ips

Italian Political Science, VOLUME 14 ISSUE 3, FEBRUARY 2020

SISP SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI SCIENZA POLITICA

Trade unions and labour conflicts: Social movement and radical political unionism in France and Italy

Katia Pilati

UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

Sabrina Perra

UNIVERSITY OF CAGLIARI

Abstract

This article explores differences in labour conflicts in Italy and France by focusing on the characteristics of the most prominent structures of worker mobilization: trade unions. Despite several similarities between the French and Italian industrial relations systems, and despite the fact that trade union density in Italy is more than three times greater than it is in France, France is one of the few European countries in which the average strike volume increased after the Great Recession. Protests in France also peaked in the pre-crisis period, while Italy did not show any wave of contention. We contend that the nature and level of labour conflicts observed in the two countries in the last two decades depend on alliances between trade unions and other social groups and organizations sustaining worker mobilization, specifically, social movement organizations. In particular, we argue that labour conflicts are related to the characteristics of social movement unionism. Evidence from cases studies in France and Italy suggests that the role of trade unions and their alliances has been different in the two countries. Confederal trade unions in France have been able to engage in social movement unionism within broader coalitions involving other social categories and social movement organizations. In contrast, in Italy, these dynamics have mostly involved small rank-and-file unions and self-organized workers' groups engaged in radical political unionism. This has resulted in different levels of mobilization associated with social movement unionism and radical political unionism, given the greater capacity of confederal trade unions in building nationally coordinated and sustained collective actions.

1. Introduction

Today, trade unions have serious difficulties in developing common and coordinated national and European strategies of revitalization in order to come out of the stagnation resulting in declining membership and worker mobilization. Since the nineties, governments have attempted to obtain social stability by co-opting these intermediate groups, which have historically challenged them through strikes, the most commonly used form of collective action in the labour field. In particular, in many countries, governments have promoted processes of trade union institutionalization. In this way, many unions have become bureaucratic organizations relying on institutional power resources, thus limiting efforts devoted to the mobilization of workers.

© 2020 Italian Political Science. ISSN 2420-8434.
Volume 14, Issue 3, 167-187.

Contact Author: Katia Pilati, University of Trento.
E-mail address: katia.pilati@unitn.it

Despite similar policy changes, evidence has shown highly heterogeneous levels and forms of labour conflicts in European countries since the beginning of the 2000s. In most European countries strikes have declined in the last two decades but, in a few cases, they have increased (Vandaele 2016: 279-280). Differences have been further exacerbated during anti-austerity protests. Since 2008, economic and labour-related claims have prevailed over political and cultural claims, but this has mostly occurred in southern Europe (Rüdig and Karyotis 2014; Portos García 2016; Kriesi et al. forthcoming).

In this framework, Italy and France represent two cases in point of some of the differences in labour conflicts that have emerged in Europe in the last two decades. France is indeed one of the few countries in which the average strike volume increased after 2005, as compared to the previous two decades, reaching, between 2005 and 2014, an average strike volume three times higher than that of Italy (Vandaele 2016: 280).[1] In addition, protests in France peaked in the pre-crisis period, while Italy only experienced a series of intermittent crisis-related mobilizations without showing any wave of contention, as had occurred in Greece, Portugal and Spain (Kriesi et al. forthcoming). Such differences emerged despite France and Italy sharing many similarities in their industrial relations systems and trade union models. Furthermore, this occurred despite the fact that the density of trade unions in France remains one of the weakest in Europe, at around 8 percent throughout the 2000s, compared to more than 30 percent in Italy, suggesting an apparently greater support from Italian trade unions for worker mobilization. These data therefore underline the ambiguous relationship between union density and mobilization.

This article aims to examine factors which are likely to affect the differences in labour conflicts between France and Italy. It contends that the nature and level of labour conflicts depend, inter alia, on alliances between trade unions and other social categories and organizations sustaining worker mobilization, particularly social movement organizations. In other words, we argue that labour conflicts are related to the characteristics of social movement unionism, as referred to by industrial relations scholars in order to explain these dynamics (Baccaro et al. 2003).

To explore such a hypothesis, our empirical study draws on existing evidence in the two cases. In France, case studies suggest the crucial role of the main confederations, like Confédération Général du Travail (CGT), in acting together with other actors to mobilize workers in protests such as strikes, demonstrations and occupations. In general, in France, confederal trade unions have a good connection to the social movement sector, even if some scholars argue that mobilization has remained fragmented since 2011 (Ancelovici 2011; Béroud and Yon 2012; Tapia and Turner 2013; Béroud 2018). In contrast, in the last two decades, Italy has often witnessed a lack of alliance building by the three major confederations – Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), Confederazione Italiana Sindacati dei Lavoratori (CISL) and Unione Italiana del Lavoro (UIL) – in processes of worker mobilization. Workers have often relied on self-organized

[1] Empirically, strikes have a multi-dimensional character, reflected by three main indicators: the number of strikes, the number of workers going on strike and the number of days not worked due to industrial action. According to Vandaele (2016: 279), the latter, i.e., the number of working days lost through strikes per worker per year, referred to as strike volume, is considered the most reliable indicator for cross-national and historical comparisons. Although lockouts should in principle be separated from strike actions, most data on industrial action do not make a distinction between those two types of industrial action.

and informal groups or on grassroots, independent, small rank-and-file trade unions (Cillo and Pradella 2018; 2019; Chesta et al. 2019; Caruso et al. 2019; see also Mattoni 2016 on temporary workers).[2]

2. The repertoire of labour conflicts: strikes and beyond

Labour conflicts refer to instances of workers' collective actions or collective actions whose claims refer to labour. They identify the various forms of opposition that the workforce, or other actors on its behalf, carry out against the worsening of labour conditions in the workplace, and of workers' rights in relation to employment standards, retirement and social security (Roscigno and Hodson 2004). Historically, strikes have been the main form of labour conflict; however, labour conflicts have not been restricted to them. Indeed, they include street protests, sit-ins, assemblies, more institutional acts such as forms of consultations, and more disruptive actions such as squatting. These forms of action represent specific instances of contentious politics. Whether or not they identify, as a whole, as a labour movement is an empirical question. Indeed, labour movements are specific forms of collective action dynamics and are associated with sustained contentious interactions between challengers and authorities, a shared class consciousness and a variety of actors and organizations which support, engage in or organize various types of labour-related collective actions and events (Tilly and Tarrow 2015; Diani 2018).

Strikes, the main form of labour conflict since the 1980s and 1990s, have progressively decreased in most European countries, despite differences across countries (Brandl and Traxler 2010; Baccaro and Howell 2011). While the Great Recession has worsened conditions in many workplaces and often diminished workers' rights due to austerity measures adopted by many European countries in order to face the crisis, strikes have continued to decline even during the last decade. A comparison of strike volume before and after 2008, the year in which the Great Recession started, shows that the days-not-worked rates have only increased in a limited number of countries in the past decade. Compared with the pre-2008 period, the average days-not-worked rate after the Great Recession only rose in Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg (Vandaele 2016: 279-280).[3] Data from the European Commission reporting the distribution of strike volume across European countries further confirms that, after 2008, strike volume declined steadily in absolute terms in almost all countries. The only countries in which strike volume sharply increased in the first four years of the crisis, between 2008 and 2012, are Denmark, Ireland and France (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Unit B.1, 2015: 37).

