

# **Industrial Relations in Europe Conference 2021**

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## **Book of Abstracts**



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## **Pushing and pulling towards European wage policies: the Governance of wages and the interaction of different Dimensions and forces**

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This paper investigates how wages can be governed in the EU and what the role and effects of different dimensions of industrial relations systems are. More specifically, we investigate the 'vertical dimension', which connects the supranational locus of European policy-making and shaping to national organizations in a top-down fashion. We also investigate the role of the 'horizontal dimension', which directly connects national organizations' goals and understandings to those of their counterparts in other countries in an emergent fashion. This connection could be either formal, i.e. visible, or informal and invisible. The latter includes orientation towards or imitation of behaviour of others. In the paper we argue that both dimensions interact with each other and are important in order to understand the functioning of wage-setting in the EU and the interaction between both institutions could allow a transnational governance, i.e. a European governance, of wages. In order to address the research question the paper derives a theoretical concept of social partnership and state actors' motives and rationales on the basis of (neo-)corporatist theory which is integrated into comparative political economy literature on differences in industrial relations systems and varieties of capitalism. Empirically, we are making use of a mixed method strategy based on a unique data set from a standardized questionnaire surveys sent out to social partners' organizations in all member states of the EU and on information based on semi-structured interviews of social partners' organizations in five countries.

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## **Product market regulation and working conditions within platform work. A comparison between international and regional food delivery platforms in Poland and Italy**

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The effects of platforms on employment conditions have been primarily analyzed through the lenses of their interactions with labour market regulation and in isolation with the product market regulation (PMR). Studies in IR tradition suggest that PMR is crucial for understanding employment outcomes (Gall et al. 2011). PMR limits competition between companies based on wages and working standards (Brown 2008&2010), whereas higher competition in (sub)sectors with less PMR weakens the ability of workers to bargain and deteriorates wages and working conditions (Pulignano et al.

2016; Aidt & Sena 2005), with employers using the competition to force concessions from workers (Benassi & Dorigatti 2017). PMR also impacts the employment conditions in labour markets by regulating the way in which services are provided and goods manufactured (Turnbull 2006; Lévesque & Murray 2010).

The paper aims to explore how and why product markets impact employment effects in the context of platform economy. More concretely, we ask: are there differences in the way in which platforms affect employment conditions, and why? How far does the different way in which platforms engage with PMR and are affected by PMR explain the diversity in labour platforms' employment effects?

We answer these questions by studying international and regional food delivery platforms operating across and within Italy and Poland, countries which present differences in both product and labour market regulation. The empirical basis of the paper are narrative interviews with workers (n=50), and expert interviews with policy makers, trade unionists, and platform managers (n=16) conducted in 2020-2021.

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## **Forms of Network Governance for the European Trade Union Federations – Governance Structures for Coordination of Collective Bargaining at the Sectoral Level in Europe**

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Network governance approach combines market, hierarchy, and relational forms of coordination (Provan & Kenis 2008) by focusing on an interplay between actors within an organisational field, where their roles differ based on the external institutional conditions of the field that in turn affect the mode of governance. This approach draws from both sociology and organisational studies by using the network organisation as the unit of analysis and focusing on the structure of collective action (Powell et al. 2005, 1113) in order to explain network outcomes through different governance arrangements. It is possible to identify three forms of network governance based on goal-consensus: shared governance model, lead organisation -governance model and network administration model (Provan & Kenis 2008).

This paper applies the network governance approach and combines it with the power resource theory (e.g. Haipeter & Dörre 2011; Schmalz & Dörre 2013) that distinguishes four different but partly mutually dependent sources of power - economic-structural power, communicative power, organisational power and institutional power - Müller & Platzer (2017) to investigate European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) governance structures and mechanisms for coordination of collective bargaining. The scope of this paper is on the manufacturing and public sector ETUFs and how different network governance forms have emerged in these settings. The primary empirical analysis is based on expert interviews with the actors in the field, representing both the ETUFs and their affiliates. These were complemented by official documents and previous research about the ETUFs and coordination of collective bargaining at the European level.

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## **A review of transnational company agreements: Stagnation of international agreements and decline of European agreements - why?**

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Although the first transnational company agreement (TCA) was signed already in the 1980s, the real dynamics of these agreements did not begin until the 2000s. These agreements, which are still very much in the minority among all of the transnational companies (TNCs) peaked in 2008. Since then, there has been, at best, stagnation in the number of international framework agreements (IFAs) negotiated each year. This stagnation hides a difficulty in extending them to new businesses not only outside Europe, but also in Europe itself. For the European framework agreements (EFAs), on the other hand, there is a loss of momentum and a drop in the number of agreements. We will shed light on the factors that would explain these different dynamics, by analyzing the strategies and practices of the actors. The analysis will focus on actors in French and German TNCs, which have signed more than half of all TCAs and thus dominate the dynamics of transnational negotiation. It will reveal the contradictory role of the mandating and validation procedures adopted by the European and international trade union federations which in turn influence the practices of the local actors. Several effects can be observed, including a renationalization of negotiations, greater informality of agreements and a change in company preferences.

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## INVISIBLE LABOUR VISIBLE WORK: HOME-BASED WORK

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- Facts such as globalization, changing production and management techniques, and flexibility have created new forms of employment. One of these forms of employment is home-based work. Home-based work, which existed before the 19th century, when the industrial revolution was experienced, did not disappear with the increase in mechanization, but was transformed. According to 2019 ILO data, 7.6% of 296 million employees are home-based workers. Home-based work is explained under the title of home-work. Home work is work carried out by a person in his/her home or in other premises of his/her choice, other than the workplace; for remuneration; which results in a product/service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used. However, home-based work does not have a legal definition but it is generally understood to be work that is carried out in one's own home. The nature of home-based work is wideranging, spanning across legal classifications, to include workers that are in an employment relationship as well as those who are independent, self-employed workers. In terms of international law, the International Labor Organization's Home Work Convention No. 177 and Recommendation No. 184 define home-based work and mention the types of this work. On the national level, it is seen that home-based work is regulated by the "Home Service Agreement" in the Law of Obligations No. 6098 and "Telecommuting" in the Labour Law No. 4857. Despite national regulations, because the employer does not notify to social security institution, these employees are employed informally, have to work without security and low wages, and are deprived of social protection due to lack of supervision.

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## Norwegian employer organisations – service providers or industrial relations actors?

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Demougin et al. (2018) argue that employer organizations have adapted to changing socio-economic contexts by developing within and across three different roles, namely the role as industrial actor, political actor and service provider. In this paper, we make use of the analyses by Demougin et al. in order to look into the role of Norwegian employer organisations (N-EO). As in other countries, N-EOs were funded as a way to counteract the power of the emerging trade union movement around 1900. While the role as an industrial actor was predominant in the first period, the organisations role as a political actor was important in relation to the establishment of labour market institutions. Within the Norwegian labour market model, N-EO still play an important role in wage determination through the strongly coordinated collective bargaining model. This could indicate that the role as a service provider would be less important in a Norwegian setting. However, members of N-EOs are not obligated to be part of collective agreements, and the EO-density rate is increasing whereas collective agreement coverage has declined.

In this paper we make use of a survey among private sector employers as well as qualitative interviews with employees in N-EO, in order to investigate what roles are the most important for Norwegian employer organisations. Furthermore, whether variations between the different organisations can be understood in light of member preferences, their position in the collective bargaining system or other factors.

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## **Pandemic crisis and strategies switch in the firm-level bargaining: some empirical evidence from Italian administrative data**

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This work is based on the Italian administrative data (source: Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali) resulting from the applications submitted to access specific tax benefits on the Performance-Related Pay (PRP) collectively established at firm or territorial level. This gives the database its originality since there are still no census data on the firm level bargaining in Italy.

