

# The evolution of Italian bilateral bodies and funds in a comparative perspective

**Alessia Vatta** 

Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Trieste, Italy

## Abstract

In recent years, decentralised collective bargaining has been increasingly discussed in Italy. The importance of collective bargaining is often questioned, but sectoral agreements have various purposes and the related bilateral bodies and funds are managed jointly by social partner organisations. In comparison with peak-level social pacts, it is a less visible kind of cooperation, but particularly relevant in times of crisis. The article deals with the activity of bipartite bodies and funds. The analysis shows that they perform remarkable functions and could develop further. However, some problems also emerge from the comparison with bilateral experiences in other countries.

## Keywords

Bilateral bodies, bipartism, concertation, interest groups, social partnership

## Introduction

Analysing policy responses to the global economic and financial crisis, the European Commission (2015) recommended income support and stressed the link between wage-setting institutions and economic performance. According to Glassner and Keune (2012: 368), the crisis tended to reinforce longer-term trends in national industrial relations, like bargaining decentralisation and coverage reduction (Demetriades and Welz, 2012; Eurofound, 2014: 22; Pedersini, 2012, 2018; Regalia and Regini, 2018: 66).<sup>1</sup> However, it also enhanced the role of negotiated responses (Glassner and Keune, 2010; Glassner et al., 2011), including bipartite arrangements. The crisis prompted the foundation of new or stronger bipartite and tripartite bodies (Broughton and Welz, 2013: 13; Eurofound, 2014: 14). Institutional conditions and the national setting of industrial relations influenced the diverging reactions to the crisis (Glassner

---

### Corresponding author:

Alessia Vatta, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Trieste, Piazzale Europa I, Trieste, 34127, Italy.

Email: [alessia.vatta@dispes.units.it](mailto:alessia.vatta@dispes.units.it)

and Keune, 2010; ILO and World Bank, 2012; Svalund, 2015), but there were attempts by the social partners to develop mutually acceptable solutions to reduce its impact and contribute to recovery (Demetriades and Welz, 2012; European Foundation, 2012). In Italy, bilateralism has become increasingly important to address the deficiencies in statutory unemployment protection and income support (Pavolini et al., 2016). The decree law 185/2008 fostered tripartite agreements at regional level and firm-level deals for income support, integrating bipartite solutions in this system and covering also small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Pedersini, 2013). Though exemptions from sectoral agreements were not so extensive as expected and bargaining decentralisation has been limited (D'Amuri and Giorgiantonio, 2015; Leonardi, 2017), local negotiations have often focused on social and health issues, and the crisis has driven the social partners towards bipartite initiatives to cope with uncertainty (Colombo and Regalia, 2016; Regalia and Regini, 2018: 70–71). Collective bargaining is thus related to forms of cooperation which play a significant social policy role. The 2009 framework agreement on bargaining reform stated that ‘further forms of bilateral arrangements’ could be implemented for the provision of supplementary welfare. As observed by Glassner and Keune (2012: 369), collective agreements in the private sector have played an important role as social policy instruments, mitigating the crisis effects on workers and safeguarding their income (Cazes et al., 2017; Demetriades and Welz, 2012). During the crisis, bipartite negotiations intensified in Italy (Broughton and Welz, 2013). According to Leonardi (2017: 98), bilateralism is probably the most structured form of participation achieved in Italy in the past 20 years. This article will investigate the bilateral bodies (*enti bilaterali*, in Italian) and the funds jointly run by employers’ organisations and trade unions.

Bilateral bodies are found particularly in the crafts industry and among SMEs, mainly in sectors where employment is often non-standard, with a high turnover of employees and widespread atypical or undeclared work. Historically, these sectors have also been characterised by limited statutory welfare provisions. Contractual welfare, i.e. the activities organised by social partners either through state delegation or by sectoral bargaining, sets a connection between labour market actors and social policy (Schelkle, 2011). In times of public welfare restructuring, collective bargaining partners have strengthened their self-regulatory role, especially concerning pensions and training (Trampusch, 2007b, 2009). Although collectively negotiated benefits cannot replace public schemes, they may complement state provisions. The range, extent and level of benefits coverage, obligations and financing mechanisms are relevant features of collective agreements (Trampusch, 2007a). Similarly, Johnston et al. (2011) argue that welfare benefits defined through collective bargaining can be arranged both in countries accustomed to dialogue and in more confrontational contexts.

Italian bipartite experiences could thus be seen as examples of sectoral or territorial partnership in a limitedly institutionalised industrial relations system, with informal and scattered experiences of decentralised micro-corporatism (Bagnasco, 1988; Lai, 2006; Regini, 1995). Favourable local conditions – like low unrest and relatively high union density – may support the development of bilateral cooperation, though within a heterogeneous economic, political and social background (Pichierri, 2007; Trigilia, 1985). The bilateral bodies are considered as instruments of labour market stabilisation and workers’

protection in times of global societal, technological and economic changes (Tiraboschi, 2012), and can be seen as a form of territorial neocorporatism (Schmitter and Lanzalaco, 1988), since they are structured in a multi-level way, at national, regional and provincial level. It has been argued that such bodies are rather specific, because of the unstable dialogue between Italian social partners at national level and the limited legislation on trade unions (Negrelli and Pulignano, 2010; Tiraboschi, 2013). The bilateral bodies act autonomously, complying with the rules set by the social partners and by law.

According to Perulli and Sabel (1997: 264–267) there are three possible descriptive models:

1. *The bodies as expression of social partner associations*: this refers to the origins of these actors;
2. *The bodies as service providers*: the bodies are seen as competitors of other players in vocational training, credit to firms, quality certification and further activities;
3. *The bodies as information brokers*: because of their composition and their strategic role, they can collect and disclose updated information.

The Italian experience is interesting from the viewpoints of welfare and collective bargaining development. The research questions are whether bilateral bodies and funds can be an evolution of social welfare in Italy, and how they relate with the system of industrial relations, given their contractual origin. Through analysis of the literature, national reports on second welfare and bilateralism, and primary documentation offered by bilateral bodies and funds through their publications and websites, about 80 bodies and funds were examined for the research. To set the Italian case in perspective, relevant experiences of bilateral arrangements in other European countries are illustrated. The final section discusses some problematic aspects.

