

# Collective bargaining towards mutual flexibility and security goals in large internationalised companies—why do institutions (still) matter?

Valentina Paolucci\*  and Paul Marginson

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the potential of collective bargaining to generate mutually advantageous flexibility and security outcomes at firm level. By focusing attention on actors' negotiating capacity at sites in Denmark and Italy of four large chemical-pharmaceutical companies, it provides a nuanced, comparative explanation. The findings demonstrate that, across countries, differences in actors' capacity and negotiated outcomes are attributable to the stability and depth of collective bargaining institutions. Within country differences are accounted for by the organisational resources (internal democracy, external links and pro-activity) of local trade unions, which condition their capacity to induce management to negotiate outcomes which benefit both parties.

---

## 1 INTRODUCTION

By exploring the role of collective bargaining (CB) in addressing flexibility and security in large, internationalised companies, recent studies demonstrate that the ability of social actors to pursue their interests in ways that translate into mutually advantageous outcomes is shaped by both institutional arrangements and firm-specific structural characteristics (Pulignano and Keune, 2015). In countries and sectors where multi-employer bargaining provides comprehensive workforce coverage, clear articulation mechanisms govern the relationship between bargaining levels, and the presence of shop stewards is widespread across companies, firm-level actors are found to be better equipped to participate in the regulation of both flexibility and security (Marginson and Galetto, 2016; Paolucci, 2017). Concerning companies' characteristics, low international competition in product markets, differentiated products and high skills and technological requirements reduce the ability of global management to inject flexibility through a top-down approach. In this context, local managers can use flexibility to meet the financial expectations of global headquarters (GHQ) while shop stewards can exploit institutional resources to negotiate compensating forms of security (Pulignano *et al.*, 2016).

---

□ Valentina Paolucci, UCD School of Business, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland and Paul Marginson, IRRU, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. Correspondence to: Valentina Paolucci, UCD School of Business, University College Dublin, Dublin, UK.  
Email: (valentina.paolucci@ucd.ie)

How HR managers and shop stewards mobilise organisational resources and exploit institutional opportunities towards negotiating flexibility and security outcomes remain underexplored. By focusing comparative attention on actors' negotiating capacity within large, internationalised companies in chemicals and pharmaceuticals in two countries with differing multi-employer CB arrangements, Denmark and Italy, this paper adds a power explanation to the literature on flexibility and security in CB. It aims to comprehend variation in the agenda and outcomes of CB on these issues both across and within countries. We demonstrate that, across countries, differences in actors' capacity can be attributed to the properties of CB institutions. Within country differences are explained at the firm-level, by the capacity of shop stewards to engage with the strategic interests of management (Locke, 1992). It is concluded that where multi-employer CB has depth and its institutional arrangements are stable, and where trade unions (TUs) draw on a broad range of organisational resources (Lévesque and Murray, 2002), union power takes the form of 'power to' (Lukes, 2005) facilitating CB outcomes that are mutually advantageous.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Following Lukes (2005), the extent to which both institutional (Ibsen and Mailand, 2011) and structural (Pulignano *et al.*, 2016) resources can be mobilised to negotiate flexibility and security trade-offs depends on the power capabilities of actors. Lukes distinguishes between 'power over', when one party's room of manoeuvre is severely restricted by another and which is by nature asymmetrical; and 'power to', when actors realise outcomes they could not achieve alone, founded on interdependencies between parties (Lukes, 2005). This dual notion recalls Walton and McKersie's (1965) distinction between 'distributive', the parties goals are in conflict and gains by one can only be achieved at the expense of the other, and 'integrative' bargaining, the nature of the problem and the approach taken permit solutions that benefit both sides.

While conflict remains an underlying feature of negotiations, in capitalist economies, the compromises that such negotiations entail 'constitute the most advantageous context for the improvement of the material interests of ordinary people' (Wright, 2000, p. 958). Doellgast *et al.* (2018) recast Wright's work and contend that when unions have sufficient power resources—institutional, organisational and structural—they can set in motion a virtuous circle of employment stability and security across the economy. Accordingly, our main objective is to explore the conditions under which unions mobilise their (power) resources to achieve mutually beneficial flexibility and security outcomes in CB. To this end, power has to be understood in its institutional context, within which groups with differing interests can exercise their power capabilities to both contest (power over) and produce shared solutions (power to).

### 2.1 Accounting for power capabilities of bargaining actors: an analytical framework

Drawing on the literature on unions' power resources (Doellgast *et al.*, 2018; Lévesque and Murray, 2002; Wright, 2000), our analytical framework identifies three kinds of power resource: structural, institutional and organisational.

#### 2.1.1 Structural resources

While recognising a role for institutions in framing action, Pulignano *et al.*'s (2016) analysis of CB over flexibility and security privileges the company-specific factors that conditioned the nature of the compromises reached between the parties. They found

that among their multinational companies (MNCs) competition in product markets, technological context and the level of integration across subsidiaries shaped workers' structural power (Wright, 2000) and, by implication, the power that shop stewards derived from workers' distinctive skills, tight labour markets and location in key industrial sectors. By conditioning the interests of local actors *viz-a-viz* GHQ, these factors were shown to shape the scope of the bargaining agenda and the nature of the outcomes.

The link between structural resources and workers' structural power is well documented (Wright, 2000; Silver, 2003). At the national level, variations in the capacity of TUs to enter into negotiations with employers have been often attributed to economic factors (Iversen, 1996). Recent research points to sectoral structures in order to explain the varying scope of the bargaining agenda on flexibility and security within countries (Paolucci and Galetto, 2020). In comparing large companies with similar structural characteristics, Paolucci, 2017 brings to the fore the enabling or constraining role of CB institutions in addressing flexibility and security. This calls for closer attention to the role that institutional arrangements play in shaping the power balance between parties.

### 2.1.2 *Institutional resources*

The properties of multi-employer bargaining arrangements are important in facilitating company-level negotiations that yield outcomes of benefit to both parties. So long as they are encompassing in their workforce coverage, the possibility of individual employers exiting in favour of unilateral management regulation is minimised (Traxler, 2003). The resulting procedural security is of particular salience for TUs in contemplating negotiations involving trade-offs from which both parties might gain. Decentralisation within such arrangements promises to combine the advantages of common standards on major substantive issues, such as pay scales and the duration of working time, with scope for local variation in implementation and detail.

