resolved by combining 'theory-before-research' and 'research-before-theory' approaches. In Berg's view, the combination of both approaches to the research design is possible, if one conceives the research strategy not as linear but as 'spiralling':

> *"In the proposed approach, you begin with an idea, gather theoretical information, reconsider and refine your idea, begin to examine possible designs, reexamine theoretical assumptions, and refine these theoretical assumptions and perhaps even your original or refined idea. […] [Thus] you are spiraling forwards, never actually leaving any stage behind completely"* (ibid: 26).

This 'spiralling' research methodology is particularly appropriate for researching post-socialist worker representation due to the lack of accumulated qualitative empirical research practices and because much of what is in existence has been informed by the ideology of scientific communism. Therefore, the pure application of comparable principles to research in the FSU can have different consequences when they are applied to capitalist states (Schienstock 1992: 121). Some difficulties are created when attempting to establish the basis of the "theory-before-research" through these purely applied theoretical propositions. However, this is not to say that the theory developed in Western sociology is not useful for the analysis of post-socialist trade unions and worker representation. Rather, it is enough to note that direct application is limited in its capacities.

One solution is found in a revision of the research strategy of 'spiralling' (Berg 2009). In institutional terms the legal framework for IR (embracing the principles for sound and coherent IR as developed by the ILO) has assigned trade unions representative and protective roles similar to those in the capitalist societies of Western Europe. Through 'spiralling' as suggested by Berg, it is then possible to discuss these theoretical propositions against the specific background of the post-socialist context. In this way

Berg's approach also helps to overcome the problem associated with the lack of a good methodological tradition. Consequently, the research design of the present dissertation starts from a discussion of union-related concepts in the Western European social sciences. The conceptual framework that follows in the next chapter adjusts these concepts based on empirical findings related to the post-socialist trade unions, which are recorded in the literature. The case study-based research strategy integrates the observations outlined above into a specific research strategy.

2.3.1. Case study

Yin (2009) differentiates between descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory case studies. Descriptive case studies aim to describe a phenomena and the real-life context in which the case occurred. Exploratory case studies aim to illustrate or enlighten certain topics and situations and generate hypotheses. Explanatory designs explain causal links found in real-life interventions.

In order to fulfil the analytical purpose of the processual case study research, the process-oriented analysis of union development pre-supposes elements of both exploration and explanation (Pettigrew 1997). The focus on union formative processes presupposes not only a depiction of the formation processes themselves, but also the identification of 'mechanisms' of inter-union interactions which have contributed to the present state of worker representation. An exploratory-explanatory case study approach aims to identify and explain the patterns of formation of post-Soviet trade unions within their operating context, including within the new institutional infrastructure, and in terms of unions' intentions and conduct.

In order to link different elements such as the context, patterns of the union development and learning, as the mechanisms which explain the development of worker representation (outcome), to the analysis at a less abstract level, the research strategy adopted here operationalises processual analysis by means of the methodological model developed by Stones (2005).[17] According to Stones (2005), the analysis of a process includes four components:

1) External structures (or 'the outer context' in Pettigrew's understanding): these are acknowledged and unacknowledged conditions of action, which can either constrain or

[17] Stones developed this model in order to strengthen the empirical applicability of Giddens' structuration theory. Processual analysis as practiced by Pettigrew is developed from the same assumptions of structuration theory. Thus, there is no difficulty in combining the two into the same research strategy.

enable actions of agents. External structures include, in this specific case, the institutional infrastructure of IR and sector and enterprise background.

