



Inaugural ILERA-ILO Webinar: 'Researching work in and after the pandemic'

24 April 2024

Chaired by Professor Rae Cooper, AO
The University of Sydney Business School
and President Elect ILERA



International Labour
and Employment
Relations Association



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Contributions from our speakers
(10 minutes only)

1. **Prof Mia Rönnmar**, Lund University, Sweden (and ILERA Gender Study Group)
2. **Prof Chris F Wright**, University of Sydney Australian (with Prof Colm McLaughlin, UCD) (and ILERA Theory)
3. **Prof Clare Kelliher**, Cranfield University, UK (and ILERA Flexible working Patterns Study Group)
4. **Dr Janine Berg**, Senior Economist ILO, Geneva

Questions, from Q and A

What's next?





LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Collective bargaining and working conditions in Sweden and the EU in and after the COVID-19 pandemic: the example of the care sector

MIA RÖNNMAR, FACULTY OF LAW, LUND UNIVERSITY
PAST-PRESIDENT OF ILERA



Introduction

- The role of law, collective bargaining and social partners in setting working conditions and addressing job quality and discrimination in and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Care sector and care workers
- Swedish labour law and industrial relations as a starting point
- Insights from comparative research on decentralised collective bargaining, the care sector and gender equality



Research approaches and methods

- Labour law and industrial relations, incl. interplay between legislation, collective bargaining, and case law
- EU and comparative
- Socio-legal and interdisciplinary
- Rich and multifaceted materials



Findings on decentralised collective bargaining and working conditions in the care sector

- CODEBAR (with Dr Andrea Iossa):
 - comparative and interdisciplinary research (France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden)
 - multi-employer and sectoral collective bargaining and ‘organised decentralisation’ in Sweden and in the care, manufacturing and retail sectors and social partner collaboration in the COVID-19 pandemic
 - European variations in collective bargaining and employee representation
- CARE4CARE* and Older Workers and Dismissals** (with Prof. Jenny Julén Votinius):
 - comparative and interdisciplinary research (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden)
 - European variations in care sector and care worker dynamics and characteristics
 - working conditions, job quality, talent management and risk of discrimination in the care sector
 - older workers and dynamics between collective bargaining, legislation, and equality law

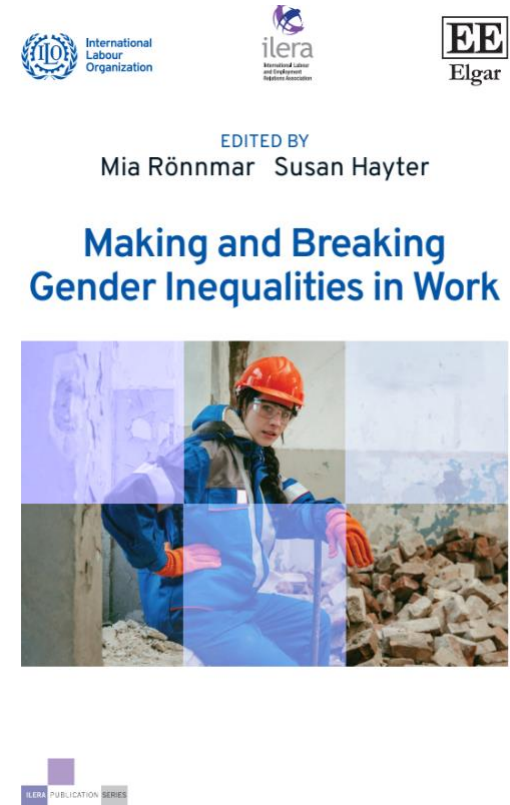


*Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, koordineras av universitetet i Florens, GA n°101094603

**FORTE-grant (Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare)

New publication, Rönnmär and Hayter (eds), Making and Breaking Gender Inequalities in Work

- ILERA Publication Series, Volume 4, forthcoming, collaboration between ILERA, the ILO, and Edward Elgar
- To be launched at the 20th ILERA World Congress, in NYC, in June
- Study of gender inequalities in work and innovative ways to promote gender equality
- Global and interdisciplinary approach, areas such as implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, work–life balance, equality law, global value chains, industrial relations, and collective bargaining



Conclusion

- Research-based knowledge on the care sector, care work, and care workers, implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and future crises
- Research-based law and policy development, exchange of best practices, and importance of gender equality
- Development of international and comparative research collaboration and innovation in research theory and methodology

Further reading:

Mia Rönnmar and Susan Hayter (eds), *Making and Breaking Gender Inequalities in Work* (ILERA Publication Series, Vol. 4, ILO/Edward Elgar, *forthcoming*, open access)

Frank Tros (ed.), *Pathways in Decentralised Collective Bargaining in Europe* (Amsterdam University Press, 2023, open access)

Project websites (with open access materials):

CODEBAR: <https://aias-hsi.uva.nl/en/projects-a-z/codebar/codebar.html>

CARE4CARE: <https://www.care4care.net/>

Social dialogue and job retention policy reform in response to COVID

**Presentation to ILO-ILERA Seminar:
Researching work in and after the pandemic
24 April 2024**

A/Prof Chris F Wright, University of Sydney
Prof Colm McLaughlin, University College Dublin
ILERA Industrial Relations Theory Study Group
Co-Convenors (with A/Prof Dionne Pohler,
University of Saskatchewan)



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Introduction

Research question:

- *How did national systems of employment regulation influence the design and implementation of job retention schemes during COVID?*

Why is this question important?