Strikes have undergone several other changes in the last decades. On the one hand, they have become more defensive than offensive, thus differing in many ways from the labour movements of the second half of last century (Ancelovici 2011; Baccaro and Howell

[2] As Culpepper and Regan (2014) underline, from the middle of the 1990s onwards, radical organizations such as COBAS (Comitati di Base) have used their shop-floor power to arrange wage-settings at the local level. CGIL often contested these agreements using a binding vote of union members in order to reaffirm its own legitimacy.

[3] Vandaele (2016: 280) suggests being cautious when discussing data on strikes after the recession. Indeed, the author argues that the number of countries covered by strike data and its reliability have fallen since 2008, especially in southern European countries.

2011). Calhoun (2012) argues that modern workers seem to be reformists rather than radicals. They tend to compete in the capitalist arena for distributional advantage. However, they do not aim to challenge the mode of production, nor propose a new economic and social order. On the other hand, empirical evidence has shown that strikes have been increasingly addressed to governments rather than to employers. Indeed, general and political strikes increased during the Great Recession, especially in the period 2010–2013 and in southern European countries such as Greece (Rüdig and Karyotis 2014; Kelly 2015: 11; Vandaele 2016).

As already mentioned, labour conflicts are not only manifested through strikes. Prompted by struggles against neo-liberal policies developed at the beginning of the millennium and exacerbated by the Great Recession, claims over economic issues, including labour-related claims, have been expressed in a variety of actions, beyond strikes (Ancelovici 2011; Flesher Fominaya 2014; della Porta 2015; Andretta, Bosi and della Porta 2016; Giugni and Grasso 2015). During anti-austerity protests, demonstrations proved to be the major form of collective action next to strikes (for southern Europe see Rüdig and Karyotis 2014; Portos García 2016; Andretta 2018). During such protests, workers have often been incorporated in broader coalitions against neo-liberal policies or austerity measures, claiming against the demise of social benefits and the retrenchment of welfare states, against the regulation of immigration to Europe, and against financial regulations and spreading inequalities (Tapia and Turner 2013; della Porta 2015). Under such circumstances, workers have mobilized around cross-cutting issues such as social exclusion or various types of rights such as housing or migrants' rights and claims by traditional working classes, the 'insiders', have overlapped with claims by 'outsiders' such as atypical workers, the unemployed, students, youth, and migrants.[4] Occupations, as well as more disruptive forms of action, by means of violent or dangerous actions such as 'boss-napping' in France at the Goodyear tyre factory, where workers held their managers hostage in a protest against the plant closure in 2012, have also been used to claim labour rights or better working conditions (Baccaro 2010).

3. Interpreting changes in labour conflicts

Several hypotheses have been put forward to account for changes in labour conflicts, more specifically for declining strikes. One reason for the declining strikes is related to long-term shifts in the labour force composition. As regards the occupational sector, scholars have observed a steady trend towards further de-industrialization of employment, namely shrinking manufacturing employment, with a corresponding decrease in the days-not-worked rate in industry in most countries (Vandaele 2016: 284). From the 1980s onwards, labour conflicts have moved from the industrial sectors to public services. Indeed, shifts in the employment composition, namely the "tertiarisation of industrial conflict" (Bordogna and Cella 2002) assume that strikes in the services sector are

[4] The opposition between insiders and outsiders is defined as dualization (Emmenegger et al. 2012). It implies that policies differentiate rights, entitlements and services for different groups of recipients. While the position of insiders has remained more or less constant, the position of outsiders has greatly deteriorated. Scholars distinguish between process of dualization, output (institutional dualism) and outcome of the policies (divide). See Davidsson and Naczyk (2009) for a review of the literature.

escalating, while historically strike-prone unionized sectors have structurally declined over time (Vandaele 2016: 284).

Another factor associated with the generally decreasing number of days-not-worked rates before the Recession relates to the fact that, since the 1990s, in southern European countries, industrial conflict has been solved via 'social pacts'.[5] Until the mid-1990s, Italian trade unions represented an integral part of the policy-making process and a major counterpart of the government in the negotiations regarding several reforms. Afterwards, unions reduced this role, although they maintained their ability to mobilize social protest and the possibility to veto a decision during negotiations (Regalia and Regini 2018).

Industrial relations scholars have further delved into the role of the characteristics of the industrial relations system to explain declining industrial action. Moving in a neoliberal direction over the past 30 years has meant, inter-alia, a dualization of the economic system, in particular of the labour market opposing insiders to outsiders, a progressive flexibilization of workers' labour conditions, and a process of decentralization of collective bargaining from the national to the second-level-firm or company-bargaining levels (Silver 2003; Baccaro and Howell 2011; Emmenegger et al. 2012; Regan 2017). Austerity structural reforms imposed by the new European economic governance have further increased the process of decentralization and the flexibility of the labour market, reducing multi-employer bargaining systems, the process of institutionalization of many industrial relations practices and delegitimized unions as political subjects (Leonardi and Pedersini 2018; Leonardi 2018)[6]. Decentralization and company bargaining have increased in many European countries including, since the 1980s, both Italy and France. Governments have encouraged enterprise bargaining instead of sectoral or national collective bargaining and have removed the monopoly of unions in bargaining working conditions and wage setting.[7] While there is 80-90 percent of collective bargaining coverage in both countries, many sectoral agreements only include what is prescribed by law, and workplace settlement disregards the sectoral framework. Consequently, the problem is often how company agreement can derogate collective bargaining (the national collective agreement and the sectoral agreement) and what the arrangements for companies should be where no union representative exists. These changes imply that labour disputes are likely to be smaller and with relatively fewer workers involved, given the downward

[5] Since the Great Recession, the process of involving labour in social pacts has been interrupted. National governments, regardless of partisanship, have mostly rejected a process of negotiated adjustment of reform initiatives that involved unions (Culpepper and Regan 2014; Armingeon and Baccaro 2012).

[6] The progressive introduction of bilateralism can be considered the most evident example of the process of institutionalization.

[7] In this framework, France is the most prominent case of state-guided coordination (Culpepper 2006) as demonstrated by the high politicized level of wage setting, including coordinated second level bargaining. In this country there is a dual system of industrial relations. In large industrial firms and in the public sector, where trade unions maintain their presence, it is possible to observe the traditional exchange between working time flexibility for job security (long term contract). In small firms and low skilled sectors – public and private – without union representations, working conditions have deteriorated and flexibility is increasing (Palier and Thelen 2010).

scale-shift of bargaining to the firm level. In contrast, where bargaining takes place at higher levels, relatively more workers are involved but conflicts may be fewer.[8]

More recently, Gentile and Tarrow (2009) have drawn on the literature on social movements, namely on the concept of political opportunity structure (POS) - which defines the institutional setting shaping opportunities for collective actions - to explain changes in labour conflicts. The POS regards both the most stable dimensions of the institutional system, like the legislative frame, and more contingent dimensions such as the type of electoral system and the stability of elites' alignments or elites' alliances (cf. Kriesi et al. 1995). According to the main hypothesis driven by such theory, an open POS is expected to provide more opportunities for protest mobilization. Gentile and Tarrow (2009) have interpreted differences in labour conflicts, namely between labour and rights-based claims, by referring to the different degree of legal-institutionalized recognition of labour rights across countries. According to the authors, in corporatist settings the specific legal-institutionalized setting is associated with more opportunities for workers to mobilize along labour issues. This also characterizes a labour repertoire of industrial action, whereby workers tend to coordinate through trade unions and frame their demands in terms of the expansion or violation of their labour rights. In contrast, where labour rights are severely curtailed, as in neoliberal regimes, opportunities for workers to mobilize along labour issues shrink, leading to a closing POS and to a shift towards a citizens' rights-oriented repertoire. In this case, claims and grievances tend to be framed in terms of civil rights; workers will build alliances with social movements, not just unions, and they will resort to civil legal institutions for protection. This has been observed in the case of the US labour movement (Milkman and Voss 2004). Nonetheless, in recent decades, neoliberal policies have definitely touched all European countries, especially through decentralization, as mentioned, thus affecting countries with a corporatist regime too (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013).