## **Bilateral bodies in Italy**

Bilateral (or bipartite) bodies were originally established in the construction sector in 1919, in order to guarantee some provisions of the sectoral collective agreement. Initially, the *casse edili* (construction workers' security funds) were used to mutualise vacations and seniority bonuses. Later, they also offered supplementary welfare services, like scholarships and summer holidays for children. Basically, by signing the collective agreement (at national or decentralised level), trade unions and employers' organisations can decide to establish a body, ruled by a bilateral committee, and define its functions. These include employment support, vocational training, anti-discriminatory provisions, pension and training funds management, safety rules implementation, labour contracts application and the certification of fiscal contributions. Agreements can be sectoral or intersectoral, and also regional or local (at firm level). Since the 1980s, bilateralism has mostly expanded in the crafts industry (De Lucia and Ciuffini, 2003). Here the system of bilateral bodies intersects with many productive sectors, from manufacturing (e.g. clothing and textiles) to creative products (like gold- and silversmiths, ceramic and glassware) and services (from beauty treatments to mechanics and installations) (De Lucia and

Ciuffini, 2003: 5). According to the national register of firms, updated by the Chambers of Commerce ([www.unioncamere.it](http://www.unioncamere.it)), there were 1,342,389 crafts businesses and 2,823,775 employees in 2016 ([www.confartigianato.it](http://www.confartigianato.it)). In this sector, the prolonged instability of collective bargaining (which implied a limited recognition of workers' rights and the impossibility for small businesses to comply with legal terms conceived for large industrial companies) led to an agreement in 1983, which first established bilateral bodies at territorial level. They were financed with a sum – equal to two working hours per worker, with a minimum of 16 hours' pay per year – to be used for welfare provisions (illness, maternity and accident allowances, professional and managerial training, crisis management), in agreement with the local public authorities. Between 1987 and 1988 two further agreements improved the system, which operated at regional level. Employers, whose enrolment in the body was voluntary, paid a contribution (a 10 hours' sum per worker per year) to a regional fund for income support in case of sectoral crisis. Eighty per cent of such resources would support workers' income during production blocks (for natural disasters, power supply blackouts, problems with raw materials stocks), while 20% had to be earmarked for the businesses, in order to reorganise production and technology or get reimbursement for internal training courses.

In 1992 the system was improved again by including the double level (national and regional). The income support fund, a special fund for trade union representation and the subsequent vocational training funds were established on a regional basis. Businesses were then obliged to join the bodies in order to get access to these provisions and keep fiscal incentives and tax relief, while joining for the mutualisation of illness, maternity and insurance against work accidents remained optional. In 1994 environmental and safety problems were also considered, with the opening of a new specific fund. The 1993 and 1996 national tripartite pacts recognised the role of bilateral bodies in vocational training policies (Tiraboschi, 2012: 444).

The protection system for the crafts industry is based on mutual assistance (De Lucia and Ciuffini, 2003: 14). Employers pay a sum into their respective regional fund for professional training and for the income support of workers affected by a temporary reduction of productive activity. The body then adds a supplement to the unemployment subsidy up to 80–90% of the wages, for an average length of three months per year. In case of shortened working hours, with solidarity contracts, the body pays out a sum, equivalent to 50% of the public subsidy, up to 75% of the wage loss. In case of natural disasters, the body contributes up to 80% of the workers' pay in absence of specific public provisions, and supportive measures for firms.

The system of bilateral bodies in crafts is made up of 21 regional bodies and one national coordinating organisation called EBNA (*Ente bilaterale nazionale artigianato*, the national bilateral body for handicrafts). The EBNA combines the funds established by collective bargaining and is financed by a contribution of regional bodies equivalent to 1% of the money raised for income support. In 2005 legal norms stated that, for temporarily dismissed workers, the unemployment subsidy would be conceded at favourable terms if a bilateral body paid a supplementary sum equal to 20% of the benefit or, alternatively, offered 120 hours of vocational training (Varesi, 2011: 69). According to the 2010 interconfederal agreement, bilateral dispositions cover all crafts businesses (whether or not they belong to signatory employers' associations), apart from the construction and automotive

transport sectors, which have separate systems. The crafts industry system requires an employer contribution of €125 per employee per year, which can be divided into 12 parts (€10.42 each), reduced to €5.21 for part-time employees working up to 20 hours per week. Employers who do not join the bodies must pay an extra amount to their full-time employees (€25 pre-tax, for 13 monthly payments). This confirms that the provisions by bilateral bodies complete welfare clauses of collective agreements, but it also highlights that they are considered as employees' rights. In 2010 the Ministry of Labour specified that membership in the bodies is not mandatory, but workers of both signatories and non-signatories of the collective agreement establishing a body should enjoy the same conditions (Tiraboschi, 2012: 426). Hence, in the case an agreement defines a benefit provided by the bodies as a contractual right, employers should either join the bilateral body, pay a sum according to the terms of the agreement, or supply an equivalent benefit.

Bilateral bodies spread quickly at regional level, particularly for vocational training (Napoli, 2003: 239). In late 1995, in the Emilia-Romagna region they were 66, with financial resources of approximately €115m (Perulli and Catino, 1997: 228). Apart from yearly dues mostly paid by firms according to the number of employees, the bodies also control other resources (union dues, unemployment and training funding, vacation wages). Therefore, they are financially independent and entitled to tax incentives and contribution relief (Tiraboschi, 2013). These sums are channelled into the bilateral funds, whose management is the bodies' primary responsibility. The bodies are also well informed about the local economic situation and can play a very effective role in job placement (Perulli and Catino, 1997: 236). As preconditions, the bodies must be financially sound and with a solid organisation (according to decree laws 469/1997 and 276/2003), and must be authorised by the Ministry of Labour or by the regional authorities. The placement activity has not been intense so far, because social partner organisations have different views about it and local agreements can vary a lot. Until 2011 bilateral bodies did not even address the question of labour demand/offer (Varesi, 2011: 96). A 2016 interconfederal agreement between the social partners stated the need for a reorganisational process aimed at cutting bureaucratic costs and strengthening the EBNA control over the regional bodies' balance sheets (Razetti and Tomatis, 2017: 124).

Bilateral bodies are present in several sectors (food, metalworking, banking and insurance, aviation, wood and furniture, construction, graphics, textiles and shoemaking, agriculture, railways, leather production, fisheries, paper, electricity and public transport, private security and personal services, cleaning, audiovisual activities, the HORECA sector [food and catering] and, of course, crafts). A governmental register keeps track of all the bodies. Beyond the sheer number of affiliates to signatory parties, they deal with collective interests. For this reason, legal norms have been enacted to support the bodies and funds, e.g. in the construction and crafts sector, regarding vocational training and the fight against undeclared work (Leonardi, 2004: 450).

The bodies may have an internal structure, with ordinary and extraordinary general meetings, a board of directors or management, and an audit committee (Tiraboschi, 2012: 445). The term of office is generally three years and renewable. The basic principle is joint representation: the chairperson is normally appointed by the employers' association, while the deputy is appointed by the unions, with a possible rotation. Usually, unanimity prevails in internal decision-making, to stress their problem-solving attitude (De

Lucia and Ciuffini, 2004). They can be of several types (e.g. labour market observatories, equal opportunities committees, bilateral bodies with autonomous juridical personality or without formal recognition).

In the construction sector, a 1959 act obliged businesses to pay vacation and public holiday wages, including Christmas benefits, into the *casse edili* (Bavaro, 2011: 43). Since 1996, the *casse edili* have also verified the fiscal conformity of construction companies by issuing a specific document, called DURC (*documento unico di regolarità contributiva*), the single declaration of fiscal conformity. This obligation was extended to the bodies of other sectors in 2007, as part of a state-required monitoring activity to fight tax evasion and undeclared work. Generally, payments to the bodies are due according to the collective agreements, which indicate the services offered.

