

How the 'standard' disappeared from standard working time

A scoping review of literature on collective bargaining regarding standard and non-standard working times in Europe.

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Most Collective Agreements (CBAs) fix pay levels based on a standard working week and typically include provisions for monetary rewards related to non-standard working hours. However, there is a lack of understanding of the specificities of these provisions across European countries. BARTIME examines the rewards for non-standard hours across 24 EU countries. BARTIME aims to contribute to the social dialogue in Europe by deepening the understanding of monetary rewards of non-standard working time arrangements and the related agreements in collective bargaining.

BARTIME is led by the WageIndicator Foundation and is joined in the project by University of Utrecht, Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) and the University of Girona. The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is associate partner to the project.

WageIndicator Foundation

WageIndicator Foundation is a global, independent, non-profit organisation operating in 208 countries across the world that collects, analyses and shares information on Minimum Wages, Salaries, Living Wages, Living Income and Living Tariff, Labour Laws, Collective Agreements and Gig and Platform Work. It aims to improve labour market transparency for workers, employers and policy makers worldwide by providing accessible labour market information worldwide through 220 websites in 70+ national languages.

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University of Utrecht (UU), Department of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, in the Netherlands is one of the largest Dutch universities with over 35,000 students. The Department of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences has a staff of more than a hundred professors, assistant professors, and PhD and post doc researchers. Its research covers issues such as discrimination in the job market, reintegration at work, growing up in a multicultural neighbourhood, developing your individual identity, high-risk behaviour in young people, growing inequality and the accessibility of care.

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) is a non-profit research institute based in Bratislava, Slovakia. It fosters multidisciplinary research about the functioning of labour markets and institutions, work and organizations, business and society, and ethnicity and migration in the economic, social, and political life of modern societies. CELSI strives to make a contribution to the cutting-edge international scientific discourse.

University of Girona

The University of Girona's Department of Economics is affiliated to the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences and offers teaching in several bachelor's and master's degree studies. The department is very active in research and its interests range from statistics, applied economics and health to public economics, services and industry. Its research covers issues such as labor economics, monetary policy, basic income, transition economies, and the impact of education on the labor market.

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1. Introduction

While much policy and scholarly attention goes to the negotiation of pay in collective bargaining agreements, there is relatively little attention to the hours to which these pay rates refer. Yet, the wages employees earn cannot be understood without reference to working hours: Working hours tell us how much effort we need to put in to earn the negotiated wages (Rubery et al., 2005). In consequence, weekly working hours play an important role in understanding whether wages are adequate and working time reductions can constitute an alternative method of increasing wages (c.f., Piasna et al., 2024; Rubery et al., 2005). Moreover, different pay rates are often negotiated depending on the timing, predictability and variability of work hours. Premium pay for inconvenient hours (e.g., shifts, nights, weekends, overtime) can constitute an important part of monthly incomes, which may help especially low skilled workers make ends meet (Ilsøe, 2012; Piso, 2022).

The BARTIME project on the monetary rewards of working time dimensions in collective bargaining and in the working population, funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Project No. 101126498), studies the pay associated with three dimensions of working time arrangements in 24 EU member states: (a) the length of the working week, including part-time, overtime and the number of working days per year; (b) work outside of core working hours (9 to 5), such as shifts, evenings, weekends, and nights; and (c) the variability and predictability of working day start and end times, including on-call work and the extent to which workers have control over these hours.

This report, which constitutes deliverable 2.1 of the BARTIME project, reports the findings from a scoping review of existing academic literature on developments in collective bargaining regarding the pay for standard and non-standard working times in Europe. Together with a concurrent study of coded working time provisions in collective agreements in EU and two expert meetings with trade unionists, employers, policy makers and academics, this report asks how pay for working time is negotiated in collective agreements. These studies do not investigate working time patterns or about wage levels per se. They focus exclusively on the *relationship* between pay and working time.

The aim of this literature review was, first, to give an overview of how collective bargaining over pay for working time has changed over the last 25 years, based on academic studies. In so doing, the literature review complements insights drawn from the analyses of coded collective agreements, highlighting the complexity and nuance of bargained provisions in a way that a harmonized coding scheme for collective agreements from 24 countries cannot. The second aim was to understand how academic theorizing explains these developments. In so doing, this report provides a theoretically informed framing of the identified issues, interpreting them in connection to wider debates in the fields of industrial relations, labor economic, and labor sociology. As such, this report does not present a complete or systematic review of all studies ever conducted into this topic but, instead, offers perspectives and open questions about this relationship, which will inform the studies in the remaining work packages of the BARTIME project.