The aforementioned scholars, in an attempt to account for changes in labour conflicts, argue that the broad macro-level context has significant consequences for labour conflicts through shifts in employment composition, or through changes in the legal-institutionalized recognition of labour rights, or else through policies aiming, inter-alia, to decentralize collective bargaining. These factors, as discussed, tend to affect many European countries, including France and Italy. Therefore, they cannot fully account for the specific differences observed between France and Italy.

In the following paragraphs, we therefore turn to examine factors associated with the meso-level, considering, in particular, intermediate mobilizing structures such as trade unions. Scholars have indeed argued that differences in labour conflicts may also depend on trade union characteristics, such as the level of unity or disunity of trade unions, the capacity of trade unions to shape government responses to socio-economic trends and periodic economic crises, and the involvement of trade unions in government decisions about public spending cuts (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013; Bieling and Lux 2014; Grote and Wagemann 2018). Below we specifically discuss the alliances built by

[8] According to Vandaele (2016) the associations between level of bargaining and strike characteristics are, however, weak and he advocates further analysis considering other economic and political variables.

trade unions with other sectors of civil society, specifically, with social movement organizations, SMOs, and the ways they may affect labour conflicts.

4. Trade unions, alliances, and labour conflicts: a hypothesis

Historically, the major actors coordinating industrial conflicts have been trade unions (Leonardi 2018).[9] Trade unions are active as both economic and political actors in activities spanning from collective bargaining, work-place regulation and the provision of services to their members, to claims-making, aggregating workers' interests against capital in relation to demands concerning salaries or work-place conditions, among others (Baccaro et al. 2003; Olivier 2011). As political actors, trade unions have played a major role in mobilizing the necessary resources for the coordination, organization and the management of strikes, the most notable and traditional form of industrial conflict in Europe (Shorter and Tilly 1974; Crouch and Pizzorno 1978).

Despite notable differences across European countries, today traditional trade unions have largely lost their primary role in mobilizing workers. As mentioned, a process of regulation of the labour market has led to progressive depoliticization and to a bureaucratization of labour disputes, leading trade unions to become more dependent on their institutionalized roles in current welfare states (Ebbinghaus and Visser 1999). The institutionalization of trade unions has meant, inter-alia, a progressive specialization of their organizational functions, the adoption of a more conventional repertoire of actions such as negotiation rather than protest, the centralization of decisions, and the moderation of the objectives which often evolve around organizational survival rather than broader social and political changes. By becoming more institutionalized – also in countries usually considered confrontational such as France and Italy – trade unions have therefore been involved in negotiations and consultation on policy making related to labour or pension laws (Ebbinghaus and Visser 1999; Ebbinghaus 2002; Brandl and Traxler 2010; Baccaro and Howell 2011). Under such circumstances, workers have, consequently, progressively perceived trade unions as institutional actors rather than as allies against institutions themselves and this has been aggravated by the growing incapacity of trade unions to organize workplace mobilization against the new organization and delocalization of production, technological innovation, shifts in the composition of employment and the flexibilization of labour contracts. Under such circumstances, trade unions have been facing a crisis of their representative power *vis à vis* workers. This has had substantial consequences for membership, which has steadily declined since the 2000s in most European countries (Visser 2016b in Regalia and Regini 2018: 69).[10]

[9] Concerning the relationship between union membership growth and strike action cf. Edwards and McCarthy 2004; Fantasia 1988; Kelly 1998; Barling et al. 1992; Clark 2009; Visser 2002).

[10] Italy is, together with Norway, the only advanced economy in which the union density rate has increased during the crisis, shifting from 33.9 per cent in 2008 to 37.3 per cent in 2013 (Visser 2016b in Regalia and Regini 2018: 69). Trade union density corresponds to the ratio of wage and salary earners that are trade union members, divided by the total number of wage and salary earners (OECD *Labour Force Statistics).* Density is calculated using survey data, wherever possible, and administrative data adjusted for non-active and self-employed members otherwise (Visser 2016b).

Trade unions have looked for strategies of revitalization to come out of this situation (Bernaciak et al. 2014). Industrial relations scholars have shown that trade unions in countries such as the US, Great Britain and France have followed peculiar strategies of revitalization by extending solidarity with other organizations and community networks, and promoting social movement unionism (Baccaro et al. 2003; Le Queux and Sainsaulieu 2010; Tapia and Turner 2013). Alliances are processes through which groups exchange various types of resources in pursuit of a common goal, and are of the utmost importance when actors cannot afford to pursue their goals in total autonomy (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). Through social movement unionism, trade unions have been able to capture new claims by workers, including those by 'outsiders' such as claims related to temporary jobs, claims related to rising unemployment or civil rights-based claims (Ancelovici 2011; Tapia and Alberti 2019).

These cases of revitalization are usually portrayed as being opposed to those instances where traditional trade unions, in contrast, have not been able to rely on alliances with other organizations and social categories, remaining anchored to their institutional role and closed to mainstream parties (Simoni 2013; Ceron and Negri 2017). In Italy, for instance, established trade unions have been absent in many labour conflicts, and have mostly continued to protect the 'insiders', while the 'outsiders' have been often mobilized by independent, small rank-and-file and more radical trade unions. Scholars have referred to these dynamics as radical political unionism (cf. Cillo and Pradella 2019 for the Italian case).[11]

Both social movement unionism and radical political unionism have meant the reappearance, next to trade unions, of several other actors active in mobilizing workers such as SMOs, NGOs, workers' self-organized groups, grassroots informal groups and a multiplicity of networks evolving in open public spaces, such as the street, square, parks and virtual space. However, the type of trade unions involved in social movement unionism and in radical political unionism and the role of confederal trade unions and small rank-and-file unions differs. We contend that such differences are likely to sustain different types of labour conflicts and forms of protest. Labour conflicts can indeed span from short term, contingent, local-level single actions – such as those which may evolve around single firm-level issues – to more sustained interactions spanning several years. We advance that the presence of confederal trade unions in dynamics of social movement unionism is more likely to be associated with sustained long-term actions, and actions with a national scope. Confederal trade unions have indeed the necessary organizational resources, a more established structure, and chapters diffused throughout the national territory sustaining such actions, something that small rank-and-file trade unions or the presence of online networks do not always possess. In contrast, we expect that radical political unionism – dominated by fragmentation between confederal and independent small rank-and-file trade unions, and the prevalence of the latter – is likely to be associated with more contingent and sub-national or local-level actions. Indeed, fragmentation among trade unions, such as that which occurred in Italy, is more likely to be associated with the competition between organizations and the polarization of the organizational field. Through fragmentation, actors become more and more autonomous

[11] Radical political unionism has been discussed with reference to France and Britain as well (cf. Connolly and Darlington 2012).

from one another, draw on different sources of support, and focus on diverging goals and tactics, or diverging interests. These dynamics are all the more likely to prevent shared interests and constrain the construction of broad collective identities which support wide-ranging, sustained and long-term collective actions.