After a brief reconstruction of the institutional framework and its most recent evolutions, first evidence will be provided on the impact of the pandemic crisis on collective agreements dealing with PRP, subject which more than others (health security management, access to Short Times Working Schemes, working hours, etc.) may have been negatively affected by the economic and employment crisis generated by the pandemic itself.

Some qualitative analysis based on case studies will also be presented to support and integrate the database's information. Specifically, four companies that, having had access to the tax break on the PRP, were interviewed in 2019 and again in 2020, precisely to verify the role of collective bargaining in the management of the pandemic.

The aim of the paper is to discuss the strategies switch in the second level bargaining due to the pandemic crisis.

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## **From proposal to experimentation: the right of trade union assembly at the time of the pandemic**

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Before the Covid-19 crisis, we had already reflected upon the need to reconsider methods and means of exercising union rights precisely in the context of digital work (S.Donà, M.Marocco, 2019).

On the basis of these considerations we had already begun to outline an initial proposal regarding the use of information technology in exercising the right to meet – and the subsequent delocalization of that right – in order to lay the foundations upon which to progressively construct further union rights.

The Covid-19 crisis and the resulting social distancing have led to measures that have favored the spread of remote working.

In this work, by updating the work already done, it is proposed, first of all, the examination of the collective agreements signed in Italy that had to be faced with the need to ensure the exercise of the right of trade union assembly in safety.

The second part of the study addresses the other emerging problem – ways and means of extending union rights beyond the sphere of subordinate employment and especially to work carried out via digital platforms. Despite its socio-economic significance, this question has struggled to find a regulatory solution. Though there have been some initiatives – even at a European level – which our study will take into consideration, Italy lags behind other European countries, with regards to both collective contracts and legislation. From this point of view, the recognition of the right of trade union assembly seems to us an essential viaticum and, for this reason, our operational proposal on this specific sector will be further refined and detailed.

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## **The long haul of the self-employed workers unionisation. European trends 2002-2018 in the service sector and the case of a good Italian organisational innovation**

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The knotty problem of self-employment representation is one of the most current challenges for industrial relations and a litmus test of the inclusive capacity of Western democratic capitalisms towards the disruptive labour market transformations.

European trade unions have been dealing with the increase in self-employment in both skilled and unskilled sectors. Unions have chosen different strategies to respond to the needs of self-employment. In some cases, with the creation of labour unions they engaged exclusively in the representation of the self-employment, regardless of the economic sector, and gathering a great heterogeneity of workers; in other cases, by extending union membership to self-employed workers in the same sector; or by setting up ad hoc organisations for self-employment, but relative to their production sector.

This variability and fragmentation is the hallmark of trade union actions towards self-employed workers. It is also the mirror of the different trajectories of self-employment, which in national contexts show a different concentration in some sectors rather than others. This variability is the result of a complex network of complementarities between different institutional arenas: growth, labour process and occupational regimes.

This article discusses the processes of convergence and divergence in unionisation between high-skilled self-employed workers in the tertiary sector within countries belonging to different models of European capitalism. Historically self-employed workers have many individual values so do not have much interest in unionisation.

The data drawn from the European Social Survey (rounds 1, 6 and 9) show different trends, which can be well explained with the path dependence theory. Following the principles of mixed methods, a qualitative analysis was conducted (interviews and focus groups, September-November 2020) for the Italian case, taking into account the creative workers. The research has shown how the approach to the trade union has been driven by the crisis in the sector caused by the pandemic, and

how through innovative union practices (CGIL the case investigated) it has been possible to combine individualistic pressures with new collective impulses among workers. This plurality of actions is explained using Crozier's scheme (1974, 1976), according to which the workers alternate their logic in a strategic and non-oppositional way, to improve their condition.

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## **“We’re all in it together, we all suffer the same”: Covid-19 and the persistence national variations in employment regulation in France and the UK**

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The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on work and employment differs considerably across countries largely reflecting variations in employment institutions regulating actor engagement and state strategies. Notwithstanding a range of differences, comparative capitalisms (CC) perspectives persistently uncover distinctive patterns of variation between Liberal Market Economies (LMEs) and Coordinated Market Economies (CMEs) and it is within the debate over societal continuities and discontinuities from a CC perspective that we situate our research. The paper draws on empirical research in France and the UK that allows for a comparative analysis of state behaviour and actor engagement in the current crisis. We compare the varying state policies and employer responses resulting from the Covid-19 crisis in France and the UK. The paper argues that the severity of the impact of the crisis on workers – and the effectiveness of trade unions action to mitigate the impact – reflect varying levels employment regulation and more specifically the level of institutional embeddedness of worker representation in France and the UK. The argument here is that far from reflecting a common raft of approaches to the employment crisis across states (one a LME, the other a CME) resulting from the common global health crisis, the absence of both institutional and mimetic congruity in employment institutions, suggests the persistence of significant path dependency. If the existential threat is global, the societal response is local with regard to institutional context and especially, as the paper illustrates, employment regulation.

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## **Manufacturing informality: Global production networks and the reproduction of informalized labour regimes in Europe’s peripheries**

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Global Value Chains (GVCs) are today a major driver of employment, and yet GVCs jobs are very often precarious, unstable, and informalized. How can we explain the persistence of such informalization dynamics within modern, globalized, production processes? If earlier GVC approaches focussed on firm-firm relations overlooking labour and employment, later perspectives showed that asymmetrical governance and peripheral integration are major drivers of employment deterioration. Consistently, critical Global Production Networks (GPNs) approaches showed how the adverse incorporation within global productions, the unequal class relations within

firms and regions, and multiple dynamics of uneven development, workforce segmentation and hierarchization crucially shape employment relations. Nonetheless, only a few of these works explicitly problematize the role of informalization dynamics in GPNs, and most of them focus on structural factors of informalization, neglecting the role of actors in actively reproducing informality.

To address such gap, this paper reframes informalization as a tool for labour control, and investigates how informalization - while influenced by structural economic pressures and local socio-institutional contexts - is ultimately shaped by the employer-employee relations at the workplace.

Combining GPNs analysis and Labour Process Theory (LPT), the paper builds a novel *extended structuralist approach* to investigate informalization persistence in the garment-footwear production networks in Italy and Albania.

By analysing the situated bargaining powers of managers and workers within firms embedded in a common GPN but integrated in different institutional contexts, the paper teases out the mechanisms of informality persistence and variegation and explains the emergence of hegemonic and coercive informalization processes. The study captures how the structural pressures deriving from the governance of a globalized production network interact with different institutional contexts. It then shows how the position firms hold in the chains and the uneven patterns of workers' resistance to informalization determine the variegated informalized labour regimes that emerge within the GPN. Building on a multi-sited qualitative fieldwork involving 118 informants among workers, unionists, managers, labour inspectors, NGO representatives and other stakeholders, I show that informalization dynamics emerge and persist as a response to competitive chains' pressures only as long as workers are unable or unwilling to resist them. Yet, the situated bargaining power relations at each node of the chain - as shaped by chain's pressures and local institutional contexts - crucially determine the predominant forms of informalization leading to either coercive and despotic, or hegemonic and negotiated, informalized labour regimes.

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## The future of work within the Nordic working life model – opportunities and challenges

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Debates on the future of work often concentrate narrowly on technological change and automation of jobs, whereas other important forces of change are overlooked. In this paper we discuss what consequences digital technological change, interacting with other global megatrends such as demographic change, green transition and globalization, will have for Nordic labour markets and work life models.

