

ILPC 2019 Special Stream No. 2

‘Representation and resistance: trade unions, their comfort zones and the new and hybrid forms of representation’

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This stream specifically addresses the challenges that processes of fragmentation pose to trade unions nationally, sectorally, internationally and along value chains. Organising and aggregating interests across competing groups of workers is an ongoing challenge since labour movements exist. Yet the interplay of globalisation and ongoing company restructuring with labour market shifts, widespread liberalisation and anti-union policies, and digitalisation multiply these challenges and create both massive concerns and in some places, some reinvigoration of trade unions (Schmalz, Dörre, and Müller 2013). Even in new and precarious forms of work, both the virtualised and space-bound kind, unions report some recent bargaining and organising successes, and new actors and practices emerge with the potential to both challenge and invigorate incumbent unions (Ruckus 2016; Tassinari and Maccarrone 2017; Milland 2017; Graham and Shaw 2017).

This stream will connect industrial relations and labour process theory to explore the relationships of union strongholds, avant-gardes, problem areas, and opportunities for incumbent and newly emerging unions (for example in Central and Eastern Europe) to mutually learn, collaborate and create more inclusive solidarities. In addition, the stream will present research on newly emerging hybrid forms of representation and resistance where boundaries are blurring between trade unions, occupational associations, organisations of the self-employed, initiatives of the unemployed, crowdworker forums, consumer campaigns, community groups etc. Currently, much industrial relations research still tends to focus on the well-organised sectors whereas growing groups of workers and newly emerging jobs are located in the weaker organised sectors, segments, supply-chain links and regions of employment. Increased conceptual dialogue with comparative political economy and critical sociology extends the scope of methods and theoretical approaches (Doellgast et al. 2018) to better embed and understand unions', different groups of workers' or other collective actors' and initiatives' strategies and behaviour in competitive work environments and fragmented workplaces.

Equally, labour process theory and evidence, with its focus on "new" forms and modes of work and working, company strategies and work organisation, restructuring, management control and resistance, can enhance the understanding of the challenges facing industrial relations, and vice versa. A combination of perspectives will allow to improve our understanding of the interplay of institutions and agency, de- and re-regulation, formation of actors, new and old

arenas of struggle and bargaining. Discussions will have a comparative and cross-national and cross-sectoral focus, bringing insights from varied sectors and regions and varied genres of research together to generate ideas about the prerequisites and constraints of successful organising, collective bargaining and interest representation, and also about unions' and other collective actors' increasing collaboration among themselves and with other actors from research, civil society or policy. Specifically we invite unionist practitioners and researchers involved in immediate application of their findings in unions' discourses and strategy development.

We welcome contributions that address

- problematic areas and regions of interest representation such as low-wage work, precarious work, virtual work, subcontracted work
- unions' responses to digitalisation on the policy, company, workplace and organising level
- the fit or non-fit of institutionalised modes of interest representation with fragmented modes of working and the exploration of creative repurposing of legal and institutional instruments
- unions' ways of creating new alliances, for example with civil society, policy, consumers, or self-organised workers' groups
- new and hybrid forms of representation and resistance with or without connections to the union movement
- transnationalisation of union strategies and practices

Please submit abstracts via the International Labour Process Conference website (ilpc.org.uk) by the deadline of 26 October 2018.

For information on the ILPC 2019 and the Calls for Papers for the General Conference and the other Special Streams please go to <https://www.ilpc.org.uk/>

References

Doellgast, V., Lillie, N., Pulignano, V. 2018) *Reconstructing Solidarity: Labour Unions, Precarious Work, and the Politics of Institutional Change in Europe*. Oxford: OUP.

Graham, Mark, and Joe Shaw, eds. 2017. *Towards a Fairer Gig Economy*. Meatspace Press. http://ia800605.us.archive.org/26/items/Towards-a-Fairer-Gig-Economy/Towards_A_Fairer_Gig_Economy.pdf.

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