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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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