There are, however, cross-national differences between multi-employer bargaining arrangements that may affect actors' capacity to facilitate the conclusion of flexibility and security outcomes. First is the presence of well-functioning articulation mechanisms between the sector (or cross-sector) and company levels (Nergaard *et al.*, 2009; Marginson and Galetto, 2016). These can entail 'delegation', through issue-specific opening clauses controlled by the sector-level parties, or 'demarcation', involving specifying the respective competence sector- and company-level negotiations.

Second is the stability of bargaining institutions. Brandl and Ibsen (2017) find that this enhances macro-economic outcomes. By extension, stability in the bargaining arrangements that frames company negotiations is likely to facilitate the negotiation of mutually advantageous outcomes. By creating shared expectations about bargaining behaviours and procedural certainty, institutional stability reduces the risk of distributional power struggles between actors.

Third, is depth of bargaining, originally defined by Clegg (1976, pp. 8–9) as the 'involvement of local union officers and shop-stewards in the administration of [sector-level] agreements'. CB has subsequently undergone a process of decentralisation whereby the competences of company-level actors have expanded significantly. While Clegg's emphasis was on depth at the sector level; we examine depth from a multi-level perspective. Accordingly, depth of bargaining indicates the way in which the bargaining process, controlled by articulating mechanisms provided at the sector level, reaches local actors and then unfolds within the firm (Müller *et al.*, 2019, p.

25). High depth of bargaining has a twofold effect on outcomes of negotiations (Due *et al.*, 1994). It gives confidence to unions to provide (at sector level) and accept (at company level) further devolution of bargaining competences. It also avoids representation problems: employers can expect shop stewards to take the lead in negotiating agreements. Furthermore, workplace organisations become an important centre of union power capable of independent authority over a wide range of issues (Kristensen and Zeitlin, 2005). We capture depth along two dimensions: the capacity of TUs to organise employees within firms; and the extent of their participation in the negotiation of company-level agreements.

We expect that, in combination, these institutional resources—well-functioning articulation mechanisms, stability of bargaining arrangements and depth of bargaining—will shape, but not determine, unions' institutional power.

### 2.1.3 Organisational resources

Institutions do not themselves prescribe the uses to which they will be put (Thelen, 2014). Lévesque and Murray (2002) argue that the extent to which unions can alter the terms of their relationship with employers (and make gains at the company level) also depends on their own organisational resources. They identify three further levers of union power.

First, the local union 'must have a range of mechanisms in place that reinforce [its] internal solidarity and democracy' (Lévesque and Murray, 2005, p. 509). These mechanisms include degree of membership participation, existence of stewards' structures, modes of communication between members and leaders and access to educational programmes. Second, the local union 'must have the capacity to strategize in formulating and putting forward its own vision' that reflects members' interests and understanding of their workplace (p. 509). Lévesque and Murray define this as 'proactivity'. They demonstrate that when shop stewards are not able to define an autonomous agenda—legitimising their role as interpreters of employee needs and as credible negotiators—they are likely to subordinate their action to corporate interests. Third, the local union 'must be embedded in both vertical and horizontal external networks and be able to draw on expertise and information from them' (p. 509). They term this external links. These three power resources are intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

Towards accounting for the capacity of actors to negotiate mutually advantageous flexibility and security outcomes within firms and to understand variations across firms (and within countries), we have identified a set of dimensions reflecting institutional, structural and organisational resources that variously operate at sector and company levels. Table 1 summarises.

## 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROPOSITIONS

We adopt a multi-level approach (Marginson and Sisson, 2006; Pulignano *et al.*, 2016) to examine the sectoral-level and firm-level factors facilitating flexibility and security trade-offs in CB. The considerations framing our identification of relevant dimensions of CB make Italy and Denmark a good fit for a comparative analysis of company-level bargaining over flexibility and security. The two countries provide differing instances of organised decentralisation within a framework of multi-employer bargaining. The boundary between CB and, respectively, labour law and social welfare also differs, with the framework of labour law noticeably more

Table 1: Types of resources available to collective bargaining actors

Levels of Observation			
Independent variables	Institutional resources	Structural resources	Organisational resources
Sectoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulation mechanisms (Nergaard <i>et al.</i>, 2009; Marginson and Galetto, 2016)</li> <li>• Stability of multi-employer arrangements (Brandl and Ibsen, 2017)</li> <li>• (Depth of Bargaining)* (Clegg, 1976).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Technological context</li> </ul>	
Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depth of bargaining (Müller, <i>et al.</i>, 2019; Kristensen and Zeitlin, 2005).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Technological context</li> <li>• Integration across subsidiaries (Pulignano <i>et al.</i>, 2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal democracy</li> <li>• External links</li> <li>• Proactivity (Lévesque and Murray, 2002)</li> </ul>

Source: Own compilation.

Note: \*Depth continues to be relevant at sector level, indicating arrangements that facilitate (or hinder) TUs in organising employees within companies and developing negotiating capabilities.

prominent in Italy than in Denmark, while social welfare arrangements for the workforce are more comprehensive in Denmark than in Italy. The study focused on chemicals and pharmaceuticals, (chemicals hereafter) an internationally open sector with capital-intensive operations in which requirements for both workforce flexibility and workforce security are prominent. Research was undertaken in four subsidiaries of different, large internationalised companies, two in each country.

### 3.1 Levels of observation

#### 3.1.1 Sectoral level

In Italy and Denmark alike, chemicals is well organised on both sides, and CB coverage is 80 per cent (Burroni and Pedaci, 2011) and 77 per cent (Ilsøe, 2012), respectively. The Danish sector lies within the industrial agreement encompassing all manufacturing subsectors. In Italy, there is a sector-specific agreement, and a distinctive level of collaboration between the social partners, common to the sector across western Europe, is evident.

