

Comparing and contrasting assignment

[Sociology](#)



We then delved deeper into each country by assessing the most common forms of employee representation and any recent changes that may be present. Finally, our team examined the traditional level of influence of the labor movement within China, Japan, Canada, and Denmark to further understand any recent changes that are occurring in that arena. DIMENSION ONE: The traditional role of the government in employee relations and any recent changes that are occurring: Our team found that there were many elements of traditional In the role of the government within employee relations and the countries that we researched.

For example, in China, it has been described that this country exists within a system of here 'old irons' (Kim, p. 165). Kim describes those areas as an iron rice bowl, iron chair, and Iron wages. The iron rice bowl is a guaranteed lifetime employment via state-owned organizations: the Iron chair is selection based on political orientation, absence of punishment for poor business performance; and finally, iron wage is where there is state-administered, inflexible wage structures and low wage policies (Kim, p. 165).

In Denmark, another country that we researched, Anderson & Mainland found that the government is involved only to a limited extent in securing employees general rights. There are only a few laws that concern white-collar workers which stipulate that employees have rights in relation to terms of notice. Correspondingly employers' terms of notice are generally at quite a low level even in the collective agreements. Trade unions have concentrated their effort on the subject of dismissal only to a more important in the processes of collective bargaining.

This has meant that Denmark, according to the COED PI -index – has a comparatively low level of employment protection (Nonsense, g. 3). In Canada, it is argued that the government role in employee relations tends to be more progressive since much of Canada is decentralized (Sack, 2010). As a result, government involvement tends to take place at a provincial level. Only 8.4% of the Canadian workforce falls under federal jurisdiction (Sack, 2010). Accordingly, labor statutes often adjust in response to changes in the political climate.

Canada has what is known as the Canadian Charter Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees both individual and collective rights of employees (Sack, 2010). Labor legislation traditionally supports worker and union rights and confirms that collective bargaining is protected under the Charter. Under a recent Court decision, it was ruled that Charter protections are now to include the right to join a union (Sack, 2010). In Japan, there are many roles that the government plays within employee relations.

According to Dolan (1994), “ the structure of Japan’s labor market was experiencing gradual change in the late sass and was expected to continue this trend throughout the sass. The structure of the labor market is affected by the aging of the working population, increasing numbers of women in the labor force, and workers’ rising education level” (Dolan, 1994). Furthermore, according to Sidestroke(1999), it is stated that “ industrial relations in Japan can be typified as relatively co-operative. The IR system is founded on three tiers: enterprise unionism, lifetime employment and seniority-based wages.

It is also distinguished by the widespread bonus arrangements and promotion almost exclusively from within” (Sidestroke, 1999). Thus, it is very clear that promotion from within is indeed a large part of how business is conducted. “ Job security is very high, workers in a firm are guaranteed albeit informally lifelong employment in exchange for commitment to the company. Even during adverse business conditions and mounting unemployment, under Japanese law, sacking people is complex and uneconomical which is seen in Japan very poor for public relations” (Sidestroke, 1999).

Our team found this piece of information particularly informational because of the fact that in Japan, loyalty is valued at a very high level. This area particularly had our team asking the question of how poor performers are managed within the business. For example – if an individual is not performing to the level that the organization desires, we assume that they would be managed out. However, based on this research, it appears that that action may be in fact a little bit more complex and decisions need to be thoughtfully carried out.

DIMENSION TWO: rotationally the most common forms of employee representation and any recent changes: In comparing China, Denmark, Canada and Japan, the most common forms of employee representation are labor unions and some form of a joint committee separation between the union and the state; for China, this does not hold true. In China union autonomy from the state does not exist. In fact, independent unions are not allowed in China, nor are any forms of labor disputes. A 1994 Labor Law

allows for the establishment of labor unions in every state, but these are controlled by the state.

Although unions in China are controlled by the state, they are distinct in that there are no thresholds for minimum vote or time limits when employees demand a union. The All-China Federation of Trade Unions is a unified organization that all organizations and establishments must deal with. The AFTU is the world's largest trade union, with more than 190 million members. A recent initiative titled, the Rainbow Plan, jointly announced by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social

Security, the China Enterprise Confederation/China Enterprise Directors Association, and the SHAFT in May 2010, it is the aim of the trade unions in China to increase the rate of unionized companies and collective agreements. In contrast to China's state controlled labor unions, Denmark has indirect participation through collective agreements rather than through legislation (Gill, 2006). According to Fullerton (2011), employee representation takes place at three levels: national, industry and company. At the national level, the main parties for the framework agreements are the LO and the Danish employers' confederation AD.