2) Internal structures: this component can be compared to 'the internal context' in Pettigrew's processual analysis and includes;

2a) 'conjunctually-specific knowledge' of external structures that have formed over time and relate to the role or position occupied by agents. This includes "[...] knowledge of interpretative schemes, power capacities, and normative expectations and principles of the agents within context" (Stones 2005: 91). The examples of such 'conjunctually-specific knowledge' in the present approach include, for instance, the historically formed positions of trade unions within the arenas of IR as well as in relation to other actors and each other;

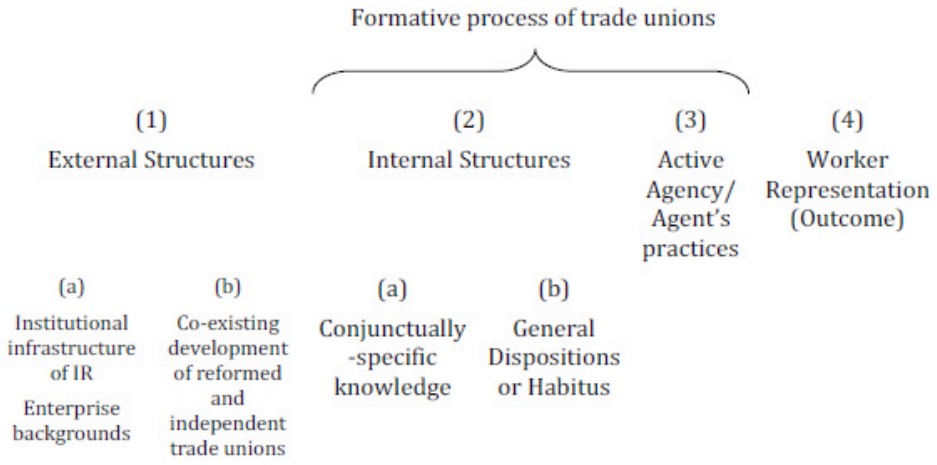
2b) general dispositions or habitus (this is something actors draw upon without thinking, including, for example, 'transposable skills and dispositions') (ibid: 88). In the FSU, such general 'skills' and 'dispositions' underpinning union-based worker representation were formed during socialism as well as new dispositions that started to form while socialism was in crisis. Faced with the differences which exist between reformed and independent trade unions, the application of different disposition or habitus by the respective trade unions results in the emergence of the path-enforcing or path-breaking worker representation outcomes;

3) Active agency and agents' practices; and finally,

4) Outcomes that are the result of active agency, which can lead to change or preservation of structures and have intended or unintended consequences (ibid: 85). In the present research approach these outcomes include the patterns of worker representation as developed by a given trade union or resulting from the interactions of different trade unions at the same workplace.

This model thus helps to explain the current state of worker representation (outcome) as based on union formative processes (mechanisms) and active agency of unions (process) within the new institutional structure and the present constellation of actors (outer context). The diagram below helps to visualise this model:

Figure 1. The Structure of Worker Representation



Source: Adapted from Stones' figure (2005: 85).

2.3.2. The Level of Analysis

In Ukraine trade unions and their associations operate at all levels: national, branch, occupational, regional, enterprise and shop-level. Several reasons exist to focus this investigation on the enterprise-level activities of unions. Firstly, the Soviet enterprise existed as "a social organism with [its] own rationality" (Clarke 1996b). Under socialism, the provision of recreation and welfare services was integrated into the enterprise (social function). The social role of an enterprise, in turn, framed the functions of enterprise-based trade unions in terms of the distribution of enterprise-provided social services. Additionally, the enterprise-based community of workers ('labour collective') served as the means to integrate workers into the system of socialist governance (integrative function).

Secondly, in view of reforms aimed at establishing a capitalist economy (particularly privatisation) the enterprise level has continued to be of central importance for changing union roles. Enterprise transformation and restructuring have provided a dynamic operating context for union formative processes after the socialist system collapsed. For instance, the elimination of recreation facilities in the course of enterprise restructuring has challenged the historic union role of fulfilling social and welfare functions. Without having developed protective functions that are based on foundations other than the social functions of an enterprise, the disintegration of the recreation facilities threatened trade unions with a loss of relevance to their members.