Both countries have well-specified mechanisms articulating the sector (or cross-sector) and company levels. In the case of Italy, these have been laid out by a series of confederal agreements and, in principle, should be the same for all sectors. Nevertheless, the chemicals social partners concluded their own agreement in 2006

providing for further decentralisation. In Denmark, according to the model of 'centralised decentralisation' (Due *et al.*, 1994), which dates back to the 1980s, co-ordination procedures are agreed at sector level: those in manufacturing differ from those in some other sectors.

The stability of CB arrangements, however, is less so in Italy than in Denmark. The core principles of 'centralised decentralisation' in Denmark have remained largely unaltered. Adaptations occurred in the 1990s when the scope of company bargaining extended beyond wage negotiations to working hours, and from 2000, when a radical opt-out clause enabled company-level actors to deviate from specific chapters of the industrial agreement. The situation is different in Italy where the articulation arrangements established under the 1993 confederal agreement have undergone multiple changes in recent years. In 2006, ahead of the controversial 2009 Confederal Reform of the Collective Bargaining System, the chemicals social partners signed an agreement providing mechanisms enhancing the scope for company-level negotiations. Unlike the Confederal Reform of the Collective Bargaining System, the sector's agreement preserved a clear hierarchy between bargaining levels. In 2011, some of the differences between the confederal and sectoral provisions evaporated as a new confederal agreement was concluded, more along the lines of the latter. However, parallel sets of rules on the scope and modalities of company-level bargaining remain in place, generating procedural uncertainty.

### 3.1.2 *Company level*

Depth of bargaining represents a distinctive feature of the Danish, while being one of the main weaknesses of the Italian, bargaining system. In the 1980s, a double process of reconfiguration both widened the competences of company-level bargaining and enlarged the substantive scope of the sectoral 'framework' agreement in Denmark (Due *et al.*, 1994). As a result, and with the subsequent adaptations indicated previously, depth of bargaining progressively increased. By contrast, in Italian chemicals, second-tier CB is less developed. Effective workplace bargaining structures exist primarily in large enterprises only (Burroni and Pedaci, 2011). TUs have encountered a series of difficulties in entering small and medium enterprises where, if present, they play a residual role. Although decentralisation of CB over the past twenty years has enhanced the scope for company-level negotiation, the capacity of unions to respond has been decidedly uneven across sectors and companies within them.

Table 2 summarises the three institutional characteristics and indicates that firm-level actors can draw upon greater resources in Denmark than in Italy. Such differences shape the negotiating capabilities of managers and shop stewards at company level, and by implication, the scope and nature of the CB agenda. Kristensen and Zeitlin (2005) demonstrate how 'local players' in the Danish subsidiary of a large MNC identify opportunities and exploit resources in their institutional context and contrast this with the defensive approach of their counterparts in the U.S. subsidiary rooted in a less propitious institutional context.

The outcome of negotiations within large MNCs will also be shaped by structural factors (Pulignano *et al.*, 2016). Accordingly, managers and shop stewards in our four internationalised company cases could potentially draw on significant structural resources. However, the relevant structural factors highlighted by Pulignano *et al.* (2016) (degree of global competition, level of international integration, product market characteristics and technology) in our four companies—Impresa 1 & 2 in Italy and Firma 1 & 2 in Denmark—exhibit considerable similarity, as Table 3 shows.

Table 2: Selected collective bargaining institutional characteristics

Independent Variables	Italy	Denmark
Articulation	Centrally controlled (national/sectoral level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National level</li> <li>• Chemicals sector</li> </ul>	Centrally controlled (sectoral level): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sectoral level</li> </ul>
Stability of multi-employer arrangements	National level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1993 Protocol for CB</li> <li>• 2009 Confederal Reform of the Collective Bargaining System</li> <li>• 2011 Confederal Agreement</li> </ul> Sectoral level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2006 Guidelines for company-level negotiations and derogations from national provisions (strengthened in 2009)</li> </ul>	National level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1980s centralised decentralisation</li> <li>• Adaptation in 1990s and early 2000s</li> </ul>
Depth of bargaining	Company level bargaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited presence of local unions, partial coverage</li> <li>• Relatively less developed</li> </ul>	Company level bargaining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large presence of local unions, extensive coverage</li> <li>• Highly developed</li> </ul>

Source: Own compilation.

With these variables being held constant, it is possible to focus attention on the organisational resources (Lévesque and Murray, 2002) of actors, thereby also accounting for variation within countries.

### 3.2 Propositions

Drawing on the previous discussion, we identify two propositions:

*P1* . Where the level of stability and depth of the CB system is higher, as in Denmark, company-level actors are likely to realise adjustments on flexibility and security that are positive for both sides. Whereas, in Italy, relatively low stability and depth of CB is likely to constrain such outcomes.

*P2* . Differences in TUs organisational resources are likely to affect the outcomes of local negotiations on flexibility and security within as well as between countries.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

Our study explores both the role of institutions and the strategy of the actors involved with them. Qualitative research methods were called for, specifically an explanatory

Table 3: Companies' organisational characteristics

Organisational characteristics	Impresa 1	Impresa 2	Firma 1	Firma 2
Degree of internationalisation	34,000 employees in 37 countries High Vertical	28,000 employees in 17 countries. High Vertical	5,000 employees in 61 countries High Vertical	40,000 employees in 75 countries High Vertical
Type of integration	Chemical and Energy	Bio-Tech/Pharma	Pharmaceutical	Pharmaceutical
Market Competition	Medium-to-low Differentiated	Medium-to-low Differentiated	Medium-to-low Differentiated	Low Differentiated
Nature of Product Market	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled
Technology Workforce	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled	Capital Intensive Highly-skilled

Source: Own compilation.



case-study approach because data bear on cause-and-effect relationships; several variables are considered (not isolated ones); multiple sources of evidence need to be triangulated (Yin, 2013).