- The COVID pandemic, lockdowns and recessions had a major impact across the world on businesses and workers
- The crisis served as a catalyst for industrial relations policy change in virtually all countries
- How different national systems of employment regulation respond to global crises is not well explained by comparative employment relations theory

Design and methods

	Institutional settings	Ideology of governing party/parties	Interview <i>n</i>
Australia	Liberal market economy with elements of coordination	Centre-right government reliant on centre-right-populist parties to pass legislation	23
Denmark	Coordinated market economy with a social democratic welfare state	Centre-left government reliant on leftist parties to pass legislation	10
Ireland	Liberal market economy with a tradition of actor cooperation	Centrist/centrist-right/green coalition government	8
Italy	Coordinated market economy with a conservative welfare state	Populist/centre/left coalition government	29
UK	Classic liberal market economy	Centre-right (majority rule) government	10

Findings: job retention schemes developed / adapted in response to COVID

	Type of scheme	Wage replacement rate (%)	Policy implementation processes
Australia	New wage subsidy	100 (capped)	Developed via government (Treasury) partly in response to pressure from the Australian Council of Trade Unions and employer groups who were involved in its design
Ireland	Pre-existing & new wage subsidy	85	Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Wage Subsidy Schemes originated from Irish Congress of Trade Unions proposals
UK	New furlough scheme	60-80	Developed via government (Treasury) partly in response to the Trades Union Congress and Confederation of British Industry lobbying
Denmark	Pre-existing & new short-term work scheme	75-90	Developed / adapted via collective bargaining Requirements to consult with unions over scheme implementation
Italy	Pre-existing	35-80*	Requirements to consult with unions over scheme implementation

Implications for research and practice post-pandemic

Findings

- All countries – CMEs and LMEs – developed similar measures in response to COVID
 - Substance: job retention / wage subsidy schemes widely adopted / extended
 - Process: governments worked cooperatively with unions and employers to achieve this

Why?

- (1) *“You get seismic shifts when people are forced to change. Change is not an easy thing to do. Our default position is the status quo. So, to shift that, you do need a bit of a shock to the system”* – Australian government official
- (2) *“If you don’t do this then you are risking social unrest... [If support was insufficient] then people would get into difficulty and then... where would that take the country? Into a very bad place”* – Irish union official
- Different legacies of job retention schemes led to different outcomes in terms of their effectiveness
- **Key takeaway:** National systems do still matter during crises, but they appear to matter less

Unresolved questions

- Why does the ‘common ideology’ of ‘collective vulnerability’ remain (generally) stronger in CMEs than LMEs?
 - *“We are a small trading nation. We don’t have anything that you cannot buy elsewhere... We need to be active. I think that it is something that is deeply rooted in many Danes... All we have is ourselves. For God’s sake, we’re sitting on a sand dune on the north of Germany”* – Danish union official
- Despite the ‘institutional discordance’ of job retention schemes in LMEs, can they play a role for future crises, e.g., climate change?
- Is there scope for ‘policy learning’ from CMEs with longstanding job retention schemes?



The COVID-19 'Flexible Furlough' Scheme – Use and longer-term implications for flexible working

Clare Kelliher

Professor of Work and Organisation

Cranfield School of Management

Cranfield University, UK

Co-chair IIRA Study Group Flexible Work Patterns



Economic
and Social
Research Council

www.cranfield.ac.uk/som

The Research

- For many employers using the UK governments '**Flexible Furlough**' Scheme during the Covid-19 pandemic represented an experiment in greater use of part-time working (cf. the 'Great working from home experiment').
- Part-time working is sought by many employees seeking to balance their work and non-work commitments. However, they often struggle to gain quality part-time work, often due to employer resistance.
- This research was designed to investigate employers' experiences of using the Flexible Furlough Scheme including whether and how their perceptions of and openness to part-time working were influenced by their experience.
- Potential implications for greater workforce diversity and enabling wider participation in employment by those unable or unwilling to work full-time.

The research employed mixed methods:

- Online survey designed to investigate employers' use of and perceptions about flexible working arrangements pre-pandemic and any changes in both use of and views about flexible working arrangements (Feb-April 2022).
- Semi-structured interviews conducted at two time points (late 2021 and May-July 2022) with directors and line managers with experience of using the Flexible Furlough Scheme to explore their experiences in more depth and any changes to their openness.

