

# *Research frontiers in Economic Sociology and Labour Studies (ResFron ESLS)*

Seminar

## *Industrial relations: in search for a new paradigm* Ida Regalia (University of Milan)

16 November 2015  
Room A, h. 13.00-14.30  
Graduate School in Social and Political Sciences  
via Pace 10 - Milan



For some time now an important strand of literature has been emphasising the limitations of the traditional “three actors paradigm” of industrial relations. The observed widespread “decline” of trade unions and collective bargaining has therefore been interpreted as putting under stress also the field and theory of IR and employment relations, and has signalled the need for a revitalization of collective action and a readjustment of theory. However, even during the “Glorious 30”, IR were widely considered an affair limited to the 3 Ms: male, manual, manufacture. In short, limitations and weaknesses have long existed; but they had remained in the shadows until recently, when the reduced ability of the system to maintain promises in its traditional strongholds helped to turn the spotlight towards other problematic aspects of the system.

Drawing on the results of empirical research from European countries conducted in recent years, with particular attention paid to the study of employment relations in small firms, the paper highlights a series of critical points in the traditional theory (and practice) of industrial relations, including the question of the actors that are/may be involved in regulation, the forms and levels of their interaction, and forms of mobilization and protest.

A NASP project  
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