In order to observe variation both across and within national institutional contexts, case studies were conducted in both countries. At national level, secondary sources were reviewed on the historical, institutional and legal context of CB in Italy and Denmark. The sector level represents a crucial contextual element in which company-level negotiations take place. Sectors are characterised by broadly similar technologies and market structure (Bechter *et al.*, 2012), giving rise to similar demands for flexibility and security. The first stage of fieldwork involved 16 semi-structured interviews with employers' organisations and the TUs representatives, who provided 'expert opinions' (Saunders and Townsend, 2016, p. 837). They were selected according to their function within their respective organisations (i.e. Deputy Director of Dansk Industry, IR Director in Federchimica and sector TU officials) and for playing a leading role in sector-level bargaining. In addition, all sector-level agreements signed from 1998 to 2014 were content analysed to identify the procedural rules governing decentralisation and the substantive rules enabling company-level negotiations on flexibility and security. Documents that social partners used to corroborate their responses—including information on sector performance and labour market conditions—were also reviewed.

The case studies are manufacturing plants of four large, internationalised chemical companies. Firms were chosen (i) under the assumption that local management would experience cost-effectiveness pressures coming from GHQs, making flexibility a key strategic issue; (ii) the technologies and skills required would make security a relevant issue for management as well as employees; (iii) collective agreements were present.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews with key participants in negotiations (i.e. HR Directors, general and HR managers and shop stewards and local TUs officials) were gathered along with local agreements signed between 2000 and 2014 in Firma 1 & 2 and Impresa 1 & 2. These informants had negotiated the respective sets of agreements over a time period of more than 10 years. They provided rich, contextualised accounts of the bargaining process, including the evolution of their relationship, enabling us to collect data of sufficient depth and breadth (Saunders and Townsend, 2016).

These primary data enabled observation of how managers and shop stewards engaged with the competences delegated/demarcated by the respective sector-level agreements and the outcomes of their interactions. The content of company-level agreements was operationalised using the categories of flexibility and security elaborated by Ibsen and Mailand (2011) (see Table 4 row headings) and the nature of actors' compromises using Pulignano *et al.*'s (2016) categorization of balanced and unbalanced trade-offs.

Data at the sector and the company level were analysed by applying principles of qualitative content analysis. Five steps were undertaken to control the risk of being arbitrary or subjective: (i) from tapes via transcripts to raw data; (ii) from raw data to condensed records; (iii) from condensed to structured protocols to preliminary category systems; (iv) from preliminary category systems to coded protocols; and (v) analysis and interpretation (Schilling, 2006). This process was undertaken with the support of Nvivo computer software.

The data set on which the paper draws is the same as that underpinning Paolucci (2017). Here, we mobilise additional, and re-analyse other, findings to address the paper's original theoretical framework. The additional findings enable us to highlight

Table 4: *Negotiated flexibility and security in Firma 1 & 2 in Denmark and Impresa 1 & 2 in Italy for each category*

Substantive categories	Italy				Denmark	
		Impresa 1 Wage	Impresa 2 Wage Job	Firma 1 Wage	Firma 2 Wage	
Pay						
IT: Demarcation	Flexibility Security					
Interconfederal						
DK: Demarcation						
Sectoral						
Working-Time	Flexibility Security	Working-Time Combination	Working-Time Job Combination	Working-Time Combination	Working-Time combination	
IT: Delegation						
Sectoral						
DK: Demarcation						
Sectoral						
Training	Flexibility Security	Functional Job	Functional Job Income Employment	Functional Employment	Employment	
IT: Delegation						
Sectoral						
DK: Demarcation						
Sectoral						
Job	Flexibility Security	Functional Income job	Functional Income Job	Functional Income Job		
Classification						
IT: Demarcation						
Interconfederal						
DK: No provision						
Provision for	Flexibility Security		External Employment Job			
Atypical						
Workers						

*(Continues)*

Table 4. (Continued)

Substantive categories	Italy	Denmark
IT: Delegation Sectoral		
DK: No provision Social Benefits and Entitlements	Flexibility Security	Combination Income
IT: Delegation Sectoral	Combination	Combination Income
DK: No provision Measures for Employment	Flexibility	Income Employment
IT: Delegation Sectoral		Job
DK: No provision		

Source: Adapted from tables 1 and 2 (Paolucci, 2017).

the interplay between bargaining institutions and other sources of union power, and the impact this has on the relationship between actors within firms. As a result, variation can be explored within as well as across national contexts.

## 5 FINDINGS

This section presents and analyses our findings on the categories of flexibility and security that have entered into company-level bargaining across the two. Table 4 provides a comparative summary. (The appendix table specifies the dates of the relevant agreements.)

Table 4 shows that in Italy, there are provisions enabling company-level negotiations on all seven of Ibsen and Mailand's (2011) substantive categories. The social partners in *Impresa 1* and/or *2* have negotiated over six of these. Whereas wage flexibility and working time flexibility are only promoted by agreements on these respective issues, functional flexibility is promoted by agreements addressing training and job classifications. Promotion of external flexibility, to mitigate the effects of strict employment protection of permanent workers, features at *Impresa 2*. In both firms, agreements on job classification and training address mainly job security while combination security is enabled by negotiations on working-time and social entitlements. Promoting external mobility (employment security) through training and provisions for atypical workers—to enhance their skill set—features in *Impresa 2*.

In Denmark, negotiating competence is accorded to company level on the first three categories. The social partners in the two Danish firms the social partners have negotiated on these and also on a further two for which there is no formal provision. Again, wage and working time flexibility are promoted by agreements on these respective issues; functional flexibility is addressed by an agreement (on training) at *Firma 1*, while external flexibility does not feature. Concerning security, combination security results from negotiations on working time and social benefits and entitlement. Employment security derives from negotiations over training promoting external mobility and also measures for employment during the financial crisis (*Firma 1*). Measures for employment also include an agreement on job security during major organisational change at *Firma 2*.

Overall, the findings suggest that in a context of reduced job protection, social welfare equips social partners in Denmark with the security they need to cope with contingent demands for flexibility. Managers can adjust their staffing needs according to business requirements while shop stewards can focus on enhancing employability in the internal and external labour market. Flexibility is perceived as functional by both. In the Italian context of stronger legal protections, managers and shop stewards can enhance flexibility and security primarily in the internal labour market. External flexibility is sought by management through the use of temporary contracts and, given a low level of state-provided income protection, unions are in a relatively weak bargaining position to improve security.

### 5.1.1 Proposition 1

We tackle Proposition 1 in two steps: the impact of institutional stability and the effect of depth of bargaining.

