

Introduction: innovation against all odds?

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1. Introduction

In the industrial relations literature, Central and Eastern European (CEE) trade unions have traditionally been portrayed as powerless and inactive (Crowley 2004; Contrepois and Jefferys 2010; Varga 2015; Bohle and Greskovits 2012). Following the collapse of state socialism they have had limited capacity to shape public policy, win material benefits, organise workers in the private sector and prevent ‘a general decline of labour’s social and cultural standing’ (Crowley and Ost 2001: 219; Kaminska and Kahancova 2011).

Union weakness derives from socialist legacies, on the one hand, and from the difficulty of adapting union structures and strategic repertoires to new socioeconomic conditions after regime change, on the other (Kubicek 1999; Ost 2000; Crowley and Ost 2001). Under state socialism trade unions were subordinated to political power and often served as an extended hand of the communist party, which did not allow them to develop capacities for genuine employee interest representation and collective bargaining (cf. Myant 2010). At the same time, new organisations set up in opposition to the former regime endorsed the tough economic reforms implemented in the early transition years, which undermined societal trust in the labour movement (Crowley and Ost 2001; Ost 2009). The result, in most CEE countries, is that the effectiveness of social dialogue has indeed been limited; with the exception of Slovenia, formal social pacts have remained rare and unions have relied instead on unstable political alliances (Avdagić 2004). Unions’ limited influence on the policy-making process was accompanied by dwindling associational power. Between 1992 and 2012, unions from new EU Member States lost 77 per cent of their members, considerably more than their Western European counterparts during the same period (Visser 2015).

The economic structures that emerged in CEE countries in the course of the systemic transition since 1989 involved to a significant extent labour-intensive activities financed and controlled by multinational companies (MNCs). Kristensen and Zeitlin (2005) argue that MNCs may develop new bargaining mechanisms and thus open new opportunities for trade union action. Similarly, Meardi (2012) asserts that it is possible to develop ‘high-road’, high-involvement employment relations in MNC-dominated economies, but acknowledges that it is rather an exception. Empirical evidence from CEE countries testifies to the limited interest on the side of western employers in transferring any form of employee representation to the postsocialist region (Bluhm 2001; Bohle and Greskovits 2004; Meardi 2012).

Despite the significant challenges faced by CEE labour movements, it seems that the thesis of pervasive union weakness in the postsocialist region is premature and overly deterministic. Both path dependency and structural accounts overlook the role of union agency – that is, their ability to recognise threats, frame problems, reorganise their resources and use them in a creative manner. Kahancová (2015) asserts, however, that even organisations with limited institutional power and a shrinking membership base can act strategically: through targeted and well-planned actions, they can exert a considerable impact on working conditions and policy-making outcomes in their respective countries. This argument derives from recent developments in CEE industrial relations. In the second half of the 2000s, there was already evidence of heightened worker mobilisation, an intensification of unions' organising efforts and the emergence of new trade unions in the postsocialist region (see, for example, Meardi 2007; Krzywdzinski 2010; Mrozowicki 2011; Czarzasty and Mrozowicki 2014). CEE trade unions liaised with their counterparts from other countries, became involved in cross-border bargaining and participated in pan-European protests against the liberalisation of the EU Internal Market (Gajewska 2009; Bernaciak 2010; Bernaciak and Lis 2017).

These trends became even more pronounced with the outbreak of the economic crisis in the late 2000s. CEE economies were hit hard by the downturn, while the reforms pursued in many countries further weakened unions' institutional standing, but a 'countermovement' opposing government-driven austerity measures was on the rise throughout the postsocialist region. Trade unions were at the forefront of this societal discontent, staging large-scale protests against budgetary cuts, labour market deregulation and social exclusion (Bernaciak 2015; Varga 2015). They also opposed the privatisation of health care and other services of general interest (Kahancová and Szabó 2015) and became more open to the concerns of marginalised and under-represented employee groups (Mrozowicki and Maciejewska 2013).

Against this background, it seems that the post-2008 period presents CEE labour organisations¹ with an opportunity to reassert themselves as representatives of the broad sections of CEE populations that have become increasingly disillusioned with neoliberal policy prescriptions, and of employee groups that have emerged as a result of labour market segmentation trends. By recapturing the 'ideological initiative' (Hyman 1999: 108) and getting involved in innovative measures, unions could limit – and in certain cases perhaps even reverse – problems related to membership loss and the decline of unions' institutional power that characterised most of the transition period in the 1990s and the early 2000s. Still, the evidence on union innovation in CEE is unsystematic and highly uneven, which highlights the need for a more thorough and systematic investigation.