These parties lay down the rights and obligations of the two sides. At the industry level, collective agreements that deal with pay and conditions are established between employers' associations and unions or "cartels" of unions grouped together to cover different industrial sectors. An example would be that one is established for most manufacturing, one for printing and media and so on. At company level, the negotiations are between the

trade union representatives and company management (Fulton, 2011). In Canada, collective agreements and arbitration awards provide one of the more common forms of employee representation for Canadians.

Adele (2003), states that approximately 40% of the Canadian workforce is covered. In addition, there is a statutory requirement for each collective bargaining agreement to provide an arbitration procedure to resolve disputes that arise as a result of a contract (Adele, 2003). In Japan, employee representation has been in development over several decades. As Serenness (2007) indicates, “ trade unions in Japan have a monopoly not only to lead collective bargaining, but also to lead Joint consultation” (p. 2). Thus, there is a two- tiered approach, of sorts.

Jerkins (2007), indicates “ the right to collective bargaining (in Japan) is guaranteed by the constitution, while labor management Joint consultation is not prescribed by law, but has been voluntarily developed by a trade union and an employer at each company. The most important difference between the two mechanisms lies in the level of formality. Joint consultation is a more informal and cooperative procedure than collective bargaining. Under this procedure, an employer and a trade union discuss any matter in a friendly atmosphere. Even if there is discrepancy, a union never goes on strike.

The Joint consultation procedure is often moved to a more formal procedure, namely collective bargaining, if an Similar to Japan’s Joint consultation is Canada’s use of sector councils. The use of sector councils has also become a popular form of non-union representation for Canadian employees. A sector council is defined as “ a Joint employer-employee organization that

provides a neutral decision making forum to determine human resource issues within the sector and to develop and implement a sectoral human resources strategy' (Gunderson, 2011). Gunderson (2011) claims that sector councils are used by 44% of the workforce.

DIMENSION THREE: The traditional level of influence of the labor movement and any recent changes that are occurring. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a long-term trend towards a decline in union membership. This downward trend appears to be ongoing, but there are wide variations among the countries researched for this assignment. The coverage in collective bargaining in Denmark and Sweden is much wider than that of Japan and China, as evidenced by the number of workers that have their pay and employment notations determined by collective agreements, which is above 80% (Gill, 2006).

Canadian union membership levels have been on a downward slope since peaking at around 40% in the mid-1980s, hitting 36% in the mid-1990s and settling at around 30% today (Brenna, 2005). In "Industrial Relations in Western Europe," Gill (2006) writes that Denmark is renowned for its relatively high degree of centralization of collective bargaining and extensive regulation of its labor markets (Gill, 2006). European Industrial Relations Observatory (2002) found that Denmark has a high union density of 88% (Gill, 2006). Fulton (2011) wrote that collective bargaining in Denmark operates within a clearly defined structure.

At the highest level there are the framework agreements between the LO and the Danish employers' federation (AD), which set the rules for issues

Inch in many other countries would be regulated by the law. Agreements covering pay and conditions, which in the sass and sass were largely also signed at this national level, are now dealt with at the level of individual industries. In the public sector, the main collective agreements are also between cartels of unions on the one and and employers (central government and the associations for regional and local government) on the other (Fulton, 2011).

In Canada, industries such as the automotive sector have been restricted due to NONFAT and other agreements that created a continental dependency instead of a national one (Brenna, 2005). Unions such as the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) have to rely upon multinational automotive companies decisions instead of making their arguments at a national political level (Brenna, 2005). Deregulation in the telecommunications industry has also caused the power of unions to weaken. New non-union employers are taking over sector jobs, as companies are now entering into contracts where they do not have to pay overtime to employees (Brenna, 2005).

China continues to struggle with independent representation. The Chinese government continues to forbid organizations spearheaded and ran by workers. Nile there is a form of representation, there is a lack of balance in power. There is great need for a more ' pluralistic' IR system which reflects China's shifting economy : market economy) (Kim, p 165). And in Japan, our team came across organizations such as RANGE. RANGE is " the largest trade union national center in Japan with 6. 8 million in membership" (RANGE). Japanese trade union organizations have a three-tier hierarchical <https://assignbuster.com/comparing-and-contrasting-assignment/>

structure: enterprise-based unions, industrial federations, and the national center at the top. There is also a wide-ranging network, with local organizations, called “ Local Ranges,” set up in all of Japan’s prefecture. The enterprise-based unions utilize negotiations and labor-management consultations in the workplace to improve working conditions, to monitor corporate activities, and to provide services to their members. The industrial federations for their part are composed of enterprise-based unions in the same industry.

Their member unions exchange information on common working conditions in the industry, discuss industrial policies and other problems, and strive to rectify these industry-specific problems” (RANGE). CONCLUSION Upon researching our respective countries and providing information to our fellow team members, we discovered that there are some significant differences amongst the discussed countries regarding both the dynamics of employee relations and the role that government plays. The differences clearly stem from historic events, political makeup, and advancement of the respective economies.