In the following sections of this report, I first briefly explain the scope and methodological approach employed in this literature review. Section 3 discusses the main issues and debates over payment of standard and non-standard working times in collective bargaining in the period from 2000 until 2025. Section four discusses how these developments are related to broader theorizing on bargaining over payment for working time, drawing especially on decentralization of bargaining and employer discretion debates in the field of industrial relations, and work devotion schema in the sociology and psychology of work. The report concludes with a discussion section that briefly outlines open questions and dilemmas in this field.

2. Methodology and approach

To investigate how the changing relation between pay and (standard and non-standard) working time is studied in academic research, a scoping review was conducted. Contrary to systematic literature reviews, whose object is to assess the quality and quantity of available evidence, a scoping review aims to identify which academic fields study the chosen relationship and how (see for example, Mak & Thomas, 2022; Pollock et al., 2024). The iterative process of the scoping review methodology, allowing the formulation of new search terms in the course of the study, is particularly suited for questions that are studied in multiple academic disciplines, often using different terminologies to describe the same phenomenon.

The question of the changing relation between pay and working time is studied by scholars in industrial relations, labor economics, labor sociology, economic geography, human resource management, political science, and a range of other disciplines. Aiming to include relevant studies from all these disciplines, multiple search strategies were employed. In a first step, the last few issues of journals in industrial relations, that commonly publish on collective bargaining topics and are interdisciplinary by design, were scanned for appropriate search terms. These included the *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Industrial Relations: a journal of economy and society*, *Industrial Relations Journal*, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Transfer*, *ILR Review*, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, and *Labour and Industry*.

In a next step, several common search terms were introduced in the Google Scholar search engine in different combinations. They include one or multiple search terms from three sets: one associated with pay (incl. wage, pay, premium, compensating differentials, penalty rate), a second set associated with working time (incl. working time, work(ing) hours, non-standard work(ing) hours, standard work(ing) hours, work week, night work, overtime, shift, weekend, inconvenient hours, irregular hours) and a third set associated with bargaining (incl., bargaining, collective bargaining, collective agreement, collective bargaining agreement).

The identified academic studies were scanned for appropriateness and fit within the scope of the literature review. The aim of this literature review was to an overview of how collective bargaining over pay for working time in European Union member states has changed recently, and to understand how academic theorizing explains these developments. To be able to answer these questions, the studies included in the literature review should research working hours and pay in relation to each other, in the context of collective bargaining in Europe, and be conducted in a

recent enough period that results are still relevant for collective bargaining practices today. In order to so, the scope of the study was limited to empirical studies conducted over the last 25 years that include at least one EU member state, and measured both working hours AND pay.

Articles that were deemed appropriate were read, developing an annotated bibliography as well as a living document in which findings and quotes from the article as well as notes from the author were clustered according to topics and theoretical approaches. Occasionally, an article led to the identification of a new stream of research on the relation between pay and working time in collective bargaining (for example when new terminologies emerged). In these cases, this stream of research was included by selecting relevant articles from the list of studies that cite that article being coded (i.e., searching forward in time by studying the papers that cited it; as opposed to searching backward in time by studying the papers that are cited in the article in question).

The chosen methodological approach did not (and indeed could not) result in a complete overview of all studies into changes in the bargaining over pay and working time in Europe. As such, I do not aspire to draw conclusions about the validity of different perspectives, or the prevalence of specific types of arrangements. Such conclusions require a systematic literature review. However, this paper does offer an overview of the changes observed in this relationship by scholars from a broad range of disciplines, and explains how these different disciplines make sense of these developments.

3. Developments in collectively bargained provisions regarding pay for working time

In the review of literature on bargaining over pay for working time, major changes are observed in the last 25 years, both in regard to standard and non-standard working hours (Burchell et al., 2024; Keune, 2007; Rubery et al., 2005). This section describes the most significant or common development observed in the studies included in this review. In this section, I ask to what extent the relation between time spent in work and earned wages, which Rubery and colleagues (Rubery et al., 2005) have called the wage-effort bargain, has changed. In other words, what were the main developments that changed what employees needed to do, or how they need to do it, to earn their wages?