## The bilateral bodies by sector

Focusing on specific sectors, in the *construction sector* bilateral cooperation has helped to implement legal norms and avoid social dumping. The *casse edili* still offer training and schooling activities, prevention and safety initiatives, and supplementary social security. All bodies should use the same basic balance sheets and respect similar rules, in order to ensure uniformity and transparency (Cimaglia and Aurilio, 2011). More recently, the economic crisis has encouraged merging processes among the *casse edili* (Razetti and Tomatis, 2017: 124).

In *agriculture*, bilateral bodies were rare until the end of the 1980s, mainly because the existing statutory national unemployment subsidy for agriculture was deemed sufficient. Currently, the system remains unstable and different conditions apply for blue- and white-collars. Bipartite bodies are mostly widespread among agricultural workers and flower growers, helping in case of accident, sickness, for vocational training and labour market monitoring (through joint observatories). There are also bodies for cooperatives and several funds for supplementary health provisions. Food and maritime fishing industries also have bilateral bodies. Their development has been conditioned by the evolution of sectoral bargaining, but in the late 1980s there was a renewed interest in agriculture for labour market analysis and employment promotion, particularly among the weakest labour force (women and immigrants). During the 1990s and the 2000s collective agreements gradually improved the bilateral system. After the 2010 agreement there were two main reference bodies: the national agricultural bilateral body (called EBAN, *Ente bilaterale nazionale per l'agricoltura*) and the *extra legem* (informal) provincial social security funds, occasionally substituted by territorial structures. The funding of the EBAN is a contribution by employers of €51.65 per year for each full-time worker and of €0.34 a day for each temporary worker. The funds should guarantee 80% of the minimum daily wages. Non-member employers must pay a further sum of €13 per month to employees; provincial agreements can supplement this sum according to local needs. Therefore, bipartite bodies' provisions are considered as guaranteed rights of employees, but remarkable differences persist among regions and provinces.

In the *tertiary sector*, bilateral bodies first appeared in the early 1990s. This macro-sector includes commerce, tourism and services. Two funds for supplementary pensions and permanent training were established by law. By collective agreement, there are about

100 territorial bilateral bodies, a national body for the tertiary sector (the EBINTER, *Ente bilaterale nazionale terziario*), a supplementary health fund, a national health assistance body for white-collar cadres and a training institute. In 1999 the contribution by employers was declared compulsory (or to be substituted by an extra 0.10% of wages offered to each employee). In 2008, payment to the health fund was declared compulsory also for employers not applying the collective agreement. Since 2009, a joint committee for transparency has to check all the financial documents, and the EBINTER must receive the balance sheets of the territorial bodies.

In *banking and insurance*, a bilateral system was necessary after the big liberalisation wave in the 1990s (which brought many redundancies), since the sector had no social shock absorbers. A fund for supplementary health assistance was established in 1992. In 1998 a fund for income and employment support was opened at the INPS (*Istituto nazionale per la previdenza sociale*, the national social security institute), with a body for vocational and permanent training. The income support is directed towards dismissed employees looking for outplacement or requalification, and intervenes also in case of working time cuts. Contributions to the fund vary, but are mostly paid by employers. Sectoral changes are researched and monitored by a joint national observatory and a national committee for equal opportunities.

## The bilateral funds

Initially, these funds were conceived as substitutes for the most important social shock absorber, the CIG (*cassa integrazione guadagni*, the wage guarantee fund), which operates mainly in medium-to-large industrial firms. Small firms had to develop alternative forms of income support for critical times. Currently, these include financial assistance to employees in case of sickness or accidents. Firms may receive financial support in case of damages or to cover some costs, e.g. for training courses and initiatives on health and safety at work. Trade union representation is also supported locally.

Generally, interprofessional training funds are set according to macro-sectors (industry, tertiary, crafts, agriculture) regulated by interconfederal collective bargaining, with a regional or territorial structure, and are financed by employers with a contribution of 0.30% of the wages per worker, originally fixed by Act 845/1978 and subsequently revised (Bavaro, 2011: 49). According to the INAPP (2017: 99) the INPS has transferred about €460m per year to the interprofessional funds since 2004. Most resources were used to co-finance training measures with the European Social Fund through the regional public administrations. Moreover, the 2009 pact between the government and the regional authorities for the reorganisation of the CIG enabled the use of EU funds to support workers' income and training programmes in companies hit by recession (Pedersini and Regini, 2013).

Act 388/2000 promoted the constitution of interprofessional training funds by the social partners' organisations, to manage the training contributions given by firms. If employers choose to join the intersectoral funds, they must ask the INPS to transfer the 0.3% levy to the chosen fund. At any time, employers can join one of the authorised funds and also support another one with 70% of the sums paid in the last three years, minus the money already used for their training plans (devised at firm, territorial, sectoral level or even individually, especially in times of crisis).

The funds are established by the most representative social partners' organisations through an interconfederal agreement defining the purposes and the statutes, and are authorised by the Ministry of Labour. Then, the INPS makes the due transfers to them (Varesi, 2011: 78). Their management is bipartite; specific committees evaluate the training projects, usually submitted by the local branches of trade unions and employers' organisations. Those approved are financed according to the fund board's decisions; the Ministry of Labour controls the management and can suspend their activity in case of misconduct. The ministry also runs an observatory on permanent training to monitor the funds' initiatives and to verify labour policies.

In the case of pensions, supplementary funds (which integrate the pensions provided by the INPS) are regulated by collective bargaining, and workers may choose to join or not. Since a percentage of employers' contributions to the bipartite bodies goes to the funds, this value can change among the sectors. Consequently, financial interventions by the bodies may differ, depending on the national collective contracts and their clauses (Leonardi, 2004: 454). The funds have either regional branches, through the bodies active at territorial level, or are managed by national delegates. Generally, membership is higher in northern regions, particularly in the construction sector and in crafts.

Following the 2009 interconfederal framework agreement, several sectoral contracts have included the establishment of bilateral funds. In the metalworking sector, an income support fund for working time cuts or sectoral difficulties started in 2012, with voluntary subscriptions by the employees (€1 per month since January 2012) and financing by the employers (€2 per month per worker since January 2011).<sup>2</sup> In the crafts sector, the income support function was originally stated by law in 1993 and 1996 for firms not covered by the CIG and in case of restructuring.<sup>3</sup> The decree law 276/2003 and the Act 2/2009 recognised the right to income support for temporary workers, in firms applying the related collective agreement and paying the contributions.

Social partners can sign agreements with the regional and provincial authorities dealing with training and labour market issues. The state funding of training activities derives from Act 236/1993, affirming that the Ministry of Labour and the local authorities can contribute to the financing of permanent training activities. These resources are divided among the regions, which organise public procurements for their attribution, and can also be given to the above-mentioned interprofessional funds. This is justified by arguments related to 'horizontal subsidiarity' and to the 'public interest functions' of the social partners, though state intervention casts doubts on the autonomy of funds (and of bilateral bodies). Instead, the bilateral funds established by law, i.e. Act 30/2003 and the following decree law 276/2003, are financed compulsorily by temporary work agencies. They must promote professional qualification courses and social security provisions for temporary workers, plus income support and placement for disadvantaged workers, with the purpose of avoiding undeclared work. The financing is a contribution by employers of 4% of workers' pay. These funds must be established by signatory social partner organisations of the national collective agreement for temporary work. In 2015, there were over 400 bilateral funds (Pavolini et al., 2016). In 2016, 21 interprofessional funds (three of them were closed after inspection by the Ministry of Labour) covered 911,286 firms and about 10,300,000 employees (INAPP, 2017).