In a bid to address this gap, our book provides a detailed account of the innovative practices pursued by CEE trade unions since 2008 which include – but are not limited to – crisis responses. The volume has four interrelated goals. First, it seeks to conceptualise innovation in the context of trade union action. Secondly, it aims to identify the drivers

1. The terms 'trade unions' and 'labour organisations' are used interchangeably. If other forms of employee interest representation are discussed it is made explicit.

of union innovation in CEE countries, paying attention to the characteristics of their national/sectoral industrial relations institutions, the resources remaining at unions' disposal and the role of union agency. The volume covers eleven postsocialist states that joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.² Thirdly, the book seeks to provide systematic empirical evidence on innovations taking place in particular national contexts. The final, fourth, goal is to assess the sustainability and impact of innovative union initiatives on unions' established roles and on their countries' industrial relations systems.

This introductory chapter outlines the conceptual framework that guides the empirical analysis in the country chapters. We first build up the concept of innovative union practices with reference to the literature on trade union revitalisation. We then identify the specific dimensions of innovation and outline the instruments remaining at union disposal when implementing innovative practices. In the last two sections, we set benchmarks for union innovation in CEE and briefly present the plan of the book.

1. Varieties of unionism and the power resources approach

Union responses to external challenges became a subject of academic inquiry with the decline of the 'Golden Age' of capitalism in Western Europe. After nearly three decades of unprecedented growth bolstered by corporatist compromises, the oil crisis of the early 1970s brought an end to the post-war economic miracle. Struggling to bring down growing unemployment figures, Western European governments had recourse to new policy remedies inspired by neoliberal ideology. Advances in business internationalisation and changes in labour market structure, as well as the decline of traditional alliances between unions and left-wing parties, further added to the problems besetting labour movements in advanced capitalist countries. Even 'under siege' (Martin and Ross 1999: 368), however, labour organisations did not remain passive observers of their own demise. On the contrary, they undertook multiple efforts 'to tackle and potentially to reverse [...] problems related to membership loss, the erosion of workplace representation, declining mobilisation potential, institutional change and loss of union power resources' (Frege and Kelly 2003: 9). In the last two decades, the literature on union revitalisation, also referred to as union renewal, has grown to encompass country analyses (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 1998; Heery *et al.* 2002; Annesley 2006) and comparative volumes examining unions' activities in different political-economic settings (Gall 2009), including those located outside Western Europe (Fairbrother and Yeates 2003; Phelan 2007).

Studies reveal diverse patterns of union renewal. Frege and Kelly's (2003) volume presents the revitalisation efforts of western European and US trade unions in six areas: (1) organising; (2) organisational restructuring; (3) coalition building; (4) partnership with employers; (5) political action and (6) international cooperation. This demonstrates that unions' strategic responses are, to a large extent, determined by the

2. Throughout the book, the 11 examined CEE countries are also referred to as new EU Member States.

institutional setups in which they operate. Specifically, organisations based in countries with established social partnership traditions rely predominantly on social dialogue and collective bargaining channels to make their voice heard. This is because in the presence of these institutional supports they have fewer incentives to get involved in organising and coalition-building than unions in liberal market economies, whose very survival depends on the presence of a strong membership base and unions' ability to liaise with other civil society organisations (Baccaro *et al.* 2003). This finding is confirmed by Phelan's (2007: 22) study documenting the activities of unions in 34 states, which shows that labour organisations in liberal market economies and developing countries have been 'freer to experiment' with innovative practices given the limited access they have enjoyed in their respective national settings. The result is that they have been more likely to get involved in organising and social movement unionism, especially in the global South where the issue of social justice and the protection of basic employee rights are of particular relevance. To mobilise successfully in such hostile environments, however, strong union agency – that is, their ability to overcome internal constraints, act as 'bridge builders' between traditional trade union structures and wider societal groups and to organise at grassroot level – has been necessary (Turner 2007).