3.1 The length of the standard work week

Over the last decades, the primary development in regard to the length of the standard workweek was that it became less uniformly defined, and therefore less equally paid within and across firms. The increasing diversity of the number of hours pertaining to the standard workweek occurred both through individual and collective provisions. On the individual level, many collective agreements introduced individual choice options, including provisions to deviate from the collectively agreed length of the standard workweek (Boumans, 2022a; Ibsen & Keune, 2018; Leede et al., 2007; Schulten, 2019). Collective bargaining and legal reforms increased employees' rights to request to work part-time and receive pro-rated wages and social security reservations (Brega

et al., 2024). Another common type of provision allows employees to agree with their employer on lower or higher weekly hours from those in the collective agreement, mostly in exchange for more or fewer days of annual leave, thus leaving annual work hours and pay unchanged (Leede et al., 2007).

Employers, also, gained more opportunities to vary the length of the standard workweek, either in regard to other firms in the sector, or within their firms. Scholars observe a growing number of sectoral collective agreements allow individual firms to set the length of the standard work week, sometimes further differentiating at the plant level or between production lines (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Boumans, 2024). There are not enough empirical studies across countries and sectors to be able to determine how such firm, plant, or production line level variation in standard working hours is related to the relative income of these groups of workers compared to peers in the same sector. Secondly, in some European countries, like the Netherlands and Germany, increasing shares of collective agreements allowed the use of contracts without guaranteed hours (e.g., ‘zero-hour’ contracts), with employees paid only for the often highly variable hours they were actually scheduled to work (Berg et al., 2014).

Finally, several studies were identified that researched extensions of and reductions in the length of the standard workweek, although the former was rare (for an exception, see Pulignano et al., 2020). At the turn of the century, studies show several examples of modest working time reductions being negotiated by trade unions, often in exchange for more variable, anti-social, or unpredictable working hours (Bosch & Lehndorff, 2001; Boumans, 2024; Haipeter & Lehndorff, 2005; Piasna et al., 2024). More recently, as labor shortages in many European countries were increasing, more substantial working time reductions that maintain levels of pay (e.g., the four-day workweek) have returned to the bargaining agenda (Burchell et al., 2024; Goerlich & Vis, 2024; Piasna et al., 2024; Spencer, 2022). Numerous pilot studies introducing a four-day workweek at full pay were conducted in mainly high-paying firms (Delaney & Casey, 2022; Mullens & Glorieux, 2023; Schor et al., 2023), although some examples are available of pilots introduced in production environments (Piasna et al., 2024). Contrary to earlier studies, these debates present working time reduction as a means of sharing the profits of increased productivity, a compensation for the increasing intensity of work, a method of increasing hourly wages, and promoting sustainable employability (Coote & Franklin, 2013; Piasna et al., 2024; Rubery et al., 2005).

3.2 Non-standard hours: larger variability, unpredictability and non-core hours

The abovementioned developments regarding the bargaining of the length of the standard workweek, are dwarfed by the literature studying bargaining on pay for variable, unpredictable and anti-social working hours. According to the reviewed studies, the past 25 years saw a proliferation of bargained provisions that have made it easier to distribute standard working hours unequally across different weeks of the year. Most common was probably the introduction of annualized hours, a term that summarizes a range of provision that result in a situation where hours worked across multiple weeks should match agreed standard working hours on average, as opposed to weekly working hours matching standard working hours in every week (or be considered overtime hours if they do not) (Arrowsmith, 2007; Boumans, 2024; Haipeter &

Lehndorff, 2005; Ilsøe, 2010, 2012; Piso, 2022; Rubery et al., 2005). To administer annualized hour schemes, 'time accounts' were introduced in many collective agreements (under many different names), where hours worked in excess of the standard workweek length are 'banked' and waiting to be compensated by shorter hours in future workweeks. Control over the allocation of shorter and longer hours across weeks varies, but usually lies with employers or line managers to a greater extent than with employees, resulting not only in more variable but also less predictable working hours (Berg et al., 2004; Haipeter & Lehndorff, 2005; Ilsøe, 2012; Lehndorff, 2007).