The relationships (often rather unstable) with the regional authorities, and – above all – the contrast between the ‘private’ nature of the funds, as established through collective bargaining, and the ‘public’ use of the employers’ contributions, are considerably problematic. In 2005 the Constitutional Court identified the 0.30% contributions as ‘security provisions’, referring to previously existing rules (i.e. the 1978 Act and its amendments). Labour law experts also tend to share this position since it places funds under ministerial surveillance. Between 2008 and 2010, legal norms were adopted to foster cooperation between the state and the regional authorities to fight the crisis and support income, with the involvement of bilateral structures. However, expanding the functions of bilateral funds entails increasing the contributions – and not all employers may agree, highlighting the issue of financial management.

Martinengo (2006: 250) reported the publication of the financial plan of the craft sector’s bilateral fund (*Fondartigianato*), for the years 2004/2005, as approved by the Ministry of Labour, on the website [www.fondartigianato.it](http://www.fondartigianato.it). Out of a total expenditure of €14,138,910 for vocational training (the fund’s main activity), only €3,538,910 was to the benefit of the workers involved. Apparently, most expenses covered organisational costs, which are often disproportionately high in comparison to the amount of membership fees (Sandulli et al., 2015). However, each fund is supposed to place its resources into separately managed accounts, one for the running of the fund itself and one for the financing of projects. Another vocational training fund in the tertiary sector, *For.Te* (*Fondo paritetico per la formazione continua nel settore terziario*), reported training funds for an amount of €19m, plus €3m for individual training plans. However, financial entries amounted to more than €40m for the two years. These data suggest a more cautious approach to the activity of the funds and the devolution of public resources to them. Efficient financial management, qualified personnel and good coordination among bodies and funds are necessary to hold them accountable for collective purposes (De Santis, 2011; Razetti and Tomatis, 2017).

## A comparative view

Considering other national experiences of bilateralism can be useful to check analogies and differences, also in relation to recent developments related to the crisis. According to Tiraboschi (2013: 114), Italian bilateralism possesses some specific traits concerning legal provisions and social partners’ involvement. For example, it differs from the German co-management of firms and also from the Ghent system, where the unions are officially recognised in their welfare-managing function, because the Italian bodies’ functions lie mainly in collective bargaining. Italian bilateralism is also different from the French *paritarisme*, which consists of the social partners’ inclusion in the boards of the social security funds (*caisses*). In fact, *paritarisme* originates from state intervention, in order to allow the social partners to take part in the economic and social life within an institutional framework. There is a distinction between ‘pure bilateralism’ (as self-regulation of the social partners for training, supplementary pensions and unemployment insurances) and ‘joint administration’ of public social security, regulated by law and influenced by governmental representatives. The *paritarisme* system is found also in training through regional funds, created in 1983 and recognised by the state. They collect

contributions from the businesses and finance training courses for employees, with a national joint coordination committee. The OPCAs (*organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés*) are the bilateral structures authorised by the state to obtain and manage the employers' contributions for vocational training at sectoral level. The great number of national contracts and the territorial heterogeneity hinder the consolidation of the system. A 2014 law and a subsequent 2015 decree established a new fund to support bipartite initiatives in public policy (Aumayr-Pintar, 2015). Another expression of *paritarisme* is offered by the *conseils de prud'hommes*, which deliberate on individual labour conflicts (Davidsson and Emmenegger, 2013). In the construction sector, joint experiences are also found in the Netherlands, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Spain and Austria, besides France (Valcavi, 2011: 333–337). In Spain, social partners are involved in health, safety and social policy forums, though with a mainly consultative role (Martínez-Lucio, 1998; Schaapman and Van het Kaar, 2007: 20).

Alacevich (2004: 101–102) argues that social partners' participation in labour policy comes about not only through national historical developments and traditions, but also because of the European Employment Strategy. This may lead either to more centralised arrangements (like in Ireland, France and Portugal) or to stricter bilateral solutions (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden), with variations in specific circumstances.

According to De Lucia and Ciuffini (2004: 137), Italian bipartite bodies represent the only European model of autonomous intervention providing income support. However, Gerstenberger (2009) reports two similar experiences. The first is that of the Swedish Council for Redundancy Support and Advice (the TRR, *Trygghetsrådet*). This is one of the 14 employment security councils involved in the outplacement of employees who lost their jobs because of restructuring. A key success factor of the councils is their joint management by trade unions and employers' organisations, with a high level of autonomy from governmental intervention. The councils are financed by the member firms of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises through a levy of 0.3% on payroll expenditure, while non-members pay 0.7% if they want to be affiliated. The support offered by the councils, in addition to state services, is both dedicated to firms (advice and assistance) and to employees (outplacement, training grants, supplementary redundancy pay). The second example is that of Belgian firm-level reconversion units, which also help redundant workers to find new jobs, but are actually tripartite. The public employment service runs them with the social partners and the financing is normally given by regional governments, sometimes with a contribution from the firms involved and from European Union funds.

In times of crisis, social partners participate increasingly in the management of unemployment benefits and/or pension systems (Broughton, 2013). There are four governance models which depend on country-specific historical traditions of sharing public space, and on the consequent degree of social partner influence on policy outcomes (Ebbinghaus, 2010). These models can be found even in the same country in different policy areas and time periods. They are *institutionalised concertation* (by the state with the social partners), *voluntary social concertation* (tripartite), *delegated self-administration* (to an independent agency, more or less centralised, bipartite or tripartite, with or without minority veto, and with/without representatives of the social

partners) and finally *autonomous self-regulation* (with a voluntary agreement between the social partners, without state interference). As also remarked by Broughton (2013: 233), unemployment benefit systems differ according to the history and culture of industrial relations, the nature of social dialogue and tripartism, and the role of the state. Moreover, the formal involvement of the social partners does not always correspond to effective participation.

Austria and Finland show a consolidated tripartite cooperation, while Belgium, the Netherlands and France are more bipartite-oriented (Schaapman and Van het Kaar, 2007).<sup>4</sup> In the Ghent system trade unions run government-subsidised unemployment insurance funds (in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and partly Belgium, where the government also plays a role in benefits distribution), and workers usually need to be union members to obtain assistance. In the Nordic countries, Belgium and the Netherlands, social partners also participate in rule-making and legislation (Schaapman and Van het Kaar, 2007: 12–14). Regarding the unemployment benefit regimes, the influence of social partners remains strong in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy and Luxembourg, sometimes – as in Germany – through tripartite structures. However, there are frequent differences concerning the funding sources, by the social partners, the state or through taxation (Regalia and Gasparri, 2012).