In line with Phelan's logic, one could expect that, in the CEE context, where tripartite dialogue is largely ineffective and union membership and collective bargaining coverage have been systematically declining, unions will also be oriented primarily towards membership recruitment and societal mobilisation. Still, even though individual instances of organising have been documented (see for example, Krzywdzinski 2010; Czarzasty and Mrozowicki 2014), systematic and comparative accounts of CEE unions' strategies aiming to 'turn their fate' (Behrens *et al.* 2004: 11) are still missing. It is also noteworthy that the activities of unions in new EU Member States have not yet been examined from the revitalisation perspective, which might stem from the widely shared conviction about the weakness of CEE organised labour presented in the introductory section. An interesting take on the topic is nevertheless offered by Meardi (2007 and 2012), who examines company-level revitalisation initiatives in MNC subsidiaries located in CEE. The author identifies examples of organising, social partnership and novel types of services offered to union members at some of the analysed plants. At the same time, however, company-level initiatives, if not accompanied by actions at other levels, may lead to the 'Mexicanisation' of the CEE union landscape, i.e. the emergence of 'islands' of heightened union representation and mobilisation surrounded by the 'sea' of the non-unionised, deregulated economy (Ost 2009).

The literature of union revitalisation offers important insights to the activities of unions in different institutional and socioeconomic settings. At the same time, the concept of revitalisation remains somewhat rigid insofar as it focuses mainly on unions' attempts to improve their organisational efficiency and external influence. It must be remembered, however, that new challenges located outside labour organisations, related to adverse macroeconomic conditions, an unstable regulatory environment and changing workforce composition, might be addressed in ways that do not directly translate to higher membership rates, unions' growing role in the bargaining process and/or their increased political leverage. In consequence, tackling these problems might not necessarily improve unions' standing within their country's socioeconomic

setup. Another problem is related to the ambitious goal set for revitalisation, implied by the very term and its commonly used synonym – renewal. The expectation of a tangible change and/or a considerable improvement in unions' position might divert scholarly attention from novel initiatives that perhaps are not that spectacular, but nevertheless constitute a timely and apt response to internal or external challenges. One can expect that in setups where labour organisations do not enjoy institutional support, like in most CEE countries, such small-scale adjustments and attempts to address old and new challenges in a non-standard fashion are much more common than remarkable successes testifying to the 'rebirth' of trade unionism.

In sum, the concept of trade union revitalisation is a useful starting point for this book's approach to trade union actions, but its limitations discussed above point to the need to 'widen' and 'flatten' the revitalisation concept. Therefore, in our book we focus on innovative practices within CEE trade union movements rather than on trade union revitalisation. The notion of innovation has been brought up in the industrial relations literature but scholars have remained ambiguous in regard to what constitutes an innovative practice in the context of trade union action (cf. Kloosterboer 2007; Bernaciak *et al.* 2014). In the next section, we review the existing uses of the term and adapt it to the needs of the present study.

2. Conceptualising innovation: from business to union actions

The concept of innovation has been used and elaborated mainly in relation to business organisations. In his early work, the economist Schumpeter (1934) asserted the crucial role of innovation, which he understood as the 'creative destruction' of old economic structures and the 'new combinations' carried out and diffused by entrepreneurs, for investment and employment creation. He accordingly identified five types of innovation: 1) the creation of new products; 2) the introduction of new production processes; 3) the opening of new sales markets; 4) the identification of new supply sources; and 5) changes of the existing industrial structure. With technological progress, innovation becomes increasingly complex and might involve transformations of companies' entire business models (Chesborough 2007). Such comprehensive processes of change are often supported by institutions external to the company such as research institutes or governments. In this holistic vision of innovation, different elements of a given country's political and economic systems come together to create national systems of innovation involved in the production and dissemination of economically useful knowledge (Lundvall 1992).

One of the defining characteristics of business innovation is its profit orientation. Rogers (1998: 2 and 5, respectively) argues that the latter aims at 'introducing new ideas to the firm which result in increased firm performance' or, differently put, at 'commercialising or extracting value from ideas'. Innovative practices are not an exclusive domain of commercial entities, however. A growing body of literature on so-called social innovation sets to examine 'new ideas that work in meeting social needs and improving people's lives' (Mulgan *et al.* 2007: 7). Undertaken by individuals, movements and organisations, social innovation encompasses a broad spectrum of initiatives. In some cases they receive

government support to be sustainable; this is because, unlike business innovation, they are not driven by revenue-seeking motives. On the other hand, the absence of the profit orientation does not prevent them from exerting an impact on the socioeconomic sphere. Local social innovation aiming at poverty reduction, for instance, improves the ability of the most impoverished members of society to satisfy their basic needs and thus complement the existing welfare state institutions (Oosterlynck *et al.* 2015).³