Multiple scholars point out that the introduction of annualized hours and time accounts has resulted in the blending of standard and non-standard working times and, crucially for this review, contributed to reduced pay premiums for inconvenient hours (Grimshaw et al., 2017). In the first place, hours that would have been paid as overtime hours and at penalty rates to the employer before the introduction of annualized hours, are largely cut by drawing on deficit hours in workers' time accounts (or building up larger surpluses in said time accounts) (Boumans, 2024; Ilsøe, 2012). Haipeter and Lehndorff (2005) report German employers repeatedly stretch these time accounts to the limit by prolonging the periods over which hours need to be balanced, increasing the maximum number of surplus hours employees can incur, or simply letting surplus hours expire.

In many cases, the introduction of annualized hours and time accounts was accompanied, or followed shortly, by extensions in the hours designated as standard operating hours (i.e., the span of hours in a day and the days of the week during which ordinary hours can be worked). In the process of re-designing the working time to accommodate employee numbers during both peaks and lulls in demand, it was not uncommon for bargained provisions to introduce mandatory work on weekends or evening/night hours, sometimes folding these requirements into pay levels associated with different types of shifts (Ilsøe, 2012; Piasna et al., 2024). As a result, Boumans (2024, p. 243) argues, "previous cost-increasing trade-offs for using labor on inconvenient hours, such as surcharges, which served both as financial compensation for employees and as a negative incentive for employers, were, for the most part, converted to time-for-time arrangements and then often phased out or scaled back". As this transpired, the difference between standard and non-standard hours appeared to shrink, with non-standard hours blending into standard hours (Pulignano et al., 2020; Rubery et al., 2005).

In addition, Rubery and colleagues argue that the introduction of annualized hours resulted in an intensification of work, implying more work effort is expected from workers for the same wage (Rubery et al., 2005). Prior to the introduction of annualized hours, work in production and service environments tended to include busy periods, coinciding with peaks in demands and potentially with overtime, but also calmer periods where working days included some amount of idle working time. One of the effects of the introduction of annualized hours was that banked surplus hours are largely compensated with time-off during lulls in demand, implying a larger share of employees' work hours are performed during busy periods and at a high pace. Studies reporting on worker perspectives confirm that employees experience their work as more high paced, and feel more pressure in the workplace. Workers reported being called up for extra shifts (sometimes in weekends and evenings) during peaks, resulting in surplus hours, and feeling like all periods were peak periods (Piasna et al., 2024). In addition, these studies show that compensation of

surplus hours in time off, supposedly scheduled the request of either the employee or the employer, was harder to realize as work pressure rarely allowed white collar workers to take time off and the reduction of personnel levels to those absolutely necessary made it hard for blue collar workers to get downtime approved by supervisors (Doellgast & Berg, 2018; Piso, 2022). Comparing Danish and German workplaces, Ilsøe (2010, 2012) reports that employee autonomy over time-off, most often through flexi-time arrangements, varied largely across workplaces (Boumans, 2022b).

4. Theoretical perspectives on developments in collective bargaining on pay for working time

In this section, I explore existing theoretical perspectives that might explain how to make sense of employer, trade union and employee motivations, and the driving forces behind these developments. I outline the two most common theoretical perspectives explaining the driving forces behind the aforementioned developments in collective bargaining on pay for working time. The first focuses on macro-level methods of production and service delivery in modern market economies to explain how global competitiveness requirements lead to the re-organization of working time at the plant or firm level (Haipeter & Lehndorff, 2005). The second much used perspective in industrial relations, draws on theories surrounding employers' preferences for enhanced discretion over the organization of labor at the firm level (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Ibsen & Keune, 2018). The last, perspective is rarely explicitly applied in studies into collective bargaining and focuses more on employee motivation. The sociological literature on devotion schema and ideal worker norms (Blair-Loy, 2003; Williams et al., 2013) is a framework for understanding organizational cultures, and relational inequality theory (Tomaskovic-Devey & Avent-Holt, 2019) explains how these organizational cultures could lead to the observed acceptance of flexibilization of working time and growing inequalities within firms. Their focus on human behavior and the organization level generation (and re-generation) of inequalities, can potentially link industrial relations phenomena to labor market outcomes.