In line with existing research, Table 4 confirms that the articulation mechanisms under the countries' respective two-tier bargaining arrangements enable categories of flexibility and security to enter into the bargaining agenda across all four

manufacturing sites. However, the possibilities are not necessarily taken up at company level. Also important is the stability of bargaining institutions. For instance, the category of measures for employment, included in Italy's 2012 sectoral agreement to address effects of the economic crisis, did not feature in either *Impresa 1* or *2*. The provision was seen at sector level as providing local actors with scope to enhance employability and competitiveness. However, the mechanisms of delegation negotiated (2006 and 2009) by the sector overlapped with the demarcation provided by cross-sectoral agreements (1993, 2009 and 2011), causing normative uncertainty. Managers emphasised that the new competences were difficult to engage with because the procedural framework became unclear, increasing the risk of costly litigation.

In contrast, in the Danish companies the firm-level actors bargained additionally on categories that fall outside the scope of articulation (Table 4). Managers and shop stewards at *Firma 1 & 2* emphasised the advantages of a sector framework that, by benchmarking employment conditions across the industry, provides stability for companies. At the same time, they considered such a framework to be insufficient in its substantive scope. By trusting their capacity to find workable compromises, extending the local bargaining agenda enabled managers to inject flexibility in the business while providing shop stewards with the opportunity to enhance employees' security.

In line with Proposition 1, a clear framework of rules strengthens the mandate of firm-level actors who, confident about the outcomes of their interactions, engage with a flexibility and security agenda, even beyond the formal scope of their competences. The possibility for local actors to produce mutually advantageous adjustments on flexibility and security in *Firma 1 & 2* is more extensive than in *Impresa 1 & 2*.

Considering depth of bargaining, the social partners in the four companies all defined their relationship using adjectives such as positive and functional towards common goals. Nevertheless, differences were apparent. In *Impresa 1 & 2* managers depict the relationship as constructive; whereas in *Firma 1 & 2*, they refer to it as constructive, cooperative and entrenched in trust. While in Italy, shop-stewards stress cooperation, and in Denmark, the most recurrent word is trust. Shop stewards in *Firma 1 & 2*, who represent 83 per cent and 77 per cent of employees, respectively, are perceived by management as expert negotiators who play an important function. Given their high capacity to represent employees, it is impossible for managers to sidestep TUs. In turn, shop stewards are bound by the company-level peace clause contained in the central agreement, which induces them to engage in cooperative behaviours. In contrast, in *Impresa 1 & 2* unions, who represent 50 and 25–30 per cent of employees, respectively, are perceived by management as inconsistent in mediating opposing interests and unable to guarantee stability. In order to gain internal consensus, they at times resort to conflict. Managers question unions' capacity to control the shop floor and to implement agreements. Strikes, although infrequent, have occurred in both Italian sites.

By cooperating, both local actors in *Firma 1 & 2* are able to make gains. Balanced flexibility and security trade-offs have been achieved involving working-time flexibility and combination security (different forms of part-time work to reconcile job with unexpected family/personal duties) and functional flexibility and employment security (formal training during organisational restructuring) whereby managers have improved the company's performance and shop stewards enhanced working conditions. More generally, management achieves internal forms of flexibility, and improves productivity, by relying on the contribution of shop stewards, who play a key role in managing skill needs and training provision.

Employees are divided into groups and shop-stewards have the responsibility to plan their work. And it is not the line manager that assigns them tasks. That makes employees take the extra step! (Firma 1 HR manager, July 2014).

In contrast, lower depth of CB in *Impresa 1 & 2* inhibits the opportunity for collaboration. Because local unions are not as representative (and their training resources insufficient), managers are more inclined to impose their own bargaining agenda on flexibility. A cost-saving approach towards enhancing productivity has prevailed over cooperative behaviours, especially in *Impresa 2* where depth is least, leading to unbalanced flexibility and security trade-offs. These involve limited commitments on job security in exchange for enhancing wage, functional, working time and external flexibility.

In the past ten years the emphasis of negotiation has been on this idea of 'job security' [sic.] the fact that you can make the company grow by enhancing marginal productivity. The real challenge for us is to improve employee performance without offering higher pay, or anything else in exchange (*Impresa 2*, Local HR Director July 2013).

In line with Proposition 1, high depth of bargaining, captured by the capacity of TUs to represent (and articulate) the interests of employees, forces managers to keep an open line of communication with shop stewards. In turn, HR managers gain strategic influence in the business as the GHQ perceives them as adept interpreters of the context in which they operate. Meanwhile, shop-stewards strengthen their internal legitimation as both local management and employees recognise the value of their functions. Where depth of bargaining is lower, management's agenda tends to predominate over union concerns.

### 5.1.2 Proposition 2

We review the organisational resources available to local unions according to the three dimensions identified earlier. A comparative summary of findings is provided in Table 5.

Regarding internal democracy, *Firma 2* features the most sophisticated system of employee representation, and *Impresa 2* the least. There are five full-time professional shop stewards in *Firma 2*, drawn from three unions representing different grades of worker (HK Privat for white collars and Dansk Metal and 3F for blue collars). The Chair of the *Klub* (union workplace structure) is also a member of the company board. Negotiations occur whenever necessary, but at least once a year. There is an open-door policy: if needed, employees can stop production for two hours and call a meeting with shop stewards and HR managers. Similar understandings around issues of flexibility and security have emerged, and cooperation has strengthened. In *Firma 1*, shop stewards come from the same three unions, but there are neither full-time representatives nor employee representation at board level. Before opening a bargaining round, employees and their representatives work on a shared platform and secure a clear mandate. Shop stewards act as mediators between the interests of managers and employees, thereby preventing conflict and creating common understandings, especially on internal flexibility.