According to BEPA (2011), social innovation might involve new initiatives, but it can also be related to the application of already existing ‘ways of doing things’ to new social contexts or to their availability to wider groups of actors. This logic is shared by an EU-commissioned report on trade union involvement in anti-discrimination policies prepared by the Working Lives Research Unit – one of the first studies that systematically applied the concept of innovation to the analysis of trade union actions. The report (WLRU 2010: 9) defines innovative trade union practices as ‘those representing new ways of engagement for the trade union in the context in which they operate, or engagement beyond traditional trade union communities’.

Building on BEPA and WLRU’s definitions, we conceptualise *an innovative union practice as a course of action differing from the one pursued in the past, staged by a trade union to address a newly emerging challenge or tackle an existing problem more effectively*. In this regard, ‘innovative’ is more than simply ‘new’: it is not a coincidental shift in union actions, but a deliberate initiative or set of initiatives launched in response to a specific problem. Moreover, innovation in our study refers not only to the adoption of novel strategies, but also to their pursuit outside unions’ traditional audience, and/or the use of tools that enable trade unions to be more effective in their action. To account for the different ‘new combinations’ (Schumpeter 1934) that can emerge in this regard, we focus on the following dimensions of innovative union action:

- (1) innovation in regard to *organisational structure*, involving, among other things, a change of union leadership; a reform of internal union organisation, such as the creation of new unit(s); the emergence of new unions or a merger of existing organisations;
- (2) innovation in regard to *choice of strategies*, which includes both the adoption of new strategies and a changing balance between ones already pursued (for example, putting a greater emphasis on organising workers in comparison with earlier periods);
- (3) innovation in regard to the selection of *target group*, which might refer either to those defined on the basis of their labour market position (precarious workers, new professions) or to wider social groups (pensioners, migrants; broader public opinion).

In order to bring forward strategic innovation, trade unions may use diverse instruments. Using insights from Frege and Kelly (2003), Boonstra *et al.* (2011), Kahancová and Martišková (2013), Keune (2015) and Trif *et al.* (2016), in our book we focus on six types of measures:

3. Despite their ‘social welfare enhancement’ function (Pol and Ville 2008: 4), some social innovation projects remain controversial. See, for example, the critique of New Public Management (Atreya and Armstrong 2002) or microcredits (Ashta *et al.* 2013).

- *Organising*. Frege and Kelly (2003: 9) argue that organising ‘focuses on the acquiring of membership’ while, at the same time, it strengthens employee representation in the workplace and boosts unions’ mobilisation capacity. In the book, we pay particular attention to the use of new recruitment methods, the organising of previously under-represented groups such as young workers, and/or the targeting of new audiences such as atypical employees.
- *Servicing*. Servicing is often put in opposition to union models based on broader participation and community activism (see, for example, Ost 2002). The two approaches do not necessarily have to be contradictory, however. In practice, servicing and coalition-building can be and are pursued simultaneously, the former enhancing the internal and the latter the external reach of labour organisations.
- *Collective bargaining and social dialogue* could at first sight be considered traditional union instruments but in fact they have a significant innovation potential. In the field of bargaining, innovation may involve taking up new topics and/or bringing the concerns of previously unrepresented groups of employees to the bargaining agenda. Innovative practices in the field of social dialogue, on the other hand, could entail bringing new topics to the bargaining table and/or changing the dialogue’s formula, e.g. by the conclusion of bilateral accords between trade unions and employer associations.
- *Coalition-building*. In recent years, the literature of so-called social movement unionism provided examples of both ad hoc cooperation and sustained alliances between unions and non-governmental organisations (see, for example, Turner and Cornfield 2007; Kay 2011). Such a broadening of the union agenda can be seen as a response to growing workforce diversity; conversely, it can be used to extend organisations’ reach beyond the workplace. Cooperation among labour organisations or between labour organisations and social movements might transcend state boundaries and involve joint negotiations with company management and transnational advocacy on behalf of certain categories of workers (Moody 1997; Hardy and Fitzgerald 2010; Bernaciak 2010; Kay 2011).
- *Political instruments and attempts to influence legislation* encompasses unions’ participation in the legislative process through the use of direct democracy tools as well as through the conclusion of formal and informal alliances with political parties, especially in relation to previously unregulated spheres or on behalf of new constituencies. It also refers to litigation procedures launched by trade unions in order to enforce existing employment regulations (Boonstra *et al.* 2011; Keune 2015).
- *Mobilisation and identity politics* can involve a variety of measures such as protests and demonstrations, advocacy campaigns and media appearances as well as the innovative use of different types of media and information and communications technologies (ICTs) to present unions’ claims, opinions and concerns (Trif *et al.* 2016). It also encompasses actions aimed at influencing societal perceptions of