4.1 Internal and external flexibility in a 24/7 global market economy

One common perspective to interpret the progressive blending of pay for and working conditions related to standard and non-standard work hours, is to study shifts in the production of goods and delivery of services in the economy. The past 25 years consolidated a shift, started well before that time, towards the production of goods and delivery of services for a global 24/7 market, with both supply chains, competitors and customers spanning the world (Anner et al., 2013; Barrientos et al., 2011). Studying the manufacturing sector, Berg and colleagues (2014) argue that the associated production of sometimes highly customized goods made it impossible, or far too expensive, to store and stock products manufactured during lulls in demand (in anticipation of peaks), leading to shifts towards 'on demand' and 'lean' methods of production. This was accompanied by what Haipeter and Lehndorff (2005) call 'operational decentralisation and strategic centralisation': a supply chain in which upper management in central headquarters actively set cost and production targets, but leave it to local units to figure out how to meet them, rewarding plants or subcontractors that meet targets and penalizing those that do not.

In the wake of these developments, meeting high and unpredictable production targets while keeping costs down, firms seek to re-organize their working hours to quickly expand and shrink in reaction to demand for products or services. The observed developments in bargaining over pay for working time: annualized hours allow for the scheduling of working time in accordance with peaks and lulls in demand, reducing idle working time (Rubery et al., 2005) and cutting costs associated with overtime (Boumans, 2024). Mandatory work on weekends or in the evening make it possible to increase production when needed, potentially at lower costs if premium pay was reduced or abolished (Ilsøe, 2012; Piasna et al., 2024).

Many of the studies included in this review stress employers' need to adapt to peaks and lulls in demand, as well as cutting costs to compete globally, as a driving force behind collectively bargained provisions leading to more variable and less predictable working hours. These provisions were commonly agreed with trade unions in exchange for maintaining employment levels, either to avoid the outsourcing of jobs or even to prevent the closure of the plant (Berg et al., 2014; Haipeter & Lehdorff, 2005; Marginson & Galetto, 2014; Pulignano et al., 2020). As such, it often constituted a trade-off between 'internal flexibility' (i.e., the more flexible deployment of direct hires) and 'external flexibility' (i.e., the flexible use of external personnel to meet demands, for example through temporary agency workers or outsourcing) (Goudswaard et al., 2009; Wickramasinghe et al., 2019). Studying local branches of four multinational companies across three European countries, Pulignano and colleagues (2020) show how trade unions accepted more inconvenient hours and even unpaid increases in working time to limit the use of temporary agency workers. Doellgast and Berg (2018) describe how call-center workers accepted deteriorating working conditions to prevent their jobs from being outsourced.

4.2 Employer discretion and decentralization

The increasing opportunities to flexibly deploy employees, fits into the second set of common perspective explaining developments in bargaining over pay for working time: the academic debates on employer discretion and decentralization (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Katz, 1993; Traxler, 1995). In this perspective, employers seek to maximize their level of control over their production or service delivery process, including through wage-setting, workplace organization and hiring and firing decisions (Baccaro & Howell, 2017). Working time is intimately entwined with the first two. In her longitudinal study on Dutch collective bargaining agreements, Boumans (2024) operationalizes increases in employer discretion over wages and work organization through collectively bargained provisions, including several that are relevant for this literature review: provisions that reduce or remove premiums for inconvenient hours, institute performance pay, lengthening standard working time, sliding (annualized) working hours, loosening restrictions on overtime and increasing shift work.

To enhance employer discretion, decision making authority is decentralized, for example through the use of opening clauses in collective agreements, the strengthening of firm level bargaining at the expense of sector level bargaining (Doellgast & Berg, 2018; Grimshaw et al., 2017; Haipeter, 2011; Ibsen & Keune, 2018; Ilsøe, 2010). The numerous developments that increase employers' or managers' control over the scheduling of employees' working hours, reported in section 2, are an

example of the former. Comparisons of the implementation of time accounts in Danish and German (Doellgast & Berg, 2018; Ilsøe, 2010) and Italian (Piasna et al., 2024) show not only that the day to day implementation and management of time accounts, by their very nature as well as in order to meet employee preferences, are derogated to the firm or even plant level, but that the extent to which this results in gains or losses of employees' autonomy over their working hours is highly dependent on the strength of firm level workers representation (Haipeter, 2011; Ilsøe et al., 2007; Paolucci & Galetto, 2020; Sippola, 2012).

