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Negotiating Insecurity? A Comparative Study of Collective Bargaining in Retail Food in Canada, Germany, Sweden and the United States

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Résumé

Le risque en emploi a trait aux incertitudes auxquelles les travailleurs et travailleuses se doivent de faire face durant leur vie économique. Ce risque se réfère plus spécifiquement aux formes d'instabilité salariale, d'instabilité du temps de travail et à l'érosion des structures traditionnelles d'avantages sociaux qui affectent le bien-être matériel et la possibilité pour les travailleurs et travailleuses de planifier en vue de leur futur.

Cette thèse s'inscrit dans les débats scientifiques importants sur la nature et les causes du risque en emploi que doivent faire face les travailleurs et les travailleuses. Elle le fait en explorant l'évolution des risques en emploi dans des contextes syndiqués, et ce de deux façons. En premier lieu, cette étude cherche à circonscrire la nature du risque, en perspective historique, dans des contextes syndiqués. En second lieu, elle explore les impacts des stratégies des acteurs (syndicats, employeurs et États) sur les résultats du risque lors de négociations collectives à travers différents contextes organisationnels et institutionnels.

Cette thèse développe un cadre théorique novateur pour comprendre le risque en emploi en incorporant trois dimensions (la générosité, l'individualisation et la segmentation). Chaque dimension ajoute une valeur quant à l'exploration de l'évolution du risque de manière chronologique au sein des organisations étudiées. Différentes sources de littérature sont mobilisées pour étudier comment, dans des contextes variés (organisationnels et institutionnels) et avec différents acteurs et leurs attributs (le pouvoir), les stratégies de ces acteurs influencent les résultats au sein des trois dimensions mobilisées.

Des études de cas contextualisées furent réalisées lors de cette recherche. Plus particulièrement, cette thèse étudie le secteur de la vente d'aliments au détail, une industrie traditionnellement associée à des pratiques qui conduisent à l'insécurité économique. Le devis de recherche se structure autour d'une comparaison longitudinale (1980-2016) de huit chaînes de supermarchés (les cas) dans deux économies de marché libérales (le Canada et les États-Unis d'Amérique) et deux économies de marché coordonnées (Allemagne et Suède).

Cette thèse est structurée en trois chapitres d'introduction au cadre général de la recherche (question de recherche, approches théoriques et opérationnalisation), trois articles individuels présentant des aspects différents des résultats de recherche et un chapitre analytique discutant des résultats clés en regard de la revue de littérature et de ses conséquences pour la compréhension de notre objet de recherche.

Plusieurs contributions émanent de ces résultats de recherche. En premier lieu, cette thèse démontre que le risque en emploi a non seulement augmenté dans les chaînes étudiées, mais que cette augmentation diffère en forme et en intensité à regard des trois dimensions mobilisées. Ces différences ont une portée quant à la façon dont on mesure les risques et de la manière que l'on explique leurs trajectoires. En second lieu, elle soutient que les stratégies des acteurs ont un impact sur le risque. Cependant, les conséquences de ces stratégies se doivent d'être analysées à l'aune des variables contextuelles. Finalement, elle illustre l'importance du pouvoir syndical dans l'efficacité des stratégies en regard du risque en emploi vécu par les travailleurs et les travailleuses de ces différents contextes organisationnels et institutionnels.

Mots-clés : risque, négociation collective, vente au détail, relations d'emploi comparées, travail précaire.

Abstract

Risk refers to the economic uncertainties encountered by workers. These include how forms of wage instability, scheduling uncertainty, and the erosion of traditional employee benefit structures are negatively affecting their material welfare and ability to plan for the future.

This thesis speaks to scholarly debates on the nature and causes of worker risk. It does so by exploring the evolution of risks in unionised workplaces. This is achieved in two ways. First, the study seeks to provide insights on the nature of risk trends in unionised settings over time. Second, it explores the impacts of actor strategies (unions, employers, states) on risk outcomes in collective bargaining across different organisational and institutional settings.

This thesis develops a novel theoretical framework for understanding risk, incorporating three dimensions (generosity, individualisation, and segmentation). Each dimension adds value to the exploration of risks over time in the organisations under investigation. Different literatures are also mobilised to examine how, in different contexts (organisational and institutional) and with different actors and their attributes (power), actor strategies shape outcomes across these three dimensions.

Contextualised case-studies were conducted for this study. This thesis investigates experiences in retail food – a sector and industry typically associated with work practices that drive economic insecurity. The research design entails a longitudinal (1980-2016) comparison of eight supermarket chains (cases) in two liberal market economics (Canada and the United States) and two coordinated market economies (Germany and Sweden).

The thesis is structured in three overview chapters (research question, theoretical approaches, operationalisation), three separate articles presenting different aspects of the research findings, and an analytical overview chapter discussing key results in the context of the broader literature and with regard to their implications.

Several contributions stem from these findings. First, this thesis demonstrates how risks have not only increased across the chains, but that these increases differ in their form and intensity across three dimensions. These differences have implications for how we measure risks and explain their trajectories. Second, this thesis finds that actor strategies matter to risk, yet that their outcomes can only be understood in relation to contextual variables. It also points to the importance of union power to the effectiveness of these strategies in mitigating the risks experienced by workers in these different organisational and institutional contexts.

Keywords: risk, collective bargaining, retail, comparative employment relations, precarious work.

List of tables, figures, and charts

List of main abbreviations

CME	Coordinated Market Economy
CSLS	Centre for the Study of Living Standards
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
LME	Liberal Market Economy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PE	Private Equity
VoC	Varieties of Capitalism

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Introduction

Few question that the risks facing citizens have intensified in recent decades. Osberg and Sharpe (2011) have found that the rise in insecurity is affecting most in the industrialised world. This rise touches citizens of all types, including that of workers. With the spread of atypical work arrangements, the swelling ranks of the "precariat" are facing insecure access to incomes, employment, and related forms of social protection (Standing, 2011). Some say that the rise of new risks exemplifies how "extreme work" is becoming the "new normal" for workers in modern economies (Granter et al., 2015). The increased social acceptability of high risks begs the question of whether this acceptance has debilitated our capacity to resist negative changes in the workplace.

This thesis adds to the risk debate by examining the impact of collective bargaining strategies on risk in unionised settings. It seeks to provide insights on the nature of how risks evolve in this setting, how contextual factors constrain or enable actors to provide superior forms of protection to workers, and to delineate the relative influence of actor strategies on risk. To satisfy these objectives, this thesis engages in a critical analysis of risk trends through comparative research on cases drawn from a single sector (retail).

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter outlines the research problem. It establishes that economic insecurity has been on the rise in most industrialised nations and that key transformations in the employment relationship, provoked by trends in globalisation, shifts in firm governance and financialisation, the decline of organised labour, and the state's retreat from its traditional role in insuring against risks, are found to be negatively impacting worker risk. It calls for research on how risks evolve in unionised settings and the role of collective bargaining strategies in shaping these trends.

The second chapter provides a review of the theories that will be considered in this thesis. It beings by presenting the Risk Allocation Framework, a framework to explore trends in the individualisation, generosity, and segmentation of risks. Four sets of theories for explaining worker risk outcomes are then discussed. The first consists of organisational factors pertaining to marketisation, organisational performance, firm financialisation, and workplace fissuring. The second examines the relevance of institutional factors, namely market coordination and bargaining centralisation. The third concerns actor-oriented characteristics, namely power resources and strategic capabilities. The final set of theories explores actor strategies, those of firms, unions, and the state. The main argument is that an integrated analysis of different factors is needed to examine how firm and union bargaining strategies affect risk. The thesis framework to guide this analysis is presented.

The third chapter presents the hypotheses and research design. It presents three sets of hypotheses relating to contextual factors, actor-attributes, and strategies. These factors are examined to contrast their relative influence on risk while uncovering any possible interconnected effects. The aim of this approach is to isolate the outcomes of bargaining strategies on risk. This chapter also presents the exploratory research design. Contextualised case studies of supermarket chains across two coordinated (Germany and Sweden) and liberal market economies (Canada and Quebec) were conducted. Ontario and Quebec are also examined to highlight sub-national differences within Canada. This study examines 8 supermarket chains, two in each country. It is informed by 97 semi-structured interviews, complemented by official documents and secondary sources.

The research findings are analysed through three articles. The first article (Chapter 4) applies the Risk Allocation Framework to provide a more nuanced understanding of risk trajectories in developed nations. It explores risks in supermarkets across Germany, Canada, Sweden, and the United States over time. The second article (Chapter 5) analyses how institutional factors – namely bargaining structures – affect the implementation of labour-management partnerships and their effects on risk. The third article (Chapter 6) engages in an integrated analysis of risk outcomes in American, Canadian, German, and Swedish supermarkets. It explores how different contextual, actor-related, and strategic variables have affected three dimensions of risk over time. The aim of this article was to tease out the importance of union and employer bargaining strategies by contrasting their effects with those of other variables.

Chapter 7 provides an overview of the research findings and their contributions to theory and the literature. The findings are assessed in relation to the articles and the hypotheses. The research contributions of theses findings are also discussed. In terms of risk theories, this research questions whether mainstream approaches are discounting important risk dynamics by not accounting for its multiple dimensions. In terms of organisational and institutional theories, the findings explore the ways in which the contextual effects examined in these literatures can be contested by actors. In doing so, they highlight the more political nature of how organisational and institutional changes affect workplace outcomes. In terms of theories on bargaining strategies, this research emphasises the importance of power to their adoption and implementation. This chapter concludes by responding to the research questions set out in the first chapter.

The conclusion provides a final summary of this research. First, it presents on overview of the thesis and its contents. Second, it addresses important research limitations pertaining to the case selection and variables included in this study. Third, it discusses the practical implications for employer, union, and state actors. Finally, avenues for further research are recommended.

Chapter 1

The Research Problem

How do risks evolve in unionised settings? Do collective bargaining strategies matter to economic security? These are the fundamental research questions addressed in this thesis. However, before these research questions are to be addressed, it is important to justify why research on the interactions between collective bargaining and risk is pertinent in the current context. This chapter will describe the current context of risk, how it relates to major trends in industrial relations, and then proceed to explore these research questions more deeply.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part describes the concept of economic security, how it has risen in most OECD countries, and why growing insecurity is a problem for workers and citizens in the industrialised world. The second part discusses key changes in the employment relationship, and how these relate to globalisation and the rise of precarious work. The third part examines actor strategies, focussing on the impacts of firms, unions, and the state on worker risk outcomes. The final part elaborates on the research question, this being how collective bargaining strategies affect economic security.

1.1 The troubling rise in economic insecurity amongst nations

Something is happening in the economy that is degrading the economic well-being of a very large number of citizens in today's richest economies. This notorious transformation is the ever more obvious rise in economic insecurity. Economic insecurity is a phenomenon which denotes a reduction in the amounts of wealth available to cushion individuals from exposure to adverse and uncertain economic events, as well as decreases individuals' confidence that their incomes will be sufficiently stable in the future to cushion them from losses (Bossert and D'ambrosio, 2013). As Lars Osberg (1998: 23) puts it, economic insecurity denotes "the anxiety produced by a lack of economic safety—i.e. by an inability to obtain protection against subjectively significant potential economic losses".

Economic uncertainty is thereby connected to personal anxieties. These anxieties relate to two key components of risk: incomes and expenses. On the one hand, workers and citizens require stable incomes to support themselves and their families, and to be able to count on future incomes to cover expenses throughout the life course. On the other hand, they need to count on consistent debt levels and expenses to protect them from uncertain material deprivation. Any instability in either component can bring forward important consequences for the economic well-being of citizens, workers, and families.

1.1.1 Rising risk and the American tragedy

The rise in economic insecurity throughout the last several decades has been particularly notable in the United States. This was a core argument in Jacob Hacker's book *The Great Risk Shift* (2006). It argues that Americans are facing greater exposure to risks than their counterparts in other developed nations. They are more likely to file for bankruptcy due to adverse economic events. They are more likely to lose their homes. And perhaps most central to his argument, American incomes have become highly volatile due to shifts away from collective forms of social protection.

A number of high profile studies carried out since Hacker published his book in 2006 confirm that American workers and citizens are still highly vulnerable from a risk perspective. Many Americans are still burdened by overwhelming debts and on the brink of bankruptcy. In the mid-1980s, American households had a debt to disposable income ratio of 65%, yet this reached an all-time high of 133% in 2007, leaving Americans significantly more predisposed to filing for bankruptcy than ever before (Porter, 2012). In fact, most bankruptcies in the United States are caused by uncertain expenses related to illness. A major study of five American states found that 62.1% of Americans filed for bankruptcy due to the burden of medical expenses in 2007, and that the share of medical-related bankruptcies grew 49.6% between 2001 and 2007 (Himmelstein et al., 2009). The uncertainty in health care costs highlights an important income dynamic that has left many Americans struggling for economic survival.

While the decline of collective arrangements to cushion Americans from shocks deriving from uncertain expenses has left them more vulnerable than before, this vulnerability is exacerbated by flattening and unstable wage outcomes. The flattening of wages casts considerable doubt on the possibility that economic growth alone can improve their living standards, particularly through its interactions with risks. According to an assessment of median weekly earnings, the PEW Research Center found that the real wages of American workers has not budged from the 1970s till 2014 (Desilver, 2014). In fact, if we narrow in on the differences between worker segments by class, we find that the lowest quarter of income earners experienced declining wages since the year 2000, while the highest ten percent of income earners experienced a near 10% increase in their real wages. The incomes of other worker segments stagnated during this period (Desilver, 2014).

Combined with the risks posed by greater job and working hour security (Hollister and Smith, 2014; Mishel et al., 2012), workers are highly vulnerable to shocks in incomes and expenses, leaving many on the brink (or beyond) of deprivation. The latter point was made all the more evident through research examining the economic security of households in the United States. According to a key study by Western et al. (2012), both the income volatility of individuals and households has increased from the 1970s to the 2000s, along with concomitant instabilities in family life. And to make matters worse, this volatility follows citizens into old age, as the greater dominance of defined contribution schemes, coupled with aggressive pension retrenchment, and even privatisation, have put retirees at greater exposure to risk (Orenstein, 2009).

1.1.2 Rising economic insecurity in the OECD

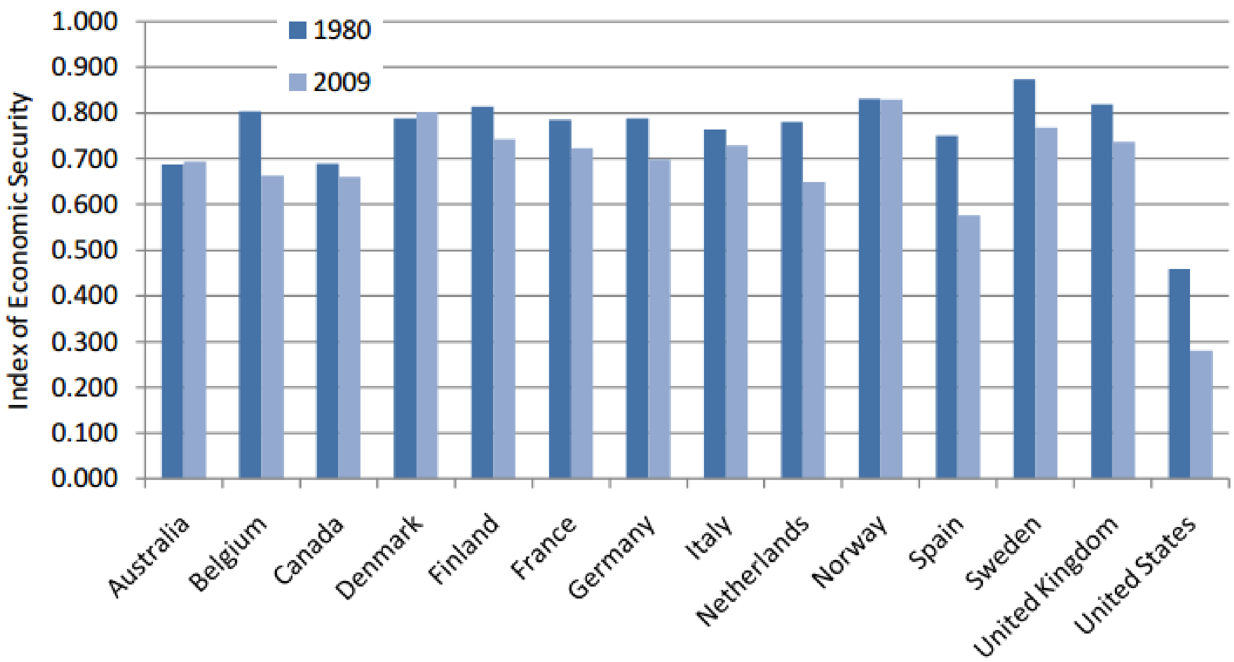
Though it is frequently observed that the United States is exceptional for its poor performance in risk mitigation, the sad truth is that the citizens of most developed countries have become more vulnerable to risk. This was an important conclusion from the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS), whose report assessed historical variations in economic security across OECD nations. The CSLS assessed indicators of risk from unemployment, financial burdens from illness, single-parent poverty, and old-age poverty. Measuring these risks together through the "IEWB Index of Economic Security", the report found that the people of Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the U.K, and the U.S. were less economically secure in 2009 than they were in 1980 (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011).

While most countries have become riskier since the 1980s, there were some key divergences. The studied countries varied in terms of their performance in providing citizens with economic security in instances of single parenthood and old age. For example, Australia, Canada, and the United States performed remarkably better in protecting women from the economic perils of single parenthood in 2009 than in the 1980s, despite the fact that the United States is still the poorest performer amongst OECD countries in this category. Furthermore, Canada, Denmark, Germany, and Norway improved markedly in terms of protecting seniors from the risks of old age poverty, while the citizens of countries such as Australia, Belgium, and Sweden are more vulnerable than in the past (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011).

What is most striking are the commonalities across countries. First of all, the citizens of most developed nations were at greater risk of being unemployed and received less generous forms of income replacement in the 2000s than in the 1980s (though some countries actually made significant improvements in this area). However, the most alarming area is the risk of being burdened by medical expenses relating to illness. While American private medical expenditures constituted a far greater share of citizens' disposable incomes than was the case for other developed nations, private medical expenditures rose substantially as a proportion of personal disposable income in every country studied in the report, leaving the citizens of all countries more exposed to risks associated with illness (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011). A more recent CLSC study focusing on these indicators in Canada, Denmark, Germany and the United States corroborate the findings of their earlier report with respect to these four countries (Osberg and Sharpe, 2014).