Thirdly, national and sectoral levels of union activities bring limited insights into the micro-foundations of and motivations for trade union practices and patterns of behaviour. Higher levels of union activities have been diverging from the demand for certain union activities at the enterprise level (e.g. Connor 1994). Also, the situation at higher levels of the unions has not reflected the inter-union dynamics that characterise lower levels of union activities (e.g. local union reform and union pluralisation). Analysis of the sectoral and national levels of IR has little explanatory power in terms of the co-existence of reformed and independent trade unions, as the latter have enjoyed a stronger presence at the enterprise-based level. As the FSU's newly established trade unions have emerged and structured themselves starting from the enterprise level then building upwards, the enterprise-based level is the most illustrative of the new constellation of trade unions and of inter-union interactions and pluralism.

Finally, the representation of workers during conflicts and union approaches to conflict situations in particular exemplifies the (non)emergence of certain union characteristics that are less evident in non-conflict situations, but are nonetheless indicative of the process and relevance of union changes. The enterprise level allows concrete conflict situations to be observed and patterns of union behaviour to be examined. In view of all of these considerations, the enterprise-level was chosen as the most appropriate level of analysis.

2.3.3. The Choice of Cases: Ten Enterprise-Based Trade Unions

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) stress 'theoretical sampling' as a means to choose cases in order to increase the analytical value of case studies. 'Theoretical sampling' means that "[…] cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs" (ibid: 27). If selected by means of theoretical sampling, multiple cases are able to yield more robust, generalisable and testable theory.

Yin (2009) puts forward 'the logic of replication' as an alternative way to choose cases. Yin's 'logic of replication' means that each case should be chosen for the purpose of either predicting similar results ('literal replication') or predicting contrasting results for anticipated reasons ('theoretical replication'). In particular, 'polar types' enable an investigator to more easily observe contrasting patterns in the data by using examples of extremes: very high and very low performing cases (ibid). Yin's position echoes the method of agreement and method of difference suggested by Mill and the main principles of the most similar and most different systems designs suggested by Przeworsky and Teune (1982 in Leuffen 2007). In the method of difference (linked to

most similar systems design) cases are selected which differ in their key independent variable, yet show similarities in other characteristics. This allows a researcher to explain the patterns of behaviour and relationships between single variables. In the method of agreement (linked to most different systems design) the cases agree on the dependent variable as well as on the key independent variable, while all other variables differ between the selected cases.

In the present research design the cases were chosen using a combination of 'literal' and 'theoretical replication', to use Yin's terminology. This means that cases predicting similar results and cases predicting contrasting results (for anticipated reasons) have to be included. All cases of unions predict a similar result; namely worker representation in general or in a certain enterprise-based situation. In this sense all trade unions can be addressed as 'cases predicting a similar result'. At the same time, union pluralisation and the differences in the historical and political development of each trade union have informed union formative processes in different ways from case to case. It is possible to address reformed and newly independent unions as 'cases predicting a different result but for anticipated reasons'. In order to test the proposition that the concurrent development of previously existing and independent trade unions has affected the forms and terms of worker representation, cases were identified in which union development could be explored using the contrasting examples of reformed and newly established unions.

Furthermore, enterprises having different ownership forms and operating in different sectors are also considered. This is important in order to conduct research at the enterprise-based level in the context of the diversification of ownership forms in the FSU. Using this framework for the research strategy, trade unions operating at two privatised, two state-owned and two foreign owned enterprises were studied. Unfortunately, my cases studies do not include any newly established private enterprises. Identifying union activities at these enterprises proved to be a considerably difficult task. Some private enterprises in mining for example, where I could identify and start to research trade unions, either dissolved or disappeared into the informal economy. Moreover, newly established enterprises have emerged most commonly as micro and small enterprises. Enterprises of this size offer an extremely difficult environment for organising trade unions and, in fact, their size often renders them unappealing for trade unions themselves (Webster, Bischoff, Xhafa et al. 2008).

