

Call for papers is now open. The titles of the thematic sessions in progress with their descriptions are listed above. The spectrum of the themes is wide, hope you can find the right environment for your presentation! In case you can't find the right session for your ideas, please utilize the open session option.

Please send an abstract, max 300 words, by 25 March 2020.

- 1 Dimensions and trends in representation
- 2 Enforcing Minimum Labour Standards
- 3 Industrial relations and growth models in Mediterranean systems
- 4 Environmental problems, subsequent greening and industrial relations
- 5 Work ability, aging and organizational changes
- 6 Gender, power & industrial relations
- 7 Unions, employer organisations and flexible labour market
- 8 Participation and inclusion in working life and the labour market
- 9 Trade unions and migrant workers
- 10 New forms of employment
- 11 Digitalization
- 12 'Work and working conditions in the platform economy'
- 13 Open session

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Dimensions and new trends in work representation

Organizers

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In European countries, representativeness enables social partners to act on behalf of their members and with this legitimacy usually assessed by public agencies and other actors through a 'mutual recognition' system. In the wake of the ILO recommendations for objective and predictable criteria, objective indicators have been agreed in some particular contexts with 'density', the proportion of membership against the total potential number of members, emerging as the most relevant.

Density has, for instance, served to attribute negotiating powers in the national context as well as assessing whether social partners are eligible to enter into the European social dialogue. Although the most common and relevant, density remains a limited and often unreliable indicator, contributing to inefficiencies in the political and economic system. In this sense, we may also state that density contributes to the continuity of the EU social policy representativeness enigma.

This session aims to discuss papers focusing on the internal and external representation of interests related with trade unions and/or employer associations. Recently, technological and economic changes in several sectors have led to the emergence of new forms of organising worker interests. These new trends often constitute less structured forms of collective action, in particular social media groups and quasi-unions. In this sense, we are also receptive to proposals focusing on these new forms of worker representation and/or their strategies. In sum, we seek to gather papers able to contribute to a new and broader concept of representativeness.

Enforcing Minimum Labour Standards: the role of cooperation between labour inspection and social partners

Organizers

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Nathan Lillie, University of Jyväskylä

Pablo Sanz, NOTUS

The effectiveness of traditional labour inspectorates' and social partners' instruments to generate and enforce labour standards are limited when businesses make a strategy of depriving workers of their rights, using complex and transnational business models to exploit regulatory loopholes and undermine fair competition. Hence, strategic and innovative practices are needed to make the enforcement of labour standards more effective, especially in sectors with a high incidence of precarious employment and noncompliance. One promising way forward is the potential contribution of co-enforcement actions undertaken by worker and/or employer organisations together with labour inspection institutions to safeguard minimum labour standards.

Labour inspection has been a central response to the gap between formal regulations and outcomes for workers – especially when unions' power is in decline and employer discretion is increased (Weil, 2015; Baccaro and Howell 2017). While scholarly debate concentrates on trade unions and enforcement, it has largely neglected the existence and potential for partnerships between labour inspectors and social partners. Generally, actions developed by public authorities and social partners tend to be analysed separately (Eurofound, 2016). This oversight has deprived scholars of the tools to understand the relationships between these actors and, perhaps more importantly from a policy-research approach, has limited the range of policy options considered by reformers (Amengual and Fine, 2017).

We propose a session that will bring together scholars engaged in this highly topical agenda. Participants will present and discuss recent research findings from different countries and different sectors, also in a comparative perspective. We also welcome theoretical contributions and practitioners' presentations. As project partners of the EU project SPLIN (Fair working conditions: exploring the contribution of cooperation initiatives between Social Partners and Labour INSpection authorities, <http://splin.forba.at/>), the organisers will contribute with current comparative findings from the construction industry and maritime shipping.

Amengual, M. and Fine, J. (2017). "Co-enforcing Labor standards: the unique contributions of state and worker organizations in Argentina and the United States ", *Regulation & Governance*, 11: 129-142.