As illustrated in Chart 1.1 below, an important observation of these studies is that no developed nation has made marked progress towards improving the economic security of their citizens, and in fact, most countries have experienced overall decline (despite experiencing improvements in select areas). The only countries to resist overall declines were Denmark and Australia who experienced marginal improvements in overall security (1.8% and 1% respectively) during this period. Spain and the United States experienced the most significant declines, having faced reductions of 23.1% and 39% in their performance respectively (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011).

Chart 1.1 – Index of Economic Security, Selected OECD Countries, 1980 and 2009



Source: Osberg, L., & Sharpe, A. (2011). *Moving from a GDP-based to a Well-being Based Metric of Economic Performance and Social Progress: Results from the Index of Economic Well-being for OECD Countries, 1980-2009 (No. 2011-12)*. Ottawa: Centre for the Study of Living Standards.

1.1.3 Risk matters

Rising economic insecurity is a serious cause for concern. Its affects are intimate, as it speaks to people's ability to furnish themselves with the basic necessities of life. When people are economically insecure, their lives are disturbed. Economically insecure persons are at greater risk of poverty and homelessness, as those with fewer wealth stocks have less buffers to weather the economic shocks in their individual expenses (Western et al., 2012). Economic insecurity forces individuals to make economic sacrifices. For instance, job insecurity forces workers to make sacrifices in the consumption of essential consumer goods such as groceries, and in the pursuance of meaningful "life projects" such as home purchases (Lozza et al., 2013). Economic uncertainty forces us to sacrifice core areas of our economic well-being to ensure that we have the resources needed for survival, thereby reducing our quality of life.

The plight of economic insecurity is not restricted to the poor. The concept addresses an aspect of reality that threatens the well-being of the poor and non-poor alike (Tang, 2015). Middle class workers also suffer from significant drops in their standard of living when they are exposed to risk, such as uncertain health expenditures or retirement incomes. However, most research examines a single facet of economic security, such as job security or health care, rather than the larger phenomenon of risk and all of its facets. This problem relates not only to economic insecurity's impact on material welfare, as its implications affect all aspects of individual and organisational well-being.

Disturbances in economic well-being and uncertainties regarding the future take a toll on the health of workers and their families. One important area of concern is mental health. According to one study, individuals facing heightened levels of economic insecurity, particularly through the experience of job loss, are more likely to experience high levels of psychological distress (Catalano, 1991). In fact, the levels of stress associated with fearing job loss are tantamount to those associated with actual instances of job loss (Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003). One study suggests that economic insecurity is positively associated with increased risk of negative mental health outcomes such as depression, substance abuse, and even suicide (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2010). The negative impacts of job insecurity on well-being are amplified when individuals are highly dependent on their employment for survival (Catalano, 1991).

Economic insecurity also impacts the social stability of families. First of all, financial uncertainty deters couples from marriage. This applies not only to poor unmarried parents, but to couples earning middle-class incomes (Smock et al., 2005). Research also shows that stress from job insecurity brings rise to several forms of family dysfunction for married couples. A large body of research surmises that financial stress is positively correlated with divorce rates (Kalmijn, 2007). Declines in relationship quality, and increased incidences of conflict in particular, were found to be a common outcome of economic hardship for couples that were married or cohabiting (Hardie and Lucas, 2010). In fact, work performance and negative feelings of economic well-being are intimately connected to household violence between spouses (Fox et al., 2002). If we narrow in on the impacts on children, it is found that less consistent incomes and working hours deteriorates child-parent relationships (Roeters et al., 2010).

Risk brings forth significant implications for organisational performance. Research on this topic zeroes in on job insecurity and does not capture risk dynamics as a whole. The results are nonetheless telling. Chirumbolo and Areni found that job insecurity negatively impacts job performance and absenteeism (Chirumbolo and Areni, 2010; Chirumbolo and Areni, 2005). A similar European study shows that job insecurity negatively impacts workers' desire to leave a company, even though this desire can be mitigated to some extent by positive work attitudes (Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003). Thus, even managers have reason to worry about the economic well-being of their workers, since instability is often of source of HR problems.

Given the above review, risk matters. It matters for workers' economic, psychological, and social well-being. Perhaps not surprisingly, it also matters for organisational performance.

1.2 Risky interactions under a changing employment relationship

Trends in economic security across nations are intimately connected to changes in the employment relationship. Several forces have unraveled the traditional employment relationship typical of the early postwar decades (Arthurs, 1967). Industrial citizenship characterised this period. This economic vision was centered around the male breadwinner in full-time standard employment, a commitment to social rights based on the principles of economic security and equality, and an interventionist Keynesian state yielding considerable authority over markets (Fudge, 2010; Arthurs, 1967). However, globalisation and the rise of precarious work have challenged the feasibility of this model. These changes and how they have reshaped the employment relationship and risk in the process is examined.

1.2.1 Globalisation and risk

Many changes in the employment relationship can be traced back to the growing prominence of globalisation. Globalisation has completely transformed how we produce goods and services, and in the process, how employees are managed in a global economy. Of course, globalisation is not new. Globalisation describes forms of technological, economic, cultural, and ideational integration across borders that have evolved over the course of human history. However, the levels of integration witnessed during the last several decades signify that globalisation has assumed an unprecedented influence on modern economies.

Globalisation has evolved significantly since the industrial revolution, a period when rapid changes in transportation and communication technologies altered how goods and services are produced. Since then, Western nations have experienced different phases of globalisation, each differing in terms of the regulation of production and the structure of multinational enterprises. This began with the lowering of trade barriers and the deregulation of key sectors in the economy during the early postwar decades. However, the major change occurred during the 1973 oil crisis, and the surprising stagflation that ensued. The inability of states to manage the crisis using commonly held wisdom on fiscal and monetary policy shocked economists and central bankers, to the point that the then popular Keynesian paradigm was slowly replaced by what we now call neoliberalism (Crouch, 2011).

The advent of mega-globalisation has drastically transformed workplaces. A major factor is the fact that multinationals face fewer barriers to relocating their production activities than ever before. Research shows that a multinational's access to alternative production sites and the structural characteristics of firms are significant indicators of whether or not a company will relocate production activities to a foreign location (Jalette, 2011). What makes this research particularly interesting is that contextual features associated with globalised production are of primary importance to decision-making on the allocation of production activities, leaving managerial values with a negligible role in such matters. In fact, research suggests that unions are often at the beck and call to the needs of firms in global production networks, and often resort to significant concession-making to prevent capital flight (MacDonald, 2014; Jalette, 2011).

This new context of globalised production threatens worker risk. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is playing a greater role in shaping employment outcomes. Through increased foreign investment, multinationals have precipitated a shift towards "more-elastic labour demands", generating a greater need for flexible employment and higher wage volatility (Scheve and Slaughter, 2004). In fact, research demonstrates that workers' perceptions of economic insecurity are positively correlated with volumes of FDI. Furthermore, offshoring is typically associated with heightened worker insecurity, though research suggests that countries' social and labour market policies can mitigate against the effects of such risk (Milberg and Winkler, 2010). However, while offshoring is often associated with forms of insecurity, such as heightened wage volatility, free trade itself may reduce such forms of economic insecurity, yet still bear negative consequences for worker welfare (Karabay and McLaren, 2010). Free trade and the advent of globalised production have had ripple effects on workers and the employment relationship. Yet globalisation is not the only culprit that is undermining worker security. One of the most prominent manifestations of increasing risk in the employment relationship is the growth of precarious work.

1.2.2 The rise of the precariat

The rise of the precariat is perhaps the most notable change in the employment relationship affecting worker risk. Coined by Guy Standing (2011), the precariat refers to a new class of insecure flexible workers. This new class of workers is facing unprecedented forms of insecurity relating to the labour market, such as job insecurity and weak collective representation. Standing argues that the growing precariat is an offshoot of globalisation and managers' concomitant desire for labour flexibility. Castel (2000) argues that present-day insecurity is rooted in the "fragility of protective regulations" which evolved from the 19^{th} century till the 1970s. These regulations have played an integral role in structuring the current "wage society", thereby leaving disaffiliated workers vulnerable to the pressures of risk.

And what characterizes the precariat? Through an examination of the United States, Kalleberg (2009) asserts that the rise of the precariat is evidenced by five features. First, due to significant declines in job tenure, particularly for older white men, workers have experienced decreasing attachment to their employers. Second, the increased duration of long-term unemployment (6 months or more) has put workers at increased risk of psychological and economic hardship. Third, precarious work is associated with a diminished perception of job security. Fourth, there is the increase of non-standard and contingent work. Finally, the precariat class is burdened by having risks downloaded onto them by their employers. When combined, these features capture the reality of precarious work as we know it in OECD countries.

Unlike the traditional working class which consisted of male workers largely occupying full-time permanent jobs, the new precariat consists of students, the elderly, mothers, and other worker segments that are in constant fear of being discarded by their employers. These workers share remarkably little control over their working conditions, as they are easily replaceable and often lack access to mechanisms of worker voice. They occupy part-time and temporary jobs that leave them in poverty. And what makes this class all the more remarkable is that the scope of the precariat is not negligible. On the contrary, Standing (2011) estimates that approximately a quarter of workers in developed nations belong to this class of workers.

1.3 Changing actor strategies and the age of risk

The changing nature of the employment relationship, largely a result of globalisation and neoliberalism, is significantly intertwined with the strategies of industrial relations actors. Firms, unions, and states represent significant vectors of globalisation, simultaneously transforming national and international industrial relations contexts (Giles, 2000). In doing so, their strategies yield important implications for risk.

1.3.1 Firm strategy: A focus on core competencies and vertical disintegration

The changing nature of firm strategy witnessed in recent decades is a response to global competitive pressures. Contrary to traditional business thinking in which diversified corporations group together multiple strategic business units to deliver a single product, firms have now turned to a focus on core competencies, these representing "collective learning in the organisation, especially how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies" (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990: 82). It is a firms' success in maintaining advantages in these core competencies, the argument goes, that best contributes to firm success in the long-term.

While an emphasis on core competencies need not necessarily lead to the vertical disintegration of the firm, this has been an all too common consequence of the strategy. However, the feasibility of disintegration is as much a consequence (if not more) of technological change than of a change in business mindsets. From the late 19th century to the early postwar period, companies like Singer and Ford succeeded by integrating separate functions into a single firm to achieve efficiency gains through economies of scale. However, starting in the 1980s and 1990s, new digital technologies (such as the bar code) facilitated the fragmentation of production. Coupled with the incentives of the increased costs of manufacturing equipment and new competitive pressures associated with more globalised regimes of production, the old model of vertical integration became (for many companies) a thing of the past (Berger, 2005), opening the door to new strategic focus for the organisation.

In addition, technological change has resulted in a remarkable complexification of supply-chain governance. This complexification has been subject to various interpretations, some more positive than others. For example, Lakhani et al. (2013) argue that there are several types of value chain governance, each associated with different power configurations and outcomes for employment systems. These authors identify five types of value chain governance, all of which differ in terms of the complexity of the tasks associated with production and the levels of codifiability needed for knowledge exchange in the chains. They argue that each form of value chain governance has its own ramifications for employment systems. For example, market governance is one in which customers and suppliers buy and sell standardised products through a chain that has high task codifiability and low task complexity (e.g. the production and sale of bicycles). These value chains tend to have weak lead firms with little knowledge of their suppliers' employees. These suppliers often exhibit unstable employment patterns, yet also tend to respond more to local institutional influences. On the contrary, hierarchical chains tend to exhibit the exact opposite behaviour, as is the case with Japanese electronics companies. The lead firms in these chains are immensely powerful and demonstrate a deep understanding of supplier employee activities. Supplier employment tends to be more stable in these chains, while local institutions tend to exhibit less influence on working conditions than do the directives of lead firms. Thus, employment outcomes are highly connected to this type of value chain governance, which in some cases can be beneficial to worker risk, and in other cases detrimental.

A broader study focussing on a variety of working conditions in the United States paints a grimmer picture. David Weil (2014) examines what he calls "workplace fissuring", a concept which denotes firms' strategic decisions to shed employment customarily carried out within the lead enterprise to subsidiary organisations. Given the need to align their human resource strategies with a focus on core competencies, firms have relegated the management of most employees to outside organisations such as contractors, franchisees, and other actors within the supply-chain. This change in the employment relationship places immense pressure on subsidiary organisations to cut costs in the management of human resources, since they are struggling to produce profits under the myriad restrictions imposed on their operations by lead firms. For example, Dunkin Donuts' franchisees are required to sign lengthy agreements that bind them to strict operational requirements, from quality control to the management of human resources. Many of their franchisees fail to produce a profit under a framework that forces them to incur high costs to comply with brand standards.

New forms of work organisation are also linked to blurring legal boundaries. This is a principal argument in a contribution by Fudge (2012), in which she argues that new forms of work organisation have led to the commercialisation and informalisation of work, leaving workers unprotected and outside the scope of current labour codes. Thus, the economic security of employees has deteriorated as subsidiary organisations neglect labour standards and cut costs to maintain the viability of their businesses.

It is worth emphasising that firm financialisation has played an important role in shaping the fragmented employment relationship and declining working conditions. According to Cushen (2013: 314), "financialisation refers to the increasingly significant role of financial markets, financial actors, and financial motives in daily life". Deregulation and institutional change have paved new avenues for extracting wealth from firms. One critical example is the rise of pay-for-performance arrangements in which managers are rewarded for callously monitoring and disciplining their employees to meet company standards. In fact, research suggests that "meaner" employment relations are positively correlated with the sums of CEO compensation (Batt and Appelbaum, 2014). Furthermore, a study of the pressures of financialisation by Cushen (2013: 314) found that these pressures "cause insecurity, work intensification, suppression of voice and the enactment of falsely optimistic behaviours; all of which prompt distress and anger amongst knowledge workers". Therefore, in combination with firm strategies relating to performance and the structuring of value chains, financialisation has placed new pressures on workers and appears to render them at even greater exposure to risk.

1.3.2 Union strategy in a context of decline

Worker institutions have been weakened in most OECD countries, thereby hampering unions' capacity as strategic actors in collective bargaining. Perhaps most notable are the declines in union density. Several scholars have dedicated significant amounts of energy to investigating the sea change in membership across OECD countries, suggesting that unionism is in a state of crisis. To a large extent, this is caused by economic change. New sectors of employment, such as high tech and growing service sectors are replacing heavily unionised sectors, like manufacturing. New forms of work organisation, such as the rise in independent contracting, have proven incompatible with traditional union structures and cultures (Dufour et al., 2010). Furthermore, evidence indicates that union density is positively correlated with the strength of the economy. Thus, fragile economic conditions chip away at sources of union support (Schnabel, 2003).

Demographic change is also a key driver of union decline. Traditional white male unionism has been challenged by increased diversity in the workplace, challenging unions to rethink traditional identities and adapt to the greater importance of representing women, visible minorities, and youth in their activities. Other micro-level determinants include levels of education and left-wing political attitudes, both of which are positively correlated with support for unionism (Schnabel, 2003). Institutions are also very relevant to support for unionism. For instance, research shows that the Ghent system, in which unions bear significant responsibility for welfare payments such as unemployment benefits, provide potential members with positive incentives to join and support unions. However, institutions of worker voice are eroding across OECD countries, leaving unions with less power than they enjoyed in the early postwar decades (Doellgast and Benassi, 2014). The decentralisation collective bargaining is nearly universal across Western countries. There has been a notable decline in multi-employer sectoral agreements and other institutional features that support coordinated bargaining. Unfortunately, the weakening of coordinated collective bargaining at the national level has impeded the possibility for cross-national coordination (Marginson, 2015a).

However, a key theme in the literature is that a major problem facing unions is internal. Thus, while external changes tell an important part of the story for union decline, understanding union's internal capacity for dealing with external conditions is crucial to understanding the larger study of union decline, as well as prescribing what can be done to solve it. Of particular interest is what Dufour and Hege (2010) describe as internal legitimacy, since today's unions lack the capacity needed to represent different groups and interests, and to thereby unite workers under a common identity. In addition to identity, the crisis of unionism is associated to declines in worker power. Unions have a variety of power resources at their disposal. These include internal solidary, network embeddedness, narrative resources, and organisational resources. The strength of these resources, coupled with unions' aptitudes for utilising them to achieve strategic goals, affect their ability to effectively respond to external change (Levesque and Murray, 2010).

Unfortunately, unions have exhibited a decline in their economic and political power. Research on North American unions suggests that they are experiencing a crisis as working-class organisations, damaged by the reconstitution of union strategies such as concession bargaining (MacDonald, 2014). Even Quebec unions, which are often commended as a North American exception for resisting union decline, are struggling to maintain their strength in the neoliberal context. One manifestation of this weakening is the prolongation of collective agreements in the province, a tendency which has negatively impacted workers and their representatives (Laroche et al., 2015). This trend is not likely to change unless they rethink their identities and build political ties to exercise power in the socio-political arena (Hyman and McCormick, 2010).

The story is not as bleak as many think. The forces of globalisation and sectoral restructuring, as well as decentralisation, have not had a uniformly negative impact on union densities across countries. In a study of 25 developed countries, Schnabel finds that net union membership (total union membership, including only wage and salary employees in employment) actually increased in more than half (13) of these countries between 1960 and 2010. The results are similar when the periods of 1970-2010 and 1980-2010 are examined (Schnabel, 2013).

The pressures on unions have grave implications for their strategies vis-à-vis mitigating worker risk. According to Doellgast and Benassi (2014), the erosion of collective bargaining institutions and the rise in employer power has had negative distributional consequences for workers. The new power balance has weakened unions' capacity to negotiate not only bread and butter issues such as wages and job security, but renders them incapable of addressing a broad number of issues pertaining to worker risk, such as working time and health care. The pressures on collective bargaining listed above are likely to remain in the future. Thus, union strategies in a changing context will be all the more important to address the growing risks facing workers.