We try to explore this hypothesis better by investigating the relationship between the type of alliances and the nature of labour conflicts in the French and Italian cases.

5. The empirical study

5.1. France and Italy compared: case selection

To empirically explore the aforementioned hypothesis, we focus on France and Italy. In selecting these countries, we followed the comparative method of the 'most similar system design', in particular, a paired controlled comparison. This method implies the intentional selection of observations that resemble each other in every respect but one to control for possible effects of omitted variables (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994: 205). Our cases, France and Italy, indeed share several characteristics. First, the two countries have historically shown a strong class cleavage and a stronger labour movement compared to other European countries. The two countries have long been considered similar in terms of the characteristics of their strikes, featuring high rates of days not worked and classified as belonging to 'the strike front' (Bordogna and Cella 2002; Vandaele 2016: 282). Despite this however, the Italian labour movement has been characterized as being weakly institutionalized and severely fragmented (Cella 1989). Workers' interests have mainly been represented by trade unions and left-wing parties in Italy, while in France labour movements have been stronger and trade unions have been more able to establish long-term alliances with SMOs. Indeed, in Italy the reciprocal defiance of trade unions and SMOs and their incapacity to build long-term alliances goes back to the seventies, when trade unions distanced themselves from the social movement sector, particularly when a few organizations turned to political violence.

Second, France and Italy share the same trade union model, historically characterized by highly politicized industrial relations, a contentious and conflictual model within a Latin cluster in which France, Italy and Spain are aggregated together (Meardi 2004; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman 2013; Pedersini 2014; Visser 2016a). In both cases, in the last three decades, this model has experienced a process of institutionalization, with a moderate level of involvement of trade unions in government socio-economic policies and claims which are dealt with through state regulation.

Third, the two countries witnessed rising rates of unemployment and worsening levels of living conditions among workers after the 2008 crisis. Italy and France are among the 10 countries with the highest unemployment rates, especially of young people, with a subsequent massive build-up of debt, in Italy in particular (Bieling and Lux 2014).

5.2 Labour conflicts in France and Italy

Despite sharing the aforementioned characteristics, the two countries have shown quite divergent patterns in labour conflicts in the last two decades. France is one of the few countries where the number of days not worked due to strikes has increased in the last two decades (Vandaele 2016: 279-280). As regards the period between 2000 and 2009,

the average days not worked due to industrial actions in France were 127 per 1,000 employees (and the figure remained approximately the same between 2010 and 2017) while there were only 88 in Italy (ETUI 2019; see also Vandaele 2016). In turn, Italy showed higher levels of general strikes than France between 2000 and 2009 (ETUI 2019: 2). In 2010, a further peak resulted mainly from the 'national days of action' against pension reforms in France (Ancelovici 2011), after which the days-not-worked average declined to a level lower than before the Recession.[12] However, between 2008 and 2012, on average, over 150 working days were lost due to strikes per 1000 employees per year in France, and only around 25 in Italy, leading to an Italian strike volume six times lower than the French strike volume.[13] Likewise, a study on protests during the Great Recession shows that most protests in France occurred in the pre-crisis period, which spanned from 2005 to 2006. In contrast, Italy experienced a series of intermittent crisis-related mobilizations without showing any wave of contention which emerged in other southern countries such as Greece, Spain and Portugal (Zamponi 2012; Kriesi et al. forthcoming). This trend appears even more striking for Italy, given that anti-austerity protests overlapped with political disaffection in a strong political crisis, with Europeans' trust in government dramatically declining in most southern countries since the onset of the crisis. Political outcomes in these countries have, nevertheless, mainly resulted in the reconfiguration of the party system, rather than in a clear-cut resurgence of protests (Hutter, Kriesi and Vidal 2018).

In this framework, the repertoire of labour conflicts has also changed significantly in both countries. In France, "strikes are getting more scattered, impromptu, and shorter, and significantly, there is a rise in individual manifestations of conflict" (Le Queux and Sainsaulieu, 2010: 507). Labour struggles in the pre-crisis period involving immigrants in France started in 2006 and later developed in the *sans papiers* movement of 2008–2010, resulting in strikes integrated by occupations (Barron et al. 2016; Béroud 2018). The Great Recession further widened the repertoire of labour conflicts. In 2010, "the national days of action that punctuated the months of demonstrations were a combination of protests and strikes coordinated at the national level" (Ancelovici 2011). Furthermore, "in June 2010, workers spent day and night occupying part of Place de la Bastille; in the following autumn, they occupied the *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration*, a new institution settled in the former Museum of Colonies." (Barron et al. 2016: 642). CGT leaders called "the main camp at Bastille – not a strike, not in a company – the 'picket of the pickets'" (ibidem). Likewise, the 2016 movement against the El Khomri law, or the 'loi Travail', that took place from March to July 2016 – the strongest and longest social protest under a left-wing government during the Fifth Republic and President Hollande's five-year term (2012–2017) – included not only strikes that lasted several days in different sectors, but a predominance of 'days of action' and demonstrations across the country (Béroud 2018). The 2016 protests were referred to as the Nuit Débout ('Up All Night'), and involved the occupation of public spaces in a series of cities, beginning with the Place de la République in Paris. More recently, in December 2019, the public sector strikes involved rail workers, bus drivers, teachers, hospital staff, and

[12] While the days-not-worked rate during the Hollande presidency (further) declined, at least until 2013, no later data are available (Vandaele 2016).
[13] This needs to be taken with caution as in the Italian case data is only available up to 2009.

students who walked out protesting the proposed reforms of the country's generous pension system. More than 800,000 people across the country took to the streets, in one of the biggest strikes in France in decades. Last year in Paris, labour union marchers were joined by yellow vest protesters, who posed a significant challenge to President Emmanuel Macron's agenda. People on strike were asking the government to back down on planned reforms to the pension system in an attempt to unify the system, which currently has specific rules for some occupations.

Likewise, the Italian repertoire of labour conflicts has also changed in the last decade. As regards anti-austerity protests, between 2009 and 2014, 33 percent of actions were strikes and 23 percent demonstrations (Andretta 2018). Similar findings are reported by a study specifically tackling labour conflicts in Italy after 2008 (Pilati, Frazzetta, and Perra unpublished manuscript). This study shows that strikes were the most common form of action during the first period of the crisis (2008-2010), representing around 24 percent of all forms of labour conflicts. Next to strikes, sit-ins and public demonstrations were the major forms of labour conflicts during those years, representing, respectively, around 19 and 15 percent of all actions observed. Furthermore, from 2008 to 2010 strikes declined from approximately 28 to 20 percent, while from 2008 to 2010 squatting increased to nearly 10 percent.

Below, we aim to discuss how dynamics of social movement unionism in France, and of radical political unionism in Italy, may have affected the aforementioned dynamics of labour conflicts in the two countries.