The situation is very different in *Impresa 2* where there are 11 shop stewards who represent the respective chemical federations of UIL, Cisl and Cgil. Together, they organise meetings with employees and participate in training sessions on IR issues. There are few ideological differences between them as pragmatism, they report, has always prevailed. However, the unions compete for members as each of them

Table 5: Union power resources in the four companies

	Impresa 1	Impresa 2	Firma 1	Firma 2
<b>Internal Democracy</b>	Three competing unions - 50% representative RSU organise meetings and participate in training on IR Referendum as a practice to obtain mandate (post-negotiations) Tensions amongst unions to attract members	Three competing unions - 25-30% representative RSU organise meetings and participate in training on IR Tensions amongst unions to attract members Tendency to isolate CGIL	Three unions organising different grades - 83% representative. Weekly meetings with employees and cooperation amongst shop-stewards Internal dialogue to obtain clear mandate (pre-negotiation) Strong emphasis on 'intermediation'	Three unions organising different grades - 77% representative Chair of Klub in the Board of Directors Cooperation amongst and shared facilities for shop-stewards Strong pre-negotiations mandate Open door policy for union members
<b>External Links</b>	Strong links with territorial, sectoral unions - sector-level officials sit at the firm-level bargaining table. Training for shop-stewards with sector-level funds Cgil - ideological disagreement between sectoral representatives and interconfederal ones produces tension	Strong links with territorial unions - officials sit at the firm-level bargaining table Training for shop-stewards with sector-level funds. Shop-stewards are also involved in training at EU level. Cgil - ideological disagreement between sectoral representatives and	Constant contacts with territorial branches and consultation during bargaining Training system linking shop-stewards, higher union officials, skill councils and ALMP networks.	Contacts with territorial branches on interpretation of sector-level provisions Training system linking shop-stewards, skill councils and ALMP networks

(Continues)

Table 5. (Continued)

	Impresa 1	Impresa 2	Firma 1	Firma 2
Proactivity	<p>Unions take the initiative but lack resources for training and their mandate is weak to actually improve the sector-level framework</p> <p>Local management needs to be 'receptive' to global strategies and that in turns reduce shop-stewards capacity to influence decisions.</p>	<p>interconfederal ones results in marginalisation</p> <p>Limited proactivity, business decisions centralised</p> <p>Difficulties in finding items for bargaining given the developed HR policies</p>	<p>Highly proactive on issues such as 'employability' and career development, as well as social benefits</p> <p>Negotiations in the form of package deals occur every three years</p> <p>Collaborative on flexibility</p>	<p>Unions have the initiative in CB which can occur as often as needed (at least once a year) on all items</p> <p>The chair of the Klub sits at the Board participating in key global decisions</p> <p>Shop-stewards are full-time dedicated to representing employee interests</p>

Source: Own compilation.



represents the same grades of worker. Tensions among shop stewards are regularly exploited by local management in order to isolate the less collaborative union (Cgil) and to unilaterally impose decisions. Even so, several strikes were successfully organised. Shop stewards understand managers' perspectives on issues of flexibility and security, which primarily respond to global business needs. Yet they find it difficult to align them with employees' expectations. In Impresa 1, the picture is similar, although the contrast with the Danish firms is not as stark. The same three unions organise the workforce and compete for members. While enjoying a higher level of representation, shop stewards struggle to obtain a strong mandate from their members and, as a result, use the practice of referenda to sign firm-level agreements. While this has guaranteed high involvement of employees in negotiations, it has simultaneously eroded the relationship with management, which considers them as unreliable negotiating partners.

Concerning external links, in both Impresa 1 & 2, the shop stewards have a high dependency on external union officials. Sectoral (Impresa 1) and territorial (Impresa 2) officials sit at the bargaining table alongside shop stewards. As decentralisation has increased, this practice has been enacted by TUs to compensate for the lack of depth of the bargaining system. Representatives in both companies report that the assistance of full-time officials is needed to strengthen their position *vis-a-vis* managers and avoid instances of *aziendalismo*, that is, the tendency to pursue an employer-driven agenda. Support from external unions also makes a positive contribution in training provision on IR issues. However, such support is not unproblematic. While, in Impresa 1, the close relationship that shop stewards have with their sectoral federations is considered useful by management to keep local CB provisions in line with overall sectoral performance; in Impresa 2, the external support offered by unions is portrayed by managers as a sign of local unions' weakness that, in their view, lack the competence to be regarded as an effective counterpart. It is not unusual for management to speak directly with external union officials.

In Firma 1 & 2, shop-stewards enjoy much wider autonomy. Territorial branches provide regular training opportunities, links to skills councils and ALMP networks and collaborate as external consultants during negotiations. However, shop stewards would never accept the involvement of higher level officials at the bargaining table, particularly in Firma 2 where, despite adhering to the sector agreement, the company is not part of Dansk Industry (DI). Union representatives in both firms report that, given their proximity to their managements and their constituencies, they are the best qualified to find suitable compromises. Overall, in Impresa 1 & 2, external links exist in principle to augment union bargaining power. However, in practice, the advantages are uneven across the two firms. By contrast, in Firma 1 & 2, such links serve to underpin shop-stewards' autonomy, wider in Firma 2 than in Firma 1.

In relation to proactivity, unions in Impresa 2 and in Firma 2 have the lowest and highest capacity, respectively, to push forward their own agendas. In Impresa 2, unions justify their defensive position by highlighting two main developments. As the company attained global scale, local managers' prerogatives have gradually shrunk as strategic decisions are centralised. Also, given the company's comprehensive approach to HR, it is difficult for local actors to identify items available to negotiate. Shop stewards refer to welfare provisions and work-life balance as important issues of conversation in the firm that have become the exclusive domain of global HR policy. By contrast, in Firma 2, shop stewards take the initiative in negotiations, bringing a range of issues to the bargaining table. The full-time status of several stewards attests

to management confidence in their role. Moreover, sitting at the board of directors, the Chair of the *Klub* has the capacity to channel union voice to the global company over key business decisions.

In Firma 1 also, shop stewards are pro-active in advancing employees' interests. By monitoring training needs, they defined for themselves a key role in promoting 'employability' and career development. In Impresa 1, unions have more capacity to influence local decisions than in Impresa 2, especially on company-level welfare benefits that have become prominent on the bargaining agenda. However, in contrast to the Danish firms, unions in Impresa 1 lack both the financial resources to make a significant contribution on training and the internal legitimation to improve on wage and other provisions in the sector-level agreement. Similar to Impresa 2, shop stewards report that the autonomy of local management in business decisions is limited. They perceive that their management counterpart needs to be receptive to global strategy, for example, on performance-related pay, and that this, in turn, constrains both sides' proactivity.