‘decent work’ and geared towards building and disseminating benchmarks on employment standards, worker rights and employer obligations within society. In the sphere of identity politics, unions may cooperate with non-governmental organisations and social movements and forge pro-employee rights alliances and coalitions.

3. Benchmarking union innovation

In our book, the presence and the extent of union innovation is assessed against status quo / ‘traditional’ union actions, reconstructed in each country chapter on the basis of three sets of benchmarks. The first benchmark is provided by the characteristics of the Fordist model of trade unionism. In the literature, the term ‘Fordism’ is used to designate a particular type of production regime developed in the early twentieth century which involved the manufacture of standardised goods and the employment of low- and semi-skilled workers at large, automated production facilities. Fordism’s reliance on ‘commodification, bureaucracy [and] social homogenisation’ (Jessop and Sum 2006: 65) also manifested itself in the sphere of employee interest representation, where it led to the establishment of large labour organisations with a hierarchical structure, centralised leadership and a homogeneous membership base. In the ideational sphere, Fordist unions espoused what Hyman (1999) refers to as mechanical solidarity: a set of standardised values and interests aggregated by the unions and catering to the needs of ‘standard workers’, i.e. a relatively protected subset of employees. In terms of strategies, Fordist unions relied on formalised procedures and official access channels, making their voice heard mainly via national-level social dialogue and company-level collective bargaining negotiations. By contrast, rank-and-file involvement, self-governance at lower levels of the union structure and communication between the different levels of the union hierarchy remained rather limited (Heckscher and McCarthy 2014). Originally developed in the United States, many elements of the Fordist production regime and the Fordist model of employee interest representation ‘travelled’ during the post-WW2 industrialisation drive to other capitalist countries and to CEE command economies. Against this background, union innovation could involve organisational changes boosting unions’ internal democracy and grassroots activism, departing from traditional modes of union operation, or, as indicated in the previous section, using the latter to take up new topics and express the demands of previously under-represented employee groups.

Our second ‘traditional union actions’ benchmark are the socialist legacies of unionism. Labour organisations in command economies displayed certain Fordist features: they were large, bureaucratic structures concentrated in manufacturing and the public sector, grouping employees that were similar to each other. In contrast to their counterparts in capitalist economies, however, they were not created to maximise workers’ welfare and/or defend their rights; rather, they assumed the role of ‘transmission belts’, communicating political decisions on production plans to their members (Thirkell *et al.* 1998). The lack of autonomy vis-à-vis the state went hand-in-hand with low levels of internal union democracy and rank and file involvement as well as limited bargaining experience (cf. Myant 2010). Union membership was either compulsory or ‘expected’

from the workers by company directors; in most cases, it was also driven by workers' personal needs given that certain services such as company social funds or holiday facilities were managed by unions and accessible only for their members. Elements of the socialist legacy are still present within some CEE trade unions that are highly hierarchical, focus on routine servicing and remain alienated from their members and even more so from broader societal concerns; they also negatively influence societal perceptions of unions. Against this background, activities falling within all three dimensions outlined in section 2 of this Introduction could be considered innovative. Of particular importance are the activities through which unions try to overcome the negative perceptions of (post)socialist trade unionism and boost their internal and external legitimacy.