Findings

- Almost forty percent (39.7%) of survey respondents reported that using the Flexible Furlough Scheme helped them to design and manage part-time working more effectively.
- 42.6% of survey respondents reported that using the Flexible Furlough Scheme helped them to better match human resources with variations in business demand.
- 42.1% of survey respondents reported that use of the Flexible Furlough Scheme made line managers more open to part-time working.
- Other experiences during the pandemic had increased managers' openness to part-time working.
- 30.4% of survey respondents agreed that increased working from home had led to greater openness from line managers to part-time working and 28.7% agreed that changes to their business model prompted by the pandemic had fostered greater openness to part-time working.
- Labour shortages also impacted manager openness to part-time working.

Implications for Research and Practice Post Pandemic

Unintended consequences show value of (enforced) experimentation:

- For learning and in challenging perceptions.
- Reconsideration of organisation of work.
- Diversity and inclusion.

Governments should consider encouraging wider awareness of different working arrangements and experimentation with different approaches.



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The value of essential work

World
Employment
and Social
Outlook

2023

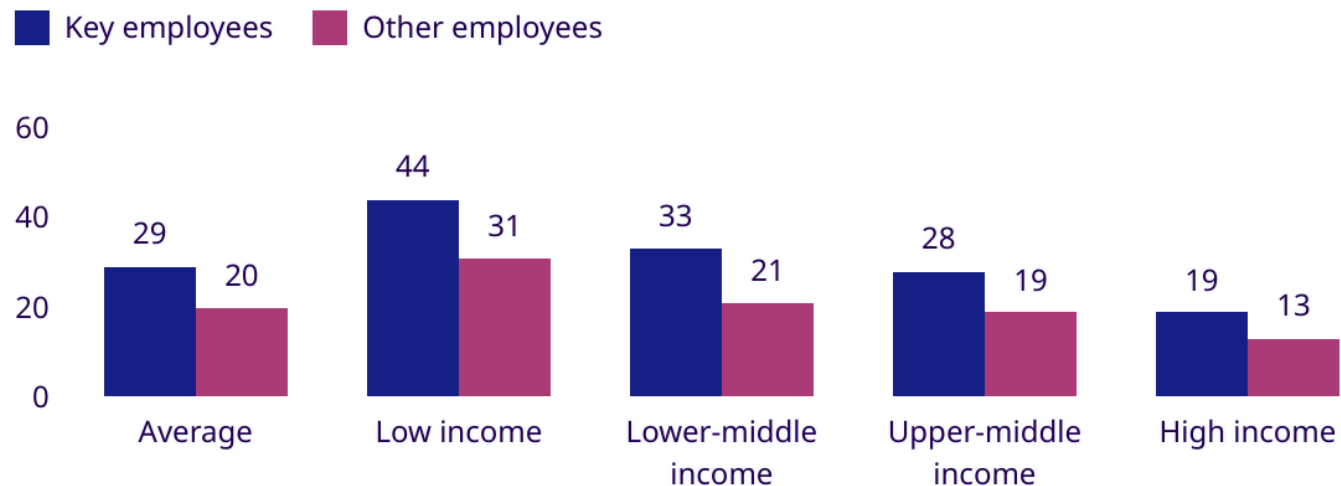
Key workers

- Countries issued sectoral lists of essential activities that needed to continue operating
- Report considers sectors mentioned by 90 countries; excl. teleworkable occupations

► 8 broad occupations:



► **Figure 3.11. Share of low-paid workers among key and other wage employees, by country income group (percentage)**



Source: Analysis based on ILO Microdata Repository (ILOSTAT), 2019 or latest year. See Appendix for more details. • Created with Datawrapper

Unexplained “pay gap” between key and non-key workers



On average, key employees earn 26 per cent less than other employees, of which only 17 percent is accounted for by education and experience.

The substantial pay gap, even after controlling for education and experience, reflects the low valuation of the work performed by key workers

Recommendations

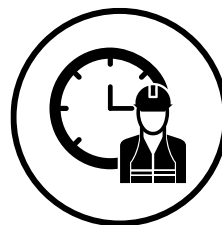
- Investing in the institutions of work improves working conditions



Safe and healthy workplaces for all



Equality of treatment and other safeguards for all contractual arrangements



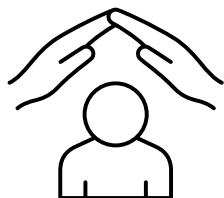
Safe and predictable working hours



Wage policies that support the valuation of key work

Recommendations

- Investing in the institutions of work improves working conditions



Extending social protection for a resilient workforce



Training for an adaptive and responsive key workforce



Turning law into practice through compliance and enforcement

What's Next?

- Join ILERA to stay in touch for events, news
- Attend the 20th World Congress of ILERA, NYC, June 2024 (chaired by President Prof Harry Katz)
- Submit a paper and attend ILERA, 14th European Congress, September 2025
- Details: <https://ilo-ilera.org/>

And

- Follow ILO research releases:
- <https://www.ilo.org/research-and-publications>