This comparison demonstrates that where union organisational resources are lower, local managers are better equipped to exploit tensions amongst unions and to unilaterally impose decisions. Further, the higher the capacity of managers to contain local unions, the lower is the interest of the GHQ to invest resources in negotiations. In Impresa 1 & 2, shop stewards ascribe their inability to improve on sector-level standards to the restricted autonomy of their management counterpart. Conversely, where local union organisational resources are high, global management is forced to respond by widening the mandate of HR managers. As a result, CB acquires a strategic function to the business. Before starting a bargaining round, the HR department in Firma 1 suggests the agenda to the executive VP who, accordingly, decides on the extent of the mandate.

In line with Proposition 2, this analysis has demonstrated that where TUs have stronger organisational resources, internal democracy, external links and proactivity, shop stewards have greater capacity to use institutional resources to their advantage. As a result, cross-country differences emerge. Where institutional resources are higher, organisational resources can magnify union institutional power, favouring a logic of sustained social compromise, as in the two Danish cases. Where they are lower, organisational resources can mitigate but never fully offset the effects. Management have more scope to drive the agenda and unions are less well placed to shape it, as in the two Italian cases. Also supporting Proposition 2, within-country differences in union power resources are also apparent and reflected in variation in negotiating outcomes. As between Firma 1 and Firma 2, internal democracy and pro-activity are higher in the latter although external links are less, suggesting higher resources overall in Firma 2. This is reflected in the more extensive negotiating agenda on different dimensions of security observed in Firma 2 as compared with Firma 1. Union power resources in Impresa 1 are higher than those in Impresa 2 on all three dimensions, a difference reflected in both the narrower scope of the agenda and greater tendency of negotiated outcomes to take the form of concession bargaining in the latter.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By examining the capacity of CB to generate mutually advantageous flexibility and security trade-offs at company level in a single sector within two countries, Italy and Denmark, characterised by two-tier, articulated, multi-employer bargaining arrangements, the paper adds to extant research on the issue (e.g. Ibsen and

Mailand, 2011; Pulignano *et al.*, 2016). By further investigating the role of institutions and their interplay with unions' own organisational resources, it makes a threefold contribution: theoretical, empirical and methodological.

On the first, we argue that union power is at the core of the relationship between company-level actors and is integral to the definition of a shared flexibility and security platform. While corroborating the relevance of firm-specific characteristics to union structural power (Pulignano *et al.*, 2016), our findings highlight the importance of two additional factors. Institutional resources foster trust and collaboration between parties enlarging the scope for integrative bargaining, while union organisational resources further enhance unions' bargaining power, enabling local actors to mobilise institutional resources. Together, these conditions facilitate the realisation of integrative outcomes. Building from Doellgast *et al.*'s (2018) 'virtuous circle' between inclusive institutions, workers' solidarity and voice-oriented employer strategies, our approach untangles the impact that these distinctive sources of unions' power have on actors' bargaining strategies.

The interplay between different sources of unions' power presents the possibility to exert 'power to' (Lukes, 2005), when defining their agenda on flexibility and security. Under such conditions, as at Firma 2 in Denmark, managers and shop stewards can gain more by cooperating than by acting independently. Such integrative potential is realised by framing issues of flexibility and security in ways that involve rights and obligations on both sides (Walton and McKersie, 1965). Echoing Wright's work, TUs that are sufficiently well-organised at the workplace (in terms of external links, proactivity and internal democracy) can push employers into formal negotiations that, over time, transform structural antagonism into 'bargained cooperation' (p. 962). Furthermore, we demonstrate that in large internationalised companies, agency on issues of flexibility and security is not confined to the GHQ; local actors have their own power resources. These can be deployed to reshape the relationship with GHQ (Kristensen and Zeitlin, 2005). Our empirical contribution concerns two intertwined findings. In both Danish companies, the social partners have gone beyond their formal competency under demarcation to negotiate on issues on which the sector-level framework is silent. Their capacity to do so arises from the power (and legitimacy) that local actors acquire from depth of bargaining at company level. It follows that powerful bottom-up dynamics may produce subsequent adjustments to articulation arrangements, progressively adapting CB institutions to the needs and the reality of actors on the ground (Marginson and Sisson, 2006; Thelen, 2014).

The three-dimensional operation of unions' organisational resources (Lévesque and Murray, 2002) sheds light on the different flexibility and security outcomes at firm level, over and above those that can be attributed to institutions. While institutions and union power are shown to be complementary, institutions alone do not fully explain the agenda and outcomes of company-level negotiations. Despite pronounced cross country differences—in both Danish firms, the level of interdependency between local actors is higher than in the Italian firms, as well as their capacity to regulate issues of flexibility and security via CB—noticeable variation emerges also within the countries. This variation corresponds to differences in one or more union organisational resources: internal democracy, external links and/or proactivity.

From a methodological perspective, adopting a multi-level approach has allowed consideration of the simultaneous influence of various institutional and non-institutional factors at different levels of observation. By setting the agenda of company-level social partners in sectoral context, we have shed further light on

variation across countries, underlining the roles of stability of CB arrangements, specifically articulation mechanisms, and depth of bargaining. The attention to the company level has also brought insight into variation within countries. Actors' capabilities, specifically, unions' ability to exert 'power to', accounts for the relative prominence of the *security* dimension in outcomes, enhancing the range of feasible compromises between the parties.

Our final remark concerns the use of qualitative (Marginson and Galetto, 2016) and quantitative (Visser, 2016) methods to explore how articulation mechanisms affect the outcomes of CB. Our paper confirms the relevance of different kinds of procedural arrangement. It also underscores the role played by the stability of bargaining institutions (Brandl and Ibsen, 2017). In addition, our choice to adopt a qualitative approach to a multi-level study has uncovered the salience of a further dimension—depth of bargaining. This dimension would be challenging to calibrate in quantitative terms. By highlighting power dynamics, depth of bargaining draws attention to the interests and the identities of the actors and the implications of variations in these. It is by observing the extent of collaboration between actors that variation in the capacity of managers and shop stewards to enact (or not) the procedural flexibility provided by the sector-level framework is explained. We demonstrate that actors retain scope for choice within constraints or even impact on those constraints in light of their own resources and shared understandings.