Internationally, the evolution of the Nordic models is regarded a success story, where high levels of growth and employment have been achieved, along with lower levels of inequality than in any comparable social models (Dølvik et al., 2015a; Magnusson et al., 2009). There are however signs that the Nordic societies are moving in direction of widening wealth and income gaps, making them less distinct from other European countries. Several challenges are arising – demographic trends point towards shortages of labour, while globalization and automation for many decades have caused loss of manufacturing jobs. A key question is therefore whether the increasingly digitalized service sector will, as have been the story so far, be able to compensate for the job losses in tangible goods production in the future. Another central question is how changes in the job and skill structure instigated by the megatrends will affect the quality and pattern of work, contractual and regulative forms, employment relations, and job market adjustment. In view of recent trends, accentuated by the Corona-crisis, it seems that the praised resilience and flexible adjustment capacity of the Nordic models in no way can be taken for granted in the future of work. In discussing these issues and the prospects for model renewal, we'll draw on theories of institutional change, service cost disease (Baumol, 1967), and new political economic literature on growth and welfare reform (Baccaro & Pontusson, 2020; Hassel & Palier, 2020).

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## **The role of labour as an environmental regulator – Analysis of the environmental commitments contained in transnational framework agreements**

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The urgency of environmental action preceded the covid crisis but an inclusive transition to a greener society has become a key feature of recovery plans in Europe. The necessity of a green transition also concomitantly appeared as an opportunity to reframe and rethink debates around industrial relations and union identities (Thomas, Doerflinger, 2020).

In that context, this study provides a framework of analysis of transnational framework agreements (TFAs) – a joint attempt by organised labour and transnational companies to address challenges around development of industrial relations and green transitions in global production networks (Newsome et al., 2015). Indeed, in recent years those agreements have started to include increasingly detailed environmental provisions and therefore act as a relevant framing device to examine processes of regulation in and around the workplace (Boyer, 1987; MacKenzie & Martínez Lucio, 2014).

A database of environmental provisions contained in TFAs has been compiled and analysed to draw conclusions about their substantive content, scope, geographical and sectoral distribution. This analysis has been complemented with semi-structured interviews involving environmental policy experts within the international union movement. Those interviews have been designed to develop an understanding of the regulatory environment surrounding those TFAs, with a specific focus on the role of labour actors.

Global in their reach, the role TFAs can play in the larger context of environmental regulation will be discussed in light of the fact that their design as well as the practices associated with them remain firmly anchored in a European context.

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## **Occupational welfare and social sustainability. The union's scope for action in protecting the environmental and public health**

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The paper, after an analysis of the recent policies adopted by the European Commission during the pandemic with the purpose of relaunching the environmental ethic able to protect public health, wants to demonstrate how industrial relations can give an effective answer to the welfare systems' sustainability problem. For the Italian case, the public redistributive policy in support of occupational welfare has the effect to encourage the collective autonomy to assume public functions of social protection, typical of the Welfare State. The occupational welfare system has an exclusive nature: it is funded by the collectivity, but only a few employees can gain the benefits. It will be argued how the social partners, using the space for political action given to them, can negotiate welfare instruments. Through these instruments the right of insiders can be universalizable, precisely because of its power to generate social value, in line with the objectives of the implementation policies of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

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## Trade Unions and Digitalisation: A Comparative Study of Union Influence in Banking in Norway and the UK

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Recent years have witnessed intense debate around digitalisation and its potential impact on work and employment. A key question is whether trade unions are able to shape the use and implementation of digitalisation so that workers benefit. Much extant literature focuses on the 'platform' economy and organising 'gig' workers. The industry 4.0 debate takes in established manufacturing workplaces, with studies suggesting some unions in Germany, Italy and the Nordic countries are seeking to influence the process of digitalisation through engagement and action at a national policy level, as well as in the workplace. However, there are few focused studies on services sector trade unions, their approaches and strategies and how they engage at different levels.

This paper reports on initial findings from a Leverhulme-funded comparative study of trade unions approach to digitalisation in Norway and the UK. Cross-national studies in countries with contrasting institutional environments where unions have varied power resources, are particularly lacking, despite their potential to shed light on the conditions and factors that make a difference. The paper explores union strategies in the banking and finance sector, with a specific focus on digital technologies relevant to customer service and lower level administrative grades. Drawing upon qualitative interviews with national officers and workplace reps in two trade unions, the study examines how these unions seek to influence firstly, the national 'debate' on digitalisation and policy development, and secondly, the way union reps influence technology use in the workplace. Lessons are drawn in terms of the conditions which support or impede union influence and how this might support union learning and strategy development.

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## The role of family and intergenerational transmission of union membership in Norway

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Declining unionization in many countries have motivated studies to get a better understanding of what factors that influence the decisions of young workers to join trade unions. In particular, it is interesting to examine the role of union membership in close family. It is widely recognized that individual choices are affected by intergenerational transmission of preferences regarding political orientation (Jennings et al. 2009), education (Holmund et al. 2011) and receipt of welfare insurance (Dahl et al. 2014), to mention some. Is this also the case for union membership? Bryson and Davies (2018) finds that the decision of young workers in Britain on whether or not to join a union is influenced by their parents' union membership. In particular, their study reveals that young workers are 29 per cent more likely to join a union if one of their parents is a union member, and 87 per cent more likely to join a union if both are union members, compared to individuals with no unionized parents (pp. 12-13). To what extent do we observe the same effects in Norway? In this study, we will use register data covering all employees in the period 2000-2019 to investigate the impact of organized parents, siblings and spouse for the individual choice of becoming a union member.

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## Renewing workers' collective action theories in the gig and precarious world of work

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The field of industrial relations (IR) and social movement studies (SM) have rarely entered into a dialogue. Kelly's mobilization theory has been one of the few successful attempts to integrate the two fields of study by providing a framework for the analysis of micro processes of mobilizations. In the light of the new conflicts that are emerging in the context of the gig and precarious economy we do think, however, that is necessary to rethink our theorisations about workers' collective action and organisation in order to go beyond trade union centred analyses of collective action (Atzeni 2021) and to account for less institutional and Eurocentric types of IR frameworks (Nowak 2021). SM has for long paid attention to the non-institutional socio-political context to explain social movement formation processes—focusing on factors such as the protest culture of a given country, the informal networks of activists of a given community, the presence of social movement organizations, the organizational tradition of mobilization of urban localities (Ford and Honan, 2019; Munck, 2019; della Porta and Diani, 2020). However, these insights have been detached from an understanding of material processes of labour exploitation and, therefore, they have been rarely associated with studies of workers' mobilizations. In this paper, by reviewing the burgeoning international literature on labour conflict and organisation in the gig and precarious economy, particularly at urban level, we thus aim to show how institutional and non-institutional factors combine with precarious labour processes in urban contexts to produce collective organisation and conflict. In doing this we hope a more integrated framework for analysis can be provided to scholars interested to understand contemporary changes in labour and social conflicts worldwide.

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## A just and green transition post-covid to a carbon-neutral society? union strategies and social dialogue at global level and their local implementation

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Key to the recovery of industrial relations post-covid and the form this takes is the development of a green economy and securing a just transition to a carbon-free world. Global and European union organisations play an increasingly active role in global climate and just green transition politics. This paper addresses the range of their interventions, the challenges to developing policy proposals, and how effectively these are enacted at regional, national and local levels. It is based on findings from a research project, 'Just Green Transitions and Global Union Organisations', part of a Canadian supported programme on climate change and work. The paper assesses in particular the strategies that emanate from the food and agriculture unions, IUF and EFFAT, and the building and woodworking unions, BWI and EFBWW, based on analysis of written declarations, policy proposals and in-depth interviews. The effectiveness of these is tested in two in-depth cases given as examples of just transition policy enactment: bio-economy in the sugar beet industry in Denmark and sustainable forestry in Sweden.