Union strategies possess important implications for both workers and citizens. Unfortunately, there exists scant research examining the interconnections between collective bargaining and risk in general. However, related research shines some light on the role of union strategies in mitigating risks. One stream of research has investigated the role of mutual gains versus adversarial strategies to collective bargaining over risk. In the United States, Kochan and others (Kochan et al., 2013; Bamber et al., 2009; Kochan, 1994) have argued that joint labour-management initiatives have demonstrated some successes in achieving mutual gains for both workers and their employers. They suggest that workers and their representatives can be important resources to firms, and that a well-compensated and trained workforce can contribute to improving the quality and efficiency of the production process. However, only a minority of firms engage in these practices, thus a major problem lies in how to diffuse these practices across the broader economy. This research is complemented by research in Canada which demonstrates that decentralised bargaining has led to inefficient supplementary benefits that burden private sector workers and their employers with burgeoning drug costs. Due to the adversarial elements in Canada's collective bargaining system, negotiators and stakeholders argue that information asymmetries and a lack of employee engagement prevent Canadian industries from achieving cost-effective drug plans, and that some form of social dialogue and / or universal program is needed to rectify the problem (O'Brady et al., 2015). Thus, there is growing suspicion of the role of negotiation strategies in achieving equitable risk outcomes for workers.

Moreover, economic insecurity is of particular relevance to debates on the role of unions in protecting insiders and outsiders. Founded by Lindbeck and Snower (1986), this theory separates workers into two categories. There are the insiders, those workers who enjoy favorable employment conditions within the firm, and outsiders, those employees who share a differentiated employment status with less favorable employment conditions. According to this theory, firms increasingly employ outsiders to meet flexibility needs while maintaining the privileged segment of employment held by their traditional employees. The insiders hold considerable power due to the high costs of hiring, training, and firing employees. They use this power to obtain wages above the “market clearing” level at the expense of outsiders (Lindbeck and Snower, 2001; Lindbeck and Snower, 1989; Lindbeck and Snower, 1986).

Originally designed as a theory of unemployment, this theory has evolved to explain broader trends in working conditions across different segments of employment. This is due to the fact that two-tier employment is increasingly prevalent across industrialised countries. In Canada and the United States, for example, employers are increasingly introducing two-tiered compensation, in which younger workers are offered lower wages and benefits than older workers occupying the same positions within firms. This has been a principal means of shifting company workers from defined benefit to defined contribution pension schemes (MacNeil, 2013).

However, some unions are pursuing innovative strategies to reverse this trend towards increased insecurity. Dean and Reynolds (2009) have documented how South Bay’s AFL-CIO Labour Council worked with other stakeholders to spearhead the Children’s Health Initiative, a program to provide health services to children in that Californian region. Meanwhile, Quebec’s industrial relations actors have innovated by legislating restrictions on the use of two-tier compensation arrangement for workers (MacNeil, 2013). This is significant, as two-tier arrangements can involve shifts in risk to those specific segments of workers with less job tenure or those not covered under collective agreements at all.

In their analyses of market dualisation in France and Germany, Jaehrling and Mehaut (2013) have shown that institutional conditions and outmoded employment regulations provide employers with myriad opportunities to impose risks on less fortunate outsider. However, a significant finding of their research is that the absence of strong employee representatives and weak sectoral bargaining have impeded rule enforcement and led to heightened risks in the retail, hotel and hospital sectors. Thus, two tier arrangements, such as low-wage agency work and other forms of atypical employment, have skyrocketed in those countries. Thus, unions have come under immense pressure to protect workers, yet changing contexts are limiting their ability to provide economic security to workers within and outside of their core membership. Whether it is the increasing decentralisation that prevents the uniform social regulation of work across worker segments, or the concomitant rise of employer power in a context of globalised production, unions are struggling to adopt effective strategies to protect workers. These changes are potentially undermining the historical efficacy of collective bargaining as a tool for mitigating worker insecurity in many scenarios, which is why an examination of the impacts of bargaining strategies responding to such pressures is of critical importance.

1.3.3 State strategy: Retrenchment, regulation, and risk

States play an important role in shifting risks within the labour market. These strategies can be categorised in terms of retrenchment and regulation. Retrenchment, commonly known as welfare state retrenchment (and in some cases restructuring), denotes reduced social spending and expenditures. Conditioned by historical circumstances, countries have developed diverging welfare regimes to protect their citizens from risk. Welfare states in the Western world have been categorised as Liberal, Conservative, or Social Democratic, with the latter of these three being lauded for its successes in reducing citizen's reliance on the market and for achieving high levels of economic well-being (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

There has been intense pressure to retrench social spending in Western democracies, and most countries have succumbed to this pressure in some form. However, there is no clear uniformity in state strategies with respect to risk mitigation. Interestingly, recent research on quantitative indicators of welfare state spending, such as benefit replacement rates and decommodification, finds that welfare states are not universally engaged in a race to the bottom where social policy is concerned (Starke et al., 2008). More recent research on state strategies in the UK, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands finds that all states have sought to consolidate social spending and cut costs following the Greek sovereign debt crisis, yet each of these countries have also made new forms of social investment in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008-2009 (Kersbergen et al., 2014).

However, despite this lack of uniformity in retrenchment activity, most OECD countries have experienced declines in economic security, as was identified earlier (Osberg and Sharpe, 2014; Osberg and Sharpe, 2011). A key aspect to understanding this augmented risk is acknowledging the private regime of welfare states. In fact, Colin Crouch (2009) has argued that we have entered a privatised Keynesian regime in which public deficits have been replaced with the soaring personal debts of low and middle-income earners, a transition which led to the financial crisis of 2008-2009.

While retrenchment strategies have had a direct influence on economic security, regulatory strategies often exhibit indirect, yet nonetheless important, effects on economic security in developed countries. Many states have deliberately weakened (or failed to modernise) employment regulations, thereby opening up opportunities for firms to make employment more flexible. The increase in flexible employment is actually spurring increased demands for state provided social protection, as fragile part-time and temporary positions continue to grow and play a role in segmenting workers according to employment status (Dekker and van der Veen, 2015; Burgoon and Drekker, 2010). Moreover, a study of flexicurity in Europe shows that while some governments often laud the introduction of flexible employment regulations compensated by increased social protection measures as a means to job creation, the flexibilisation measures adopted by European countries outweigh the forms of social security introduced to counterbalance increases in economic insecurity (Tangian, 2007). Thus, key investments in social policy are not sufficient to offset trends towards greater insecurity, as labour market outcomes associated with employment regulation often drive new forms of risk (Bonoli, 2007). Furthermore, state strategies in employment regulation may affect how risk is distributed across different employee segments (Guillaud and Marx, 2014; MacNeil, 2013).

1.4 The research question

The above review provides some insight on trends in actor strategies and risk. While we know that risk is rising, more systematic research on how actors influence risk outcomes is needed. Interestingly, most of the existing research focusses on state strategies, particularly those pertaining to the retrenchment (or non-retrenchment) of welfare regimes. This finding is puzzling. The above cited research shows that while only half of Western industrialised nations demonstrate clear evidence of retrenchment in their welfare states, risk continues to grow in the OECD. This suggests that a major source of risk lies outside the purview of state policies.

While there is some research on how industrial relations actors have interacted with risks, these focus on specific aspects of risk, and do not capture the broader dynamics of economic security. Perhaps more importantly is that the existing research is hardly sufficient to draw any conclusions on how firm and union strategies have interacted with risk, particularly through collective bargaining (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005). Considering that risk trends relate to employment, lack of research on the interactions between actor strategies and risks at the firm level is particularly troubling, yet shows why research on this area is all the more pertinent.

Two research questions are presented to examine the influence of collective bargaining on risk. **First, how do risk trends differ across unionised settings?** This involves examining the *degree* of these trends, by examining whether unionised workplaces have become more or less risky over time, and the *nature* of risk transformations over time, in terms of how changes in incomes, working hours, and arrangements to cushion expenditure shocks (e.g. health insurance), to shed light on how workers in these environments are being impacted by risk. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to whether and how these risks are allocated across different segments of workers, in order to assess whether shifts in risk have had a differentiated impact on workers. In doing so, this investigation will provide considerable insights on how unionised workplaces have fared with respect to the various risk dynamics briefly described above, all of which will be addressed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Second, this thesis will investigate how collective bargaining strategies have impacted these risk trends. This involves a thorough examination of actor strategies in various settings to determine how they impact risk. First, this will involve explicitly identifying the actor strategies that affect risk. That is, how do the actors themselves perceive these strategies, and how can they be understood conceptually? Second, what are the impacts of these strategies on various aspects of risk? The focus will be on delineating the importance of employer and union bargaining strategies to risk. The aim is to account for how these bargaining strategies matter to risk by assessing them in relation to contextual factors, actor-attributes, and the strategies of other actors (especially the state). This approach to the research problem will be further developed in the next two chapters.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Explanations of Collective Bargaining and Risk

How do current theories contribute to our understanding of collective bargaining and risk? This chapter answers this question through multiple means. First, it examines the notion of risk, and discusses its relevance to collective bargaining. It goes beyond the general notion of risk discussed in the first chapter by developing a new framework for analysing risk. As will be shown below, risk allocation addresses three dimensions of risk, capturing how risks change in terms of their generosity, individualisation, and segmentation.

Second, this chapter examines different theories for explaining risk outcomes in organisations. It first proceeds by exploring how factors relating to markets, institutions, organisations, and actor attributes potentially affect risk. This is followed by a theoretical examination of different bargaining strategies and their potential outcomes. This chapter concludes with a wrap-up of the major conclusions of this review and proposes a simple framework for examining the impacts of bargaining strategies on risk in different settings. The aim of this set-up is to draw out the influence of various factors to risk outcomes in unionised contexts, and to then delineate the influence of bargaining strategies.

2.1 Conceptualising risk: Towards a model of risk allocation

As discussed in the previous chapter, risk denotes uncertainty over whether an individual is to experience economic hardship, a phenomenon which contains both subjective and objective dimensions. A key contribution of this research is that it explores how risk is shaped through collective bargaining. The concept of risk allocation addresses three key risk dynamics: shifts in individualisation, changes in generosity, and segmentation. The following sections unpack these three dimensions and integrates them into a single model.

2.1.1 Shifts between the collectivisation and individualisation of risk

Collective bargaining outcomes interact with larger societal shifts in risk. In his book *The Great Risk Shift*, Jacob Hacker (2006) argued that collective arrangements of risk sharing that were once spearheaded by governments and firms have eroded, resulting in the devolution of responsibility for risks onto individuals. On the one hand, the state is moving away from forms of social protection that involve risk pooling. Welfare state retrenchment, or what some call welfare state restructuring, has added new pressures on collective bargaining, as most jurisdictions face immense pressures to recalibrate or even privatise critical components of their welfare states while unions and employers pursue divergent strategies to fill the gaps (Johnston et al., 2011; Schelkle, 2011). These shifts in risk at the state level may be interpreted as an "unacknowledged policy regime" (Crouch, 2009). Resembling some form of privatised Keynesianism, the old regime reliant on the use of public debts to fueling economic demand while guaranteeing economic security has been replaced by one in which states are rigidly practicing austerity, making personal debts the core driver of economic demand in an individualised economy. Thus, a major shift has taken place in which the role of welfare states has substantially changed in recent decades, as the state has withdrawn responsibility for managing risks in many areas.

On the other hand, firms are also playing a critical role in shifting risks. Firms are increasingly opting out of arrangements to collectivise risks, preferring individualised arrangements for mitigating risks or abandoning responsibilities for such risks altogether. In terms of individualised forms of risk mitigation, the major aspect of this strategy has been to replace risk pooling with individualised savings accounts or lump sum payments dedicated to buffering risks. The shifts from collective health insurance and defined benefit pension plans to individualised savings accounts have become notorious in recent decades (Hacker, 2006). The 1980s marked a major departure in firm strategy towards pensions in the United States, as firms were relentless in their pursuit of "cost containment and flexibility", thereby abdicating "their role as a critical risk bearer in society". Cobb (2015: 1332) argues that the weakening of employee voice mechanisms is to blame for the erosion of collectivised retirement benefits in the United States. Others question whether unions can maintain any influence on pension funds at all, as financial markets have imposed considerable constraints on pension governance (Skerrett et al., 2018).

Thus, risk individualisation is taking place in many scenarios, denoting the tendency towards shifting away from collective arrangements to arrangements in which greater responsibility for risk management is in private hands. While individualisation represents a key dynamic in terms of risk, in that workers must increasingly fend against insecurity individually, it does not address the importance of the level of resources dedicated towards the mitigation of risks in many areas. For this reason, we need to acknowledge the importance of the generosity of both private and public resources to risk mitigation, a concept which is developed in the following section.

2.1.2 Generosity: Exploring the resources that mitigate risk

Generosity matters to risk outcomes. In his landmark book *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Gøsta Esping-Andersen's (1990) examination of welfare regimes focused on their respective capacities for de-commodification, which is largely a reflection of their generosity in terms of providing individuals with resources dedicated to buffering the risks inherent in the market (1990). The more generous the welfare provisions of public and private actors, the greater is the regime's capacity for mitigating undesired risks. This work sparked an interest in the private and public welfare mix, creating a point of departure for future research on the contributions of public and private actors to risk mitigation. It involves incorporating the importance of both state-provided and occupational forms of welfare to analyses of risk; thereby addressing the combined importance of public and private resources towards shielding citizens and workers from uncertainty (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Powell and Barrientos, 2004).

Drawing on this work highlighting the importance of public and private sources of risk mitigation, a slightly revised version of the concept used in the welfare state literature will be applied. The concept of *generosity* refers to the amount of a resource that workers receive to cushion themselves from financial hardship. It addresses both public and private resources, whose contributions to risk mitigation are continuously renegotiated amongst social actors (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008).

Furthermore, while the welfare state literature focusses on conventional forms of social protection (Burchardt and Obolenskaya, 2016; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008; Klein, 2006; Hacker, 2002), such as public and private pension and health care benefits, the concept of generosity developed in this thesis focusses on all resources provided to individual workers by their employers, states, and even unions. Thus, it can also refer to the provision of working hours, salaries, and other areas which typically affect worker risk (Bonnet et al., 2003). The more resource provision is below what is necessary to weather the variabilities inherent in an individual's economic life, the greater is their exposure to risk.

Generosity is to be distinguished from the concept of individualisation discussed earlier. While the individualisation literature focusses on the nature of risk sharing (collective versus individualised arrangements), the concept of generosity concerns the level of resources provided to protect workers from risks. To some extent, the generosity of an arrangement can even offset the negative impacts of individualisation. For example, a highly individualised arrangement associated with a high expected guarantee may be preferable to an arrangement in which the risk is collectivised but the guarantee is poor. Meanwhile, a generous defined contribution plan, in many contexts, can translate into a higher level of retirement security than a less generous defined benefit plan (Brown and Weisbenner, 2014). Thus, the level of resources committed to employees by employer, state, and union actors matters for risk alleviation. However, a final piece of the puzzle deals with the distribution of risks across different categories of workers.

2.1.3 From integrated to segmented risk outcomes

While risks shift along the individualisation/collectivisation continuum and differ in terms of the generosity of arrangements to weather the adverse economic shocks of contemporary life, segmentation describes how risks are segmented across different categories of workers. Segmentation draws on the idea of market dualisation. Dual labour market theorists posit the existence of a privileged core of employees that enjoy full-time status and all of the security benefits such status provides, these being within what has come be known as an "internal labor market". Furthermore, they posit the existence of a "secondary labour market" comprised of employees with insecure working conditions (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). Those within the secondary labour market encounter considerable barriers to penetrating the internal labour market, and are typically trapped in short-term unskilled work with weak working conditions, due to the fact that these jobs are more susceptible to market fluctuations (Kalleberg, 2003). For countries in which labour market protections are weak, the secondary labour market can be tantamount to a poverty trap for many (Maloney, 2003).

How divergences in working conditions across dual labour markets persist is aptly addressed by insider-outsider theory, which argues that these disparities are a function of the relative power of insiders and outsiders on the labour market. This theory was originally introduced to examine how segments of employees who command greater market power, largely through their levels of job protection due to firm turnover costs and status as unionised employees, impact the wages and employment levels of entire categories of employment, often to the detriment of outsiders who do not hold privileged positions within their firms (Lindbeck and Snower, 2001; Lindbeck and Snower, 1989; Lindbeck and Snower, 1986).

The relevance of insider-outsider theory is that it shows that risks can be shifted across worker segments, and that the political divide across the two types of workers and their relative power matters for job quality (Chung and Mau, 2014; Schwander and Häusermann, 2013). Poor working conditions tend to shift from insiders to outsiders in highly dualistic systems, such as through wage increases in escalator clauses (Cousineau et al., 1983). This is less so when dualism is less evident, and hence the insider-outside divide less poignant (Crouch, 2015). However, while insiders share a more privileged status on the labour market, research shows that they too are vulnerable to worsening working conditions, as their command of relative labour market power alone is not sufficient to shield themselves from the internal and external pressure on firms to download risks onto employees (Häusermann et al., 2015). The focus of this research is on how unionised employees exemplify the insider category and how different types of labour politics affect insider-outsider relations and their associated work outcomes such as job security (Emmeneger, 2009).

So far the discussion has suggested that there exists a dichotomy of workers with differential privileges and status in the labour market, and that the relative power of each group may impact shifts in worker risk across different categories of workers. However, the real story is more complex, as the concepts of dualism and insider-outsider relations are binary, and reflect disparities across workers largely in terms of their employment status. Other work has shown how social location represents some of the many “vectors of inequality and social exclusion”, due to the fragmenting of the employment relationship and its differentiated effects on union and state capacities to protect minorities from harmful working conditions (D'Amours et al., 2017). The importance of social location brings us to segmentation theory. Segmentation theory expands on the dual labour market hypothesis to assessing multiple categories of workers and how their working conditions vary in terms of both employment status and social location (Reich et al., 1973). These include how working conditions are segmented on the basis of gender, race, and immigrant status, and how these forms of segmentation affect workers' exposure to non-standard work arrangements (Hudson, 2007).

One important facet of segmentation is women's continuing struggle with worker precarity. For example, research has found that Canadian women, even those in full-time permanent positions, are more likely than men to experience precarious working conditions, an outcome of a labour regulation regime rooted in the early post-war decades. This outmoded regime has failed to adapt to new realities pertaining to the entry of women in the workplace, and while women have made marked improvements in reducing segmentation within core employment, Canadian labour regulation centered on the male breadwinner model still facilitates the segmentation of women into non-standard work arrangements (Cranford et al., 2003; Fudge and Vosko, 2001; Zeytinoglu and Muteshi, 2000).