Turning to the participation in the boards of pension funds and social security, in France and Sweden social partners are involved in occupational pension schemes, supplementing state provisions. Occupational schemes can be set by collective agreement or by individual employers, and can be self-managed by the social partners, as in Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway. They can be either sectoral or cross-sectoral (Duchemin and Weber, 2013: 10). In Norway, a reform of occupational schemes for early retirement was implemented by social partners via cross-sectoral collective bargaining (Duchemin and Weber, 2013: 27). In France and Italy social partners are also involved in savings schemes contributing to pension funds. A good level of competence is needed for the success of such participation (Broughton, 2013: 243). In perspective, due to both the financial crisis and demographic trends, the increasing privatisation of public welfare benefits will probably demand further regulation and the definition of an effective strategy by social partners, in order to keep an influence on decision-making. This will acquire even more importance since supplementary pension schemes often involve investments in the financial markets, with a certain degree of risk (Ebbinghaus and Wiß, 2011). In the countries of the Ghent system, the unions' involvement in unemployment insurance funds, in cooperation and with the supervision of national control boards, already requires a properly trained staff and organisational resources.<sup>5</sup> While in Belgium, Finland and Denmark this determines the presence of social partners in specialised councils and committees, in Sweden a service agency for the management and coordination of funds (the SO, *Arbetslösets kassornas Samarbetsorganisation*, unemployment insurance union) was established (Regalia and Gasparri, 2012: 44).

Bilateralism in European countries can be autonomous or absorbed into tripartite or state-regulated arrangements (Valcavi, 2011). Consequently, it is not easy to find analogies among the national systems. However, the mitigating effects of bilateralism on the impact of the crisis has been duly acknowledged, e.g. in Germany and Spain, with a good potential for the future (Sandulli et al., 2015: 303, 319–320).

## An assessment

After the labour market reform implemented through Act 30/2003, an enhanced role was defined for bilateral bodies in Italy. Settling their functions by law made some labour law experts argue that a formal definition of bilateral bodies was incompatible with their negotiated origin; others have maintained that the reform established an ‘official’ and rigid role of the bodies (Mariucci, 2003). An alternative view stressed that the bodies had already performed public functions before 2003, with a close connection between the political and administrative system and the member associations (especially the unions) (Reginelli, 2006; Vallebona, 2006). A related issue regards the relationships within bipartite bodies, since trade unions and employers’ associations already offer a good number of services to their members. A cooperation or partnership between bodies and associations could be useful, though – up to now – fund management has remained within the bodies, without a real overlap of functions. By financing the organisational structure of the bodies, the funds are a resource for representative organisations. Since the bodies are non-profit, financial information should be made public. They are supposed to engage in activities concerning the collective interest, therefore they should be more transparent about their finances (particularly when these are transferred by public institutions).

In order to define a possible typology of bilateral bodies and funds, four basic factors should be considered. The first is the *range of functions* they perform: this seems to be a crucial element according to experts and to the existing literature, including the above-mentioned Perulli and Sabel’s proposal. The second point regards the *sectors of activity*: up to now bilateral bodies have been typically working in specific sectors, but – should they expand further – their role in welfare provision could be consolidated. The third variable is *territorial coverage*. Their national, regional or provincial establishment is strategic for benefit provision. The fourth element (only for the funds) is the *contractual or law-related origin*. This could influence their action (Liso, 2013).

The evolution of the bodies is difficult to foresee. Given their unbalanced development among sectors and regions, their activity is not always easy, even with supporting laws, and the level of fragmentation is high (Razetti and Tomatis, 2017: 121). Act 30/2003 has given clearer rules regarding subscription and payment of contributions. More recently, agreements have been signed by social partners in the craft sector and in banking to set up bilateral solidarity funds and provide income support when necessary (Rustico, 2014). In the craft sector, a fund called FSBA (*Fondo di solidarietà bilaterale per l’artigianato*, bilateral solidarity fund for crafts) should cover all workers in businesses regulated by sectoral agreements, including those with up to 15 employees. However, it only started in 2016 and, though similar funds had to be established also in other sectors by Act 92/2012, implementation has been partial up to now. Solidarity funds should pay 20% of the unemployment subsidy, while the Ministries of Labour and of Economy should complete the payment (Razetti, 2015). A system of these funds should be built to protect workers in sectors not covered by the CIG and subject to working time cuts. With the agreement of the most nationally representative social partners’ organisations, solidarity funds should be established by decree of the Minister of Labour, in agreement with the Minister of Economy, and managed by the INPS for income support and professional training purposes. Act 92/2012 also included the co-financing of

such initiatives by other national funds and/or EU structural funds, with a reorganisation of previously existing bilateral and interprofessional funds. This was an attempt to institutionalise the funds for workers' protection, adding ministerial representatives to the management boards. Precise requirements were defined for fund management, auditing and accountability (e.g. the incompatibility of trade union functions with management roles and the ban on payments or reimbursements for fund administrators). The decree law 148/2015 lowered the threshold for the establishment of funds (they now have to cover firms with more than five employees), while crafts and temporary work agencies were allowed to keep their specific funds.

The visibility of bilateralism has increased since the social pacts of 1992 and 1993, whose clauses were taken into consideration in the most important following agreements and labour laws (Vv Aa, 2012: 252). This institutional attention makes the 'spontaneous and negotiated' origin of bilateral bodies less plausible than is usually proclaimed. Moreover, the focus on bilateral bodies is motivated by the coordination problems of Italian policy-making. Territorial bargaining may be variously effective, but since national policy regulation is weak, the emphasis is on local experiences. In labour policy particularly, while social shock absorbers are dealt with at the national level, active labour policy and vocational training are monitored at the regional and sub-regional levels, with uneven policy implementation. Interaction and the adoption of common practices and rules – especially concerning funding – are still problematic, because of both the heterogeneity of local demands and the simultaneous presence of several bilateral bodies in the same areas, due to the number of collective agreements signed by the various employers' organisations (Bellardi, 2011). Given the basic importance of collective bargaining for the development of bilateral arrangements, the actual coverage should be considered with more attention, since decentralised bargaining mostly regards large firms, rather than SMEs. To prevent the weakening of national bargaining and of the social partners' role, it would be important to involve SMEs and cooperatives further and avoid the duplication of costs for firms (Bellardi, 2014).

Overall, bipartite bodies and funds can be considered as special elements of Italian industrial relations. At the same time, in spite of official and legislative attempts to institutionalise their action, they can only perform a complementary role in welfare provision, due to their uneven territorial and sectoral coverage.