Whilst the notion of just transition provides a frame, unions take a multi-pronged approach to climate change, seeking to integrate traditional concerns with employment and working conditions



with action to combat climate change. In arguing for a comprehensive social transformation, they are driven by current global targets and goals as well as sector-specific concerns. It is shown how engagement with climate change is necessitating a more political strategy and wider social dialogue, directing unions to represent more than the interests of their members.

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## Social dialogue at the workplace during the pandemic

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The current COVID-19-pandemic sends negative and unexpected shocks to the labour markets. The consequences of the corona-pandemic for the labour markets are not yet to be overseen, but the negative effects will be serious and long lasting. A central feature of the Nordic model is the collaboration between workers and employers at the workplace. The model has proven to be particularly effective during crises (Dølvik et al. 2014). By involving employees and their representatives in crisis management, the outcome are expected to be less devastating for business and more inclusive for the workers than without such involvement. The main question in this paper is how the social dialogue at the workplaces have functioned under extraordinary conditions. During surveys among shop stewards in both private and public sector, we have mapped the situation in large parts of the Norwegian labour market. We asked how the shop stewards have experienced the formal and informal participation during the pandemic, their sense of influence on important decisions and how they judge the employers' handling of this extreme situation. In many ways, the local social dialogue has been put on its' worst stress test ever. The results show a remarkable stability in terms of cooperation, and even some of the shop stewards label their relationship to the employer as better than before the pandemic (Trygstad & Andersen 2021). We want to elaborate the importance of social dialogue in times of crisis and discuss why the long-standing trust between the parties is so persistent.

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## Job quality in worker cooperatives: democratic heavens or institutional loopholes?

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The debate on job quality in worker cooperative is characterised by two different poles. Some contributions tend to focus on job satisfaction and intrinsic dimensions of job quality, highlighting how they are generally higher in cooperatives compared to capitalist firms because of their democratic character which translates into a peculiar organisational and managerial ethos. Other contributions, based on "harder" measures of job quality, show that cooperatives perform slightly better than capitalist firms, but their job quality is at risk of "deterioration" due to market pressures. Through a qualitative analysis of job quality in some of the sectors of the Italian economy in which the incidence of cooperatives on total employment is highest (social services, cleaning, and meat processing) based on semi-structured interviews with workers and relevant experts (trade unionists, managers, clients), this paper wants to make two points regarding this debate. Looking at hard indicators of

job quality, the paper highlights that worker cooperatives in Italy often perform worse than other companies active in the same sector. This is connected to the fact that differentials in labour regulation and employment relations constitute a key factor explaining why this form of enterprise was able to expand in the analysed sectors. Thus, we argue that cooperatives have acted as institutional loopholes through which regulation could be circumvented and labour costs reduced, negatively affecting job quality and opening up to a significant redefinition of employment relations in the four sectors.

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## Critique of EU Action Plan to the 'European Pillar of Social Rights

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The crisis of industrial relations was not generated by the coronavirus pandemic, but the progressing division of the global production process during the last generation has undermined working regulations of the nation states. In response to this evolution, the International Labour Office, reminiscent of its origin in the 1919 Peace Treaty of Versailles, has taken a great step forward at a meeting in Geneva 21 June 2019 through the adoption of its "Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work". It is against this background of tripartite global movement that the European Union based on the "European Pillar of Social Rights", proclaimed by the European Commission at its Gothenburg Summit 17 November 2017, can historically be located. In the meantime, two EU Directives on specific issues have been enacted 20 June 2019 and an 'Action Plan' adopted 1 March 2021. This 'Action Plan' for the implementation of Social Rights in Europe is intended to shape the future development of EU social government. Despite its glaring ambiguities, this plan is the most important document for the social policy programme of the European Commission.

This contribution to IREC 2021 will analyse the publication of the 'Action Plan' against the background of a more long-term history of industrial relations and its present process of transition. This critique will be based on a proposal for an alternative strategy transcending present obsolete economic restrictions.

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## Is the gender wage gap cyclical? Evidence from the Norwegian labor market

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Economic fluctuations have different consequences for the wages of different demographic groups. Understanding what drives these consequences is important for policies that aim to support both economic stability and equal pay.

The role of observable characteristics (e.g., education, age, part-time work) for the gender wage gap is extensively analyzed in the literature, but the role of labor market conditions has received limited attention. Building on the literature that investigates wage sensitivity to labor market conditions, we analyze the interplay between the gender wage gap and aggregate unemployment.

Our empirical analysis relies on Norwegian registry data that covers the years 2000-2019 with detailed information on wage components at the job level. Although the Norwegian unemployment

rate has been low during these years, it has varied more for men than for women. This supports evidence that the Norwegian labor market is gender-segregated, and it shows that low unemployment rates do not preclude the presence of economic fluctuations.

Our results indicate that the gender wage gap is cyclical – it becomes smaller when unemployment is high. On average, for the period 2000-2019, one *percentage point* increase in aggregate unemployment is associated with 0.3 *percentage point* reduction in the gender wage gap. This association, however, does not necessarily reflect the causal effect of economic crises on the gender wage gap. To isolate this causal link, we are expanding our analysis by comparing Norwegian municipalities that have shown varying degrees of vulnerability to economic downturns (e.g., the financial crises in 2008, the oil-price fall in 2014).

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## Effects of Inequality, Diversity, Gender and Migration

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**Objective** - The aim of the article is to discuss the concept of immigration within the context of immigration policies, theories and research, and to discuss the challenges faced by the diversity-inequality framework. The research question is to evaluate the inequality caused by the policies towards immigrants and the prejudiced attitudes of the local people in the lives of immigrants. How gender theory and research deal with multiple inequalities is important. The study briefly revisits the academic debates on gender equality, diversity and multiculturalism, which arguably represent two different paradigms. While multicultural approaches deal with the harmony of minorities with diversity as the key concept, feminist approaches focus on gender equality with gender.

**Methodology** - The intersectional approach demonstrates that increased migration and human mobility presents similar challenges for the two thinking structures to address complexity and multiple inequalities within and outside the nation state. The main section explores the “multicultural dilemma” in more detail, focusing on the intersections between gender, ethno-national minorities.

**Findings** - Perceptions of diversity and gender equality / women’s rights are contextual and dynamic because intersecting differences and inequalities are embedded in national histories, institutions and policies. Researchers have proven that the discourse of women’s rights and gender equality has become an integral part of belonging.

**Originality / value** - The intersectionality approach to gender, ethnicity is combined in this article with a transnational approach to gender, diversity and migration.

**Keywords** Multiculturalism, Gender Equality, Intersectional, Immigration and Integration Policies

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## The Code on Social Security (2020) and Workers’ Movements during the COVID-19 Pandemic in India

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This paper is concerned with the multiple lines of labour divisions unfolding under the Code on Social Security Code (2020) through varying definitions of workers, different payment scales, different accessibility to social security and the reproduction and intersection with social divisions of caste,

class and gender. By looking at the implications of the Act on the process of collective bargaining, it explores the scope of action for workers' associations after these new provisions.

As an investigation of the long-term origins of regulating bargaining processes, it argues that the new law passed in 2020 social factors of inequality are perpetuated by embedding them into a rationale of the "modern" labour process following the terminology of efficiency, productivity and flexibility.

The structure of this investigation is three-fold: First, it analyses the new law and the various components with regards to trade union actions, social security and remuneration which the Social Security Code aims to synthesise. Second, drawing on various interviews conducted with trade unionists from INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress) and the WPC (Working Peoples' Charter), it analyses workers' mobilisations in Delhi which followed the passing of the law under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Third, the paper looks at the contradictory trajectories as unfolding under the Act. By extending the scope of workers falling under "informal" categories, the law cements precarious structures, yet opens up possibilities to form broad alliances and unite various sections of the workforce, as rendered visible during the general strike in November 2020.