This differentiation is made evident by research on Canada's public and private sectors. Research has found a significant wage differential by gender in casual and contract work (Fuller and Vosko, 2008). Further research on the Australian context has found that non-pay related work experiences, such as harassment at work, are segmented along gendered lines, particularly in occupations where women's reliance on the market is particularly strong (Peetz, 2015). Similar findings were found in the United States, where males tended to be exposed to more "persuasive" forms of control in the workplace that enhance their creativity, autonomy, and satisfaction with work tasks, while females experienced more "coercive" forms of control such as direct supervision, thereby diminishing their dignity at work along gendered lines (Crowley, 2013). Gendered segmentation is still a grave concern for workers in both internal and external labour markets, as differential working conditions have been found across genders in both settings (Fuller and Vosko, 2008).

Segmentation by race, a term attributed to visible minorities otherwise known as non-caucasians (Fuller and Vosko, 2008), has proven particularly relevant to workers' differential experiences with job quality. In the United States, the segmentation of risk is critically evident, as the segregation of "separate societies" by race in the country's major cities has formed the basis of class-relations. Structural changes in the American economy have trapped racial minorities in a downward spiral of heightening risks coupled with diminished economic opportunity (Goldsmith and Blakely, 2010). In Canada, research suggests that segmentation by race is just as evident as segmentation by gender, as visible minorities are considerably more likely to engage in non-standard work. The segmentation effects are amplified when gender and race characteristics are combined, meaning visible minority females are the most likely to work in precarious working conditions. Moreover, immigrant workers fared even worse than their non-immigrant counterparts (Fuller and Vosko, 2008), thereby showing that immigrant-status is particularly important to segmentation outcomes. In fact, immigrants in Canada experienced a considerable decline in wages relative to Canadian born workers, particularly those at the "low end of the wage distribution" (Boudarbat and Lemieux, 2014). In his research on immigrant workers in the United States, Hudson (2007) found that immigrant status and citizenship, even more so than race or sex, are useful predictors of how certain worker segments experience barriers to entry with respect to entering privileged primary sector positions in the American labour market. Meanwhile, Canadian research has shown that major increases in immigration and those with visible minority status, coupled with an interaction effect with gender and age, leads to social exclusion and segmentation as immigrants experience weak returns from their education, work experience and union affiliation, as well as the negative effects of socialisation processes that tend towards the idealisation of characteristics associated with being Canadian born (Lightman and Gingrich, 2013; Malenfant et al., 2010).

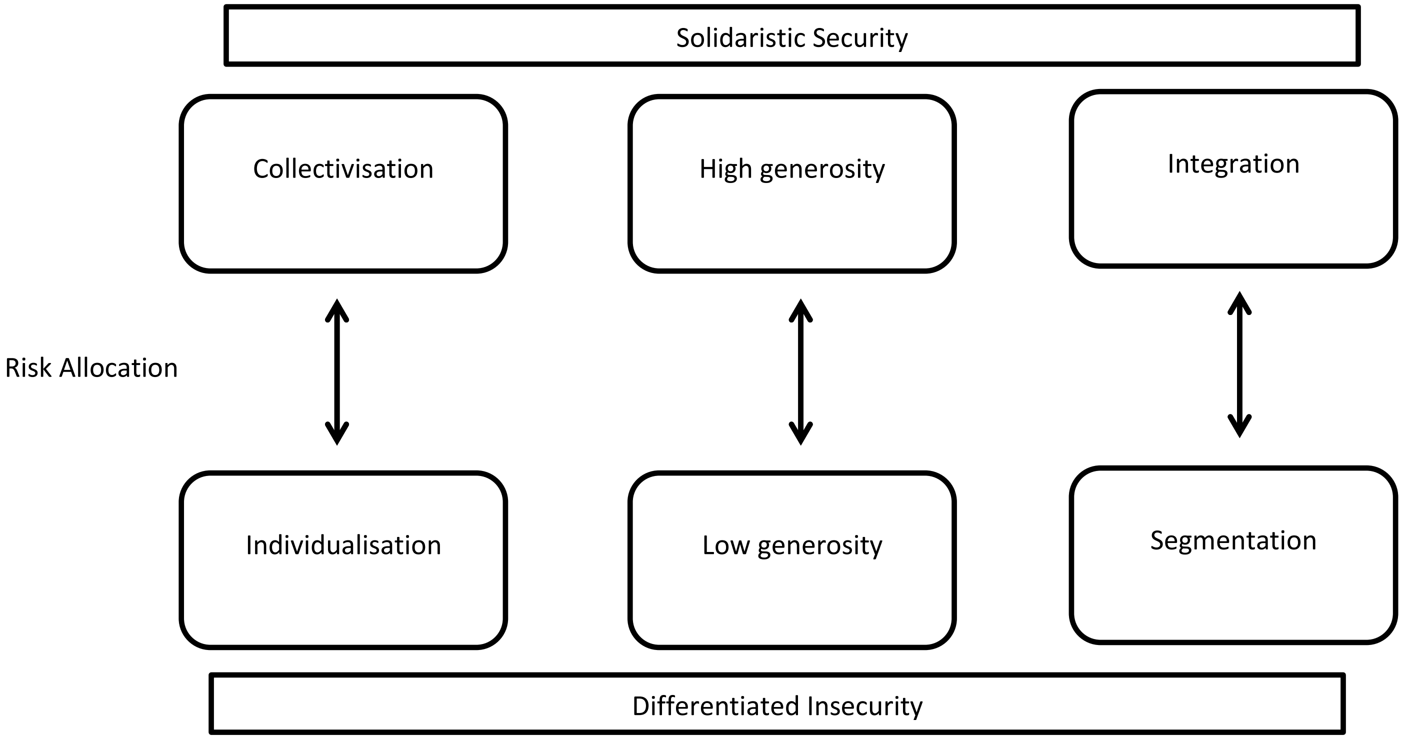
While the above research explores segmentation across select countries, they illustrate a trend present across Western industrialised democracies. A large study by Seeleib-Kaiser et al. (2012) on France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States has shown that all of these countries, despite their institutional differences, have experienced segmentation in specific risk areas. They call this trend the "dualization of welfare". Similarly, Häusermann and Schwander (2012) found that all post-industrial countries have experienced the effects of segmentation across insiders and outsiders, as well as in social location, in terms of their workers' differentiated experiences in the labour market, with social welfare, and in terms of political integration, which addresses gaps in political participation and union membership. This research suggests that while segmentation is significant in all societies, Nordic welfare regimes have been the most successful at mitigating the disparities in "job perspectives, income, welfare rights and political integration" compared to other post-industrial labour markets. Thus, the above review has suggested that segmentation is indeed pertinent to workers' risk experiences, by invoking how risks differ and shift across employment status and social location. Having demonstrated the relevance of segmentation as a key dimension to risk allocation, the final section in this part links all three dimensions of risk allocation into a single model.

2.1.4 A risk allocation model

Drawing from the discussion of risk movements above, a Risk Allocation model has been constructed for describing risk outcomes in collective bargaining (Figure 2.1). It delineates between the best- and worst-case scenarios in which shifts in risk allocation take place. On the one hand, solidaristic security describes the best-case scenario in which risks are fully collectivised, generosity is high, and there is no segmentation across worker categories. On the other hand, differentiated insecurity describes the worst-case scenario in which risks are fully individualised, generosity is low, and high levels of segmentation are observed. This second scenario occurs when the ideals of high security and solidarity have been entirely compromised, leaving workers poorly positioned to deal with the risks that lay before them.

This model offers a way to study the complexity of risks in the contemporary context of the firm. While the literature on risk tends to focus on one of the three aforementioned dimensions of risk in isolation, the three dimensions of risk will be integrated into a single model for this research. This is perhaps the first holistic model for examining movements in risk, capturing the full range of dynamics, while also highlighting the importance of public and private contributions to risk mitigation, as well as how they change over time. It demonstrates important dimensions of risk, and shows how they interact together to impact the overall risks affecting workers as a whole. Having developed this risk allocation model to portray movements of risk in the context of collective bargaining, the second part of the chapter now turns to key theories to explain risk outcomes in collective bargaining.

Figure 2.1 – Risk Allocation Model



2.2 The Importance of Theoretical Diversity to Explaining Bargaining Outcomes

As elaborated by Beatrice Webb, collective bargaining consists of a process in which workers negotiate for better working conditions with their employers as a collective, rather than individually (Webb, 1907; cited in Doellgast and Benassi, 2014). While this broadly refers to broader interactions between two core parties, these traditionally being unions and employers, their outcomes also reflect dynamics that go far and beyond those between firm and union representatives. Inspired by a body of research that suggests that contextual and structural factors must be incorporated into research on work and employment (Hyman, 2008; Edwards and Kuruvilla, 2005; Paauwe and Boselie, 2003; Godard, 1997), the analysis of actor strategies will be complimented by an examination of market-related, organisational, institutional, and actor-oriented characteristics. This research posits that risk outcomes in collective bargaining may be the result of various factors and that theoretical diversity is therefore required. These are reviewed in the next parts.

2.3 Markets

The following sections provide a brief examination of how markets relate to bargaining outcomes. Since collective bargaining in the private sector affects companies, profit-making entities, it seems natural to presume that the supply and demand of products affects their capacity to improve working conditions in their workplaces. The major factor examined here is marketisation. This concept was chosen because of how it captures the importance of price competition to bargaining outcomes and the growing literature dedicated to understanding its social effects on workers.

2.3.1 Marketisation

The concept of marketisation is mobilised to examine how market dynamics affect bargaining outcomes. It is defined as the "intensification of price-based competition" (Greer and Doellgast, 2017: 193). Marketisation is to be distinguished from other types of competition, such as those based on product or service quality, in that it specifically refers to instances where firm survival in the market hinges on their ability to provide low prices. The intensification of price competition can be precipitated by many factors, including the entry of new competitors to domestic markets, the internationalisation of markets, labour market deregulation, the vertical disintegration of the firm, and the arrival of new technology. The fact that it stems from so many sources explains why its growth can be difficult to anticipate.

The fact that marketisation has negative implications for working conditions has become more conspicuous in recent years. When marketisation is high, profit-margins grow tighter and employers experience considerable pressure to cut costs. Since personnel costs represent a large portion of firm budgets, workers are often directly affected. For example, historical research has documented how Wal-Mart's successes in supply-chain optimisation, anti-union avoidance strategies, and aggressive control of in-store labour costs have undermined traditional retailers' competitive position, pushing them to introduce extreme forms of insecurity to compete based on low prices (Lichtenstein, 2009; Carré and Tilly, 2017). Thus, price-based competition may be associated with ripple effects on firms. As one company offers consumers significantly lower prices through changes to work practices, others feel inclined to follow suit.

Marketisation also matters to collective bargaining. Most glaringly is that it drives competition for weaker working conditions across bargaining units (Greer and Hauptmeier, 2016). Employers often use price competition to pressure unions into making concessions in order to keep their operations financially viable. Unions often concede because they fear that they may lose members should their company become less profitable, or worse, go bankrupt. It is for this reason that research associates higher levels of competition with a weakened bargaining position for unions (Pulignano et al., 2016). Given the above research, intensified price competition should be associated with effects on worker risk.

2.3.2 Summary

The above sections highlight why price competition may be of importance to collective bargaining outcomes that affect risk. On the one hand, marketisation hinders firm capacities to mitigate risks by forcing them to cut labour costs. On the other, marketisation provides unions with a disadvantage in collective bargaining by forcing them to choose between maintaining members over constraining their firms' ability to use labour cost flexibility to give them an edge in pricing their products.

2.4 Organisational contexts

The following sections provide an overview of contextual factors pertaining to organisations. First, organisational performance is examined. However, the notion of performance is widely contested, as organisational performance represents a wide range of variables whose importance ranges depending on the subjective views of corporate and union actors, each of whom tend to emphasise different aspects of organisational performance as being crucial to a firm's success. The following section examines financialisation. This refers to a growing literature stream which has dedicated itself to how shareholder value and financial engineering, often by private equity firms, is transforming working conditions and the employment relationship. The relevance of fissured workplaces in shaping firm outcomes is also examined, showing how different firms organise their value-chains matters for job quality.

2.4.1 Organisational performance

It has been argued that organisational performance "has acquired a central role as the deemed goal of modern industrial activity" (Richard et al., 2009: 719). In fact, an entire field of enquiry has dedicated itself to understanding organisational performance. This is the central preoccupation of scholars subscribing to the Strategic Human Resource Management school of thought, a research paradigm whose core focus is on how human resource practices impact performance. Informed by micro-level studies rooted in the psychology, economics, and management literatures, these studies have tried to explain how HR practices affect various indicators of organisational performance, often treating firms as closed systems and workers as quantitative units of analysis (Batt and Hermans, 2012; Wright and McMahan, 2011; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009).

Interestingly, this research has found that HR practices, including those that relate to risk, impact performance. For example, research on risk suggests that job insecurity has negative impacts on organisational performance, mainly in the form of increased absenteeism, poorer job performance, and higher turnover (Chirumbolo and Areni, 2010; Chirumbolo and Areni, 2005; Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003). While this literature is quite limited in terms of its choice of performance indicators, case selection, and narrow definition of risk, it suggests that greater risk outcomes may negatively impact a company's bottom line. But if risk is bad for performance, why do firms pursue strategies that augment risk to begin with? Do they implement other measures to counteract the negative impacts of risk, such as programs that improve employee attitudes (Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003), or has the literature simply done a bad job of exploring the links between risk and performance?

The concept of organisational performance has been the subject of debate. This attests to the difficulty of defining organisational performance as a construct, whose dimensions are highly variable by field of study, type of stakeholders, and the levels of analysis privileged by researchers (Rogers and Wright, 1998). Many have gone beyond the narrow scope of performance focusing on economic valuations and the limited viewpoint of the firm to reflect a diversity of stakeholders, objectives and outcomes (Kaufman, 2015; Godard, 2014; Batt and Hermans, 2012; Kaufman, 2012; Batt and Banerjee, 2012).

The major proposition here is that aspects of organisational performance may indeed be of immense importance to risk outcomes in collective bargaining. Objective performance is important, in that it addresses the concrete performance outcomes of firms, which play an important role in guiding decision-making (Richard et al., 2009). Since the links between specific human resource practices and organisational performance are often difficult to confirm empirically (Meier and O'Toole, 2013), the subjective views of actors on how human resource practices drive worker security affect organisational performance is of particular interest. However, performance considerations cannot be separated from important trends pertaining to financialisation and value chain governance, two organisational characteristics which are also of considerable importance to risk.

2.4.2 Financialisation

It is impossible to discuss the relevance of organisational performance without addressing the financialisation of firms during the 20th century. Krippner (2005: 181) argues that firm financialisation denotes "a pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production". It refers to businesses' decreasing reliance on primary production activities to maintain profitably, to the neglect of such activities in favor of financial methods of profit-making. For example, research on the retail sector internationally has shown that leading retail companies have been able to capitalise on dividends, even while the total revenues of their companies have been in long-term decline. In the context of financialisation, this research shows how retailers use strategies not related to traditional production activities to expand profits, thereby shifting their focus away from core competencies. These strategies include "foreign expansion, financialisation of assets, deterioration of suppliers' and workers' positions and the use of working capital management to transform market power into financial gains" (Baud and Durand, 2012: 241). This has led to a crisis of accumulation, in which the gains of production are being diverted away from productive investment to financialised activities, thereby transferring considerable power to the financial industry in the process, to the detriment of workers and worsening income inequality (Van der Zwan, 2014; Crotty, 2005).

Furthermore, financialisation is often associated with the rising power of the private equity (PE) model. According to Eileen Appelbaum and Rosemary Batt (2014), private equity firms have acquired 11,500 companies in the United States. The core objective of these private equity firms, through notorious financial strategies (e.g. leveraged buyouts), is to extract maximum value from firms, often at the expense of workers. More specifically, private equity firms profit from loading their companies with immense debts while selling key assets. Provocatively, these firms are not responsible for the debts incurred by their companies, or even incidences of bankruptcy, leaving other firm stakeholders (often their workers) negatively impacted by short-term strategic decisions. This leads to the proposition that firm financialisation may have negative implications for risk outcomes in collective bargaining.

2.4.3 Fissured workplaces

Originating in the work of David Weil, "fissured workplaces" research shows how responsibility for jobs has been shed from lead firms to franchisees, subcontractors, and supply-chain actors, and that this adds pressure on non-lead employers to cut corners on working conditions to maintain viable businesses (Weil, 2014; Weil, 2011). For example, research on employment in franchise jobs demonstrates that job quality in such settings is markedly inferior to that of less fragmented workplaces (Cappelli and Hamori, 2008).

The fissuring of workplaces has been particularly relevant to collective bargaining. Research has shown that the blurring of the employment relationship, through the "vertical disintegration" of the firm has led to the erosion of traditional collective bargaining structures in some contexts. For example, franchising and subcontracting have been used as a means to avoiding collective bargaining and other employee voice mechanisms in Germany (Doellgast, 2012; Doellgast and Greer, 2007). Thus, fissured workplaces have not only introduced governance structures which hurt workers by squeezing actors across value chains, but they are associated with a regulatory environment that facilitates a form of exit from collective bargaining. However, this last point becomes clearer in the later section on bargaining structures.

The key analytical point here is that fissured workplaces are a relevant aspect of contemporary organisational contexts. They matter for organisational performance, as organisational performance is not confined to the experiences of a single firm, but rather a variety of actors in value chains who possess different objectives concerning performance. Furthermore, they matter for the extent that actors across value chains have discretion over human resource practices, including those pertaining to risk. Responding to this, the proposition drawn from this section is that workplace fissuring, on account of how it fragments workers' relationships with both firms and unions, is likely to play an important role in shaping risk outcomes in collective bargaining.