5.3 Social movement unionism in France

If we approach the explanation of labour activism in France by drawing on theories related to resource mobilization and the role of trade unions as major actors mobilizing resources in the labour field, the picture is quite puzzling. In France, the density of trade unions remains low compared to other countries. Throughout the 2000s unionization in France remained around 8 percent. Specifically, the density in 2018 was 8.8 percent in France and 34.4 percent in Italy, despite the latter largely accounting for affiliations by workers with a typical contract, the 'insiders', and by pensioners who receive various types of services from trade unions (OECD 2020). Indeed, "French trade unions are often considered an 'atypical' case when it comes to international comparisons due to their small number of members and their strong dependence on the state (particularly for their funding), but also, and paradoxically to the first two points, because of their ability to instigate very strong collective mobilization" (Béroud 2018: 180). Previous research points to two other characteristics of trade unions: trade union unity as well as trade union alliances with other organizations and societal groups (cf. Ancelovici 2011). As regards trade union unity, the so-called 2010 'national days of action' were indeed organized by an alliance of all French labour confederations, namely the CGT, the CFDT, FO, the CFTC, the CGC, UNSA, the FSU, and Solidaires. Such an alliance, called 'intersyndicale', was not unprecedented, but it had never held together over such an extended period (Ancelovici 2011). Alliances that trade unions built in France affected their strong collective mobilization: despite the 2010 French reform concerned with retirement and unemployment insurances, worker mobilization gradually extended to youth, who had initially organized their own rallies, independent of those of the trade unions. According

to several youth organizations, 70,000 youths (high school and university students) participated in the national day of action on 19 October 2010 (Ancelovici 2011: 123). Cross-sectional and national-wide initiatives in which trade unions allied with other social movement organizations, youth-led or immigrant-led initiatives also include the CGT-led '*sans papiers*' campaign, which started in 2006, as well as the Nuit Débout movement, in which French trade unions played a determining role in the opposition to the El Khomri law (also called the 'loi Travail') in Spring 2016 (Tapia and Turner 2013; Barron et al. 2016; Béroud 2018). Following this, some scholars have contended that traditional trade unions in France have engendered dynamics of social movement unionism by privileging coalition-building with other organizations and constituencies, including not only workers with a variety of contracts, but also students and immigrants (Tapia and Alberti 2019).[14] The evolution of the protests by undocumented migrant workers which started in 2006 exemplifies this process (Barren et al. 2016). The strike, which began in 2006 in Chilly-Mazarin, near Paris, involved immigrant workers in an industrial laundry service; a second major strike then took place at a Buffalo Grill restaurant in June 2007 and a third strike was organized at *La Grande Armée* restaurant near the Champs-Elysées, with the support of several CGT branches. All three initiatives were initially supported by the local branch of CGT, which workers knew from media and community networks. Due to their limited resources, the local CGT branches had, however, contacted and involved the main branch of the CGT in Paris and eventually involved the national branch when strikes became diffused in 2008. Eventually, the multi-site movement was followed by negotiations between the CGT and the government over regularization criteria (Barron et al. 2016: 639).[15] These campaigns were successful due to the union attempts to involve migrant workers, thanks to the intersection of demands for liberation and equality (Tapia and Alberti 2019: 117). Claims had been related to mobility rights, the freedom of movement through regularization, as well as to labour rights, in an attempt to achieve equal treatment among all workers in the workplace (Tapia and Turner 2013; Tapia and Alberti 2019). Collective action frames were, therefore, resonating both with traditional workers' claims and with claims by new categories of workers such as migrant workers. Likewise, with respect to the 2016 protests known as the Nuit Débout, Beroud (2018: 181) highlights that "a number of the organizers of Nuit Débout wanted to create a space where their struggles could converge and to help the unions to strengthen their position of power in relation to the government. For them, it was less about rejecting trade unions than about pointing out their weaknesses in relation to the difficulties they have in reaching a whole section of the

---

[14] Vandaele (2016: 283) nonetheless contends that "due to divisions between unions, a revival of social movement unionism has hardly resulted in revitalizing the main characteristics of France's industrial relations system so far".

[15] Of course, the participation of CGT in undocumented workers' strikes did not come without conflict as when "On 2 May 2008, members of the 'Coordination 75' of sans-papier collectives (CSP 75) occupied the Bourse du Travail, a communal labor building housing the Paris branch of the CGT, which by then was the most active labor union section in the strikes [...] criticizing what they believed to be the union's new role as an unavoidable intermediary of regularization" (Barron et al. 2016: 640). Conflicts peaked when "on 24 June 2009, after facing 14 months of occupation at the Bourse du Travail, the CGT proceeded to forcibly evacuate its premises, with the assistance of anti-riot police outside the building" (ibidem).

workforce, including occasional workers, and offering them an adapted framework of representation."

5.4 Radical political unionism in Italy

According to a recent study, trade unions in Italy staged 52 percent of the anti-austerity protests. 34 percent were organized by the largest confederations, mostly CGIL in 2009 and 2010, and 20 percent by radical grassroots trade unions (Andretta 2018). During these protests confederal trade unions were not, however, able to ally with other actors in building strong coalitions, hampering the development of cooperative relations and of social movement dynamics, and facilitating the growth of independent unions. Several case studies on strikes that have emerged since the Great Recession confirm that many of them were backed by independent trade unions and self-organized groups, at times in alliance with other constituencies, involving dynamics of radical political unionism (Cillo and Pradella 2019). Strikes which occurred in the logistics sector from 2008 onwards mainly concerned immigrant workers from North Africa and Asia (Cillo and Pradella 2018). In this case, conflicts began in 2008 in one logistics centre of the Bennet supermarket chain in Origgio (Milan), and then spread to the main logistics hubs in the central north of Italy. As well as self-organized workers' groups, these struggles were mostly supported by independent small rank-and-file unions like Slai Cobas and Adl Cobas and were supported by left-wing militants and social centres from Milan (Cillo and Pradella 2018: 77). A first national strike of the logistics sector was organized on 22 March 2013, blocking the sector in the north of Italy, Rome and Naples, and then two other national strikes followed. As well as strikes, workers organized pickets which went on for several months, blocking commodity flows from the warehouse to supermarkets in northern Italy. Issues claimed were initially focused on working conditions but then included broader and political issues, such as the repeal of the 'Bossi-Fini' Law (ibidem). Workers eventually managed to achieve better working conditions in the cooperatives of the main logistics hubs but, at the same time, induced harsh repressive measures by the state and the companies.

The same authors report experiences of strikes across the Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) plants in southern Italy which erupted in 2015 (Cillo and Pradella 2019). This time strikes started when workers at FCA went on strike against increasingly worsening working conditions such as those related to delays which were "often offset by forcing employees to work during rest periods, refusing permission to use the toilets, and not stopping the assembly line in case of accidents" (Cillo and Pradella 2019: 463). Strikes were called in January 2015 and then repeatedly called in the following months and years – in May and November 2015, in April and July 2016, in January and October 2017 and in March 2018 – involving workers from different FCA plants in southern Italy, Melfi, Termoli, and Cassino and Atessa. Strikes also transnationalized to include solidarity with workers on strike at the FCA plant in Serbia. Even in this case, strikes were organized thanks to the support of SiCobas and, to a lesser extent, AdlCobas and USB. Fragmentation among trade unions was clear in this case, as independent trade unions pushed for going on strike in clear opposition to traditional trade unions even to the most militant branch, the FIOM-CGIL (Federation of Metallurgical Employees and

Workers), which precipitated into a crisis as many shop stewards preferred to join independent unions (Cillo and Pradella 2019: 459).