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## What do employers think? The costs and benefits of complying with pay transparency in different sectors

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This paper proposes a sector-sensitive approach to the analysis of the devising and implementation of employers' strategies on making pay information more transparent. In the UK and further afield, national regulations have been introduced to make public information on pay and other pay-related elements (bonuses, professional profiles grouping, use of pay scales, etc.) more transparent. To date, in the UK at least, this strategy has had limited success in reducing the gender pay gap, with companies partially fulfilling the requirements or even submitting 'suspiciously-looking data' and with no legal requirements over the compilation of narratives or action plans (Topping et al., 2018). Outside of the UK, there have been varied national and regional efforts to regulate the circulation of pay information in general as a means to improve pay transparency, with the ultimate aim of more equal pay. For example, under an executive order in the US which came into effect in 2018, federal agencies and their contractors are required to make pay information on their employees publicly available. In June 2019, the European Parliament also passed a directive to make information of working conditions, pay included, more predictable to workers. Introducing binding pay transparency measures is also prioritised by the current president of the European Commission.

National variations in compliance regimes have been the focus of academic study, in addition to research that highlights the broader societal effects of pay transparency, especially in relation to their contribution to pay equality and the narrowing of pay gaps. More organisationally-focused research has emphasised the potential for employer benefits from divulging pay information (e.g. Colella et al., 2007; Greiner et al., 2011). Our focus will be on the often-neglected effect of sector characteristics (cf. Healy and Ahamed, 2019). We wish to explore the extent of sector-sensitive structures of incentives, impacting on how and why employers respond to requirements on pay transparency. Varying industry-specific dimensions, such as degrees of unionisation, market volatility, gender composition of the workforce and the extent of flexible working practices, can offer potentially interesting lenses for the analysis of how national regulations are translated into organisational practices.

Methodologically, we begin with the UK context in this paper, with the prospect of applying this approach for cross-national comparison in the future. We map and analyse managerial practices at the company level, focussing on the different (actual and perceived) costs and benefits of employers' compliance in different sectors. First, we conduct a review of secondary data available (surveys, statistics, reports from consultancy agencies and interest groups); in a second phase we complement our analysis with company-level case studies from selected sectors characterised by different

socio-economic factors. By adopting such a focus, we offer insights into costs, organisational decision making, formal or informal practices of addressing pay transparency and the benefits of pay transparency for both employers and employees. We aim at identifying the extent to which sector-specific differences can shape the structure of incentives (cost-benefits) in reporting and addressing pay transparency.

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## **Digitalean at Work: Varieties of Lean Models in Digital Automotive Factories in Italy**

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A growing literature on the impact of new technologies on the transformation of the work process is emerging, that stresses the role of the combination of technological and organisational changes as drivers of transformation in terms of human-machine relationship. While comparison across countries starts to be undertaken, relatively less attention has been devoted to study how heterogeneity unfolds within the same sector of activity. By analysing the case of the automotive sector in Italy, this paper aims at filling the existing gap in the literature, addressing the existence of a varieties of lean-oriented organisational models inside however a common trend of digitisation across factories. Hereby, leveraging on the results of two field-work analyses conducted under a collaboration with the Fondazione Sabattini and the metal workers trade union FIOM in the period 2016-2018, we are able to put together an ensemble of automotive assembly plants marked by processes of technological and organisational transformation. Our research design allows to address different sources of heterogeneity: within-sector, within-firm, and across products.

According to our results, first, differently from an archetypal total lean model, a structural tension between leanness in the production system and leanness in the organisation of the work process exists in all studied workplaces. Second, far from an ideal type of a pure digital factory, strong forms of within-sector and within-firm heterogeneity, in terms of digitisation processes, is found. Finally, what workers do in terms of the final assembled products mediates both technological and organisational readiness, enacting more or less manifested forms of attachment/refusal of workers' vis-à-vis corporate identity.

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## **Organizing the Big-Tech. Comparing Unionism at Amazon in Italy and Germany**

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This paper analyzes the cycle of worker contention at Amazon logistics in Italy and Germany, trying to see the variation in the forms of mobilizations and the role of traditional unions (CGIL and Ver.Di) in a key multinational restructuring urban logistics. Data collected on protest event coverage, interviews with key informants and documents produced by unions and worker organizations will give a comparative overview of variations and similarities of worker power, repertoire of action and claims. The goal is to explain on the one hand, how technology has affected working conditions and on the other hand, how worker organizing triggered specific forms of unionism in the two countries. In this

sense, the approach looks more at the institutional and country specific conditions as key explanatory factors defining different or similar dynamics and outcomes of worker mobilization. While the comparative analysis disconfirms any determinism regarding technological innovation, it also shows how previous collective bargaining institutions and the regulation of employment relations system plays a central role.

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### **‘Good employers wanted’. Strategies of Polish employment agencies towards posted workers in home care sector**

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Employers struggling with labour shortages, retention and competence mismatches may opt for the implementation of innovative strategies towards attracting workers. This paper will use the “good employer” lens to shed light on the practices undertaken by employment agencies posting workers in EU countries. These employers’ actions are the result of internal policies of the companies aimed at brand improvement as well as individualising employee-employer relations. This paper will examine ‘good employer’ perspective in relation to a particularly vulnerable group of mobile workers, that is Polish workers posted by private labour market intermediaries to carry out care work in German households.

To illustrate the activities of the posting entrepreneurs, the paper will draw on the results of qualitative research coming from different projects (POWBridge, EuroAgencyCare) carried out between 2016-2021. A total of 16 interviews (semi-structured interviews, also including vignettes) were conducted with representatives and owners of employment agencies (both family businesses and multinational corporations) specialized in home care services. Additionally, 19 interviews with researchers, care market experts, social partners or other migration facilitators will be implemented. The collected empirical material showed that, regardless of the characteristics of the actors posting workers to the domestic care sector in Germany, they make similar efforts towards live-in care workers. Unable to change the specific conditions of employment in home care (e.g. 24/7 work, low wages, physical and emotional strain), employers who post workers pursue additional strategies in terms of selection and recruitment, support and professional development of workers, and problem-solving assistance in the host country.

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### **Covid-19 and the prospects of workplace vaccination. An industrial relations perspective on vaccination programmes in the UK and Italy**

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In early 2021, one year after the Covid-19 outbreak, immunization campaigns started. Countries are investing as many resources as possible – financial, political, logistic, organisational – first to produce and/or access vaccines and then to inoculate them. We consider the latter and focus on vaccination programmes in the UK and Italy. Specifically, we examine the different approaches that key industrial relations actors in the two countries have followed. We will also investigate the

prospects of workplace vaccination: absent (as foreseeable) in the UK, present (so far planned but not yet launched) in Italy.

The analysis has four aims. First, to review the policies and legal aspects underlying vaccination programmes (e.g. employers' and employees' obligations), discussing also the rationale used by policymakers to prevent or to allow workplace vaccination. Second, to identify employers' and trade unions' contribution towards vaccination programmes in both countries, in terms of the narrative, design, implementation and monitoring of such programmes. Third, to assess the outcomes of workplace vaccination in the Italian case, examining the numbers of workers immunized through this channel as well as the characteristics of these workers, then comparing these with developments in the UK. Fourth, to discuss insights that can be drawn from these two cases, building upon classic and contemporary literature in industrial relations and welfare studies.

