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CALL FOR PAPERS

TOWARDS THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LABOUR MARKETS

Interdisciplinary Reflections
on the Changing World of Work

International Conference

Bergamo (Italy), 24-26 November 2022
XII Edition



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The social and economic changes occurring in recent years are impacting labour markets in important respects. On the one hand, the pandemic and its effects have highlighted the existing imbalances within the markets – i.e. differences in generations, genders and contractual arrangements. On the other hand, the institutional effort to promote the environmental and digital transition has become a pressing issue, which will certainly affect workers and companies.

In light of these trends – which are already changing the economy and labour situations – the adjustments made to current labour markets appear insufficient to counter the risks resulting from weakening protection and new inequalities.

Instead, a major overhaul is needed in the awareness that today's actors can play a significant role in the social construction of labour markets.

In this respect, attention must be paid to representation and intermediate bodies, which enjoy a privileged vantage point for interpreting, defining, and advancing the interests of the different social entities that make up the world of work.

For these reasons, it is necessary to consider the social partners, their evolution resulting from current transformations, and their role in constructing and governing the labour market through collective bargaining and industrial relations practices. This involves, for example, examining the mechanism of supply and demand, paths for occupational mobility, and business restructuring. At the same time, it is important to analyse phenomena that still fall outside the realm of traditional representation practices; and that therefore can lay the foundations for new forms of representation targeting certain categories of workers (i.e., non-standard workers, platform workers).

In order to understand these dynamics and define the contours of modern labour markets, an interdisciplinary approach is needed, which brings together the legal and economic dimension while also considering sociological, philosophical, and anthropological aspects.

ADAPT's International School of Higher Education in Labour Law and Industrial Relations invites professors, researchers, graduate students, professionals, and those who have an interest in the conference topics to provide their contribution. This is done in order to analyse the social construction of new labour markets from an international and comparative perspective. Scholars are encouraged to contribute to one or more of the following research tracks.

1) Renewing Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue Considering New Labour Markets and their Dynamism

This research track aims to investigate the role of collective bargaining and social dialogue in the construction of modern, sustainable and inclusive labour markets. It considers the challenges faced by economic and social systems at the international level. The focus will be on the major changes dictated by environmental and digital transitions, as well as on the demographic and migration flows which are impacting on the working population and its needs.

From this point of view, priority will be given to empirical, both national and comparative, investigations carried out on a company, sectoral or intersectoral level, aimed at highlighting the policies already implemented through collective bargaining. These measures are intended to guide companies through restructuring, reorganisation and the just transition to different production, by also improving gender equality. They will also be a tool for promoting workers' occupational, professional and personal mobility. Drawing on empirical and documentary analysis, attention will also be given to the possible evolutionary directions of collective bargaining and the relationships between companies and workers while looking at crucial factors for the construction and governance of modern and dynamic labour markets. These factors include timing (e.g., before, during or after the beginning of a transformation phase), the approaches implemented (e.g., protective or proactive), the actors involved (e.g. the social partners, public authorities, third-sector bodies, experts), and the contents (e.g. procedural or substantial norms) featuring interaction and collective regulation.

2) Today's Forms of Representation: Looking at the Past to Build the Future

This research track considers the modern forms of representation of workers and employers, not only with reference to new actors (e.g. self-organised worker collectives in the gig economy), but also to trade unions and traditional employers' associations, which are all struggling to keep up with the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of new labour markets. Some of the main issues for those engaged in representation are:

- a) the construction of collective identities, particularly because the workforce and the business settings are increasingly fluid in terms of composition and needs;
- b) the definition of a trade union agenda and strategic objectives that reflect these identities, reconciling the demand for new labour rights and protection with the availability to contribute, with employers and other stakeholders, to a shared and sustainable construction of development paths;

- c) the provision of goods and services that meet the needs of individual members while ensuring collective results;
- d) the redefinition of resources and tools, by also evaluating the elements favouring higher internal and external legitimacy (e.g., narrative and learning skills, networking abilities with different actors, the deployment of digital technology);
- e) the innovation of organisational structures e.g., by integrating more democratic procedures and gender and diversity objectives.

Case studies or research conducted at national and international level focusing on the evolution of representation are welcome.

3) Industrial Relations between Theory and Practice. The Legacy of the Past and the Attempt to Engage in an Innovation Process to Govern Emerging Work-related Issues

Considering the changes that have occurred in recent decades, this research track focuses on the attempts to renovate industrial relations practices by reinterpreting and updating IR classic works.

The focus will be on the widely discussed difficulties of traditional IR institutions (trade unions, collective bargaining, labour law) and the concurrent rise of alternative instruments and bodies (non-governmental organizations, international multilateral institutions, corporate social responsibility); the inclusion of other aspects in the discussion between the parties, i.e. personal and professional identity, family and private life and the relationship with the environment and local communities; the new sources of power and legitimation – i.e. the digital media – that affect interaction inside and outside organizations and help to explain their outcomes. These are only some of the questions dealt with by academic and practitioners alike. This research track welcomes theoretical papers and case studies providing empirical evidence on changes to representation and industrial relations.