Baccaro, L. and Howell, C. (2017). *Trajectories of Neoliberal Transformation*. Cambridge

Eurofound. (2016). *Exploring the fraudulent contracting of work in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at : <http://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Fraudulent-contracting-of-work.pdf>.

Weil, D. (2015): *Strategic Enforcement in the Fissured Workplace*. J.T.Dunlop Memorial Forum, Harvard Law School

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Industrial relations, growth models and regional arrangements in Mediterranean systems

Organizer

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This contribution is aimed at exploring developments in the industrial relations systems of Mediterranean countries (i.e. Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, France) in the post-crisis period, with particular attention to the Italian case, basing on the extensive empirical work that I carried out in the context of my master thesis (26 focused interviews and document analysis).

The contribution will cover three main topics that emerge as interesting for the current debate on industrial relations in the Mediterranean area. First, an introductory part will compare most recent developments in the system of collective bargaining in the area. In particular, the Italian case will be re-considered in a critical fashion, highlighting that decentralization of collective bargaining has gone more in-depth than current literature states, especially as an effect of the informal daily praxis at the grassroots level. Second, in light of the declining effectiveness of national arrangements, the role of regional arrangements in industrial relations will be inquired, in order to understand whether and how new levels of regulation are arising for filling some regulatory gaps. The regional level is argued to be particularly important for Mediterranean countries, in particular those, like Italy and Spain, being featured by regional sub-cultures (Triglia and Burroni, 2009). Third, the analysis of industrial relations in Mediterranean countries will be integrated with a growth model perspective, considering the interrelation between demand and supply-side factors, as well as highlighting the relationship between the Dominant Social Bloc (Amable, 2017) and what Baccaro and Pontusson (2019) defined "second order coalitions". Particular attention will be paid to highlight the interplay between coalitions underpinning the industrial relations regime and those underpinning the growth model at broad.

The contribution is interesting not only in light of the focus on the often neglected regional dimension of industrial relations, but especially because it updates insights from Mediterranean countries integrating them with insights from recent work in comparative political economy.

What do environmental problems and subsequent greening do to industrial relations?

Organizers

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In the context of industrial relations, environmental concerns have not traditionally been in the focus. Rather, discussions about sustainability have referred to the labor market issues and the regulation and organizing of work. Yet, environmental problems, along and connected with other systemic ruptures, are challenging the traditional premises of industrial societies. These new wicked problems, which the climate crisis manifests, do not obey national borders, however much nationalist politicians cling on them. The scenario is that European institutional structures may face epochal transformations or crises, which are simultaneously social, political, economic and environmental.

In principle, the new articulations of sustainability, “green new deal” and “green economy” are largely approved. In addition, there is a widespread unanimity that contemporary consumerist lifestyles and the modes of production they necessitate are ecologically destructive and that “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented change” (2018) is necessary. The trouble is that consensus does not convert into consequent action in the required scale and pace, and while greener technology is awaited to deliver the solutions, overall “sustained politics of unsustainability” (Blühdorn 2014, 147) prevails. At the same time, we do not know too much about the concrete decisions, actions and contradictions the new situation has already generated: What kind of consequence does the attempt towards less carbon or carbon-free production have for industries? Are ecological and social sustainability always the two sides of the same coin? Is the “work first” (or even “decent work first”) policy possible anymore? Are environment problems a new common agenda or a new contested terrain for the labor market partners?

By and large, industrial relations discussions need to include environmental issues on their research agenda. To enhance this, the session welcomes contributions, which reflect the interfaces between industrial relations and environmental issues. Both theoretical and empirical studies and case descriptions are welcome.

Blühdorn, I. (2014) Post-Ecologist Governmentality: Post-Democracy, Post-Politics and the Politics of Unsustainability. In E. Swyngedouw & J. Wilson (ed.) *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 146–166.