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## **Industrial relations from below. The struggle for recognition of food delivery workers in Italy**

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Since it has been platformized, food delivery sector is characterized by a transnational wave of unionization which has not only made their worker a symbol of precariousness, but it has also led to crucial achievements. In this sense, considering the high institutional involvements that has made possible to achieve results such as the recent agreement signed with Just Eat, Italy seems to be at the forefront of an emerging tendency where platform workers are achieving results that are challenging the neoliberal view of Industrial relations. These aspects make food delivery struggle an ideal case study to look at how industrial relations may be built from below, both overcoming the difficulties that platform organizations provide to union activities and addressing a successful path to achieve their demands. The analysis will then look at factors such as organizing practices and union strategies, other than by employers' behaviors, but overall at the crucial role played by the State, intended both at national and local level as well that in its judiciary articulation. The concept of recognition - grounded on a solid sociological and political theoretical debate - will then be used to provide an understanding of those factors which have been key in determining a successful result. The empirical evidences provided from a participant ethnographic approach that the authors are conducting within Riders Union Bologna since its formation.

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## **What happens when a changing migration infrastructure meets COVID-19 pandemic: the analysis of migrant workforce dynamics in the UK healthcare sector**

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From the start of COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare work has been identified as one of high-skilled key occupations with a high proportion of migrant professionals (Fasani and Mazza, 2020). In the UK, prior to the pandemic, health professional bodies expressed concerns over migrant workforce

shortages and staff retention in the field of nursing due to Brexit (RCN, 2020); during the pandemic significant regulatory changes were introduced in respect to migrant healthcare workers. The overlap of two major developments – the pandemic and Brexit, provides a background for the analysis. Drawing on the concept of migration infrastructure (Xiang and Lindquist, 2014) and industrial relations oriented studies of migrant nurses in the UK (Bach, 2010), this paper considers how various actors have responded to shocks related to COVID-19 and Brexit and examines the ways in which it has affected their engagement with healthcare migrant workers. The analysis relies on primary data collected in late 2020 and early 2021, mainly interviews with a senior healthcare HR consultant (previously the director of NHS hospital trust), a Health Education England international recruitment manager and leaders of associations representing Filipino and Indian nurses in the UK. The interpretation of data focuses on how Brexit and COVID-19 have affected employers and migrant workforce. While the analysis points to instabilities related to Brexit and vulnerabilities heightened by COVID-19, the interpretation of interviews with migrant nurses' association groups also finds evidence supporting suggestions that the COVID-19 crisis may have strengthened migrant rights' advocacy (Isaac and Elrick, 2020).

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## The unsustainable precarity of the pursuit for freedom: a critical overview of the Spanish “*si soy autónomo*” movement

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Throughout 2020, the Spanish Government initiated the process of regulating all activities related to platform work with the purpose of ‘chasing the fraud of bogus self-employment’. Somewhat surprisingly, this initiative was met by a substantial wave of protest from the workers who the government proclaimed to be attempting to protect. In this light, the present research explores the arguments of the Spanish *si soy autónomo* [yes I am self-employed] movement in its struggle against the Spanish Government. Drawing from a critical discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews to couriers of Uber Eats, Deliveroo and Glovo, as well as to a representative of an association in favour of the preservation of the self-employed status (N=20), the main finding is that the pursuit for the self-employment status is primarily informed by workers' attempt to escape the precarious working conditions offered to wage-earners in the Spanish labour market as a whole, rather than by an empirically grounded claim. This suggests that new labour legislation addressing the challenges posed by platform work must not overlook the broader context in which it is intended to unfold – otherwise, it may not only fail to improve workers' situation, as also drive them to demand what are, actually, further deregulated legal arrangements.

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## Sense-making and (e)valuation in Local Practices of Performance-related Pay in Sweden

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The Swedish wage-setting system has transformed over the last four decades. Tariff-based yearly pay raises and collective agreed general wage increases have been replaced by individual and differentiated wage setting, and yearly compensations are based on performance-related pay raise. Performance appraisal is thus a means to systematically (e)valuate both what the employee has achieved



and how the tasks were carried out. This has been said to indicate a neo-liberalization of wage determination in Sweden, however, there are few studies of what is actually going on at the local level, where this performance-related pay determining system is put to practice. This study explores, describe and explain how qualitative performance criteria are used in evaluations, how they are interpreted, and how managers and employees approach makes sense of and practice performance appraisal and individualised pay determination. We analyse the overall yearly process from setting goals for individual employees, over the performance appraisal, to the ranking and pricing of the subordinates at the unit or team level. We focus in particular on the instruments used and the information collected by managers to perform the (e)valuation and ranking, and how managers and employees make sense of the policies and criteria in relation to concrete occupational tasks. Empirically the study is based on organisational documents such as policies, guidelines and performance appraisal criteria, and 47 interviews with 53 persons (employees, line managers, trade union reps and HR-staff) from four large organisations in both the public and the sectors

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## **Negotiate health and safety in remote working at firm-level. A comparative analysis of Danone in Italy, France and Spain**

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The pandemic has contributed to a strong spread of remote work (Eurofound, 2020) together with connected risks, in particular psycho-social risks related to the use of technologies in unconventional working environments (Popma, 2013). During the pandemic, observations in this regard have grown (Rigotti et al., 2020), identifying the main psychosocial consequences of a widespread and prolonged use of remote work in the loneliness of workers and other psychological diseases (Eurofound, 2020; Buomprisco et al., 2021) and in the increase of working hours and workload (Fana et al., 2020; Tresierra, Pozo, 2020). In several European countries the social partners have signed collective agreements at national level aimed at regulating remote work, sometimes (as in the Spanish case) leading to legislative reform. But also an analysis of the firm-level bargaining shows that in several cases remote working has been governed not only unilaterally (Belzunugui-Eraso, Erro-Garces, 2020; Dagnino et al., 2020). The article focuses, with a comparative approach (considering Spain, France, Italy), on the case of the multinational company Danone, analyzing agreements, internal surveys and interviews too managers and trade unionists, with regard to how industrial relations at firm-level were able to manage remote working in the emergency phase, especially about psycho-social risks connected to it. This analyzing if and how the different national institutional settings impact on firm-level bargaining decisions showing that these, though bargaining coordination (Traxler, 1995; Burroni et al., 2020; Molina, Godino, 2020) between national agreement asking for firm-level agreement in this specific issue, were more efficient and timely than national legislation.

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## **Ryanair Pilots. Unlikely Pioneers of Transnational Collective Action**

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National systems have provided unions with stronger institutional power resources by comparison to the EU structures governing the Single Market. In aviation, EU governance rules empowered Ryanair to defeat all European pilot unions, regardless of the different national varieties of structural, associational, or institutional power resources they were relying on. Notwithstanding, in December 2017, a transnational group of union-related pilots, the European Employee Representative Committee (EERC), successfully coordinated strikes across Europe, forcing Ryanair to finally recognise trade unions. But why did an informal, transnational group of union activists succeed where all national unions across Europe had hitherto failed? This critical case study shows that the weakening of national unions does not necessarily undermine transnational collective action. Also, EU governance structures at times can provide workers with unexpected leverage that can be used to trigger transnational collective action. Hence, transnational union strength cannot be deduced from an aggregation of national power resources. It also depends on the ability of union activists to exploit peculiarities in the contradictory EU governance regime. By deciding to recognise national unions (instead of the EERC), however, Ryanair also returned industrial relations to the national level, thereby making the transnational coordination of strike action more difficult.

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## Saving creative industry during COVID-19 emergency – who are the winners and losers?

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The emergency caused by COVID-19 –virus has caused a profound stagnation in the creative industry, particularly in activities in arts and culture. The losses in event economy are cumulated in catering and tourism services as well as in services of technology. Government measures have been addressed to the creative industry for promoting survival over the emergency with resilient patterns of action for avoiding substantial damages in the industry and related services.