2.4.4 Summary

The above sections proposed that organisational contexts likely play a critical role in shaping risk outcomes in collective bargaining. First, organisational performance was examined, since performance considerations figure prominently in how firms manage their workers and is a key consideration in decision-making for both firms and unions who have a stake in their company's profitability. Second, financialisation is also considered, as it shifts firm priorities away from workers and productive activities to more financial objectives. Third, workplace fissuring is identified for its impacts on who bears responsibility for risk outcomes. It also alters how firms conceive performance objectives (shaped through power relationships between lead and subordinate firms) and affects unions' ability to provide workers in a given firm with representation. However, while organisational contexts are likely very influential to bargaining outcomes, organisations are embedded in institutional contexts. The next sections will examine institutional theories that contribute to explaining how risks are shaped through collective bargaining.

2.5 Institutional theory

This part will provide a brief assessment of key institutional theories and their implications for risk. These theories examine the rules which govern the interactions between actors in collective bargaining. It begins with Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) theory, examining the role of institutions for market coordination in influencing risk outcomes. It then analyses neoliberal convergence, VoC's counter-theory which proposes that non-market institutions have become of lessor importance to work outcomes over recent years. It ends by discussing the bargaining structures literature, which proposes that collective bargaining arrangements may also matter, perhaps more so than national institutions.

2.5.1 Varieties of Capitalism: On the role of institutional complementarities

Varieties of Capitalism made its way to industrial relations in the 1990s. It entered the mainstream in 2001 after Peter Hall and David Soskice published their seminal work entitled *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. The key thesis is that national institutions for market coordination impact societal outcomes. According to this firm-centric theory, modern economies are split into a dichotomy. They are either liberal market economies (LMEs), in which firms and other actors interact on the basis of market principles, or coordinated market economies (CMEs), in which their actions are guided by non-market forms of coordination.

In their initial work, Hall and Sokice (2001) argued that Germany and the United States differed across five spheres of activity relating to industrial relations, vocational training and education, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, and employee relations. Being a coordinated economy (CME), Germany's system of industrial relations emphasises coordination over wages and working conditions, coordination over employee training, patient capital emphasising long-term returns, cooperative inter-company relations to resolve coordination problems and facilitate transfers in technology, as well as a cooperative relationship with employees emphasising consensus, reputations within networks, and long-term employment contracts. On the other hand, the United States operates as a liberal market economy (LME), in that it emphasises the primacy of markets in setting wages and working conditions, focuses on general education and skills (as opposed to industry specific skills in CMEs), shareholder capitalism with a short-term orientation, market-based and competitive relations between firms, and unilateral management decision-making authority and short-term employment contracts. According to VoC theory, there exist multiple complementarities within each economy's institutions. These complementarities affect firm strategies, as firms in LMEs are more short-termist than those in CMEs.

VoC theory's relevance to risk bears on its explanation of business strategies. Due to institutional complementarities, firms in coordinated market economies are more likely to invest in long-term strategies. For instance, Hall and Soskice's initial work in the area suggests that CMEs are more conducive to incremental innovation, while institutions associated with LMEs facilitate radical forms of innovation (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Later work showed that coordinated economies exhibit higher economic growth because of their long-term orientation towards investing in production (Hall and Gingerich, 2009). Since firms in coordinated market economies are more oriented towards the long-term, they are more likely to invest in their workers rather than pursuing short-term economic goals. This being the case, the proposition is that national forms of market coordination will affect investments in workers, and hence risk in the process.

2.5.2 Neoliberal convergence theory: The other side of the coordination continuum

VoC theory sparked a debate on the resilience of coordinative institutions. Its chief challenger is convergence theory, a theory which challenges the institutional resiliency and complementarities claims of VoC theorists. The basic premise of neoliberal convergence is that the divergences in countries' industrial relations institutions, which were relatively stable in the early postwar decades, have been steadily disappearing. As a consequence, we have witnessed a convergence in industrial relations systems across most OECD countries in recent decades, bringing nations towards a common model emphasising flexibility and deregulation.

Considerable research has been dedicated to validating this claim. In an influential 15 country study with a focus on Western Europe, Baccaro and Howell (2011) argued that all Western countries have been moving towards a common model of liberalisation between 1974 and 2005, which is most exemplified by the reconfiguration of centralised collective bargaining institutions in many countries. Institutions, they argue, exhibit surprising plasticity, and operate quite differently in changing environments. What is to blame for this convergence? The authors suggest that it is likely rooted in contemporary economic restructuring (deindustrialisation and the financialisation of capitalism), the breakdown of traditional class compromises, and rising employer power. Three in-depth case studies on convergence theory examining institutional change Britain, France, and Sweden reached a similar conclusion, which is that there has been some level of institutional convergence “towards decentralized, individualized, firm-centered industrial relations institutions offering much greater flexibility, and autonomy in the determination of pay and conditions at the firm level” (Howell and Givan, 2011: 250). Therefore, while the VoC literature stresses the importance of maintaining institutional complementarities to achieving successes in economic performance, convergence theory suggests that we are in fact witnessing a breakdown of the traditional dichotomy, suggesting that institutional complementarities no longer play a critical role in institutional reproduction. The major difference between the convergence and VoC literatures is that the former proposes that it is the decline of national institutions that is of critical importance to industrial relations, bringing forth a certain amount of institutional homogeneity in terms of practices and outcomes, while the VoC literature argues that national institutions have actually maintained a considerable amount of resiliency and signify that cross-country differences still matter. The proposition stemming from this research is that the convergence of national institutions also matters to risk.

2.5.3 Bargaining structures: Does centralisation matter?

The VoC and convergence literature streams have emphasised the importance of national forms of market coordination to collective bargaining outcomes. A distinct but related stream of research examines the importance of bargaining structures to outcomes in collective bargaining. The level of collective bargaining may be centralised (national or multi-employer agreements) or decentralised (plant or establishment agreements). These levels are historically rooted in employer preferences (Clegg, 1976), including a desire to neutralise labour conflicts in the workplace (Sisson, 1987).

Bargaining structures have decentralised cross-nationally in past decades, as many sectors have supplanted national or multi-company bargaining with arrangements at firm or establishment levels (Katz, 1993). There exist many explanations for decentralisation. Decentralisation is attributed to macro-level trends such as market liberalisation and labour market de-regulation, and micro-level trends relating to changing firm structures and preferences towards performance (Ortigueira, 2013; Traxler, 2004; Katz, 1993; Hendricks and Kahn, 1982). However, counter-intuitive research has shown that some employers in fact strategize to maintain the stability of centralised bargaining despite greater economic uncertainty. This appreciation for institutional stability can be a reflection of power relations and the "strategic positioning of key actors in the industry", demonstrating that not all employers are unequivocally in favor of local-level negotiations (Laroche and Murray, 2012: 90).

Bargaining structures are clearly influential to the behavior of both employers and trade unions (Sisson, 1987; Clegg, 1976). Changes in these structures come with consequences for workers. Germany is an important case in point. Once heralded for its dual system of collective bargaining, Germany exemplifies the negative effects of decentralisation. On account of the erosion of sectoral bargaining, German workers were the only workers in the EU to experience a decline in their real wage (-6.2%) between 2001 and 2009 (Lehndorff, 2016). The share of German workers in non-standard employment also rose in this period. Thus, this research suggests that the German economic "miracle" is in fact a façade, as recent gains in employment came with adverse impacts on job quality. In a larger study on the wage effects of collective bargaining in Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, Bosch (2015) finds that "shrinking bargaining coverage" negatively impacts wages and income inequality in each of these countries, suggesting that the negative impacts of decentralisation are widespread. In addition to their negative effects on working conditions, Traxler (2003) shows that single-employer bargaining fails to meet performance expectations. Given the interconnections between the above aspects of work and centralisation, the proposition drawn from this research is that bargaining structures affect worker security.

2.5.4 Summary

In addressing key theories on institutions, this part of the chapter has argued that they may be of critical importance to shaping risk outcomes in collective bargaining. The VoC and convergence literatures disagree on many points. However, their work brings forth a common proposition, which is that levels of market coordination matter for risk. Bargaining centralisation is also proposed to affect risk. Bargaining structures are to be distinguished from market coordination, as they focus on aspects of collective bargaining that are often independent from macro-level trends in market coordination. However, a mere focus on institutions appears insufficient, as the above theories neglect the role of actors and the impacts of their choices in different institutional settings. There is a need to examined theories that acknowledge the importance of actors and power to risk outcomes. For this reason, the following sections will examine actor-centered approaches.

2.6 Actor-centered approaches

Actor-oriented theories have arisen to account for the role played by actors in shaping their environments, going beyond simplistic institutional theories that are overly rationalistic and overplay the importance of path dependency. This part looks at how the attributes of actors might contribute to explaining risk outcomes. It discusses the relevance of power resources and the strategic capabilities of unions.

2.6.1 Power resources and strategic capabilities

Mainstream industrial relations theories frequently neglect the role of power. Research emphasising power resources has emerged as an alternative line of analysis, challenging varieties of capitalism for failing to acknowledge the rise of corporate power and its tragic consequences for industrial relations (Doellgast and Benassi, 2014). However, how do we characterise labour power? Levesque and Murray (2010) identify four key resources available to unions. They propose that internal solidarity (e.g. cohesive identities), network embeddedness (diverse links to unions and other community members), narrative resources (interpretative frames of union action), and infrastructural resources (material, human, processes, policies and programmes) are essential to achieving change. However, they go beyond the work of traditional power resource theorists by highlighting the importance of actors' "strategic capabilities" in using their power resources. Thus, unions must master the strategic capabilities of intermediation (fostering collective actions through network activation), framing (defining a clear and autonomous agenda), articulating (over different levels and spaces), and learning (to diffuse learning within the union) should they wish to successfully manage their resources in enacting change.

A long line of research dedicated itself to exploring the links between these power resources to bargaining outcomes. For instance, research shows that union delegates yielding greater power resources feel more powerful in collective bargaining and exert more influence on workplace change (Murray et al., 2014). Others have pointed to the importance of international coalition building as a means to bolstering union influence at the local level (Dufour-Poirier and Hennebert, 2015; Fairbrother et al., 2013; Kay, 2011; MacDonald, 2003). These are merely examples of a much larger body of work that has emerged on the relevance of actor power to collective bargaining outcomes. Thus, it is proposed that actor power and capabilities are critical to understanding their role in mitigating risk. More pointedly, it is the power of labour actors in challenging private interests that appears most relevant, as stronger unions are more likely to succeed in serving their workers' interests through collective bargaining.

2.6.2 Summary

The core proposition drawn from the actor-oriented theories examined in the above sections is that actor attributes may matter to risk. This may be in the form of power resources and the strategic capabilities held by unions, as unions who feel strong may be react differently to threats facing working conditions. An analysis of these attributes enables one to capture important actor dynamics that matter to collective bargaining. However, they do not address the specific choices that actors make in collective bargaining. For this this reason, the next part will examine the importance of actor strategies, this representing the core subject of this thesis.

2.7 Actor strategies

Of core interest is providing insights on how collective bargaining strategies impact risks in various contexts. Even when faced with similar pressures, actors operate according to different ideas and rationales in crafting their responses to change. The contents of bargaining strategies may be particularly relevant to bargaining outcomes, since considerable research suggests that actors in collective bargaining possess critical latitude to choose, despite the influence of organisational and institutional contexts (Bélanger et al., 2013; Almond et al., 2005; Kochan et al., 1986). Furthermore, while collective bargaining is principally carried out between unions and employers, this study suggests that state strategies also merit special emphasis for their effects on risk on labour relations. Thus, the strategies of all three actors is examined.

2.7.1 Firm Strategy towards employee and union relations

How do firm strategies influence risk? Drawing on Walton et al.'s (2000) work on "strategic negotiations", the importance of firm strategies vis-à-vis both employee and union relations will be highlighted. With respect to employee relations, firm strategies tend to diverge in terms of how they motivate their workforces to achieve the goals set out by the company. On the one hand, they can choose a strategy of *compliance*, in which they attempt to control their employees and discipline them throughout the production process. On the other hand, they can opt for a *commitment* strategy in which they positively engage their employees to ensure that they have a vested interest in the company's success.

The employee relations strategy pursued by firms has never been so important. Given the growing pressures of globalisation and technological change, companies have had to make critical choices concerning how they manage their employees to ensure their competitiveness in changing contexts. Kalleberg (2003) provides an excellent illustration of how commitment and compliance strategies relate to working conditions. His research has identified how some firms opt for a "low road" approach in which workers are treated as "disposable" inputs of production. Through an emphasis on "numerical flexibility" – such as large-scale efforts to reduce labour costs - employee commitment is sacrificed to address labour cost concerns. As a result, a compliance strategy in which employee control is necessary to motivate production becomes the core strategy pursued by the firm.

However, a considerable number of firms have pursued the "high road", by implementing commitment strategies that consist of training a high flexibility workforce that excels at teamwork and provides significant input into company operations (i.e. high-performance work systems). By realising "functional flexibility" within the enterprise, without necessarily diminishing working conditions, firms adopting this model attempt to capitalise through the productivity gains achieved through a highly trained, compensated, and thereby committed workforce (Kalleberg, 2003).

Of course, firms can adopt variants of both strategies. They can apply commitment models towards certain categories of workers and compliance strategies towards others. This mixed strategy has played a significant role in expanding labour market segmentation. This segmentation effect in hospital and metal sectors was explored by Crouch (2015). Employers in union and non-union firms have incentives for protecting core skilled (or sometimes non-skilled) workers to ensure skills retention, while segmenting certain categories of workers to buffer against changing economic conditions. However, the combination strategy need not necessarily be bad. For example, Locke et al.'s (2009) research on the global apparel industry found that a commitment model can overlap with a compliance model as a means to problem solving and sharing "best practices" across the value chain. Thus, the two approaches, when effectively combined in a non-segmented fashion, can in fact yield some interesting outcomes for firms and workers.

A second strategy relates to labour relations. As this thesis investigates collective bargaining, it is of interest that firms experiencing similar environmental pressures pursue divergent strategies of engagement towards unions. According to Walton et al. (2000), this is the "social contract aspect of labor relations". First, firms can implement a strategy of tolerance, but not active cooperation, which the authors describe as *arms-length accommodation*, the most common form of labour relations during the traditional New Deal era of unionism. Second, firms may opt to *avoid* unions altogether by adopting an oppositional stance. Through this, these firms seek to evade, weaken or even eliminate the union altogether. Finally, there are those firms which embrace union *cooperation* and seek to encourage participation through various means.

Given the decline of traditional arms-length accommodation, most firms today are faced with a choice: do they to oppose or cooperate with unions? Much research on this suggests that cooperative firm labour relations strategies are conducive to superior working conditions. A general study analysing the Australian Worker Representation and Participation Survey found that the industrial relations climate tends to be poor in establishments where management is perceptibly opposed to unions (Pyman et al., 2010). Other research has focussed on the specific strategy used by employers to oppose unions in their sectors and establishments. For example, Hatton has studied how employers hire temporary agency workers to weaken unions. Through an analysis of 106 labour-management disputes, Hatton's (2014: 86) research argues that the hiring of such workers is carried out "to prevent unions from forming, to weaken existing unions, to apply pressure on unions during negotiations, and to intimidate or harass striking workers". Thus, the negative impacts of union opposition may be felt by unionised workers through managerial efforts to weaken their bargaining position, as is done through the pursuance of exit options such as temporary agency workers, or by merely meeting the needs of flexibility by shifting poor working conditions to workers at the periphery (Jansen et al., 2014; Jaehrling and Méhaut, 2013).

Furthermore, it is of importance to note that the employee and labour relations strategies of firms are often interconnected. International research on the airline industry has found that some firms adopt strategies to avoid unions while controlling employee behavior, a combination that leads to flexibility and the deterioration working conditions. Meanwhile, others pursue union partnerships coupled with a commitment strategy, often to the benefit of their employees. Interestingly, it is often presumed that low-cost business strategies are more compatible with the avoidance/control strategy, thereby perpetuating the myth that low-costs (in the airline industry) can only be attained through union avoidance, low commitment, and poor working conditions. However, research has shown that high commitment strategies (profiting from functional flexibility) coupled with union partnerships, have been integral to many firms' low-cost business strategies, thereby serving as a counter-example which justifies the amelioration of working conditions to achieve efficiency goals (Gittell and Bamber, 2010; Bamber et al., 2009).

The proposition here is that firm strategies could also explain risk variations in collective bargaining. What is also of interest is how these strategies relate to different institutional and organisational contexts. Furthermore, it is also important to recognise that other actor strategies may also be of considerable relevance to economic security in collective bargaining, such as those of unions and the state.

2.7.2 Union strategy: A question of cooperation and mobilisation

As the other key actor in collective bargaining, union strategies are also important to negotiations over worker security. Union collective bargaining strategies involve positioning towards two goals, the first relating to the type of labour-management relationship aspired to by the union, and the second pertaining to its mobilisation strategy. With respect to the labour-management relationship, there is significant literature dedicated to the extent of cooperation sought from management by union actors. This is a significant aspect of Walton and McKersie's (1965) classic "behavioral theory of labor negotiations", in which unions could choose between distributive bargaining of a zero-sum and confrontational nature, and integrative bargaining of a positive-sum and more cooperative nature. The choice over whether to cooperate, it is argued, has a ripple dynamic on the entirety of the collective bargaining process.

Drawing from this theory, Boxall and Haynes (1997) provide a simpler model suggesting that union strategies towards employers can be either *adversarial*, *cooperative*, or a mixture of the two. The choice of whether to cooperate has been a source of contention for unions in many countries. The expected benefits of such a strategy are that a long-term oriented approach based on relationship building would orient employers' preferences towards improving the working conditions of their employees. Many have had concerns that such a strategy could lead to the "co-option" of labour representatives, should labour be demobilised through the process. However, through a cooperation strategy based on strong union organisation and worker unionisation, it has been shown that both unions and their employers can gain from the mutual legitimation of interests, as well as the restructuring of expectations necessary to preserving a positive relationship between the two parties (Oxenbridge and Brown, 2002; Haynes and Allen, 2001).