Another case study examined the emergence of 'rider unions', self-organized collectives of food delivery riders working for online platforms (Chesta et al. 2019: 821). The first of these workers' strikes took place in Turin in October 2016 and involved a group of riders employed by the food delivery company Foodora. This action was then followed by Deliveroo employees in Milan who organized a strike in July 2017, and then workers grouped under the label Riders Union Bologna went on strikes in November 2017. In all such cases, riders were claiming better working conditions, either rejecting the transition from an hourly pay system to a payment-by-delivery system, as had occurred in Turin, or refusing to risk their health by riding on the icy streets, as had occurred in Bologna. In all such instances riders were self-organized. The support for their claims came, again, not from confederal trade unions but from youth associations and social centres, due to the presence of students with previous experiences of activism among workers (Chesta et al. 2019: 822).

These case studies show the absence of engagement by confederal trade unions and the dominant role of small rank-and-file and independent trade unions, as well as their fragmentation. Italy has indeed experienced isolated trade unions since the 1990s, with marked differences and competition between the three traditional union confederations, with CGIL showing a more conflictual approach than the other two, CISL and UIL. This situation has been further exacerbated by the distance between confederal trade unions and independent trade unions. The latter, often in competition with confederal trade unions, have, since the 1990s, increasingly focused on atypical workers who have been looking to have their concerns represented at a political level (see Mattoni 2016 on temporary workers). When traditional trade unions met instances by atypical workers, whose claims in Italy were often backed by self-organized workers' groups and independent trade unions, they were pushed by other sectors of society, as was the case with the emergence of NIDIL, the CGIL trade union sector representing atypical workers. NIDIL was initially rooted in the autonomous organization of professional occasional freelancers (Murgia and Selmi 2011: 171). However, rather than collaborating with the latter, CGIL preferred to create a specific internal representation. The aim was to provide protection for under protected workers, also through collective bargaining. CGIL defined a national committee for professional self-employed individuals, in order to extend labour rights and welfare protection to all workers. This initiative aimed to revitalize CGIL and it was part of the strategies to organize young and atypical employees, 'knowledge workers' and immigrants (Pirro and Pugliese 2015; Leonardi 2018).

In the last decade, confederal trade unions have nonetheless supported campaigns against xenophobia, exploitation of migrants and the abuses associated with low-cost services in urban transport, in some airline transport as in the case of Ryanair, as well as in the area of home-delivered food. There has been strong mobilization against the over-exploitation of migrant workers in agriculture by providing assistance in rights and contracts. In October 2016, through the support of traditional trade unions, immigrant workers obtained the approval of a law, the 2016 Law 199, that punishes illicit labour intermediation and forced labour and slavery (Leonardi 2018). Despite this, confederal trade unions have lost much of their appeal amongst workers. As mentioned, this has

been linked to processes of decentralization of bargaining and of co-optation of trade unions by political parties.[16] The negative effects of these processes on trade unions were multiple and included not only the lowering bargaining power of trade unions, but also a crisis of their representation and their de-legitimation among workers. This has contributed to competition between parties and trade unions for consent and the exit of trade unions from labour–capital conflict (Streeck 2009; Cella 2012; Crouch 2012a; 2012b).

In this regard, traditional trade unions in Italy seem to be caught in the middle of two processes of delegitimization.

First, Italian confederal trade unions are progressively losing their legitimacy in the industrial relations system as they are often not a legitimated counterpart for the national government in the definition of major reforms. While trade unions have the possibility to veto a decision, and they have been involved in the discussions on reforms such as those on retirement or on the labour market (see Pritoni and Sacchi 2019) governments do not necessarily include their claims when finalizing and implementing reforms. With regard to the 2011 Fornero law, for instance, this occurred with reference to the 'esodati'.[17] Scholars have indeed underlined that, during the Great Recession, the government not only excluded trade unions from the process of adjustment, but eviscerated tripartite social partnership arrangements (Culpepper and Regan 2014; Benassi and Vlandas 2016). Despite this, trade unions, most notably CGIL-FIOM, are still maintaining a set of power resources in defence of collective bargaining. Recently, Leonardi (2018) observed that for Italian unions, progressive decentralization is manageable due to their comparatively strong membership and their representative power at the plant level.

Second, trade unions have progressively lost their legitimation in the eyes of workers. Indeed, unions are today organizations founded both on notions of collectivism and on individual identities and interests. These need to be continuously negotiated for trade unions to encompass all forms of exclusion due to gender, job insecurity and international migration that produce deep fractures between the workforce. In Italy, one of the main channels used to increase union density has been the transformation of the membership basis. While this has been traditionally based on collective ideational motivations, more recently membership has shifted its focus on individual instrumental attitudes. In this perspective, trade unions have aimed to increase their membership by managing services of welfare provisions which offer organizational and financial resources. However, members have become clients rather than activists.

[16] Particularly, the architecture of Italian industrial relations has changed since 1993 (Baccaro and Howell 2011). The 1993 Interconfederal Protocol attributed a central role to decentralized bargaining as it provided unions with a 'right to access' the enterprise-level bargaining that was previously unavailable. However, as discussed by Baccaro and Howell (2011) Confindustria, the Employers' Association, became "increasingly disenchanted with tripartite negotiations and, on the eve of national elections in 2001, struck a strategic alliance with the center-right coalition, […] criticized concertation as an empty rite that blocked much-needed structural reform […]"

[17] The 'esodati' are those workers who had agreed to stop working at the time of the 2011 Fornero reform, but who could not earn a pension under the new retirement age and contribution age rules, thus finding themselves unemployed and without pension rights for a number of years.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this article was to explore differences in labour conflicts in Italy and France by focusing on the characteristics of the most prominent structures of worker mobilization in labour conflicts: trade unions. Italy and France have indeed witnessed similar changes in labour conflicts. However, the level of strike volume after 2008 increased in France but not in Italy. In addition, anti-austerity protests in France started to emerge in the pre-crisis period while Italy experienced a series of intermittent crisis-related mobilizations without showing any wave of contention.

Under this framework, both in France and Italy, trade unions have shown strategies of alliance building. However, evidence suggests that the alliances built by trade unions have been different in the two counties.

In particular, confederal trade unions in France have been able to engage in social movement unionism within coalitions involving other social categories and SMOs. On the one hand, this may have occurred because of low French trade union density rates. On the other hand, confederal trade unions in France have been more open to SMOs. Through social movement unionism, confederal trade unions in France have enlarged their frames from a closely bound focus on workers and their conditions – including those related to salary, layoffs, restructuring and redundancies – to a focus on broader rights including equality and basic rights such as, for instance, mobility or housing rights. The participation of confederal trade unions in alliances has implied national-level and long-term actions. As discussed, France witnessed an increasing average strike volume after 2005, as compared to the previous two decades, and the cases studies discussed, such as in the case of the *sans papiers* movement or of the Nuit Débout protests, show important long-term, sustained interactions involving a variety of actors.

In contrast, alliances between trade unions and SMOs in Italy have mostly involved small rank-and-file unions and self-organized workers' groups engaged in radical political unionism. Confederal trade unions have remained more marginal in such alliances. These dynamics have been associated with a lower level of strikes in Italy than in France, and with a decreasing number of strikes after 2005. However, single case studies such as strikes at FCA suggest that further evidence is required to better assess the role of independent small rank-and-file trade unions in shaping long term and sustained labour conflicts. Differently from what we could have expected given the presence of small rank-and-file trade unions – which, according to our hypothesis, are more likely to be associated with local levels, and short-term actions – the FCA strikes started in 2005 and then spread to 2016 and 2017 across many northern Italian regions. Independent small rank-and-file trade unions may therefore, at times, be able to replace the role of confederal trade unions. The conditions for them to do so need, however, to be better assessed.