Governments in the European countries have supported creative industry with different patterns and in the frame of the economic capacity to deliver support. In Finland, the remarkable measures have been delivered by the state authorities of both education and culture, and economy and labour, as well as by NGOs and regional authorities. The modes of support have been manifold with respect to organisations and people working around them. Despite the multiplicity of the funding sources and the delivery patterns, the financial measures have been targeted at the institutionalised organisations; this logic has left free artists and professionals in the industry in a marginal position. Artists have interpreted this categorization as a sign to treat them as not contributing to society through “real work”.

This awkward situation is, in essence, embedded in the changing structures of the labour market and retarded welfare systems. The reason for dropping out from support channels originates in the basics of institutional welfare systems in society, built on the traditional division into employees or entrepreneurs. Artists and professionals in the creative industry are categorized as multiple job holders into neither of these, for their employment pattern is in the non-institutionalized area of entrepreneurship and salary earner. The COVID-19 -based financial measures have been delivered through institutionalized channels failing to recognize artists and professionals in the creative industry at the margins of support systems.

Our project “State of emergency and resilience in the cultural economy organizations” ([projects.tuni.fi/resilience-in-cultural-economy/](https://projects.tuni.fi/resilience-in-cultural-economy/)) studies the situation of culture industry during the emergency caused by COVID-19 and the survival patterns over the pandemic.

## **Navigating the post-COVID 19 terrain: state policies in a post-crisis labour market**

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The COVID-19 pandemic introduced a series of challenges to the function of the labour market: from shutting down whole sectors of the economy and the subsequent furloughing of staff to the rise of flexible forms of employment, and from the use of technologies in managing the new spatio-temporal realities to the psycho-economic effects of the crisis to workers.

Since the early days of the lockdowns, EU states reacted in a concentrated way, focusing on specific measures to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the pandemic for businesses and workers alike. Despite the differences in the type and extent of measures adopted across the continent, a common trajectory was the focus on financially supporting workers through policies of short-term work or the adoption of furlough schemes. These Keynesian-style approaches to macroeconomic and labour market management, appeared in staunch contrast to the neo-liberal trajectory that had been aggressively followed in the past decade in the EU.

Could this imply a new era of positive state intervention in the economy, slowly moving away from the hard-core neo-liberal principles that have dominated the public discourse since the 2009 financial crisis? Although it is still too early to predict the way the post-COVID labour market and employment relations terrain will look like, a first glimpse to the future may be gained by looking at how an EU member state plans to manage the post-lockdown working realities.

The paper will critically evaluate and discuss the new legislation introduced in Greece to address some of the issues raised during the lockdown: from the management of working time and flexible work, to the role of collective bargaining in determining labour market outcomes. Despite the semi-Keynesian intermission to labour market management, the post-COVID state seems determined to adhere to the core principles of neo-liberalism.

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## **Revisiting insider-outsider approach: The role of identity, moral conviction, and union democracy.**

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Nonstandard forms of employment commonly involve precarious conditions of labour. Given such challenges, trade unions are expected to fight against the use of (precarious) nonstandard employment. However, in reality, some unions refuse to represent nonstandard workers.

This study aims to explore why unions fail or even refuse to represent nonstandard workers by revisiting the insider-outsider approach. The insider-outsider approach provides an explanation of the union exclusiveness by its dependence on economist rationality assumption of core insiders (Hassel, 2014; Palier & Thelen, 2010). I contribute to the current approach exploring the psychological factors of identity and moral conviction as alternative determinants of union behaviours. Also, I provide an additional explanation of how the preferences of insiders are reflected in union behaviour by exploring the role of union democracy, as the current approach could be elaborated by tracing the process the individual factors evolve into the organisational outcomes.

Based on semi-structured interviews with 33 current and previous union members of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU), I explore how union members develop their distinct identity of insiders. Then, I seek to build a consolidated model to investigate how the preferences of insiders are disproportionately represented to union response through the union democracy.

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## Union communication and their grassroots on social media during collective bargaining

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When communicating with members and the broader public, unions must strike a balance between mobilizing workers against employers and a 'social dialogue' approach emphasizing compromise and negotiated results. However, using social media, grassroots groups with alternate readings of worker-employer relations can now draw on a much larger and stronger platform to create dissent in resistance to official union lines and their balancing efforts. Drawing on a case study of unions and grassroots communication on Facebook during sector collective bargaining, this article explores different strategies for political communication online.

Through an examination of three official trade union communication pages, and four unofficial grassroots' campaign pages we show important similarities and differences in the mode of communication on Facebook by unions and their grassroots. More precisely, we used the open source program Facepager to scrape web data from Facebook's API – giving us all posts, comments, links, pictures, videos, and the number of shares and likes for each post or comment – in the period from February 9 to April 16, 2020. This period represents the time from when the peak bargaining settlement was achieved in the Danish coordinated bargaining system until the results of the membership vote was made official.

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## Sectoral bargaining in Ireland- on the ropes again?

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This paper reports on attempts at a formal reinstatement and potential extent of sectoral bargaining taking place in Ireland. Ireland had a system of sectoral bargaining since 1946 (known as Joint Labour Committees, JLCs), of which there was 16. Sectoral bargaining in Ireland was not widespread but confined to specific low paid and vulnerable occupations (Ó'Riain, 2014). However, the system for sectoral bargaining which had been in force for over 70 years, was declared illegal by the Irish Supreme Court 2013 in the case of McGowan & others v The Labour Court, Ireland & another (Hendy, 2014).

In response the Irish Government introduced the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act of 2015, providing for the negotiation and registration of sector and firm level collective agreements. More

recently, a High-Level Working Group has been set up on the future of IR (including minimum wage protections, collective bargaining, trade union recognition) which may alter further collective bargaining and/or trade union recognition. The 2015 Act provided for the first time a legal definition of collective bargaining and for forms of sectoral bargaining through a voluntary framework of JLCs, known as Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) and Sectoral Employment Orders (SEOs). The response in Irish IR has witnessed support from trade unions for the SEOs and JLCs, but sharp divisions among employers' groups threaten the stability of the voluntarist arrangement post-Covid with one group taking a constitutional case to the courts. At the time of writing, the terms of reference for the new High-Level Group are unclear with tensions surrounding sectoral bargaining.

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## **Local resiliency in the negotiation of technological change. A comparison between territorial experiences**

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Examining the relationship between unions and technological and economic change becomes a more difficult task when the firm's size is smaller due to the greater difficulties that trade unions may encounter in organizing their representation activities in the context of SMEs. Several factors make it more challenging to organize trade unions in SMEs, such as: the presence of relationships characterized by informality and individualization, the high proximity of interpersonal relationships (both between employer and employees and between employees), and the resistance encountered by the employer (Kirton and Read, 2007). nevertheless, the Italian landscape, from this perspective, represents a case historically characterized by a good level of union density even in SMEs, mainly conveyed by the coverage achieved by sectoral agreements more than by bargaining processes at the firm level (Holten and Crouch, 2014; Eurofound, 2017). Moreover, considering the territorial dimension, trade unions have historically played a major role in industrial districts' governances (Picchierri 2002). Until recent years, manufacturing local economies have been observed mainly as local economy resilient both from the occupational and trade union density point of view. However, the rising of Industry 4.0 locate this local reality at the center of the now day economic change. In this context becomes reasonable to question what is the role of unions in implementing I4.0-related technologies in the context of manufacturing SMEs cluster. In order to provide an answer to this question, this work rely on both quantitative observation of territorial context and qualitative information deriving from selected case studies.