In line with three hypothesis (in chapter 1), the formative processes of unions were divided into the three phases. In the first phase of union development (organisational), unions and their leadership must determine which reforms they need by making choices on different dimensions including identity, agenda, structure, resources, relationships with employers and attitudes to conflicts. This is followed by an operational phase, which clarifies the conduct of union activities. In this phase, unions collect experiences and knowledge and then construct practices of operation that help solidify their chosen formation. Finally, there is a consolidation phase. It is assumed that union consolidation phase is reached when and if an understanding of opposing interests is firmly established within a union. In order to explore this non-linear nature of union formative processes, two cases of each phase of formation have been included. Table 2 (below) provides an overview of the selected enterprises.

Sector specifics were not involved in the process of enterprise selection. In choosing not to make a selection based on sector specifics I was guided by several considerations. First, the high social cost of transformation and repeated economic crises has affected all sectors of the economy and all workers. Second, union formative processes have unfolded in Ukraine regardless of sector divisions. It should be noted at this point, however, that sector specifics may play a role in union representation. For example, in the FSU union militancy was a characteristic of the mining sector, but it has not developed to the same extent in any other sector. As Crowley (2000) has pointed out, dangerous conditions in the mining sector could have explained the high degree of militancy among coal miners. Furthermore, in fact, newly established union movements in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus all first emerged in the mining sector. However, as Crowley (ibid) further demonstrates, only a lower level of militancy without strikes emerged in the metallurgical sector, where workplaces present similarly dangerous conditions. Similarly, Boyeva, Dolgopyatova and Shironin (1993) find that sector specifics hardly played any significant role in the enterprises' position on the market or on managers' decisions. The case studies below will show that the conflicts workers faced at the workplace level served as a stronger impetus for union development than sector specifics.

Table 1. The choice of the enterprises for case studies

Formative stages			Characteristic / Enterprise	Branch	SOE	PRIV	TNC	Unionisation	
F	O	C						RUC	ITU
X			**L'viv Bus Plant**	Machine-building		X		X	X
X			**Lafarge Mykolaivcement**	Building materials			X	X	
	X		**ArcelorMittal**	Metallurgy			X	X	
	X		**Kyiv metro**	Transportation	X			X	X
		X	**Sukha Balka**	Iron-ore Mining		X	X	X	X
		X	**Zaporizhya Clinical Hospital**	Public Services (Medical)	X			X	X

F- formation of the union; O –union operation; C – consolidation of union organisation and activities; SOE – state owned enterprise; PRIV - private enterprise emerging after privatisation; TNC – Transnational Corporation; RUC– reformed union committee; ITU – independent trade union.

2.4. The Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected in three stages between mid 2007 and early 2010. In response to critiques of qualitative research, triangulation, in other words the use of multiple methods, serves as a means, "to raise sociologists above the personalistic biases that stem from single methodologies […] [and] overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator and/or method" (Denzin 2009: 300). Several sources of data were considered in the process of research in order to increase the reliability and validity of the research.

During the first phase of data collection, different media were analysed in order to identify union developments and conflict situations at enterprises where involvement of trade unions was highlighted. Simultaneously, pilot expert interviews were conducted with representatives of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU). Regional committee members and other representatives were also interviewed in order to identify further interesting cases. It should be noted at this point that trade unions in Ukraine enjoy very little presence in the media. Hence, pilot interviews helped to identify some valuable constellations that were used as the basis for case studies. The additional purpose of expert interviews was to test the interview schedule and the reaction of the informants to the topics raised and questions asked. Following these expert interviews, the questionnaire was optimised.

The second phase of the research followed evaluation of the results of preliminary research. During this second phase, contact was made with informants in the unions selected for case studies. An extensive collection of background data about these enterprises and trade unions complemented the activities undertaken in this phase of research. George and Bennett (2005) call this stage 'soaking and poking', as it leads to the construction of a chronological narrative that helps the researcher understand the basics of the case. Analysis of the internal union newspapers and media, a preliminary chronology of union development as well as an outline of conflict situations were formulated. The interview questionnaires and conceptual framework were both refined and optimised. Also, additional expert interviews were completed in this phase of the research.