## Conclusions

According to the European Foundation (2012), at various levels and with national differences, social partners have undoubtedly been involved in decision-making and implementation of anti-crisis measures, either by agreements or through collective bargaining. Social dialogue, partnership and strategic collaboration between social partners' organisations and the governments are crucial for policy effectiveness and transformation processes (Torres, 2013: 172). Up to the May 2013 agreement on representativeness, signed by *Confindustria* and the main trade union confederations, there was no direct and general effect of collective agreements in Italy. This left some uncertainty about the availability of the bilateral bodies' services to the employees of non-signatory employers. In addition, Act 30/2003 and the subsequent decree law 276/2003 only referred to

‘comparatively most representative’ associations as signatory parties. In theory, after the 2011 and the 2013 agreements and the following 2014 consolidated act on representativeness, this problem should be solved, but the *erga omnes* extension is not automatic and the implementation of the rules on representativeness is still lacking (D’Amuri and Nizzi, 2017; Leonardi et al., 2018). At the same time, the involvement of bilateral bodies in welfare supply could be in line with the outsourcing of such functions from the state to ‘private’ actors (both employers’ associations and trade unions are voluntary organisations regulated by private law in Italy). Their role as ‘private interest governments’ is however disputed, since the attempt to give them public functions differs from previous experiences of local neocorporatism in Italy, where public policy delegation was absent (Perulli and Catino, 1997: 240). Moreover, Streeck and Schmitter (1985) warned that private interest governments can occur only in selected sectors, industries and policy areas. The traditional role of trade unions in collective bargaining may not necessarily be undermined (Napoli, 2005). Rather, an increase in the functions of bilateral bodies would require a stronger organisational ability and a managerial approach within the social partners’ organisations and the bodies, to play a more strategic role (Nogler, 2014a: 19).

After Act 30/2003 the debate on the bodies weakened in the following years, probably because differences among the various types of bilateral bodies hindered big changes (Martinengo, 2006). Nevertheless, the tension between the prerogatives of social partners’ organisations and the role of bilateral bodies could be overcome also as a consequence of the 2013 agreement, the 2014 consolidated act, and the 2016 interconfederal agreement. Accordingly, bargaining partners must enjoy a representativeness of at least 5% of workers in their sector. This value should be the average between the percentage of certified union membership subscriptions and the percentage of votes received at the election of firm-level representative trade union bodies, the RSU (*Rappresentanze sindacali unitarie*). A national collective agreement is valid if approved by trade unions representing at least 50%+1 of the relevant workforce, which should be previously consulted. This solution should clarify also the representativeness of bilateral bodies in each sector. However, implementation is not binding for non-signatory organisations, and the missing application of the rules on representativeness implies legitimacy problems (Leonardi et al., 2018). This regards especially SMEs and the sectors where bilateral bodies are most widespread, whose employers’ organisations did not sign the 2013 agreement (Pelos, 2013). Moreover, enrolment in the bodies has become necessary in some cases, like the construction sector, where employers have to join the *casse edili* to get the tax assessment – the DURC – required for public procurement (Cester, 2003: 213). And support measures for workers are possible if employers pay their dues to the bodies, making them less and less ‘voluntary’ (Scarponi, 2003). Even if they are established bilaterally according to private law, their provisions are necessary and hardly optional in critical times. The implementation of Act 92/2012 should help to improve the financial management and solve potential conflicts of interest.

However, it is also too soon to evaluate the effects of Act 92 and decree law 148. On the former, law experts have favourably judged the requirements concerning the obligation to keep fund accounts in order, but underlined the persisting sectoral fragmentation of income support, since the CIG has not been extended (Faioli, 2015; Giubboni, 2014). Furthermore, the public interest role attributed to the funds has been criticised, because

of the continuing diversity between them and at territorial level (Cascino et al., 2016; Liso, 2013). Particularly in the case of pensions, diverging conditions mean that funds can only partly work alongside public welfare (Cascino et al., 2016; Giubboni, 2014). Possible disputes between the initiatives of the social partners and the competences of public authorities in policies and/or jurisdiction should be avoided (Johnston et al., 2011: 360). Following Trampusch (2007a), the risks of inequality and disadvantages among sectors could be corrected by controlling the bodies' and funds' activities and checking achievements and possible interdependencies, with close attention to financial sustainability (Pavolini et al., 2016: 61). Their activities should be better connected with national public policies. Moreover, the bodies' initiatives are more developed and incisive in areas where employers' associations or groups of businesses cooperate for these purposes. Especially in southern Italy, this happens far more rarely and there is the risk of widening regional discrepancies, given the redistributive importance of occupational welfare (Natali and Pavolini, 2017; Nogler, 2014a: 15). A systematic data collection on the activities and services provided by the bodies is still not available (Razetti and Tomatis, 2017: 125). External monitoring of the bodies and especially the funds should be more open to public scrutiny; the financial transfers from the INPS should be disclosed, preventing fragmentation and misuse of resources, and enhancing accountability (Sandulli et al., 2015: 255).

The ILO and the World Bank (2012: 45) suggested that social dialogue should be encouraged by governments to build trust and consensus on recovery policies and shock adjustments, also through an increase in collective bargaining coordination. The bilateral approach is related to a collaborative industrial relations model, bound to promote territorial development and regular employment (Tiraboschi, 2013). According to Pavolini et al. (2016: 52), in times of sovereign debt crisis and social spending cuts, bilateralism and occupational welfare are pushed as possible 'exit strategies'. They can be examples of negotiated responses to the economic crisis and its uncertainties (Glassner et al., 2011: 305). By reducing the level of conflict and promoting social cohesion, bilateral provisions protect remuneration and social security, and can also be useful to implement the terms negotiated by collective bargaining (Tiraboschi, 2013). At the same time, in agreements signed at all levels, welfare issues are becoming more and more important (Regalia and Regini, 2018: 76). It remains to be seen whether the bilateral bodies will grow and be able to play a more incisive role in the near future.

## **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## **Funding**

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## **ORCID iD**

Alessia Vatta  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4174-4204>

## Notes

1. In Italy, exemptions from sectoral agreements are possible following both Act 148/2011, which stated that decentralised ‘proximity agreements’ can disregard collective agreements and legislative provisions, and the interconfederal agreement on productivity (November 2012), which promoted ‘full autonomy’ for second-level agreements on topics like working time, work organisation, competitiveness and workers’ participation (Pedersini, 2012; Pedersini and Regini, 2013). In May 2018, the decentralised agreements deposited at the Ministry of Labour numbered 32,542 ([www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it)).
2. Some cases of firm-level bilateral welfare agreements (e.g. in *Luxottica*, the eye-glasses firm) were also inspired by the same approach (Vv Aa, 2012).
3. A related case has been the telecommunications sector, where in 2000 the CIG was used for mobility procedures linked to the downsizing of the incumbent firm *Telecom Italia* (Kornelakis, 2016).
4. In the Netherlands, the most famous bipartite institution is probably the Foundation of Labour (*Stichting van de Arbeid*). Trampusch (2007a: 213) also mentions the sectoral funds (*CAO-fondsen*), established by collective bargaining and financed by employers and employees to provide several welfare benefits (e.g. child care, early retirement, training).
5. In Belgium, the unions receive an administration fee from the state for this function and manage the social security system with the employers (Reman, 2013; Vilrocx and Van Leemput, 1998: 332). Sectoral vocational training is also run in a bipartite way.

