**Special Session Proposal**

**Title**:

*Collective Bargaining Between Transformation and Discontinuity – A Comparative Perspective on Southern and Northern Europe*

**Organizers**:

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**Keywords**:

- Collective Bargaining

- Comparative Labor Law

- Employment Relations

- Labor Market Regulation

- Social Dialogue

**Abstract**

Collective bargaining remains a fundamental pillar of labor market regulation, yet its role and effectiveness are being reshaped by profound economic, social, and institutional transformations. The fragmentation of production, the rise of atypical employment, and the increasing influence of supranational actors are redefining collective agreements' impact in different national contexts.

This special session adopts a comparative approach, contrasting the experiences of Southern Europe (Italy and Spain) with those of Northern Europe (Sweden and Finland). While Southern European countries traditionally rely on strong legislative mechanisms—such as erga omnes clauses and administrative extensions—to uphold high bargaining coverage, Northern European systems emphasize coordination among social partners and sectoral bargaining traditions. However, both regions face pressures from decentralization, digitalization, and new forms of employment, challenging established regulatory frameworks.

The session will explore the interaction between different bargaining levels, the mechanisms extending agreements beyond signatory parties, and the evolving content of agreements, including wages, working time, occupational welfare, sustainability, and digital work regulation. Additionally, it will address the transparency and accessibility of collective agreements, examining the role of public and private institutions in managing and disseminating these documents to improve labor market governance.

By highlighting the similarities and differences between these two European regions, this session aims to foster a deeper understanding of collective bargaining's evolving role and contribute to the broader debate on labor market regulation in a rapidly changing economic and social landscape.

**Session Format**:

The session will follow a structured panel format with a mix of research presentations and discussion. It will consist of:

1. Introductory remarks (10 minutes) – Overview of the session’s themes and objectives.

2. Presentations (50 minutes) – Each speaker will present their research findings on collective bargaining in their respective national context, focusing on challenges and recent developments.

3. Open discussion (20 minutes) – Interactive debate with the audience to explore policy implications and future research directions.

**Format**:

Paper development session.