During the third phase of data collection ten visits to Ukraine were conducted. Each visit was between one and three weeks long. In the course of the visits the informants were

interviewed, and it was possible to obtain additional documents for data collection and analysis. During all three phases of data collection, documentary data was continuously collected and the background information on each case was updated accordingly. After the completion of field visits and interviews I conducted follow-up on the telephone or by email. This allowed me to follow union developments over time. Where possible, informants were interviewed several times. The data was collected mainly by means of expert semi-structured interviews and complemented by documentary analysis and participant observation. Each of these methods of data collection is detailed below.

2.4.1. Interviews

In fact, interviews are 'essential' sources of case study information because most case studies are about human affairs or behavioural events (Yin 2009: 104). Interviews serve as "[…] the primary means of accessing the experiences and subjective views of actors" (Whipp 1998: 54) and as "[…] a highly efficient way to gather rich, empirical data […]" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007: 28). The value of interviews as a research method in the present methodological approach is also found in the degree of flexibility, which "enables the researcher to open up new dimensions of a problem" (Whipp 1998: 54). In the course of qualitative interviewing the researcher not only looks for the answers to certain questions, but also has to figure out the 'taken-for-granted' understanding that actors have and use (Schutz 1967 in Rubin and Rubin 2001). In this way, qualitative interviewing allows insights into phenomenon, while remaining in context.

The most important distinction between types of interviews concerns the degree of standardisation and the form of the interviews. In terms of the degree of standardisation, Berg (2009) distinguishes between standardised, non-standardised and semi-standardised types of interviews. The difference between them is the degree of rigidity with regard to presentational structure of interview questionnaires. Depending on the form of interview conducted and the questions asked, interviews may be narrative, problem-centred, focused, ethnographic, expert or group interviews (Kruse 2008). In this dissertation the question of union formative processes was particularly well suited to problem-centred semi-structured interviews.

Problem-Centred Semi-Structured Interviews

The research focus of this dissertation – union formative processes – pre-supposes the existence of data related to material characteristics of union activities as well as subjective perceptions of union leaders, officers, members and workers. The possibility

to access such data is revealed through the use of problem-centred semi-structured interviews. The problem-centred interview aims to generate evidence by applying previous knowledge that serves as "a heuristic-analytical framework for ideas for questions," and by simultaneously encouraging respondents to disclose what he or she determines to be relevant (Witzel 2000: 2). Simultaneously, this type of interview "[…] is a theory-generating method that tries to neutralise the alleged contradiction between being directed by theory or being open-minded so that the interplay of inductive and deductive thinking contributes to increasing the user's knowledge" (ibid: 1). In total, fifty-eight interviews were conducted. Primary target interviewees were trade union presidents and leaders. The union leaders interviewed are all experts in their areas of activities. They have shaped the direction of internal union changes and the overall union development discourse. Some of the informants, in the case of newly established unions, participated in establishing the union for which they have been working or were those who initiated reforms within their union.

Surveys of the Ukrainian trade unions show (e.g. Sayenko and Pryvalov 2003) that the perception of union strength and positions taken by union leaders can significantly diverge from the perceptions of the same issues by workers, managers or state authorities. In order to take this into account, whenever possible, I asked a few workers at the enterprises I visited to share their view on unions. Access to workers was possible during the meetings with some respondents as well as through participation at union meetings or events. Initially, I also planned to interview managers or public relations and social affairs specialists. However, gaining access to managers was very difficult and was only possible in two cases (Zaporizhya Clinical Hospital and Sukha Balka). In cases where I could not access managers, I tried to compensate with thorough studies of enterprise and public media.