Work ability, aging and organizational changes

Organizer

Clas-Håkan Nygård (clas-hakan.nygard@tuni.fi), Tampere University

In many industrialized countries, there is a sharp increase of the ageing population due to a decrease in fertility and an increase in life expectancy. Most industrialized countries have therefore planned to extend working lives. A problem is that many people retire very early due to work disability, long before they reach the official retirement age. Proper work ability is a requirement for a sustainable and prolonged employment. Work ability is primarily a question of a balance between work and personal resources. Personal resources change with age whereas work demands may not change parallel to that, or only change due to new technology. Work ability in average decrease with age, but necessarily not linearly and so much that it ends up with work disability. Several different work ability pathways may exist. Work-related factors as well as general lifestyle may explain the declines and improvements in work ability during aging. The better work ability is, the later is the retirement. This makes work related factors, including work ability, an important occupational and public health issue when the age of the population increases.

Addressing the gender gaps: Gender, power & industrial relations

Organizer

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The continuous growth of the service sector, also that of public sector employment, has facilitated women's entry to the labour force in many countries. Many gender inequalities persists in the labour market: Discrimination in recruitment, gender pay gap, precarious employment relationships such as non-standard contracts, lower job quality, sexual harassment and (threat of) violence at work, as well as due to political decisions such as austerity measures hitting the public sector employees the hardest. Union membership among women is now higher than it is for men: the average member today is a woman in her 40s in the public sector. However, to what extent has achieving gender equality within their own structures as well as in the labour market a high priority goal to different trade unions is an important question. Equally important is the question how the power of employer associations in economic, labour market and welfare reforms has shaped gender in/equality in wider society.

This session is open for presentations tackling the gender in/equality in the labour market as well as industrial relations from various perspectives: the role of women in trade unions, changing structure of collective bargaining and its consequences for gender in/equality as well as the role of social partners in national or EU level policy-making. Of great interest, are also papers on public sector restructuring and outsourcing with their (gendered) effects as well as efforts in reducing the gender pay gap in the public sector.

Trade union and employer organisation strategies in a flexible labour market: the quest for legitimacy

Organizers

Paul Jonker-Hoffrén (paul.jonker-hoffren@tuni.fi), Tampere University

Carlos Fernández (carlos.fernandez@uam.es), Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

This session gathers together scholars and practitioners interested in the position of labour market relations in the current flexible labour markets. Trade unions all over Europe have, on average, seen their membership dwindle. One of the commonly cited reasons is individualism coupled with uncertainty in the labour market. An ever changing (local and sectoral) workforce is not conducive to a stable union membership. However, also employer organisations experience threats to their legitimacy: start-ups, small businesses and self-employed workers may not be inclined to join employer associations. Therefore, more knowledge is needed about the strategies of these actors as organizations operating in an uncertain environment. Arguably, current institutions keep labour relations somewhat stable, but these are subject to pressures too.

In the session we invite presentations on the challenges and strategies the labour market partners face in an "unhinged" world. In particular, presentations can be about:

- membership campaigns
- co-operation and mergers
- political activity

as well as other topics.

Participation and inclusion in working life and the labour market

Organizers

Ilkka Kärrylä (Ilkka.karryla@helsinki.fi), University of Helsinki
Pauli Kettunen (pauli.kettunen@helsinki.fi), University of Helsinki

The session will enhance discussion participation and inclusion in Nordic working life ideas and practices. Participation is viewed as a question that concerns the meaning and content of work, labour market relations, and the role of the employee. The themes will look at how recent trends and changes are related to historical modes of thought and action. The session welcomes papers on managerial discourses on employee participation, 'activation' as a tool in employment policy, as well as labour market parties' ideas on the relation of participation and bargaining.

Work life and employee requirements have gone through a major transformation in Western countries since the 1980s. The current employee ideal characterised by flexibility, entrepreneurial attitude and interpersonal skills reflects changes in the organisation of work, work organisations and work culture. Moreover, a so-called participatory turn has increasingly emphasised employee involvement and organisational citizenship at workplaces since the 1970s. The apparent objective of these programs is to empower employees.