4.3 The ideal worker norms and the work devotion schema

Increasing expectations that employees are available for work around the clock, such as observed in surging unpaid overtime among professional white collar workers and adaptability to peaks in demand of blue and pink collar workers, can also be interpreted using the concept of the 'ideal worker norm' or 'work devotion schema'. As Williams and colleagues (2013) explain, "the work devotion schema (Blair-Loy, 2003) reflects deep cultural assumptions that work demands and deserves undivided and intensive allegiance." This sociological and psychological research has pointed out that work devotion schema manifests differently across occupational groups, observing an expectation to work (extremely) long hours among salaried white collar occupations, compared to the assumption that part-time hours maybe scheduled at any time of production and service environments (Allard & Whitfield, 2024; Chung, 2020; Howcroft et al., 2024; Rydström, 2025; Williams et al., 2013). The need for service and production workers to be always available to work their limited hours in unpredictable and variable shifts, can be interpreted in this frame. So can the regular unpaid overtime and unbalanced time accounts of professional workers.

In this context, the introduction of time accounts does not only set expectations for employees' to always be available for work, at the expense of free time and family time, but becomes an important indicator in career progress with employees who are more available earning higher rewards. Studying the hotel industry in the UK, Piso (2022) concludes that employees agree to inconvenient shifts and long hours, knowing it to be important for job retention as well as for being promoted. Several studies also indicate that collective agreements allowed workers to choose between several types of shift work, with the more variable and unpredictable shift patterns including more inconvenient hours being paid at higher basic wage rates (Doellgast & Berg, 2018).

5. Going forward: dilemmas for collective bargaining on pay for working time

This review of the literature on collective bargaining over pay for working time suggests that, in large part, the changes in the organization of working time that were reported at the turn of the century, remain relevant today. The introduction of provisions like annualized hours and time accounts, with the associated shifts in working hours towards more variability and less predictability, persisted and are probably more widespread today than 25 years ago. Although the existing evidence is still biased towards the experiences of the most studied countries (i.e., Germany, Italy, Denmark and the UK, and to a lesser extent, the Netherlands), the reviewed body of research suggests that many employees are worker more inconvenient hours than before, and are less likely to be paid extra for it (Boumans, 2024; Haipeter & Lehndorff, 2005). The extent to

which employees themselves benefit from this flexibility through greater autonomy over working time and reductions in the length of the work week, appears to be much more context specific and especially dependent on the involvement of workers and their representatives in the implementation process at the local level (Doellgast & Berg, 2018; Ilsøe, 2010, 2012; Pulignano et al., 2020).

One major issue that is flagged increasingly as time accounts take hold, is the question of unbalanced time accounts. Despite the design of time accounts as balancing longer working hours during peak periods with shorter hours or time off during lulls, many studies into the day to day implementation of time accounts suggest it is often hard for employees to claim surplus hours (Haipeter & Lehndorff, 2005; Piasna et al., 2024). The surplus hours in these unbalanced time accounts, could be interpreted as underdeclared labor.

This may spark two dilemmas in regard to collective bargaining on working time. The first is whether trade unions should defend their members' time off (e.g., to improve work-life balance and protect health) or approach the issue as wage theft. Rubery and colleagues (2005), as well as (Ilsøe, 2012) have suggested the trade union movement may be split on this issue. In Denmark, unions mainly stressed the potential advantages regarding autonomy, health and work-life balance. In combination with the large labor force participation of mothers, increasing numbers of workers with informal care responsibilities, and surging mental health concerns as the intensity of work continues to grow, protecting recuperation time appears to be a key issue. On the other hand, in the UK (and to lesser extent Germany), unions tended to view time accounts as limiting access to overtime payment, and thus as disguised pay cuts. Concerns over rising poverty in Europe, would suggest that these payments may be crucial for especially low-paid workers to make ends meet.

The organization of working time in a way that meets both workers' interests in time-off, extra income, and autonomy over working time as well as employers' needs to adapt to peaks and lulls in demand, appears to require the implementation of these schemes at the most local level (Ilsøe, 2011; Paolucci & Marginson, 2020). In line with recent insights from research into health and sustainable employability interventions in the workplace, the participation of workers themselves seems paramount to finding appropriate solutions (see, for example, Van Berkel et al., 2014). But industrial relations scholars have traditionally stressed the importance of centralized bargaining for rights-based approaches, and in many countries the workers' representation at the firm and plant level is relatively weak (Grimshaw, 2024; Grimshaw et al., 2024; Haipeter, 2011; Sippola, 2012; Tros, 2023; Wright, 2024).

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