## References

- Alacevich F (2004) *Promuovere il dialogo sociale: le conseguenze dell'Europa sulla regolazione del lavoro*. Florence: Firenze University Press.
- Aumayr-Pintar C (2015) The future of social dialogue, tripartitism and bipartism: Collective employment relations – Q4 2014. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu/print/observatories/eurwork/articles/](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/print/observatories/eurwork/articles/) (accessed 25 May 2016).
- Bagnasco A (1988) *La costruzione sociale del mercato. Studi sullo sviluppo di piccola impresa in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Bavaro V (2011) Gli enti bilaterali nella legislazione italiana. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 33–64.
- Bellardi L (2011) Le istituzioni bilaterali tra legge e contrattazione collettiva: note di sintesi e prospettive. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 7–32.
- Bellardi L (2014) La recente riforma della struttura contrattuale: profili critici e incoerenze. *Giornale di diritto del lavoro e di relazioni industriali* 144(4): 739–752.
- Broughton A (2013) Social partner involvement in unemployment benefit and pensions systems in the EU. In: European Commission, *Industrial Relations in Europe 2012*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, pp. 229–257.
- Broughton A and Welz C (2013) *Impact of the Crisis on Industrial Relations*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu) (accessed 14 May 2018).
- Cascino M, Lai M and Trovò A (2016) Bilateralità e previdenza complementare. *Nuove Tutele* 5(2): 71–102.
- Cazes S, Garnero A and Martin S (2017) The state of trade unions, employer organisations and collective bargaining in OECD countries. VOX CEPR Policy Portal. Available at: <https://voxeu.org> (accessed 9 October 2018).



- Cester C (2003) Il futuro degli enti bilaterali: collaborazione e antagonismo alla prova del mercato del lavoro. *Lavoro e Diritto* 27(2): 211–217.
- Cimaglia MC and Aurilio A (2011) I sistemi bilaterali di settore. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 97–246.
- Colombo S and Regalia I (2016) Changing joint regulation and labour market policy in Italy during the crisis: On the edge of a paradigm shift? *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 22(3): 295–309.
- D'Amuri F and Giorgiantonio C (2015) *The Institutional and Economic Limits to Bargaining Decentralization in Italy*. IZA Policy Paper No. 98.
- D'Amuri F and Nizzi R (2017) *I recenti sviluppi delle relazioni industriali in Italia*. Questioni di Economia e Finanza. Occasional Papers No. 416. Rome: Banca d'Italia.
- Davidsson JB and Emmenegger P (2013) Defending the organisation, not the members: Union and the reform of job security legislation in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research* 52(3): 339–363.
- De Lucia G and Ciuffini S (2003) Il sistema degli Enti Bilaterali nell'artigianato: un'esperienza italiana al servizio del dialogo sociale europeo. *Quaderni di Impresa Artigiana* 64: 5–25.
- De Lucia G and Ciuffini S (2004) The system of bilateral bodies in the artisan sector: The Italian experience in the context of European social dialogue. *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* 20(1): 133–145.
- De Santis G (2011) La bilateralità tra nuove sfide ed antichi bisogni. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 359–364.
- Demetriades S and Welz C (2012) *Role of Social Partners in Addressing the Global Economic Crisis*. Working Paper. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Duchemin C and Weber T (2013) *Social Partners' Involvement in Pension Reform in the EU*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Ebbinghaus B (2010) Reforming Bismarckian corporatism: The changing role of social partnership in continental Europe. In: Palier B (ed.) *A Goodbye to Bismarck? The Politics of Welfare Reforms in Continental Europe*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 255–278.
- Ebbinghaus B and Wiß T (2011) Taming pension fund capitalism in Europe: Collective and state regulation in times of crisis. *Transfer* 17(1): 15–28.
- Eurofound (2014) *Impact of the Crisis on Industrial Relations and Working Conditions in Europe*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- European Commission (2015) *Industrial Relations in Europe 2014*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2012) *Social Dialogue in Times of Global Economic Crisis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Faioli M (2015) Il sostegno al reddito attuato mediante fondi bilaterali di solidarietà. In: Faioli M and Raitano M (eds) *I fondi bilaterali di solidarietà nel Jobs Act. Problemi giuridici e analisi economica*. Working Paper No. 9. Rome: Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, pp. 7–35.
- Gerstenberger B (2009) Is this together? Social partners and restructuring. *Foundation Focus* No. 7 (July): 5.
- Giubboni S (2014) I fondi bilaterali di solidarietà nel prisma della riforma degli ammortizzatori sociali. *Giornale di diritto del lavoro e di relazioni industriali* 14(4): 715–726.
- Glassner V and Keune M (2010) *Negotiating the Crisis? Collective Bargaining in Europe during the Economic Downturn*. DIALOGUE Working Paper No. 10. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Glassner V and Keune M (2012) The crisis and social policy: The role of collective agreements. *International Labour Review* 151(4): 351–371.

- Glassner V, Keune M and Marginson P (2011) Collective bargaining in a time of crisis: Developments in the private sector in Europe. *Transfer* 17(3): 303–321.
- ILO (International Labour Office) and World Bank (2012). *ILO/WB Inventory of Policy Responses to the Financial and Economic Crisis*. Joint Synthesis Report. Geneva and Washington, DC: ILO and World Bank.
- INAPP (Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche) (2017) *XVII Rapporto sulla formazione continua. Annualità 2015–2016*. Rome: INAPP and Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.
- Johnston A, Kornelakis A and Rodriguez d'Acari C (2011) Social partners and the welfare state: Recalibration, privatization or collectivization of social risk? *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 17(4): 349–364.
- Kornelakis A (2016) Inclusion or dualization? The political economy of employment relations in Italian and Greek telecommunications. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 54(2): 385–408.
- Lai M (2006) Appunti sulla bilateralità. *Diritto delle relazioni industriali* 16(4): 1020–1042.
- Leonardi S (2004) Gli enti bilaterali tra autonomia e sostegno normativo. *Giornale di diritto del lavoro e di relazioni industriali* 103(3): 443–495.
- Leonardi S (2017) 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*. Brussels: ETUI, pp. 83–108.
- Leonardi S, Ambra MC and Ciarini A (2018) Italian collective bargaining at a turning point. In: Leonardi S and Pedersini R (eds) *Multi-employer Bargaining under Pressure: Decentralisation Trends in Five European Countries*. Brussels: ETUI, pp. 185–223.
- Liso F (2013) I fondi bilaterali alternativi. In: Ferraro G, Mazzotta O and Cinelli M (eds) *Il nuovo mercato del lavoro*. Turin: Giappichelli, pp. 521–528.
- Mariucci L (2003) Interrogativi sugli enti bilaterali. *Lavoro e Diritto* 17(2): 163–173.
- Martinengo G (2006) Gli enti bilaterali dopo il d.lgs. 276/2003. *Lavoro e Diritto* 20(2–3): 245–251.
- Martinez-Lucio M (1998) Spain: Regulating employment and social fragmentation. In: Ferner A and Hyman R (eds) *Changing Industrial Relations in Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 426–458.
- Napoli M (2003) Gli enti bilaterali nella prospettiva di riforma del mercato del lavoro. *Jus* 50(2): 235–245.
- Napoli M (2005) Riflessioni sul ruolo degli enti bilaterali nel decreto legislativo 10 settembre 2003, n. 276. *Jus* 52(1–2): 309–321.
- Natali D and Pavolini E (2017) Occupational welfare in Europe: Why we need to study it more than in the past in order to understand social inequalities. *LIS Newsletter* No. 1 (March).
- Negrelli S and Pulignano V (2010) The evolution of social pacts in Italy: Crisis or metamorphosis? In: Pochet P, Keune M and Natali D (eds) *After the Euro and Enlargement: Social Pacts in the EU*. Brussels: ETUI, pp. 137–160.
- Nogler L (2014a) Introduzione. Ma dove vanno gli enti bilaterali dell'artigianato? In: Nogler L (ed.) *Gli enti bilaterali dell'artigianato tra neo-centralismo ed esigenze di sviluppo*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 11–31.
- Pavolini E, Leonardi S, Raitano M and Arlotti M (2016) *Unemployment and Pensions Protection in Europe: The Changing Role of Social Partners*. PROWELFARE Country Report: Italy. OSE Paper Series, Research Paper No. 21. Brussels: European Social Observatory.
- Pedersini R (2012) Intersectoral agreement on representativeness heals rift. *EurWORK*, 8 January. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu) (accessed 13 January 2017).
- Pedersini R (2013) Italy: Impact of the crisis on industrial relations. *EurWORK*, 17 June. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu) (accessed 30 January 2017).
- Pedersini R (2018) Conclusions and outlook: More challenges and some opportunities for industrial relations in the European Union. In: Leonardi S and Pedersini R (eds) *Multi-employer*