The duration of interviews was between 40 minutes and 3 hours. In some cases, the interviews were complemented by attending meetings which informants had scheduled with someone else. This provided additional insights and greater understanding of unions and their leaders. In the majority of cases two to three interviews were conducted with the same informant in order to reflect on the on-going development of their union over time. The follow-up interviews with the same informants took place approximately six to twelve months after the first interview and were also complemented with follow-up calls. Close to two-thirds of the interviews were recorded by digital voice-recording device with the informants' consent. For each case under analysis, a documentation profile was compiled, which included interview transcripts,

participant notes and collection of other documents. Interviews that were recorded were transcribed in Russian or Ukrainian with only grammatical editing (there was only one interview in English). Some informants chose to talk 'off the record' for part of the interview or phone call. In those cases detailed notes were taken, which then provided a basis for data evaluation.

The Development of Interview Guidelines

In the process of drafting the interview guidelines an inductive-deductive procedure of interview questionnaire development, as suggested by Witzel (2000), was used in order to elicit 'storytelling'. The communication strategy aimed to generate storytelling and included pre-formulated introductory questions that focus discussion of the problem under analysis. Within the exploratory strategy, questions of understanding or comprehension were asked, so that the informant was encouraged by the enquiries of the interviewer to engage in storytelling. This approach allowed the building of a deeper understanding of the problems under examination and a degree of flexibility and openness in the questions asked. As the interview questionnaire is a supporting device used to jog the interviewee's memory of the research topics (Witzel 2000), it only provides a framework for orientation. The interviewer has to be able to spontaneously react to the informants' responses and immediately develop new questions as necessary.

As Witzel (2000) suggests, interview questions are usually based on previously developed categories or concepts and are asked without obscuring the original view of the informants. Given a degree of flexibility and spiralling in the research design, not 'theoretical concepts' but rather 'conceptual areas' (Berg 2009) were used, on the basis of which interview questions were thus formulated. Following the principles of processual research, 'the conceptual areas' for further development of questions included: 1) conflict (development, union role, involvement); 2) union characteristics (mission, agenda, structure, resources, attitudes to conflict and choice of relationship with or approach to employer), 3) union agency, and 4) outer context (legacies, external influences and actor constellation). For each of the conceptual areas a set of open questions in the form of "how", "what" and "why" (Pettigrew 1997) was formulated.

The questions were re-grouped into thematic blocks reflecting the informants' perceptions and the characteristics of trade unions: conflict, formation characteristics, union agency and external context. In this way, it was possible to start the interview by encouraging the informant to describe the conflict and the respective union's

involvement in it, but also to concentrate further discussion on the topics included in the questionnaire. Finally, it should be noted, that it was not possible to follow the interview questionnaire exactly during all interviews, yet it was still possible to collect data about aspects of conflict articulation and organisations.

2.4.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation provides unique opportunities to reach groups and get access to events that are otherwise inaccessible to the typical study (Yin 2009). Kawulich (2005: 2) defines participant observation as "[…] the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities". At the same time, participant observation entails a trade-off between certain advantages and the threat of bias connected to the role of the researcher (Yin 2009).

Participant observation conducted in the process of data collection for this dissertation took different forms including ad hoc attending union seminars, conferences, executive councils meetings, campaigning actions, protest preparation meetings, protests and pickets, founding meetings of trade unions, as well as court sessions, in cases where they took place. In total, participant observation included fifteen different events. Observations were documented in the form of field notes during and after every event. These notes provide records of what was observed, including informal conversations with participants and records of activities, during which the researcher was unable to question participants about their activities. The data that these observations contained were then included in the overall data analysis.

2.4.3. Document Analysis

Documents provide an important source of information about both the real-life context of a phenomenon and the phenomenon itself. In particular, when exploring and researching organisations, documents provide useful data that facilitate building an understanding of an organisation, its history, structure and its functions (Prior 2003). Documents include letters, e-mail correspondence, agendas, announcements, minutes of meetings, administrative documents, formal studies, and reports appearing in mass media (Yin 2009). Documents contain exact names, references and details of events, covering a long time span, many events and many settings. Their comparative advantage is that they can be reviewed repeatedly and are unobtrusive.