Considerable research suggests that workers tend to benefit from union partnerships with management. This research points to the "informal consultative processes" and augmented levels of trust inherent in successful partnerships that have proven fruitful to the amelioration of working conditions (Oxenbridge and Brown, 2004: 388). For example, Geary's (2008) study on labour-management partnerships in Ireland found that a very large majority of union members perceived such arrangements quite positively. In fact, most argued that labour-management cooperation had a positive effect on pay conditions, employment security, job satisfaction, employee performance, confidence in management, and even their ability to embrace change. In connection with this, fewer than 20% of these members found that such arrangements had a negative impact on their unions' capacity to represent their needs (Geary, 2008). Furthermore, another study by Price et al. (2014) argues that the non-adversarial nature of collective bargaining in Australia's retail sector is the core reason that this sector's unions, despite their weak organising efforts, have been capable of improving working conditions in a sector that is internationally known for precarious work.

While significant research suggests that partnerships yield positive outcomes for workers, such arrangements can be fraught with challenges. As shown by Harrisson et al. (2011), cooperative arrangements can challenge the traditional identities of union representatives, who find it difficult to strike the right balance between maintaining close, trusting, and cooperative relations with managers, and maintaining solidarity and trust with their own members. Rolfsen's (2011) research argues that union cooperation with managers becomes particularly problematic when unionists start being perceived as managers. This takes place when union representatives bear responsibility for the diminishment of wages, benefits, and working conditions, particularly when union positions taken in the context of the partnership do not reflect those of their membership base. This becomes even more complex in a neoliberal environment in which employers find it difficult to keep their bargain with unions and in which workplace mutuality (in voluntarist bargaining systems) is increasingly rare (Dobbins and Dundon, 2015). Thus, unions struggle against pressures both to resist concession-making and maintaining the confidence of their members.

In addition to whether unions seek to cooperate or oppose management, unions also vary in terms of their chosen mobilisation strategy. Mobilisation strategies can take a variety of forms, ranging from the provision of basic services to core employees within the bargaining unit, to mobilising a broad alliance within and outside of the firm through some form of alliance. The most basic strategy has been dubbed a "servicing" strategy (Boxall and Haynes, 1997). The premise of this strategy is that unions serve a basic function for the bargaining unit, by providing the mere exchange of basic services in return for fees. These services can be the provision of expert advice, representation functions towards management, and participation in employee benefit governance, but little more.

An over-reliance on servicing, including instances where servicing is mixed with cooperative practices, can be highly problematic to resisting the pressures associated with neoliberalism. The major issue here is that a servicing strategy is one in which there is no coalition building from within nor outside of the organisation. This deficiency can render the union incapable of mounting an offensive to resist pressures deriving from within and beyond the firm (Boxall and Haynes, 1997). The major critique of unions adhering to the servicing model is that its limited focus is associated with many weaknesses in terms of worker solidarity. Solidarity, many have argued, is a necessary precondition to maintaining union influence through collective bargaining, as it enables unions to capitalise on power rooted both within and outside of the firm to enact change for workers (Lévesque and Murray, 2013; Lévesque and Murray, 2010; Lévesque and Murray, 2002; Boxall and Haynes, 1997).

The above research informs two propositions that both the labour relations and mobilisation strategies of unions impact risk outcomes in collective bargaining. Given the above review, decisions over whether to cooperate with management or mobilise workers have implications for outcomes in risk. However, one final piece of the puzzle is the state and its direct and indirect influence on risk.

2.7.3 State strategy towards risk and the employment relationship

Finally, state strategy is of potential importance to collective bargaining outcomes pertaining to risk. The literature on state strategy argues that despite the relevance of institutional contexts, there is still considerable room for the state to make choices through public policy. This may be divided into two propositions.

First, it is proposed that social policies directly impact worker risk. For many countries, the current context is one in which welfare state retrenchment has left citizens bereft of the many forms of publicly provided risk mitigation measures that were present in the early postwar decades. This refers to the retrenchment of public health care, pensions, and other social programs that have historically played a key role in risk mitigation. Some have called this a transition to market citizenship, in which states have become less committed to social outcomes, allowing them to be determined through market dynamics rather than public policy (Fudge, 2005). Furthermore, international welfare state research has shown that states have had differentiated responses to the pressures of globalisation and neoliberalism, and that these responses come with important implications for risk mitigation (Bonoli and Natali, 2012). Thus, drawing on welfare state research, the state plays an important role in risk mitigation through social policies that enhance public and private welfare provisions (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Powell and Barrientos, 2004; Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Second, it is proposed that pro-labour state strategies indirectly impact risk. Labour regulations have been noted for their role in protecting workers. Vallée (2005) has shown that states can introduce a variety of regulations to reduce the vulnerability of workers, ranging from redefining legal categories of employment, enhancing fundamental worker rights, better access to social rights, and reforming institutions of collective representation. For example, recent research has examined how various jurisdictions are demonstrating creativity in crafting strategic labour laws to address the growth of precarious work falling outside the scope of traditional employment statutes. For example, childcare providers in the province of Quebec have been granted the right to collective bargain as a bargaining unit formed around their profession (rather than the boundaries of a single firm). Through negotiations with the state, childcare providers are able to negotiate standards for compensation and working conditions across the province (McCrystal, 2014). In some cases, laws that address both collective representation and forms of direct risk alleviation can be mixed to produce innovative outcomes. In illustration, the new German minimum wage has been integrated into their system of collective bargaining, stipulating that it is the social partners who decide the wage increases and that these increases be aligned with those of collectively bargained wages in the country (Bosch, 2018). Thus, states can be major facilitators in helping workers to access their social rights and means to collective representation.

On the other hand, labour laws can disrupt traditional bargaining relationships with negative consequences for workers, as has been documented with the right-to-work movement in the United States. Through the unraveling of the New Deal and providing states with discretion over labour regulations concerning union security, the decline of closed shops has been linked to diminished union power and rising inequality in the country (Hogler, 2015). Of course, these are merely examples of how state strategies impact collective bargaining, as states have an immense variety of policy instruments at their disposal for addressing risk and labour relations.

This section adopts propositions that state strategies may have important implications for risk outcomes in collective bargaining. Policy choices matter for directly addressing risk through the welfare state. They may also indirectly influence risk outcomes by regulating the employment relationship.

2.7.4 Summary

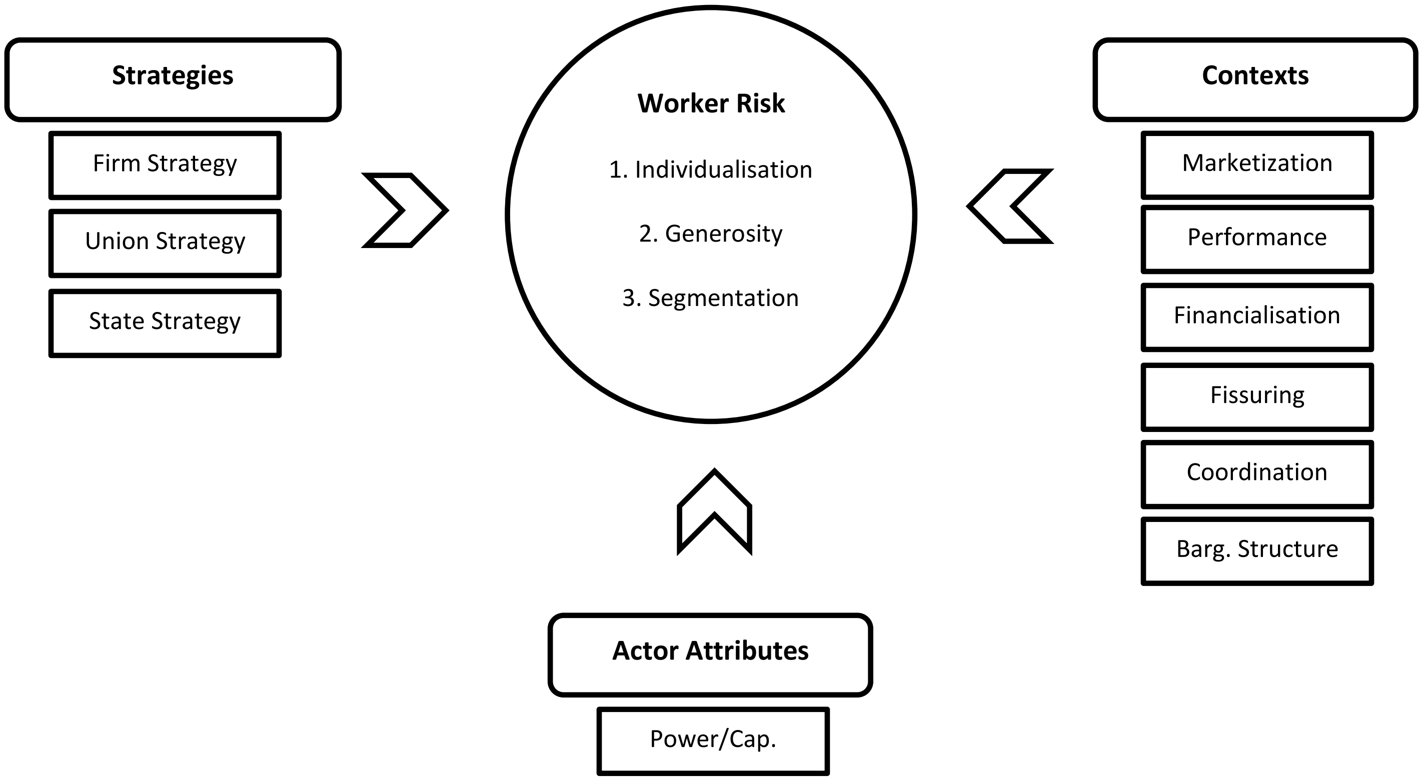
Firm, union, and state strategies may be of considerable importance to risk outcomes in collective bargaining. This potential link is supported through several propositions. First, firm employee relations and labour relations strategies were deemed of importance to risk. Second, unions strategies on whether to cooperate with managers or mobilise their workers were also singled out for their relevance to risk. Finally, while the state is not normally directly involved in collective bargaining, states strategies in the form of social policies and labour regulation matter too. This being the last set of theoretical approaches examined in this chapter, we now turn to a presentation of the theoretical framework.

2.8 Conclusion and theoretical framework

This brings us to the thesis framework (Figure 2.2). This framework provides guidance on how to test how these sets of explanations relating to strategies, contexts, and actor attributes relating to worker risk. First is the concept of risk allocation. This broad concept integrates the risk dimensions of individualisation, generosity, and segmentation, seeking to go beyond most existing research on risk that has investigated one of the three aspects of risk at the expense of others. These three dimensions of risk will structure the examination of worker risk trends in collective bargaining.

This chapter also identified three sets of theoretical explanations that are of relevance to risk. First, the core focus is on the actor strategies of firms and unions, and to a lesser extent the state. This encompasses firm labour relations and employee relations strategies. It also includes unions' labour relations and mobilisation strategies. Finally, state strategies are assessed, those that directly affect risk (social policies) and those that indirectly affect risk (labour regulation).

Figure 2.2 – Thesis Framework



Second, the relevance of contexts is also addressed. These contexts are market-related, organisational and institutional. First, marketisation, otherwise known as intensified price competition, was highlighted for its effects in constraining firms' financial capacity to absorb risk and unions' structural advantage in negotiating. Second, organisational factors are of interest. These include organisational performance and whether it aligns with improved working conditions. Financialisation and its effects on the reordering of firm priorities was also discussed. Finally, fissured workplaces and their effects on who bears responsibility for workers were highlighted. Third, institutions were relevant. This includes the influence of market coordination on the long-term orientation of firm strategies and its associated effects on risk. It also includes bargaining centralisation and its effects on risk through standardising working conditions.

Third, theories relating to the attributes of actors were examined. The power resources and strategic capabilities of unions may be of considerable importance to risk. Stronger unions may be more capable of exacting change through collective bargaining and other means. In this case, it may not necessarily be the strategy adopted by the union that matters (though this may be important), but rather the strength of the union engaged in collective bargaining.

The ultimate aim of this framework is to examine the effects of bargaining strategies (firm and union) on risk. Contrasting the influence of multiple factors to risk serves two purposes. First, it attempts to delineate the relative influence of bargaining strategies (firm and union) by acknowledging the relevance of other factors to risk outcomes. Only by teasing out different possible explanations can the influence of collective bargaining strategies be truly understood. Second, this framework enables the thesis to account for the interconnectedness of different factors that matter for risk. Causality is never straight-forward. Thus, an understanding of bargaining strategies alone would be insufficient to understand their effects on risk, as these tend to differ based on the setting.

Chapter 3

Operationalisation and Research Design

The first chapter established that economic security is a serious and growing issue amongst OECD countries. The second chapter outlined the key theories for exploring the interconnections between collective bargaining and risk. This chapter concretises the research aim through two parts. The first seeks to operationalise the theoretical framework by clarifying the concepts that will be used to investigate the core research question: how do collective bargaining strategies impact economic security? Various hypotheses will be advanced as possible explanations to guide the examination of how actor strategies, understood in their market-related, organisational and institutional contexts, matter for worker insecurity.

The second part of the chapter outlines the research design. On account of its growing prominence as a low-wage sector and its notoriety for perpetuating the growth of precarious work, as well this sector's union presence in all OECD countries, the retail sector provides the testing ground for examining the interrelationships between collective bargaining and risk. Through comparative case studies of different retail firms (supermarkets specifically) in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States, the comparative-case study methodology sets out to examine the influence of strategies, contexts, and actor-attributes on risk allocation. The hypotheses will be tested through the analysis of semi-structured interviews, official documents, government data, and secondary literature.

3.1 Operationalising the framework

In order to operationalise the framework, the first part of this chapter begins by defining risk allocation, the dependent variable whose variance is to be explained in this thesis. Key hypotheses will then be formulated through this conceptual review. Given that supermarket chains will be examined, a point to be justified further on in this chapter, some aspects of the operationalisation will take this into account.

3.1.1 Dependent variable: Risk allocation

As discussed in the previous chapter, risks are allocated through shifts in individualisation, changes to generosity, and segmentation. However, what exactly are the risks to be assessed through the risk allocation framework developed in this thesis? Most significant research defining core areas of economic security in the modern context has been carried out since the early 2000s. This research consists of several strands. Rooted in the works of Jacob Hacker (through his work with the Institution for Social and Policy Studies) and colleagues, and that of Lars Osberg and others affiliated with the Centre for the Study of Living Standards (Osberg and Sharpe, 2014; Hacker et al., 2014; Osberg and Sharpe, 2011; Osberg and Sharpe, 2005; Osberg, 1998), this first strand examines risk from a public policy perspective. Meanwhile, another strand has been shaped out of the works of Guy Standing (through his work with the International Labour Organisation) and related researchers focusing on work-related elements of economic security (Hacker et al., 2014; Bonnet et al., 2003; Standing, 2002).

Elements from these literature streams have been combined to capture those aspects of economic security which are most pertinent to this study. These different strands have been integrated into a Worker Risk Indicators Table (Table 3.1) which draws out the relevant aspects of risk from these research streams. It also situates these different types of risk into the Risk Allocation Framework for testing in this thesis.

Four risk areas will be explored. The first area denotes risks in wages. These reflect the extent that worker wages provided are sufficient to purchase life's necessities, firm real wage guarantees, and the segmentation of wage risks to certain workers. The second area denotes risks in retirement incomes. These reflect the level of resources to buffer risks in retirement, the minimum guarantees provided by firms and the state, and the segmentation of these risks to certain workers. The third area denotes risks in working time. These reflect the extent that workers have access to full-time work, minimum scheduling protections provided by firms, and how these risks are segmented certain of workers. The fourth and final area denotes risks in health care. These reflect the resources provided to buffer health care expenses, basic guarantees provided by firms and the state, and their segmentation to certain workers.

Table 3.1 – Risk Allocation Indicators Table

Indicators of Risk Allocation			
Types of risk	Generosity	Individualisation	Segmentation
Wages	The level of wages provided to purchase life's necessities	The extent that real wage increases are guaranteed by firms	The extent that wage risks are isolated to specific categories of workers
Retirement incomes	The level of resources provided to buffer income risks in retirement	The extent that minimum retirement incomes are guaranteed by firms or the state	The extent that risky retirement arrangements are isolated to specific categories of workers
Working time	The extent that workers have access to full-time work	The extent that minimum scheduling protections are guaranteed by firms	The extent that risky working hour arrangements are isolated to specific categories of worker
Health care	The level of resources provided to buffer health care expenses	The extent that basic health care is guaranteed by firms or the state	The extent that risky health care arrangements are isolated to specific categories of workers.

The purpose of these indicators is to provide an indication of the risk trends facing different cases observed later on the thesis. Negative movements across the areas in each dimension lead to high-risk scenarios (illustrated in Figure 3.1 and Table 3.2). Positive movements contribute to low-risk scenarios. However, it can be shown how a variety of outcomes may be possible, as a combination of negative and positive trends can contribute to medium risk outcomes. The broadness of this framework is of considerable importance, this conceptualisation of risks is useful to comparative research. The extent that risks are high or low is relative, and depends on the outcomes of the cases. What matters most is that these indicators provide the conceptual groundwork for categorising risk trends across cases. Now that this section has discussed how the independent variable (i.e. risk) will be measured across the cases, the next sections will explore hypotheses pertaining to various independent variables to explain risk outcomes.