However, from the perspective of critical management studies, this kind of rhetorics can be seen as a means of making employees to adopt the objectives of employer and carry them out more effectively. Sometimes the use of participatory practices can be a way of legitimising managerial decisions, giving employees only an ostensible possibility to participate in decision-making. 'Participation' and autonomy may have meant moving from external control to employee self-control as mode of governance.

Trade unions and migrant workers

Organizer

Nathan Lillie (nathan.a.lillie@jyu.fi), University of Jyväskylä

The nation state has long been the implicit boundary of the collective “us” for national labour movements. Globalization provides labor movements with a functional imperative for redefining this boundary, encouraging unions to re-frame their self-interest. To borrow the typology Perlmutter (1969) applies to multinational corporations, unions are ethnocentric organizations, meaning they reflect a particular national origin in their structures, strategies, staffing and mentalities. They reflect national-ethnocentric formulations of class interest, arising out of nationally specific trajectories of working class formation. Each specific trade union movement grew up in interaction with its specific nation state, and that state’s institutional framework for regulating capitalism.

Union interaction with new migrant groups tends to shift union organizational identity. Nationally bounded union organizational logic can drive them to treat labour migrants as a threat, although how to deal with this is a strategic choice. As Marino et al. (2017) point out, unions may either try to protect their native members by excluding migrants from the labour market, or alternately, represent migrants to ensure they are not exploited, and thereby prevent wage competition with native workers. Pursuing the former prevents their recruiting migrants, which interferes with their ability to accomplish the later. The two strategies are therefore mutually exclusive, although over time they can change. Willingness to represent migrants, however, is only a first step. Inclusion in activist and leadership positions is a further, and more difficult, step, but one which is important to successful recruitment and representation. For example, as Mulinari and Neergaard (2005) observe from interviews of immigrant union activists in Sweden, many native Swedes assume that immigrants cannot be full participants in the collective historical experience of Swedish working class struggle. However, migrants and natives working in the same physical spaces and labour markets can over time erode the barriers causing unions to prefer exclusion, reconfiguring union interests, causing them to take up multiculturalism and immigrant integration (Marino 2012).

This session will be for research on union engagement with migrant workers, including refugees and asylum seekers, and including issues around migrant organizing, representation, and labour market integration.

Challenges and consequences of nonstandard and new forms of employment

Organizers

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As a result of variety of factors many countries have witnessed growth in non-standard forms of employment that deviate from standard employment such as temporary employment, part-time and on-call work, temporary agency work and other multiparty employment relationships and dependent self-employment, and the emergence of platform work. The rise of these types of employment have also created challenges in terms of workers' rights as well as collective representation, job quality and social protection.

This session invites contributions from researchers working within any disciplinary, theoretical or empirical approaches that address the overarching theme of Challenges and consequences of nonstandard and new forms of employment.

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Digitalization

Organizers

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We are told today that we are living in an age of massive connectivity underpinned (among the others) by the broad use of digital technology and social media. Terms like the sharing economy, the gig economy, the fourth industrial revolution and artificial intelligence are used, with exciting image of entrepreneurial spirit and flexibility, empowering individuals while promising to liberating them from the old-fashioned (wage) dependences of a remote past. Despite the growing importance of the emergence of new forms of work by scholarly work, however, we know not sufficiently to date about work and working conditions for platform workers.

In particular, it is still unclear how traditional forms of regulation and institutional settings as well as different collective actors and governments' approaches within employment and industrial relations deal with the emergence of platform work. To what extent does the emergence of platform work result in bad and/or good work and for whom? What are the main transformations underpinning the changes in the way of working, living and being of individuals participating in platform work? And how do individuals experience the increasing dislocation in time and space brought by the raising of on-line labour markets?

In this stream we want to engage in an open and 'reflexive' discussion on the antecedents and consequences of such a way of working, being and living in today's society. Our central concern is to debate on work within digital platforms and we attempt to shed light on the main theoretical questions and empirical challenges the emergence of this area of research is bringing into light.

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Open session

Contributions related to the scope of the conference, that do not fit in one of the themes listed above are welcome to be submitted to this session.

Organizer: to be announced later.