4) Labour Market Organization and Regulation: The Law of the Labour Market and its Role

The dynamics briefly described above call for different rules in relation to the organization and regulation of the labour market, particularly in consideration of increasingly hybrid career paths. In this respect, laws are needed to ensure sustainable transitions which reduce workers' risks. It is therefore necessary to consider different aspects: the function of labour market enablers and the relevance of intermediation; new forms of intermediation and the

platformization of work; the integration of education, training and work; the relationship between income support and active labour policies, also in terms of conditionality; the tools for regulating access to professions; the certification of skills and their portability; and the measures to ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged workers or those with special needs, more generally. This research track brings together papers discussing the way labour law contributes to creating career paths, both in terms of market regulation and job creation. This process might involve transitions to different sectors, roles, and employment statuses. Close examinations adopting the gender and/or minority studies lens are of interest under this research track.

5) Tackling Inequalities at Work: The Working Poor, Minimum Wage and Beyond

In addition to having to ensure sustainable career paths, labour law is increasingly called on to tackle profound inequalities. Not only is it necessary to ensure smoother transitions, but also to reduce poverty amongst the working poor or to cure imbalances more generally (this is the case of essential workers). In this sense, EU and national lawmakers alike are looking at instruments to ensure the provision of a minimum wage. Moving beyond the debate arising in EU member states – which results from different traditions – it is necessary to understand the conditions under which this measure can counteract in-work poverty and if other policies are needed. This research track collects case studies in specific sectors, which examine measures to deal with in-work poverty, outlining the factors that determine their effectiveness or possible shortcomings. This research track pays attention to case studies in specific economic sectors or covering specific working arrangements (e.g., non-standard work, zero-hours contract, platform work) and look for contributions that examine measures to deal with in-work poverty, outlining factors behind their effectiveness or possible shortcomings, also giving emphasis to the gender and/or minority perspective.

6) A New Social Construction of Skills

A considerable number of theories have been elaborated on skills as well as the development of skills and their links with the economy over the past half century. These theories are frequently based on competing arguments, formulating different assumptions about the creation of skills and their relationship to society. However, recent transformations have raised questions about the applicability of these hypotheses to the current context. Starting from the classical postulations that inform analyses related to skills, this research track investigates the phenomenon known as ‘the new social construction of

skills'. Although the previous approach to this practice is still relevant, the context in which this construction was developed has changed (i.e., due to trade unions' diminished power and the decline of manufacturing, with the concurrent revival of the tertiary sector). Studies may therefore address the change in the way skills are identified, and the analysis of bodies and institutions which are in charge of defining them and enabling a functioning matching between supply and demand of skills and professional profiles at sectoral, local and national level. The track also intends to bring together papers examining the possible discriminatory practices arising from this new social construction of skills, with particular attention to gender-based discrimination. Research is also welcome concerning skills formation and innovative approaches to skills anticipation and matching that take into account the fundamental changes to contemporary labour markets.

DEADLINES

- Abstracts can be submitted between **30 March** and **17 June 2022**
- Authors of selected papers will be notified by **8 July 2022**
- Authors are kindly asked to confirm their in-person attendance by **16 September 2022**
- The final version of papers must be sent by **17 December 2022**

GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts must be submitted online through the [Abstract Submission Portal](#), which also contains detailed instructions for abstract submission.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

To ensure high standards, ADAPT's International Scientific Committee is fully involved in all the organizational stages of the conference. Below you will find the list of academics making up the [ADAPT International Scientific Committee](#):

Prof. Lena Abrahamsson (University of Lulea, Sweden)

Prof. Giuseppe Bertagna (University of Bergamo, Italy)

Prof. John Budd (University of Minnesota, USA)

Prof. Alexis Bugada (Université d'Aix-Marseille, France)

Prof. Federico Butera (Università Milano Bicocca, Fondazione Irso)

Prof. Jesús Cruz Villalón (Universidad de Sevilla, Spain)

Prof. Marc De Vos (Ghent University Law School)

Prof. Juan Raso Delgue (University of the Republic, Uruguay)

Prof. Ruth Dukes (University of Glasgow, Scotland)

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Prof. Bernard Gazier (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

Prof. José Luis Gil y Gil (Universidad de Alcalá, Spain)

Prof. Julio Armando Grisolia (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Argentina)

Prof. Thomas Haipeter (Institute Work, Skills and Training at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany)

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Prof. Thomas Kochan (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA)

Prof. Felicity Lamm (Auckland University of Technology)

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Prof. Michele Tiraboschi (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy) – Coordinator

Prof. Eric Tucker (York University, Canada)

Prof. em. Dr. Manfred Weiss (Goethe-Universität, Germany)

Prof. Adrian Wilkinson (Griffith University, Australia)

PAPERS

The best papers presented at the conference will be selected and, depending on the topic, evaluated for publication in **Diritto delle Relazioni Industriali**, **E-Journal of International and Comparative Labour Studies**, **Professionalità studi** and **Revista Internacional y Comparada de Relaciones Laborales y Derecho del Empleo**, or in a special issue to be included in the **ADAPT Labour Studies Book-series**, edited by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Editors will also consider for publication the papers by those who are unable to attend the conference but are willing to provide their contribution just the same.

COSTS

Participation in the conference is free. Participants must bear the expenses of travel and accommodation. A limited number of grants to cover a part of the travel costs will be made available for students or doctoral students whose abstracts present original and valuable research.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For inquiries, contact us by sending an email to: internationalconference2022@adapt.it.

STAY CONNECTED

Updates and news about the 2022 ADAPT International Conference will be provided through the official event website internationalconference.adapt.it and via social networks ([@ADAPT_Bulletin](#) – [@adaptland](#)).