Finally, regardless of which dynamics prevail – social movement unionism or radical political unionism – trade unions face the problem concerning the relationship between their identities as collective actors and workers' interests in the capitalist arena. This entails a paradox. Unions are in fact strongly advocated to criticize the capitalist mode of production. This implies a regulation of the labour market, particularly during economic crises, to support the rights of workers and to improve their working conditions. However, during the last crisis, the critique of capitalism was not at the core of public and political debates. Trade unions appeared weak in opposing governments'

attempts to reform the labour market rules. The consequence was limited popular support for trade union initiatives. Workers and unions therefore appeared divided in their efforts to defend jobs in the context of the industrial crisis, of the restructuring of industrial sectors and of increasing social inequalities. Unions are clearly organizations founded on notions of collectivism, but this risks colliding with workers' individual identities whose interests cannot all be associated with class belonging. Therefore, the unions' challenge is to incorporate and represent the variety of interests based on class belonging, gender, race, international migration and job insecurity conditions, in order to face challenges due to profound fractures among workers (Dufour et al. 2010).

References

Ancelovici, M. (2011), 'In search of lost radicalism. The Hot Autumn of 2010 and the Transformation of Labour Contention in France', *French Politics, Culture & Society*,29,3: 121-140

Andretta, M. (2018), 'Protest in Italy in Times of Crisis: A Cross-Government Comparison', *South European Society and Politics*, 23 (1): 97–114.

Andretta, M., Bosi, L., and, D. della Porta, (2016), 'Participants in trade union-staged demonstrations: a cross-country comparison', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *22*(3), 295–313.

Armingeon, K. and Baccaro L. (2012), 'The Sorrows of Young Euro', in Bermeo, N. and Pontusson, J. (eds) *Coping with Crisis: Government Reactions to the Great Recession*, New York: Russell Sage: 162-198.

Baccaro, L. (2010), 'Labour and the global financial crisis.', Socio-Economic Review 8: 341–348.

Baccaro, L., Hamann, K., & Turner, L. (2003), 'The Politics of Labour Movement Revitalization: The Need for a Revitalized Perspective', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, *9*(1), 119–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680103009001455

Baccaro, L. and Howell, C. (2011), 'A Common Neoliberal Trajectory: The Transformation of Industrial Relations in Advanced Capitalism', *Politics and Society*, 39, 521–563.

Barling, J. Fullagar, C. and Kelloway, K. (1992), *The Unions and Its Members: A Psychological Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barron, P., Bory, A., Chauvin, S., Jounin, N., and Tourette, L. (2016), 'State categories and labour protest: migrant workers and the fight for legal status in France', *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(4), 631–648.

Benassi, C. and Vlandas T. (2016), 'Union inclusiveness and temporary agency workers: The role of power resources and union ideology', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 22,1: 5-22.

Bernaciak, M., Gumbrell-McCormick, R. and Hyman, R. (2014), *European trade unionism: from crisis to renewal?* Report 133, Brussels, ETUI.

Béroud, S. (2018). 'French trade unions and the mobilisation against the El Khomri law in 2016: a reconfiguration of strategies and alliances', *Transfer*, Vol. 24, 2: 179–193.

Bèroud. S and Yon K., (2012). 'Face à la crise, la mobilization sociale et ses limites. Une analyse de contradictions syndacales', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 20 (2): 169-183.

Bieling, H.-J. and Lux, J. (2014), 'Crisis-Induced Social Conflicts in the European Union – Trade Union Perspectives: The Emergence of 'Crisis Corporatism' or the Failure of Corporatist Arrangements?', *Global Labour Journal*, 5, 2: 153-175.

Bordogna, L. and Cella, G.P. (2002), 'Decline or transformation? Change in industrial conflict and its challenges', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 8,4: 585–607.

Brandl, B. and Traxler, F. (2010), 'Labour Conflicts: A Cross-national Analysis of Economic and Institutional Determinants, 1971–2002.', *European Sociological Review,* 26 (5): 519–540.

Calhoun, C. (2012), *The Roots of Radicalism: Tradition, the Public Sphere, and Early Nineteenth-Century Social Movements*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Caruso, L., Chesta R.M. and Cini, L. (2019), 'Le nuove mobilitazioni dei lavoratori nel capitalismo digitale: una comparazione tra i ciclo-fattorini della consegna di cibo e i conducenti di Amazon nel caso italiano', in *Economia e società regionale*, 1/2019: 61-78.

Cella, G.P. (1989), Criteria of Regulation in Italian Industrial Relations: A Case of Weak Institutions, in P. Lange and M. Regini (Ed.): *State, Market and Social Regulation*. New Perspectives on Italy, Cambridge: CUP, S: 167–185.

Cella, G.P. (2012), 'Difficoltà crescenti per le relazioni industriali europee e italiane', *Stato e mercato*, 94: 29 – 54.

Ceron, A. and Negri, F. (2017), 'Trade Unions and Political Parties in Italy (1946-2014): Ideological Positions and critical juncture', *South European Society and Politics*, 22,4: 491-508.

Chesta, R. E., Zamponi, L. and Caciagli, C. (2019), 'Labour Activism and Social Movement Unionism in The Gig Economy. Food Delivery Workers' Struggles in Italy', *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 12(3), :819-844.

Cillo, R., and Pradella, L. (2018), 'New immigrants' struggles in Italy's logistics industry'. *Comparative European Politics*, 16(1), 67–84.

Cillo, R., and Pradella, L. (2019), 'Remaking the labour movement in Italy: the revival of strikes at Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles in 2015–17', *Globalizations*, 16:4, 457-471, DOI: 10.1080/14747731.2018.1558821

Clark, P.F. (2009). *Building More Effective Unions*, 2nd edn. Ithaca, N.W.: ILR Press.

Connolly, H. and Darlington, R., (2012). 'Radical political unionism in France and Britain: A comparative study of SUD-Rail and the RMT'. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 18,3: 235–50.

Crouch C. (2012a), 'Il declino delle relazioni industriali nell'odierno capitalismo', *Stato e Mercato*, 94: 55- 75.

Crouch, C. (2012b), *Il potere dei giganti*, Bari-Roma, Laterza.

Crouch, C., and Pizzorno, A. (1978), *The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe since 1968*. London: The Macmillan Press.

Culpepper, P. (2006), 'Capitalism, Coordination and Economic Change. The French political economy since 1985', in P. Culpepper, P. Hall and Palier, B. (eds), *Changing France. The Politics that Markets make*, London: Palgrave-McMillan.

Culpepper, P. and Regan, A. (2014), 'Why don't governments need trade unions anymore? The death of social pacts in Ireland and Italy', *Socio-Economic Review*. 12,4, 723–745.

della Porta, D. (2015), *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism Back Into Protest Analysis*, Cambridge; Malden: Polity Press.

Davidsson, J.B. and Naczyk M. (2009), 'The Ins and Outs of Dualisation: a Literature Review', *RECWOWE Paper*, 02/2009.

Diani M. (2018), "Unions as social movements or unions in social movements, in J.R. Grote, and C. Wagemann (eds.), *Social Movements and Organized Labour: Passions and Interests*, London: Routledge, pp. 43–66.

Dufour, C., Murray G., Peetz D. and Yates C. (2010), 'Rethinking collective representation: introduction', *Transfer* 16,3: 291-297.