Figure 3.1: An Illustration of High-Low Risk Trends

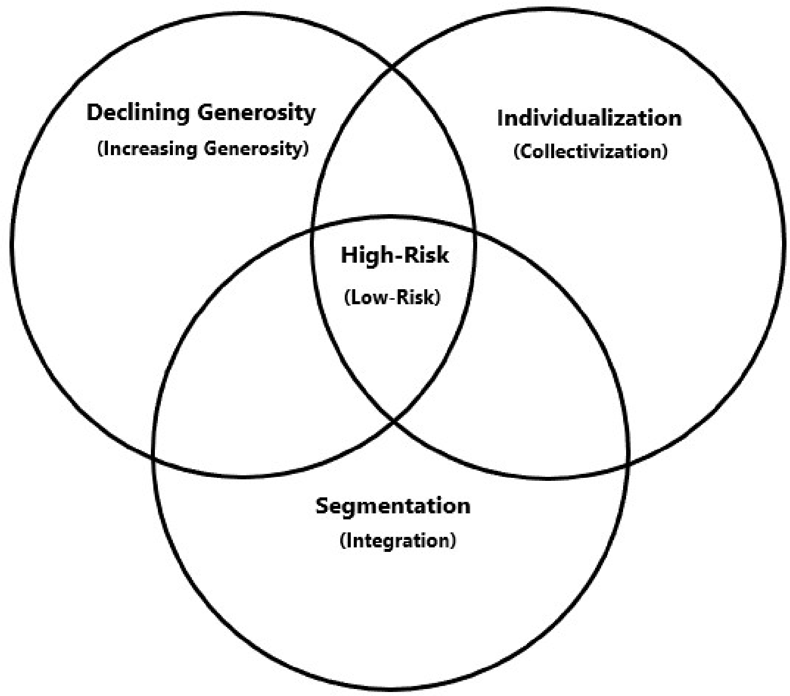


Table 3.2 – Description of Risk Dimensions: The Case of Increased Risk

Dimensions	Definition	Examples of increased risk
Declining generosity **(Increasing generosity)**	A reduction in the level of private and public resources available to alleviate risks *An Increase in the level of private and public resources available to alleviate risks*	Wage rate reductions, working hour reductions, lower employer benefit contributions
Individualisation **(Collectivisation)**	The extent that workers must bear responsibility for risk mitigation alone *The extent that firms and states provide minimum guarantees to protect workers from adverse circumstances*	Abandonment of real wage increase commitments, weakened scheduling guarantees, shifts from collectivised insurance to savings accounts
Segmentation **(Integration)**	The extent that risks are confined to workers by social location or employment status *The extent that risks are more equally spread across categories of workers*	Development of riskier terms of employment for part-timers, creation of non-union jobs or establishments, tiered wages and benefits discriminate against newer employees

3.1.2 Contextual IV #1: Marketisation

As identified in the previous chapter, contextual factors may be of considerable importance to risk outcomes in collective bargaining. This and subsequent sections develop hypotheses relating to marketisation, organisational performance, firm financialisation, workplace fissuring, and market coordination so that these variables can be tested for their influence on risk outcomes in collective bargaining.

Marketisation, otherwise known as the intensification of price competition (Greer and Doellgast, 2017), was identified for its relevance to bargaining outcomes. This is addressed through the following hypothesis:

H1.1 Risk outcomes are higher under intensified price competition

This intensification of price competition was identified for how it constrains employers' ability to cope with higher cost human resource practices and how it incentivizes union competition towards lower labour costs through collective bargaining. It is measured by the extent that low-prices become of focal importance to competition, as opposed to other types of competition relating to product quality or service delivery. The greater the focus on low prices, the greater the likelihood that risk outcomes become high.

3.1.3 Contextual IV #2: Organisational performance

Considerable research suggests that there is a strong connection between performance and job quality (Batt and Hermans, 2012; Chirumbolo and Areni, 2010; Chirumbolo and Areni, 2005; Chirumbolo and Hellgren, 2003). More specifically, this research suggests that worker security is positively related to performance. It suggests that secure workers are more productive and provide superior customer service, and that the benefits of risky work practices do not outweigh the negative performance effects of such insecurity. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1.2: Risk outcomes are higher when organisational performance is weak

Table 3.3 – Organisational Performance Indicators Table

Performance indicator	Definition
Financial performance	
Net operating profits	Firm's revenue minus the cost of goods sold and selling, general and administrative expenses. Taxes and interest are removed to reach this net figure
Store Profit margins	Ratio of net operating profit to sales by store
Product market performance	
Market share	Firm sales revenue in the product market divided by the total sales revenue available in that market
Sales	Firm revenue from goods sold.
Sales growth	Change in sales over the period, expressed as the difference between sales last period and those this period as a percentage of the sales last period
Workforce-related performance	
Employee satisfaction	Satisfaction with service quality, physical environment and management style
Employee loyalty	Expressed through rates of turnover and absenteeism
Productivity and output quality	Sales per square foot, mystery shopper results

Sources: Richard, P. J., Devinney, T. M., Yip, G. S., & Johnson, G. (2009). Measuring organizational performance: Towards methodological best practice. *Journal of management*; Silvestro, R., & Cross, S. (2000). Applying the service profit chain in a retail environment: Challenging the "satisfaction mirror". *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, *11*(3), 244-268.

This hypothesis presumes that bargaining outcomes that diminish worker security also diminish organisational performance. Subjective measures of performance will be examined. This choice is made for two reasons. First, it is actors' views of organisational performance that inform their decision-making, not the empirical measure. This enables us to escape some of the biases associated with expectations (what is deemed strong performance for managers in one company may not be sufficient to satisfy those in another). Second, it enables the study to adapt the measures of performance to reflect those aspects that matter most to a given company. For example, some companies might care more about sales while another may care more about profits.

The work of Richard et al. (2009) is applied to establish what constitutes performance. It focuses on actors' perceptions of financial (net operating profits, store profit margins), product market (market share, sales, sales growth), and workforce-related (employee satisfaction, employee loyalty, and product and output quality) aspects of performance (Table 3.3). The intent is to focus on a variety of performance related concerns to ensure that actors have the opportunity to discuss the performance concerns that matter for their organisations.

3.1.4 Contextual IV #3: Firm financialisation

As discussed in the previous chapter, organisational performance objectives cannot be separated from trends in financialisation. Financialisation is associated with a restructuring of firm objectives, privileging short-term shareholder returns over other types of performance. In addressing these trends, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1.3: Risk outcomes are higher when firm governance is financialised

Firm financialisation denotes trends in which companies acquire increasing shares of their profits through financial means, rather than through a reliance on core production activities (Krippner, 2005). This thesis measures two types of financialisation. First, it examines how risk outcomes differ between publicly owned entities and other types of corporate governance (private companies, cooperatives, and so forth). Second, it draws from the work of Appelbaum and Batt (2014) by examining the role that institutional investors play in corporate governance. Institutional investors are any entity that pools money together for investments (e.g. private equity firms), including managing portfolios of companies acquired for the sake of short-term gain (Foroohar, 2016). Drawing from these two aspects of financialisation, publicly owned entities and firms governed by institutional investors are expected to expose their workers to more risks.

3.1.5 Contextual IV #4: Workplace fissuring

There is one last characteristic of organisational contexts that deserves attention. This is the extent of workplace fissuring, which refers to the extent that responsibility for employment has been "shed" from lead firms to franchises, subcontractors, and across supply-chains (Weil, 2014). In other words, workplace fissuring occurs when the standard employment relationship between an employer and its employees has splintered, leading to a situation where multiple organisations (lead firms, franchises, subcontractors, and actors along the supply-chain) share authority over employment. This phenomenon leads to declining working conditions, as numerous actors across the value chain exert pressure on workers to maintain profitability. This being the case, one final hypothesis concerning the organisational context examines this variable:

H1.4: Risk outcomes are higher when workplace governance is fissured

Workplace fissuring will be examined to capture the possible importance of franchise, subcontracting, and supply-chain actors to risk outcomes. Higher worker security is expected when lead firms are unilaterally responsible for employee working conditions. Meanwhile, worker security is likely to suffer when lead firms shift this responsibility to franchises, subcontractors, and supply-chain actors while maintaining control over critical components of their business operations.

3.1.6 Contextual IV #5: Market coordination

The earlier discussion on institutional approaches suggested that forms of coordination may be of importance to risk. For this reason, this thesis examines one hypothesis related to institutions and their relationship with worker risk outcomes in collective bargaining. This hypothesis is the following:

H1.5: Risk outcomes are lower in coordinated market economies

The original varieties of capitalism model focused on five spheres of coordination, these being industrial relations, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, relationships with employees, and vocational skills and education (Hall and Soskice, 2001). However, relationships with employees may be interpreted as more of a strategic choice, as Schneider and Paunescu have argued (2012). Thus, the other four spheres of coordination addressed in the original model will be examined.

Hall and Gingerich (2009) have undertaken considerable work in operationalising the first two spheres and their composite elements. Coordination in industrial relations can be examined through three types of coordination. First, it can be assessed through the level of wage coordination. This refers to the levels of coordination, with national or sectoral coordination most epitomising coordinated economies, while firm wage coordination is more common in liberal market economies. The degree of wage coordination refers to the extent that wages are strategically coordinated by unions and employers. As this thesis focuses on economic security, it broadens coordination to include all aspects of working conditions relating to risk, not merely wages. A final form of coordination in industrial relations refers to labour turnover, an important indicator of labour market fluidity which assesses the proportion of employees within the economy that have held their jobs for less than one year. Thus, economies with high levels and degrees of coordination over working conditions, as well as low labour turnover, are said to coordinated. The reverse is true for liberal market economies.

Coordination in corporate governance can also be measured through three indicators. First, shareholder power refers to the amount of power shareholders possess relative to firm managers or dominant shareholders. These are measured through "the availability of proxy voting, deposit requirements for shares, the election of directors, the legal recourse available to minority shareholders, shareholders' rights to issues of new stock and the calling of shareholder meetings" (Hall and Gingerich, 2009: 455). Second, dispersion of control refers to the number of firms in the economy relative to the number of shareholders, expressed as the percentage of firms without controlling shareholders. Higher dispersion exists when few firms have controlling shareholders (possessing 10 percent or more in voting rights). Third, the size of the stock market refers to the "market valuation of equities on the stock exchanges of a nation as a percentage of its gross domestic product" (Hall and Gingerich, 2009: 455). Thus, environments in which dominant shareholders bear significant influence in the economy, with low dispersion, and in which stock markets are large are characteristic of coordinated market economies, while the reverse scenario characterises liberal market economies. Furthermore, while some of these elements were discussed in the section on firm financialisation, the institutional aspects of corporate governance refer to broader financial trends throughout the economy, not merely how they relate to one firm.

This thesis uses the original formulation of Hall and Soskice (2001) to define the other two forms of coordination. Vocational training and education is said to be coordinated when trade unions and employers' associations share responsibility over the provision of training in efforts to meet specific industry needs. Meanwhile, it is market oriented when education systems are geared towards general skills training, and in which the social partners share little to no responsibility for coordination over training. Finally, inter-firm relations are coordinated when contract law and employment institutions facilitate exchanges aimed at resolving coordination problems between companies, particularly with respect to contracting and the transfer of technologies. Furthermore, these are market oriented when standard market relationships guide inter-firm interactions through enforceable formal contracts. Liberal markets also tend to incentivise competition through anti-trust legislation. Thus, this thesis will examine the hypothesis that coordination across these four spheres is positively related to risk outcomes.

3.1.7 Contextual IV #6: Bargaining structure

Bargaining structures are also important. In particular, the centralisation of bargaining structures is expected to be related to risk outcomes. This relationship is examined through the following hypothesis:

H1.6: Risk outcomes are lower under centralised bargaining structures

The concept of bargaining structure is not a simple one to define, as levels of centralisation differ across different subject areas (e.g. wages and work organisation) (Katz, 1993). Drawing from Hugh Clegg's (1976) seminal work on collective bargaining, the extent, level, and scope dimensions of bargaining structures will be examined. The extent of bargaining refers to the proportion of employees covered by collective agreements. The level of bargaining refers to whether it is unions and employers' associations at the district, regional, national or confederal levels who negotiate collective agreements, or whether this is relegated to worker representatives. The scope of bargaining refers to the number of elements covered under collective agreements. Thus, more centralised structures are those in which bargaining coverage is high, negotiations centrally cover workers in multiple companies and establishments, and the scope covers many aspects of employment. It is heavily decentralised when coverage is low, negotiations cover a single firm or establishment, and the scope of working conditions is narrow. These represent purely centralised and decentralised forms of bargaining, as various gradations exist in between.

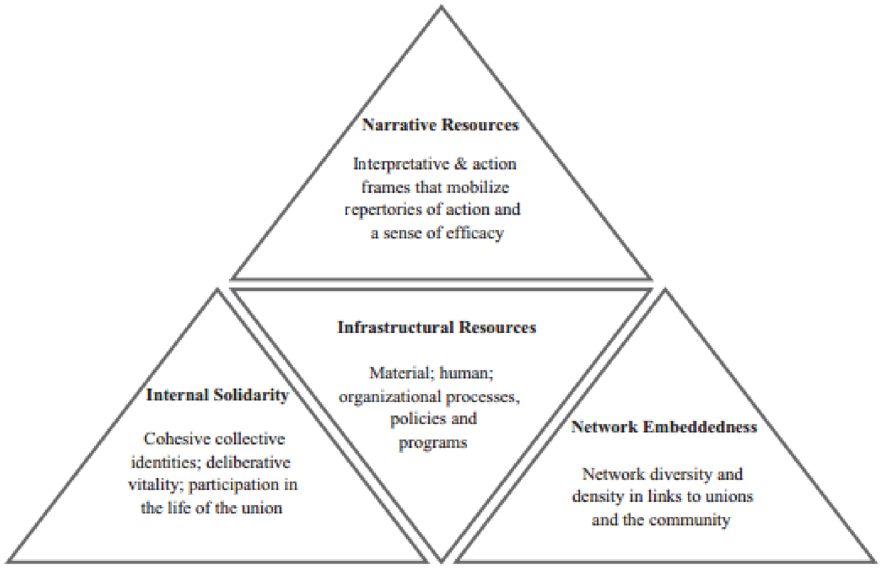
3.1.8 Actor-oriented IV #1: Union power resources and strategic capabilities

While an examination of contextual factors will facilitate delineation between the influence of contexts and bargaining strategies on risk, there is also a special space for actor attributes. As discussed in Chapter 2, Union power resources and strategic capabilities may be more influential to bargaining strategies than outcomes. Thus, more powerful and strategically competent unions may in fact be more capable of mitigating worker risk. This is examined through the following hypothesis:

H2.1: Risk outcomes are lower when unions are strong and possess strategic capabilities

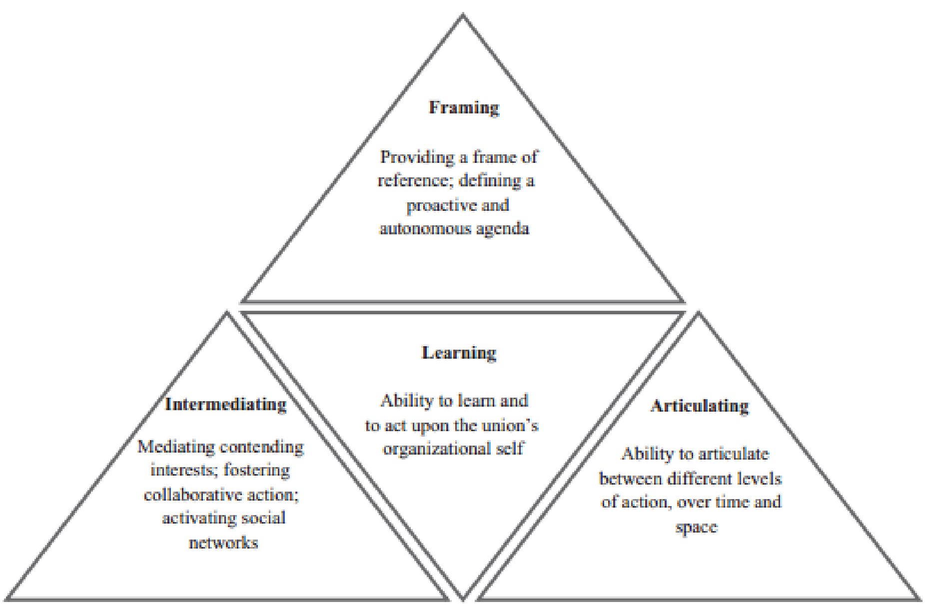
The research carried out by Levesque and Murray analyses power resources and strategic capabilities which are relevant to risk outcomes in collective bargaining (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The first key power resource is internal solidarity, which is maintained when bargaining units maintain cohesive internal identities, high deliberative vitality in decision-making, and significant member participation in union activities. The second power resource is network embeddedness, which is strong when a union has strong links to other unions and actors in the community. The third element of power resources are narrative resources, which are strong when "values, shared understandings, stories and ideologies that aggregate identities and interests and translate and inform motives" serve a pro-labour agenda (Levesque and Murray, 2010: 339). Finally, infrastructural resources are those materials, processes, policies and programmes that aid unions to achieve their goals.

Figure 3.1 - Union Power Resources



Source: Lévesque, C., & Murray, G. (2010). Understanding union power: resources and capabilities for renewing union capacity. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *16*(3), 339, 342.

Figure 3.2 - Union Strategic Capabilities



Source: Lévesque, C., & Murray, G. (2010). Understanding union power: resources and capabilities for renewing union capacity. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *16*(3), 339, 342.

Four strategic capabilities are necessary for making use of union power resources. The first strategic capability is intermediation, which refers to how unions foster collective action by activating their networks. The second is framing, which denotes unions' capability of activating their networks by "defining a proactive and autonomous agenda" (Levesque and Murray, 2010: 342). The third is articulating, which refers to arbitrating between different forms of action in different locations and temporal periods. Finally, learning is also critical, and refers to how unions learn and spread knowledge within their organisations to inform action (Levesque and Murray, 2010). These four power resources, as well as four strategic capabilities, will be examined to test whether they are in fact positively related to strong forms of risk mitigation in collective bargaining.

3.1.9 Strategic variable #1: Union partnerships

Being the core focus of this thesis, actors' collective bargaining strategies will be investigated for how they shape worker security. The research assessed in the previous chapter suggested that job quality is most likely to be ameliorated when employers and unions adopt cooperative strategies. Thus, a significant body of research suggests that working conditions are positively related to union partnerships (Price et al., 2014; Geary, 2008; Gittell and Bamber, 2010; Bamber et al., 2009; Oxenbridge and Brown, 2004; Oxenbridge and Brown, 2002; Haynes and Allen, 2001; Boxall and Haynes, 1997). This brings us to the hypothesis that union partnerships may also yield positive impacts for worker security, as the benefits of partnerships on job quality may be transferable to worker risk. This hypothesis is the following:

H3.1: Risk outcomes are lower under labour-management partnerships

Union partnerships represent one of two factors: 1) the existence of an informal cooperative relationship between company and union representatives; and 2) complementary employee participation mechanisms such as joint committees (Dobbins and Dundon, 2015; Wilkinson et al., 2014; Kochan et al., 2008). Partnerships are strategic because the adoption of cooperative positions by both sides is a pre-requisite to its maintenance. Adversarial bargaining ensues with the absence of cooperative posturing on both parts, leading to distributive bargaining tactics (Kochan et al., 2008; Walton et al., 2000). Of course, mixed outcomes are possible, as some union partnerships may be more successful than others. This being the case, this thesis examines whether greater degrees of cooperation lead to greater degrees of worker security.