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## **Responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for workers in Higher Education Institution: exploring interactions of gender, caring responsibilities and precarity**

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Increased use of precarious employment contracts is a growing issue for workers in higher education institutions (HEIs) internationally. In 2020 the first UK national lockdown due to COVID-19 coincided with the end of national industrial action in the sector by the University and College Union (UCU). Emerging from industrial strike action over precarious contracts, workload and pensions, the UCU pivoted to responding to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on HEI workers. We present data from a survey of 995 UK HEI workers undertaken in April and May 2020. Exploring the experiences of workers through analysis of both quantitative and qualitative survey responses, we demonstrate both gender and caring responsibility are important to understanding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on employment conditions and work content for precariously- versus permanently-employed workers.

Many precariously employed university staff experienced loss of hourly-paid work or unexpected non-renewal of fixed-term contracts in the first months of the pandemic (Staton, 2020). Our analyses indicate that remote working had an unequal impact on workers experiences and working patterns depending on their employment contract, gender and caring responsibilities. We found existing inequalities between casualised and permanent staff were exacerbated, particularly: reduced hours and pay, work-life conflict, exposure to unsafe conditions, and the impact of technology on working patterns.

From a theoretical perspective, our findings highlight nuances in the stratification of casualised staff, with internationally-relevant implications for industrial relations and representation of precariously employed staff in HEI sector institutions.

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## **Servicing as a Strategy for Renovating Union Action: Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Implications**

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The theme of the revitalization or renewal of union action has been at the centre of the industrial relations debate for many years (see Moore 2010; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013; Schnabel 2013; Baccaro and Howell 2017; Vandaele 2018). Among the possible strategies for this purpose (Frege and Kelly 2004), the literature has mainly focused on organizing (Clawson 2003; Hurd et al. 2003; Simms et al. 2013). Less attention has been paid to servicing (Jarkey and Fiorito 1990; Boxall and Haynes 1997; Williams 1997). The latter goes beyond the simple supply of individual goods for union members. Instead, it represents a service-based strategy that aims to bring both unorganized and marginal workers closer to trade unions. In addition, unlike organizing, in which the strengthening of union membership is pursued by creating new communities of workers-activists, the rationale of servicing is to increase the perceived usefulness of joining a union.

In this context, the paper presents the preliminary findings of the BreakBack Project – funded by the DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission – focusing on the Italian case. This research project has a twofold objective: first, to detect the presence of concrete servicing practices as translations of strategic choices aimed at renovating union action; second, to understand the effects of these practices to strengthen union membership.

In Italy, the supply of personal services is now an activity that characterizes the organizational action of trade unions (Feltrin 2018). In fact, trade unions provide individual assistance, tax compliance, labour matching, and several other services regularly. These are mainly traditional services, aiming to offer workers “selective incentives” to join trade unions. Furthermore, they generate a large share of their budget. Recently, however, trade unions have been experimenting with services characterized by a different rationale, more in line with the very idea of servicing.

To identify these activities and assess their impact on union membership and active participation,

the research was divided into two phases. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the representatives of the three main Italian trade unions, CGIL, CISL, and UIL. The aim, here, was to understand how much servicing was present in the underlying rhetoric of union strategies at the national level. In the second phase, five case studies focused on concrete practices of union services linked to union renewal strategies.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, the five case studies – carried out in the Autumn of 2020 – sought to cover a wide range of workers and territories. These are:

- Vivace - CISL (services for professionals and freelancers);
- Partita Viva - CISL Vicenza (services for professionals and freelancers);
- Sportello Lavoro - CISL Firenze-Prato (guidance and training services);
- Nidil - CGIL Firenze (services for self-employed workers);
- Quadrifor (a joint body that provides training for managers and supervisors).

Preliminary findings indicate a moderate presence of servicing within union strategies. That said, this scarce attention at the confederal level is somehow counterbalanced by local experimentation, which seems to be “a bottom-up process” of union renewal.

Preliminary findings indicate a moderate presence of servicing within union strategies. That said, this scarce attention at the confederal level is somehow counterbalanced by local experimentation, which seems to be “a bottom-up process” of union renewal. What is more, the case studies reveal that differentiated strategies are at work. In fact, the subjects offering these services are positioned along a continuum from traditional services – for which workers are “users” – to servicing activities in a strict sense, up to forms of hybridization between servicing and organizing.

The research sheds new light on a little-explored dimension, stressing the role of local contexts – with their sets of both hindering and enabling constraints that influence union action – and the existing tensions between the objective and subjective dimensions of the interests at stake, with a view to extending union membership to difficult-to-organize workers.

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## ‘Global Labour Market Actors’ Discourses and Policies on Migration’

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International migration is a quintessentially a global issue, as well as a European one, which has become a highly divisive source of conflict at national, European and global levels, as well as a rallying cry for social movements and parties of the extreme right. At the national level, migrant and labour market regimes are constantly being adapted to the challenges associated with demographic change, economic crisis-induced labour market constraints, political forces and European and global labour market regulation. While much attention has been paid to the views and discourses of different actors at the national level, there is less attention to the discourses and policies of European and international industrial relations actors, and how they shape and are shaped by national-level discourses and policies.

This paper investigates global social and labour market policies and discourses on migration, particularly migrants in the labour market. It will explore how they have been influenced by and sought to find a common position out of the conflicting views of national actors, whether governments, trade unions or other actors. It also seeks to understand the patterns of these global discourses and discuss them in relation to the dominant political discourses at the national and international levels. European and global industrial relations actors are linked by networks of knowledge, policies and ideas. They shape global perceptions, diagnoses and solutions to social problems, and provide policy prescriptions to world-regional, national and sub-national policy levels. This paper will pay special attention to the inter-relationships between the national, European and global levels, and examine how they affect one another, to produce a common discourse, or alternatively to develop distinct discourses and policies.

The paper will look at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Union (EU), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation. As there has been a great deal of attention already to the EU, the main focus will be on the leading trade

union actors, the ITUC and ETUC.

The paper draws on work we carried out together in the course of the research project 'In Search of the Global Labour Market' project at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZiF), University of Bielefeld, 2017 – 9.

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## **Still Embedded in Euro-corporatism? European Trade Unions Within the New European Economic Governance Regime**

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The developments since the outbreak of the 'Great Recession' led to increasing EU's commodifying interventions in wages and workers' rights. What was therefore the strategy followed by organised labour vis-à-vis the EU's new economic governance (NEG) regime?

Historically, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has been in favour of further European integration. Jacques Delors' pledge to complement the process of market integration with the construction of a 'Social Europe' was fundamental for getting the support of trade unions to the renewed process of EU integration (van Apeldoorn, 2002). Since then, the ETUC has constantly supported European integration while continuing to ask for a greater EU social dimension (Horn, 2012), in a sort of 'symbolic Eurocorporatism' (Bieling and Schulten, 2003).

The outbreak of the 2008 economic crisis, followed by the establishment of a commodifying NEG regime (Erne, 2015; Jordan et al., 2020) seemed to lead to a change in the strategies of ETUC and its affiliates. For the first time in its history, the confederation rejected an EU treaty (the 'Fiscal Compact'), while promoting European counter-mobilisations. This led some scholars to wonder whether the ETUC had finally shifted its approach away from symbolic Euro-corporatism (Horn, 2012). Yet, already towards the end of the Barroso II Commission, the ETUC became increasingly embedded in new mechanisms of EU economic governance such as the European Semester.

Using a combination of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, this paper aims to describe the trajectory followed by the largest European trade union confederation vis-à-vis the new European economic governance framework. It does so through a multi-level research design which looks at the European level and at two country cases, Ireland and Italy.

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**Donatella Della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore: Trade unions as social movement organisations**

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**How labour market regulation shapes the demand for migrant labour: a cross-country comparative analysis of the adult care sectors**

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**Immigrant workforce integration and ethnic stratification: the role of skills**

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