Ebbinghaus, B. (2002), 'Trade unions' changing role: membership erosion, organizational reform, and social partnership in Europe', *Industrial Relations Journal,* 33(5): 465-483.

Ebbinghaus, B. and Visser, J. (1999), 'When Institutions Matter: Union Growth and Decline in Western Europe, 1950–95.', *European Sociological Review* 15:135–58.

Edwards, B. and McCarthy, J.D. (2004), Resources and social movement mobilization, in D.A. Snow, S.A. Soule and H. Kriesi (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movement*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Emmenegger P., Hausermann S., Palier B. and Seeleib-Kaiser M. (2012). *The age of dualization. The changing face of inequality in deindustrializing societies,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Unit B.1, 2015. *Industrial Relations in Europe 2014*, http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=13681&langId=en.

ETUI. (2019). Strikes– Map of Europe https://www.etui.org/Services/Strikes-Map-of-Europe

Fantasia, R. (1988). *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action and Contemporary American Workers*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2014), *Social Movements and Globalization: How protests, occupations and uprisings are changing the world*, London: Red Globe Press

Gentile, A., & Tarrow, S. (2009), 'Charles Tilly, globalization, and labour's citizen rights', *European Political Science Review, 1*(3), 465-493. doi:10.1017/S175577390999018X

Giugni, M. G. and Grasso M. T. (eds.) (2015), *Austerity and Protest: Popular Contention in Times of Crisis*, London: Routledge.

Grote, J.R. and Wagemann C. (eds.) (2018), *Social Movements and Organized Labour: Passions and Interests*, London: Routledge.

Gumbrell – McCormick, R. and Hyman R. (2013), *Trade Unions in Western Europe. Hard Times, Hard Choices*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hutter, S., Kriesi, H., and Vidal, G. (2018), 'Old versus new politics: The political spaces in Southern Europe in times of crises', *Party Politics*, *24*(1), 10–22.

Kelly, J. (1998), *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London: Routledge.

Kelly, J. (2015), 'Conflict: trends and forms of collective action', *Employee Relations* 37(6): 720–732.

King, G. R., Keohane, O., and Verba, S., (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Kriesi H., Koopmans, R., Duyvendak, J.W. and Giugni, M.G. (1995), *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis.* Minneapolis: *Minnesota University Press*

Kriesi, H., Lorenzini, J., Wüest, B., & Hausermann, S. (Eds.). (forthcoming), *Contention in Times of Crisis: Recession and Political Protest in Thirty European Countries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leonardi, S. (2018), 'Trade unions and collective bargaining in Italy during the crisis', in Lehndorff, S., Dribbusch, H. and Schulten, T. (eds), *Rough waters: European trade unions in a time of crises*, Brussel: ETUI: 87-113.

Leonardi, S. and Pedersini, R. (eds) (2018), *Multiemployer bargaining under pressure: decentralization trends in five European Countries*, Brussels, ETUI.

Le Queux, S. and Sainsaulieu, I. (2010), 'Social Movement and Unionism in France: A Case for Revitalization?, ' *Labour Studies Journal,* 35, 4: 503–519.

Mattoni, A. (2016), *Media Practices and Protest Politics: How Precarious Workers Mobilize*, London: Routledge.

Meardi, G. (2004), 'Modelli o stili di sindacalismo in Europa?', *Stato e Mercato*, 4: 207-236.

Milkman, R. and Voss K. (eds.) (2004). *Rebuilding Labour: Organizing and Organizers in the. New Union Movement*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Murgia A., Selmi G. (2011), 'Inspira e cospira. Forme di auto-organizzazione del precariato in Italia', *Sociologia del Lavoro*, vol. 123 :163-177

OECD, 2020, Statistics, Trade union, https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TUD

Olivier, R. (2011), 'Powerful remnants? The politics of egalitarian bargaining institutions in Italy and Sweden', *Socio-Economic Review* (2011) **9**, 533–566

Palier, B. and Thelen, K. (2010). 'Institutionalising dualism: complementaries and change in France and Germany', *Polics and Society*, 38,1: 119-148.

Pedersini, R. (2014). 'European industrial relations between old and new trends', *Stato e Mercato*, 3, (2014): 341-368.

Pilati, K., Frazzetta, F. and Perra, S. *Varieties of trade unions and labour conflicts in Italy*. unpublished paper.

Pirro, F. and Pugliese E. (2015), *Rappresentare i non rappresentati*, Roma: Ediesse.

Portos García, M. (2016), 'Taking to the streets in the context of austerity: a chronology of the cycle of protests in Spain, 2007-2015', *Partecipazione e conflitto*, 9,1: 181-210

Pritoni, A., and Sacchi, S. (2019), Interest Groups and the 'Jobs Act': Lobbying with What Effects?, in *Rivista Italiana di Politiche Pubbliche,* 2: 181-212, doi: 10.1483/94319

Pulignano, V. (2003), 'Union struggle and the crisis of industrial relations in Italy', *Capital and class* 79: 1-7.

Regalia, I. and Regini, M. (2018), 'Trade Unions and Employment Relations in Italy during the Economic Crisis', *South European Society and Politics*, 23,1: 63–79
https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2018.1430608

Regan, A. (2017). 'Rethinking social pacts in Europe: Prime ministerial power in Ireland and Italy', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 23,2: 117-133.

Roscigno, V. J., and Hodson, R. (2004), 'The Organizational and Social Foundations of Worker Resistance.', *American Sociological Review*, 69: 14-39.

Rüdig, W. and Karyotis, G. (2014), 'Who Protests in Greece? Mass Opposition to Austerity', *British Journal of Political Science,* 44,3: 487-513. doi:10.1017/S0007123413000112

Shorter, E. and Tilly, C. (1974), *Strikes in France, 1830–1868.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Silver, B.J. (2003), *Forces of labour: workers' movements and globalization since 1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simoni, M. (2013), 'The left and the organized labour in low-inflation time', *World Politics*, 65, 2: 314-349.

Streeck, W. (2009), *Re-forming Capitalism. Institutional change in the German Political Economy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tapia, M., and Alberti, G. (2019), 'Unpacking the Category of Migrant Workers in Trade Union Research: A Multi-Level Approach to Migrant Intersectionalities', *Work, Employment and Society*, *33*(2), 314–325. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017018780589

Tapia, M. and Turner, L. (2013), 'Union Campaigns as Countermovements: Mobilizing Immigrant Workers in France and the United Kingdom', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 51:3 : 601–622.

Tilly, C. and Tarrow, S., (2015 [2007]), *Contentious Politics*, 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vandaele, K. (2016), 'Interpreting strike activity in western Europe in the past 20 years: the labour repertoire under pressure', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *22*(3), 277–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258916658804

Van Dyke, N. and H. J. McCammon (eds), (2010), *Strategic Alliances: Coalition Building and Social Movements,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Visser, J. (2002), 'Why fewer workers join unions in Europe: a social custom explanation of membership trends', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 40,3: 403-30.

Visser, J. (2016a), 'What happened to collective bargaining during the great recession?' *IZA Journal* of Labour Policy*, 5,9, 1-35*.

Visser, J. (2016b) *ICTWSS Data base*. version 5.1, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS), University of Amsterdam, September.

Zamponi, L. (2012). 'Why don't Italians Occupy?' Hypotheses on a Failed Mobilisation', *Social Movement Studies*, 11:3-4, 416-426, DOI: 10.1080/14742837.2012.708833