My analysis targeted those documents that are related to the trade unions' own process of self-positioning: strategy papers and action plans, press-releases, news published on their web-sites and newspapers, position papers, statements, and resolutions as well as complaints filed with the ILO and ITUC. Particular attention was paid to the documents produced by the FPU and KVPU and their respective member sectoral unions (when affiliated with any of the trade unions discussed in the dissertation's case studies) in addition to the documents of the enterprise-based trade unions chosen as case studies. Newspapers of the KVPU, FPU and AMKR trade union were also analysed, as they provided regular coverage of union activities and positions in different areas. Also, the analysis of related documents that were not produced by unions themselves included reports about trade unions in newspapers, radio and television, studies of trade unions and records of press conferences. By means of these sources it was possible to obtain a wider variety of diverse perspectives on union activities. Data collected from documentary analysis was also included in the case study and data analysis.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in several steps and followed a procedure of qualitative content analysis. As "[…] an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of text within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models" (Mayring 2000: 2), this allows the researcher to condense and analyse qualitative data by means of categories. While a system of categories is at the centre of qualitative content analysis, the methodological literature on qualitative content analysis does not provide any explicit definition of the term 'category'. As Mayring (2008) himself notes, the construction and definition of research categories – the centrepiece of qualitative content analysis – is scarcely described.

Mayring (2000: 3) refers to categories in terms of "the aspects of text interpretation". Regarding categories Reinhoffer, for example, cites Miles and Huberman (1991: 80 in Reinhoffer 2008: 125), who see categories as, "[...] retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypothesis, concept, or theme". Hence, Reinhoffer understands categories as patterns of analysis that are more abstract than the material which is analysed, a sort of 'umbrella term' providing generalisations of concrete empirical elements (Mayring 1999: 79 in Reinhoffer 2008: 125). Grigoryev and Rastov (2001) define categories as key ideas (semantic or meaning units) in the text, which are based on definitions, the empirical indicators of which are set in the research design. The

present research design follows the definition suggested by Shalak (2004), who depicts categories as a selection of vocabulary units with similar definitions, hence, 'conceptual constructs'. Content categories are understood in the present dissertation as conceptual constructs that are based on a selection of vocabulary units with similar definitions and provide generalisations of concrete empirical elements.

The development of the system of categories can proceed inductively, deductively or by some combination of both (Berg 2009, Mayring 2000, 2008, Mayring and Gläser-Zikuda von Beltz 2008, Reinhoffer 2008). Inductive categories emerge from "the dimensions or *themes* that seem meaningful to the producers of each message […]" linked or grounded to the data from which they derive (Berg 2009: 347, emphasis in original). Inductive category-building approaches are characteristic of 'grounded theory' approaches. In a deductive approach to category development, a theoretical framework and a research question thus make up the starting point for the development of categories (Berg 2009, Mayring 2000, 2008). Categories are developed in the process of the operationalisation of the theoretical propositions (Mayring 2000). As Berg (2009: 350) notes, "[…] researchers need not limit their procedures to induction alone. Both inductive and deductive reasoning may provide fruitful findings". Notably, in order to increase the reliability of categories, they are considered tentative or 'open' and are re-considered and adjusted in the process of content analysis (Berg 2009, Mayring 2000, 2008, Reinhoffer 2008).

Content categories for the present data analysis were developed in both deductive and inductive ways. Starting from the two major concepts on which the conceptual framework was based – inner context (organisation characteristics) and outer context (contextual dimensions) – three respective content categories were developed and divided into subcategories. These subcategories include mission, agenda, structure, resources and relationships with employers as well as attitudes to conflicts (inner context) and formal rules, legacies, external influences and actor constellation (outer context). They were complemented by the content category of 'time' referring to the point of establishment before and/or after the onset of post-socialist transformation. Additionally, two categories were added inductively: conflict and leaders' background were derived from the analysed material. The list of content categories was revisited after the analysis of the first expert interviews and, for the purpose of increasing the reliability of the data analysis process, again after the analysis of all documents, participant observation and interviews for each case.