### References

- Bechter, B. Brandl, B. and Meardi, G. (2012), Sectors or countries? Typologies and levels of analysis in comparative industrial relations, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, **18** (3): 185–202.
- Brandl, B. and C. Ibsen (2017), 'Instability and Change in Collective Bargaining', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, **55**, 3, 527–550.
- Burroni, L. and Pedaci, M. (2011), Sector-Level Bargaining and Possibilities for Deviations at Company Level: Italy. Dublin: Eurofound.
- Clegg, H. A. (1976), Trade unionism under collective bargaining: a theory based on comparisons of six countries. Oxford: B. Blackwell.
- Doellgast, V. Lillie, N. and Pulignano, V. (2018) eds. Reconstructing solidarity: Labour unions, precarious work, and the politics of institutional change in Europe. Oxford University Press.
- Due, J. Madsen, J. S. Carsten, J. and Petersen, L. K. (1994), The Survival of the Danish Model: A historical sociological analysis of the Danish system of collective bargaining. Djøf/Jurist-og Økonomforbundet.
- Ibsen, C. and M. Mailand (2011), 'Striking a Balance? Flexibility and Security in Collective Bargaining', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, **32**, 2, 161–180.
- Ilsøe, A. (2012), 'The Flip Side of Organized Decentralization', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, **50**, 4, 760–781.
- Iversen, T. (1996), 'Power, Flexibility, and the Breakdown of Centralized Wage Bargaining', *Comparative Politics*, **28**, 399–436.
- Kristensen, P. H. and Zeitlin, J. (2005), Local players in global games: The strategic constitution of a multinational corporation. Oxford: Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Lévesque, C. and G. Murray (2002), 'Local Versus Global: Activating Local Union Power in the Global Economy', *Labor Studies Journal*, **27**, 3, 39–65.
- Lévesque, C. and G. Murray (2005), 'Union Involvement in Workplace Change', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, **43**, 3, 489–514.
- Locke, R. M. (1992), 'The Demise of the National Union in Italy', *ILR Review*, **45**, 2, 229–249.
- Lukes, S. (2005), Power: A Radical View. London and New York: Macmillan.

- Marginson, P. and M. Galetto (2016), 'Engaging With Flexibility and Security', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, **37**, 1, 95–117.
- Marginson, P. and K. Sisson (2006), *European Integration and Industrial Relations* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan).
- Müeller, T. Vandaele, K. and Waddington, J. (2019), *Collective bargaining in Europe: towards an endgame* (Brussels, ETUI).
- Nergaard, K., J. E. Dølvik, P. Marginson, J. A. Díaz and B. Bechter (2009), 'Engaging with Variable Pay', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, **15**, 2, 125–146.
- Paolucci, V. (2017), The role of collective bargaining in addressing flexibility and security. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, **23**, 4, 329–346.
- Paolucci, V. and M. Galetto (2020), 'The Collective Bargaining of Flexicurity: A Case for Sector-Level Analysis?' *Human Resource Management Journal*, **30**, 2, 165–179.
- Pulignano, V. and M. Keune (2015), 'Understanding Varieties of Flexibility and Security in Multinationals', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, **21**, 1, 5–21.
- Pulignano, V., N. Doerflinger and F. De Franceschi (2016), 'Flexibility and Security Within European Labor Markets', *ILR Review*, **69**, 3, 605–630.
- Saunders, M. N. and K. Townsend (2016), 'Reporting and Justifying the Number of Interview Participants in Organization and Workplace Research', *British Journal of Management*, **27**, 4, 836–852.
- Schilling, J. (2006), 'On the Pragmatics of Qualitative Assessment: Designing the Process for Content Analysis', *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, **22**, 1, 28–37.
- Silver, B. J. (2003), *workers' movements and globalization since 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thelen, K. (2014), *Varieties of liberalization and the new politics of social solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Traxler, F. (2003), 'Bargaining (De) Centralization, Macroeconomic Performance and Control Over the Employment Relationship', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, **41**, 1–27.
- Visser, J. (2016), 'What Happened to Collective Bargaining During the Great Recession?' *IZA Journal of Labor Policy*, **5**, 1–35.
- Walton, R. E. and R. McKersie (1965), *A behavioral theory of labor negotiations: An analysis of a social interaction system*. Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Wright, E. O. (2000), 'Working-Class Power, Capitalist-Class Interests, and Class Compromise', *American Journal of Sociology*, **105**, 4, 957–1002.
- Yin. R. K. (2013), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Sage Publications.

## APPENDIX

*Table A1: Outcomes of company level collective bargaining on flexibility and security with dates of agreements*

	Flexibility	Security	Flexibility & Security
Impresa1	Wage (2002–2015) <sup>1</sup> Work time (2010–2015)	Combination (2015 <sup>2</sup> ; 2005)	WorkTime-Combination (2013; 2010–2014) Functional-Job (2011; 2007) Functional-Income (2011;2007)
Impresa2	Wage (2002–2012) Work time (2002–2012)	Employment (2003)	Wage-Job (2005; 2001) WorkTime-Job (2005–2012)

(Continues)

Table A1. (Continued)

	Flexibility	Security	Flexibility & Security
			WorkTime-Combination (2001–2008) Functional-Job (2004–2011) Functional-Income (2001–2008) Functional-Employment (2008; 2009; 2011) External-Job (2002–2009)
Firma 1	Wage (2004–2012) Work time (2004; 2007)	Combination (2004) Employment (2010; 2014) Income (2010)	WorkTime-Combination (2010) Functional-Employment (2007–2010)
Firma 2	Wage (2002–2013) Work time (2000; 2004; 2007; 2007)	Employment (2012) Combination 2000; 2002; 2005; 2012)  Income (2012) Job (2004)	WorkTime-Combination (2012)

<sup>1</sup> Early negotiations took place within the selected time frame

<sup>2</sup> Single agreement

Source: (Paolucci, 2017).

Copyright of Industrial Relations Journal is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.