- Bargaining under Pressure: Decentralisation Trends in Five European Countries*. Brussels: ETUI, pp. 291–298.
- Pedersini R and Regini M (2013) *Coping with the Crisis in Italy: Employment Relations and Social Dialogue amidst the Recession*. DIALOGUE Working Paper No. 50, Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Pelos F (2013) E venne l'accordo sulla rappresentanza e rappresentatività sindacali. *Nuovi Lavori* No. 112 (4 June).
- Perulli P and Catino M (1997) Le organizzazioni di rappresentanza imprenditoriale: verso uno sperimentalismo istituzionale. *Stato e Mercato* 50(2): 217–247.
- Perulli P and Sabel CF (1997) Rappresentanza del lavoro autonomo e coordinamento economico. Il caso degli enti bilaterali dell'artigianato. In: Bologna S and Fumagalli A (eds) *Il lavoro autonomo di seconda generazione. Scenari del postfordismo in Italia*. Milan: Feltrinelli, pp. 245–268.
- Pichierri A (2007) I sistemi socioeconomici locali. In: Regini M (ed.) *La sociologia economica contemporanea*. Rome and Bari: Laterza, pp. 106–130.
- Razetti F (2015) Bilateralità e welfare contrattuale: quale ruolo per i territori? In: Maino F and Ferrera M (eds) *Secondo rapporto sul secondo welfare in Italia 2015*. Turin: Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Luigi Einaudi, pp. 69–109.
- Razetti F and Tomatis F (2017) Bilateralità, settori e territori: diversi modelli di solidarietà a confronto. In: Maino F and Ferrera M (eds) *Terzo rapporto sul secondo welfare in Italia 2017*. Turin: Centro di Ricerca e Documentazione Luigi Einaudi, pp. 119–142.
- Regalia I and Gasparri S (2012) *Social Partners' Involvement in Unemployment Benefit Regimes in Europe*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- 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.
- Reginelli A (2006) Gli enti bilaterali nella riforma del mercato del lavoro: un primo bilancio. *Diritto delle Relazioni Industriali* 16(4): 1002–1020.
- Regini M (1995) La varietà italiana di capitalismo. Istituzioni sociali e struttura produttiva negli anni Ottanta. *Stato e Mercato* 43(1): 3–26.
- Reman P (2013) Questionnaire: Belgium – Social partners involvement in the reforms of pension systems. *Eironline*, 4 October. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1304032s/be1304031q.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1304032s/be1304031q.htm) (accessed 4 July 2014).
- Rustico L (2014) New bilateral fund to support craft sector workers. *Eironline*, 10 March. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/12/articles/it1312029i.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/12/articles/it1312029i.htm) (accessed 21 March 2014).
- Sandulli P, Faioli M, Bozzao P et al. (eds) (2015) *Indagine sulla bilateralità in Italia e in Francia, Germania, Spagna, Svezia*. Quaderni Fondazione G. Brodolini, No. 52.
- Scarponi S (2003) Gli enti bilaterali nel disegno di riforma e nuove questioni circa la funzione dei 'sindacati comparativamente più rappresentativi'. *Lavoro e Diritto* 17(2): 224–242.
- Schaapman M and Van het Kaar R (2007) Social partners and social security systems. *EurWORK*, 19 February. Available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu) (accessed 16 January 2017).
- Schelkle W (2011) Reconfiguring welfare states in the post-industrial age: What role for trade unions? *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 17(4): 301–314.
- Schmitter PC and Lanzalaco L (1988) L'organizzazione degli interessi imprenditoriali a livello regionale. *Stato e Mercato* 22(2): 63–96.
- Streeck W and Schmitter PC (1985) Community, market, state – and associations? The prospective contribution of interest governance to social order. *European Sociological Review* 1(2): 119–138.
- Svalund J (2015) Adjusting labour through crisis: A three industry comparison. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 36(1): 99–121.

- Tiraboschi M (2012) *Labour Law and Industrial Relations in Recessionary Times: The Italian Labour Relations in a Global Economy*. Modena: ADAPT University Press.
- Tiraboschi M (2013) Bilateralism and bilateral bodies: The new frontier of industrial relations in Italy. *Journal of International and Comparative Labour Studies* 2(1): 113–128.
- Torres R (2013) Introduction: European labour markets in economic crisis. *International Labour Review* 152(2): 167–173.
- Trampusch C (2007a) Industrial relations as a source of solidarity in times of welfare state retrenchment. *Journal of Social Policy* 36(2): 197–215.
- Trampusch C (2007b) Industrial relations as a source of social policy: A typology of the institutional conditions for industrial agreements on social benefits. *Social Policy & Administration* 41(3): 251–270.
- Trampusch C (2009) Collective agreements on pensions as a source of solidarity. *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare* 25(2): 99–107.
- Triglia C (1985) La regolazione localistica: economia e politica nelle aree di piccola impresa. *Stato e Mercato* 14(1): 181–226.
- Valcavi D (2011) Esperienze di bilateralità in alcuni paesi dell'Unione Europea. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 305–358.
- Vallebona A (2006) Gli enti bilaterali: un seme di speranza da salvaguardare. *Diritto delle Relazioni Industriali* 16(4): 1043–1051.
- Varesi P (2011) Bilateralità e politiche attive del lavoro. In: Bellardi L and De Santis G (eds) *La bilateralità fra tradizione e rinnovamento*. Milan: Franco Angeli, pp. 65–96.
- Vilroxx J and Van Leemput J (1998) *Belgium: The Great Transformation*. In: Ferner A and Hyman R (eds) *Changing Industrial Relations in Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 315–347.
- Vv Aa (2012) *Rapporto CESOS 2011*. Rome: CESOS (Centro di Studi Economici Sociali e Sindacali).

## Author biography

Alessia Vatta is assistant professor at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Trieste. Her research interests include political concertation, neocorporatism, business organisations and lobbying. Her recent publications focus on labour and social clauses in European Union commercial policy agreements.