Last, but not least, the presence and the extent of union innovation is assessed against elements of the industrial relations system and the patterns of mobilisation typical for a given country/country group. Owing to their shared legacies of trade union roles during state socialism, in the initial years of transformation CEE countries were often bundled together and put under the catch-all label of a 'transition' model of industrial relations (Kohl and Platzer 2004). Over time, however, it became increasingly clear that referring to CEE states as a single category obscures important cross-country differences. In this respect, Bohle and Greskovits (2012) constructed the to-date most elaborate typology of postsocialist political economies. Based on an analysis of socialist legacies and the transitional policy choices made by individual countries, they distinguished between three types of capitalism in CEE. First, Slovenia can be viewed as the only CEE economy closely approximating to the corporatist model as it features centralised bargaining structures and well-established tripartite dialogue. Second, the 'liberal' market economies, most notably the Baltic states, have developed decentralised union structures and have little tradition of tripartism; the belated start to the reforms made them embark on a radical path of transition that favoured macroeconomic stability over the various forms of labour market protection and welfare provision. Finally, the 'embedded liberal' economies, including Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, could be placed in the middle between the Slovenian and Baltic extremes: they have demonstrated some degree of labour involvement in the policy-making process, but their collective bargaining systems have been largely decentralised and sectoral-level agreements have remained scarce or declined in importance. The economies of Bulgaria and Romania share many characteristics with the Baltic states, even though in both countries the transformation and democratisation processes were protracted in view of the low levels of state capacity to introduce reforms through social dialogue. Croatia, analysed by Bohle and Greskovits (2012) together with Romania and Bulgaria, shares many characteristics with countries of the embedded neoliberal group. Even though its trade unions remain fragmented and the collective bargaining system is decentralising, sector-level bargaining still plays a role and unions are able to exert policy influence through legislative pressures (Butković *et al.* 2016).

A related typology can be built in relation to the extent of labour mobilisation and the presence/absence of institutional supports for union action (Table 1). Here again, Slovenia is the only CEE country characterised by high levels of labour mobilisation and bargaining institutionalisation. The liberal Baltic states Estonia, Lithuania and

Latvia are at the other end of the spectrum, with low levels of labour mobilisation and bargaining institutionalisation. Initially strong and militant labour in Bulgaria and Romania was not matched by an equally strong state that would have been capable of building corporatism and including trade unions in policy-making. Finally, governments in Croatia and in the Visegrád countries of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia initially aimed at building democratic corporatist institutions and a generous welfare state, but these efforts gradually vanished and the role of social partnership in economic governance became more limited.

Table 1 The extent of labour mobilisation and collective bargaining institutionalisation in CEE

		Labour mobilisation	
		High	Low
Institutionalisation of bargaining	High	Slovenia	Czechia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
	Low	Bulgaria, Romania	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Source: Authors' adaptation of Bohle and Greskovits (2012) and Bejaković (2015).

To conclude, the presence and the type of union innovation are assessed in individual country chapters against three sets of benchmarks: (1) features of Fordist unionism; (2) socialist legacies in industrial relations; and (3) elements of countries' industrial relations setup developed after 1989 in the course of the political and economic transition. We expect that these characteristics will provide a country-specific 'point of departure' for each study. This approach is consistent with the national systems of innovation scholarship (Lundvall 1992) and with the varieties of capitalism literature according to which different types of capitalist economies follow different paths of innovation (cf. Hall and Soskice 2001; Allen and Aldred 2009). It can also be expected that differences in unions' resources and repertoires of action derived from the two typologies presented above will translate into different forms and extents of innovation. Specifically, unions that traditionally relied on established negotiation channels might be reluctant to use mobilisation-based strategies. By contrast, unions with a greater legacy of mobilisation but weak institutional support may be more open to collective action outside traditional industrial relations channels. Building on Meardi (2006), we also expect that, in view of the largely decentralised nature of CEE industrial relations systems, innovative initiatives will be undertaken primarily at the company level.

4. Plan of the book

The present volume has been compiled within the framework of the project 'Beyond the crisis: innovative practices within CEE trade union movements', run jointly by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and the Central European Labour Studies

Institute (CELSI) in 2014-2016. The project examined the extent of union innovations in eleven EU Member States from CEE, as well as their drivers and impact on labour organisations and national industrial relations. Individual country chapters have been written by country experts on the basis of the theoretical framework outlined by the editors in this Introduction.

The book's concluding chapter confronts the above expectations regarding the differing forms and extents of innovation with insights from the individual country chapters. It is structured along the three research questions addressed by the project and examines: (1) the drivers of union innovation in the CEE region; (2) the innovative practices and instruments adopted by CEE unions after 2008; and (3) the sustainability of union initiatives and their impact on CEE union labour organisations. It also focuses more generally on the procedures of collective bargaining and industrial relations institutions in the studied countries.

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