

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 relies on both quantitative observation of territorial context and qualitative information deriving from selected case studies.

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