A detailed case analysis was produced from the data collected by means of narrative analysis strategy. In Pettigrew's terminology, such "events and chronology" is the starting point for the process of linking the data to the theory (Pettigrew 1997: 341). Such a narrative can be used as a basis for further analysis or to facilitate the development of the analytical concepts from the data (ibid). Each chapter ends with an analysis of the narratives of the two cases discussed in that chapter. Following both Pettigrew (1997) and Eisenhardt (1989), the analytical purpose of case studies is achieved, if case study findings can be generalised beyond those cases:

> *"[…] [T]he idea behind the cross-case searching tactics is to force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data. These tactics improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory, that is, a theory with a close fit with the data" (Eisenhardt 1989: 541).*

The narratives of my case studies are thus discussed in a cross-case analysis in a separate chapter (Chapter 8).

2.6. Limitations

Qualitative analysis aims to collect information about facts, material circumstances and subjective views, and conduct assessments of the developments investigated by means of informants. The subjective views of informants are difficult to research in the FSU countries due to their history of seventy years of socialism. This is clearly a limitation of the research because in the Soviet Union it was not common to openly express criticism and at present informants are still very cautious about clearly articulating their own position and offering criticisms. Some of my interviewees did not look comfortable when criticising in public and only agreed to give their critical remarks off the record.

The second limitation of the research is access to informants. Many informants stressed that they did not see any benefits for themselves in being interviewed for research purposes. One potential informal even made the threat of filing a lawsuit if any research were done on her trade union. The lack of respondents' interest to participate in my research served as a reason not to research some of the unions initially chosen to be case studies. After some efforts to convince informants about the benefits of their participation in my research, some of those who agreed to participate seemed to be reluctant to share their views and were often very brief in their answers. This influenced the quality of data for those union cases compared to others for which the informants provided more extensive answers.

Thirdly, the interview questionnaire could not be strictly followed in every interview, as some of the respondents insisted that they would first speak on their own initiative,

permitting questions to be asked only after their narrative was told. In some cases, informants' descriptions were quite lengthy and thus left little time for clarifications.

In addition, the present dissertation focuses on trade unions whose leaders may perceive the position of the union more optimistically than workers or management. Therefore, sustained efforts were made to organise meetings with workers and enterprise managers or human relations specialists who mainly deal with trade unions within an enterprise. After several repeated attempts to contact enterprise management, access to them was possible in only a few cases. In particular, management at TNC subsidiaries outright rejected my request for interviews. Where no managerial views could be obtained through direct interviews, their positions were extracted from public declarations, interviews published in the media and enterprise-based press.

Furthermore, the sample presented here did not include newly established private enterprises or enterprises in the informal economy. The findings of the cases were generalisable only for pre-existing enterprises. Specifically, these cases are generalisable to privatised, state enterprises and TNCs' brownfield subsidiaries. Union-free enterprises and new managerial approaches to IR (i.e., the individualisation and informalisation of enterprise IR) are most likely to be common amongst newly established enterprises. As a consequence of their distinct structures, they might differ considerably in the specific operating conditions for unions in comparison to previously existing enterprises. Currently, very few trade unions exist at newly established private enterprises, meaning that further investigation into their processes was not possible. Initially, one such private enterprise was included in my choice of enterprises in the mining sector. Half a year after completing interviews at this enterprise, however, it was formally shut down, although it continued to operate in the informal economy. Transition into the informal economy consequently meant dissolution of the trade unions.

Finally, my previous employment at the KVPU may have negatively influenced my access to some of the former official trade unions and their readiness to answer my questions. Against a background of inter-union rivalry and competition between the previously existing FPU and newly established KVPU, some leaders reacted rather negatively to my request for research and refused to be interviewed by myself explicitly on the grounds of my employment background.