3.1.10 Strategic variable #2: Firm commitment strategy

Research presented in the previous chapter suggested that job quality is positively related to firm commitment strategies adopted to motivate their employees. Greater degrees of commitment may thereby be positively related to risk. This is examined through the following hypothesis:

H3.2: Risk outcomes are lower when firms adopt commitment strategies

Through such a strategy, firms choose to motivate their employees through a combination of functional flexibility and high investments in training to obtain their commitment, aiming for higher productivity in the process (Bamber et al., 2009; Gittell and Bamber, 2010; Kalleberg, 2003). It is the importance of job quality in maintaining the overall commitment of workforces that is integral to firm commitment strategies. Furthermore, this feature of commitment strategies distinguishes them from compliance strategies which couple cost-cutting with coercive disciplinary measures (Walton, 1985).

3.1.11 Strategic variable #3: Union mobilisation

Union mobilisation strategies may also matter for risk. This seen as preferable to a servicing strategy in which the union acts as a simple service provider and focuses on relationship building to maintain working conditions. This hypothesis is the following:

H3.3: Risk outcomes are lower when unions adopt mobilisation strategies

Union mobilisation strategies consist of engaging stakeholders both internally and externally to the bargaining unit (Grimshaw et al., 2014; Lévesque and Murray, 2013; Lévesque and Murray, 2010; Palier and Thelen, 2010; Harvey, 2009; Lévesque and Murray, 2002; Boxall and Haynes, 1997; Mahon, 1991). On the one hand, the union engages its members frequently to garner their support for potential resistance to managerial authority in the future. On the other hand, the union also engages other unions and community members in an effort to coordinate over common goals.

3.1.12 Strategic variable #4: Social policies

There is an important space for state strategies and how they shape risk outcomes. While institutions are of critical importance, states can choose from a range of policy instruments to shape welfare state outcomes and bargaining relationships. Two hypotheses related to state strategies are of interest. The first relates to the role of social policies in mitigating worker risk. This is explored through the following hypothesis:

H3.4: Risk outcomes are lower when states adopt social policies to mitigate risk

Social policies have been described as those which are implemented by the state to satisfy citizens' basic needs for human welfare, which some describe as social rights (Morel et al., 2012; King and Waldron, 1988; Marshall, 1950; Beveridge, 1942). They are any government policy that is introduced to meet a basic human need, such as pension policies or changes to employment insurance. Strong welfare enhancing social policies are generally perceived as positively related to the economic security of citizens and retrenchment leads to insecurity (Bonoli, 2012; Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Fudge, 2005; Powell and Barrientos, 2004; Esping-Andersen, 1990). However, while the relationship with worker risk may appear obvious, there is a possibility that even perceptibly progressive social policies can result in negative impacts on risk. Should states fail at enforcement or should firms respond to social policies by shifting risks to other aspects of working lives, it is possible that progressive social policies may be associated with negative impacts on worker risk.

3.1.13 Strategic variable #5: Labour regulation

The previous chapter argued that state strategies which alter the employment relationship can improve or deteriorate working conditions. The following hypothesis tests the effects of labour regulation on risk:

H3.5: Risk outcomes are lower in the presence of interventionist pro-labour employment standards

Labour regulations can threaten labour by restricting the right to collective bargaining and instill divisions and inequalities within the workforce. For example, this is the case with right-to-work legislation in the United States (Hogler, 2015). On the contrary, pro-labour regulations can protect and even enhance bargaining rights (McCrystal, 2014), such as laws which provide workers with greater opportunities to become represented by a union and negotiate collective agreements. The presence of pro-labour regulations that provide more rights to workers are expected to be positively associated with risks, since they enhance their ability to influence firm governance through employee voice mechanisms.

3.1.14 Summary

Given the overview of the key concepts and hypotheses presented above, three sets of hypotheses will be investigated to assess the impacts of contextual, actor-oriented, and strategic factors on worker risk (Table 3.4). These sets of hypotheses enable this study to explore not only the impacts of strategies, with particular attention on firm and union bargaining strategies, but facilitates delineation between the influence of strategies, contexts, and actor attributes on risk outcomes.

While the variables under investigation were defined above, table 3.5 clarifies the operationalisation of these variables. It indicates the gradation that may be found when assessing the concepts against data from the field. Furthermore, there is a clear possibility that some independent variables may impact certain dimensions of risk (individualisation, generosity, and segmentation) but not others. Their impacts may also be differentiated across different risk areas (wages, retirement incomes, working time, and health care). Having operationalised the key concepts of this thesis, the second part of this chapter will outline the research design for testing these hypotheses through qualitative research.

Table 3.4 – Summary of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	
Contexts	
H1.1	Risk outcomes are higher under intensified price competition
H1.2	Risk outcomes are higher when organisational performance is weak
H1.3	Risk outcomes are higher when firm governance is financialised
H1.4	Risk outcomes are higher when workplace governance is fissured
H1.5	Risk outcomes are lower in coordinated market economies
H1.6	Risk outcomes are lower under centralised bargaining structures
Actor Attributes	
H2	Risk outcomes are lower when unions are strong and possess strategic capabilities
Strategies	
H3.1	Risk outcomes are lower under labour-management partnerships
H3.2	Risk outcomes are lower when firms adopt commitment strategies
H3.3	Risk outcomes are lower when unions adopt mobilisation strategies
H3.4	Risk outcomes are lower when states adopt social policies to mitigate risk
H3.5	Risk outcomes are lower in the presence of interventionist pro-labour employment standards

Table 3.5 – Indicators: Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent Variable	
Dimensions of Risk Allocation	
Individualisation	High, medium, low
Generosity	High, medium, low
Segmentation	High, medium, low
Independent Variables	
Contextual Variables	
Intensified price competition	High, medium, low
Organisational Performance	Strong, medium, weak
Firm Financialisation	High, medium, low
Workplace Fissuring	Lead firm versus fissured responsibility for employment
Market Coordination	High, medium, low
Bargaining Centralisation	High, medium, low
Actor-Oriented Variables	
Union Power	Strong, medium, weak
Strategic Capabilities	Strong, medium, weak
Strategic Variables	
Firm and Union Labour Relations	Partnership or adversarial

Firm Employee Relations	Commitment or compliance
Union Mobilisation	Servicing or solidarity
Social Policy	Welfare enhancing or retrenchment
Labour Regulation	Pro-labour or anti-labour

3.2 Research design

The hypotheses examined in this thesis will be tested through comparative contextualised case studies. As illustrated in the project description (Table 3.6), it will examine the influence of collective bargaining strategies across eight companies in Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Germany, Sweden, and the United States through semi-structured interviews. Thus, this thesis will compare numerous cases at the company level, while highlighting the importance of national (and sub-national) and sectoral contexts.

Thus, this study embraces the case study as its methodology of choice. Drawing from the work of Wilbur Schramm (1971), Yin (2013) provides a standard definition of what constitutes a case study. It is described case studies in the following manner:

The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what results. (Yin, 2013: 12).

This definition is highly illustrative of what is sought from this research. Cases will be compared to examine how decisions in collective bargaining have positively or negatively affected worker risk in various contexts. It is important to note that the independent variables may differentially impact the three dimensions of risk. Thus, a contextualised case-study methodology is being adopted (Streb, 2010), in order to capture the nuances relating to the different independent variables and their relation to the different dimensions of risk.

A major strength of this methodology is how it aims to produce practical knowledge in a manner consistent with both phronetic (Flyvbjerg, 2001) and reflexive (Burawoy, 1998) approaches to social science. The research problem and methodology is informed by a stay with the European Trade Union Institute. Preliminary fieldwork with seventeen expert witnesses in unions, corporations, think tanks, and the European Union was conducted to flesh out the research problem, variable choice, and case selection. Thus, this qualitative multi-case comparison adopts a reflexive approach to field research, as it involves multiple close encounters with key actors in the field (Burawoy, 2003). It is a theoretically driven project that embraces the historical and embedded nature of the cases. While it may suffer from the problem of generalizability, it complements research on large populations by getting closer to the causal nature of social phenomena (Edwards and Belanger, 2008), thereby engaging in a deeper analysis than is possible in positive science which limits itself to "context effects" (Burawoy, 1998).

Table 3.6 – Description of Research Project

Description of Research Project	
Methodology	Contextualised Case Studies (Comparative)
Case selection	8 Supermarket chains (2 per country) in Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Germany, Sweden, and the United States
Period under investigation	1980-2016
Data sources	97 semi-structured interviews (including preliminary interviews), official documents, and databases
Types of respondents	Firm representatives, union representatives, expert witnesses
Sampling strategies	Convenience and snowball sampling
Data analysis technique	First-level and pattern coding of interview data Analysis through meta-matrices and clustered summary tables

Three levels of analysis on collective bargaining outcomes will be examined. The cases (i.e. companies) will be compared across national and subnational jurisdictions to account for differences in institutions and actor strategies at the macro-level. Furthermore, the meso-level of analysis will be investigated through a focus on a single sector in order to hold certain market and technological factors constant. Finally, this study will investigate the micro-level characteristics of the firm. Thus, companies will be compared not only within jurisdictions, but across jurisdictions to highlight how strategies, contexts, and actor attributes affect risk. The following sections will describe this thesis' case selection in more detail.

3.2.1 National and subnational case comparisons: Comparing companies in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States

The main objective of making national comparisons is to isolate the impacts of macro-level institutions and actor strategies on risk allocation. This thesis adopts the diverse case method as its selection strategy in order to tease out possible causal relations between a variety of cases (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). In line with the theory on collective bargaining reviewed thus far, this thesis strategically selected cases that differ in terms of market coordination, while leaving open the possibility that these institutions may be connected to strategic differences across the cases. It compares two coordinated market economies with two liberal market economies. The examined cases will account for what Hall and Gingerich (2009) deem as the archetypal liberal-market economy (United States) and coordinated-market economy (Germany). Research has shown that liberal- and coordinated-market economies vary significantly, both in terms of the way that they deal with risk and of the role of union actors in risk alleviation (Soskice, 1999).

Furthermore, this study will also account for forms of coalitional power. The case selection will also include Canada (LME) and Sweden (CME) to capture important differences in collective bargaining traditions. This is significant as worker solidarity is not explained through coordination typologies (iconic Germany versus United States). While being a liberal-market economy like its American counterpart, Canada's higher and more stable union densities are linked to more effective union organisation and superior performance in collective bargaining (Rose and Chaison, 1996). The fact that Canadian labour unions were "incorporated as a class representative into a labour regime governed by a class idea", rather than merely one of many interest groups as in the United States, has had considerable impacts on the relative bargaining power and capacity of maintaining worker solidarity in its provinces (Eidlin, 2015: 200). The same is the case for Sweden, whose unique history has facilitated significant forms of solidarity, despite considerable international pressures (Mahon, 1991). This distinguishes Sweden from Germany. Like Sweden, Germany's system of collective bargaining is highly coordinated, and has experienced some pressures towards decentralisation in recent years (Bosch, 2015; Haipeter and Lehndorff, 2014). However, the presence of greater coalitional power in Sweden makes a difference in collective bargaining, as recent research on income distribution will attest (Thelen, 2014).

This study will also conduct a within-case comparison to further examine the impacts of actor strategies and industrial relations institutions in subnational jurisdictions that evidence many institutional similarities. One such similarity is the welfare regime. Germany (Corporatist-Statist), Sweden (Social Democratic), and the United States (Liberal) have developed considerably different welfare regimes which differ in terms of their generosity and the universality of programs (Esping-Andersen, 1990). While a federation, Canada's provinces are also typical of liberal welfare regimes. Due to the role of the federal government in maintaining pan-Canadian programs, whose erosion or expansion has been linked to variations in federal commitment, the welfare regime characteristics of Canada's provinces have been historically similar (Mahon, 2008). These regimes relate to collective bargaining in different ways, and differ significantly in terms of the public and private mix of social protection (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Powell and Barrientos, 2004).

The Canadian federation, in which the actors and institutions of collective bargaining vary by province, makes for an excellent testing ground for the hypotheses examined in this thesis. In recognition of the political variation within Canada's regions, this study will examine both Ontario and Quebec, the latter being a "hybrid" regime combining French civil law with North America's labour relations model and which blends aspects of both liberal and coordinated market economies (Bélanger and Trudeau, 2009; Jalette et al., 2017). Ontario, on the other hand, is more typical of a liberal market economy. Furthermore, Quebec also differs from Ontario in terms of workplace regulation, as the former is more inclined towards state intervention, such as restricting two-tier compensation through provincial regulations (McNeil, 2013) and favouring greater access to unionisation and the more effective use of the strike (Murray and Verge, 1999; Haddow and Klassen, 2006).

3.2.2 Sectoral and company analysis: A review of collective bargaining in supermarket chains

This study focuses on a single sector, acknowledging that industrial relations practices often vary more by sector than by country (Bechter et al., 2012). The retail sector makes for an excellent testing ground for the impacts of collective bargaining strategies on worker security. This is so for numerous reasons. First, the sector represents the epitome of worker insecurity. According to a recent ILO report (2015: 1), “no industry has experienced greater diversification in its waged employment over the last four decades than retail commerce, where different forms of atypical, non-standard employment practices have now attained standard status”. In addition, Standing (2011) recognised that retail workers were the largest segment of the swelling ranks of the “precariat”. Critically, the dominant strategy of large firms in this sector has been one of combining high performance with low wages and short working hours, contributing to declining job quality in many countries (Carré et al., 2010).

Second, the technological and market conditions pressures facing this sector are uniform across many countries. These are the increased use of information technology in supply management, “optimal staff scheduling”, the spread of “aggressive discount chains” that fiercely compete with traditional retailers through the skillful use of logistical technologies, and that most countries are experiencing some form of liberalisation in this sector (Carré et al., 2010: 215). Because of these uniform pressures, coupled with the similar human resource needs of firms in this sector, the tasks performed by the bulk of retail workers, these being cashiers and stock clerks, are uniform across developed countries.

Finally, there is the fact that despite these similarities, collective bargaining has proven relevant to the sector in all OECD countries. This is for two reasons. First, there is a union presence within the sector in all developed countries. Second, the divergent forms of collective bargaining across countries have proven relevant to working conditions in the sector. One study has demonstrated that while working conditions have deteriorated across most OECD countries, the experiences of retail workers can vary across collective bargaining regimes, such as in the form of wages, labour turnover, working time, and unemployment within the sector (Carré et al., 2010). In fact, a more recent study has suggested that collective bargaining has positively impacted job quality in Sweden's retail sector, using indicators such as wages, working time, and employee benefits (Andersson et al., 2011). This research suggests that Sweden may be a global exception for retail work. Thus, given that the sector is notoriously insecure and structurally similar across developed nations; available evidence suggests that collective bargaining is highly relevant to the sector. However, whether and how it is relevant to economic insecurity has yet to be explored.

Table 3.7 – Case Selection

Case Selection		
Jurisdiction	Supermarket Chain	Business Model
Germany	DEU-1	Franchise and Corporate Owned
	DEU-2	Corporate Owned
Canada	CAN-1	Franchise, Independent Retailers, and Corporate Owned (Quebec) Corporate owned (Ontario)
	CAN-2	Corporate Owned (Quebec and Ontario)
Sweden	SWE-1	Independent Retailers
	SWE-2	Corporate owned (Cooperative)
USA	USA-1	Corporate Owned
	USA-2	Corporate Owned

This study narrows the focus by examining food retail, the largest segment of the retail sector. This involves investigating supermarket chains in particular. Supermarkets are traditional grocery stores in which customers purchase food and household products in a self-serve fashion, and which are smaller in scale than hypermarkets that are "very large-surface self-service stores, usually out of town, selling a wide range of both food and non-food goods" (Geppert et al. 2014: 256). This thesis will thereby examine two major supermarket chains in each country (Germany, Canada, Sweden, and the United States), amounting to eight chains in total. The chains identified in Table 3.7 represent some of the most significant supermarket chains that have a union presence in the countries studied for this thesis. Furthermore, aside from the United States, the case selection facilitates a comparison of franchise, independent retailer[1], and corporate owned establishments in each of the countries. This case selection was informed by preliminary interviews with seventeen expert witnesses through a research stay with the European Trade Union Institute and a related research project on employee benefits negotiations conducted with a researcher at Carleton University. Thus, this case selection was part of an iterative process with the field to ensure that the cases are treated holistically and are representative of the sector.

Thus, this study will examine two large food retailers with a union presence in each country. In the case of Germany, this study will examine the experiences of DEU-1 and DEU-2, two of the country's larger supermarket chains. DEU-1 operates corporate owned stores while DEU-2's stores are a mix of corporate owned and franchise establishments. In Sweden, SWE-1 operates according to the independent retailer model, compared to SWE-2 which is a cooperative enterprise that operates corporate owned retail establishments directly. In the United States, this study will examine both USA-1 and USA-2, neither of which have establishments run by franchisees. Finally, this study will compare CAN-1 and CAN-2's operations in Ontario and Quebec. CAN-1 operates a mix of franchises and corporate owned stores in Quebec, but only corporate owned stores in Ontario. Meanwhile. CAN-2 operates corporate owned stores in both provinces. The fact that CAN-2's organisational structure is similar across the provinces is particularly useful, as it enables this study to isolate the impacts of strategies and institutions on a

[1] Independent retailers are similar to franchise owners, in that they also license the right to use the chain's brand for their stores. The main difference is that they share considerably more discretion in maintaining their product lines and in setting the HR policies of their stores.

retailer whose organisational characteristics are similar across different sub-national jurisdictions.

3.2.3 Historical period under investigation

The interactions between collective bargaining and risks from 1980 till 2016 are examined. This timeline enables this study to capture important dynamics. First, this period captures the decline of economic security (Osberg, 2009; Hacker, 2006), be it the withering of the golden age of social security (Pierson, 1998), or the failures of private actors to resist pressures to augment risks in various settings (Johnston et al., 2011; Schelkle, 2011). Second, this time period also covers an important period in which union membership and density has declined across most European and North American countries (Schnabel, 2013; Ebbinghaus, 2002). Coupled with tendencies towards bargaining decentralisation in OECD countries, this trend has fundamentally contributed to the weakening of collective bargaining in many circumstances (Ribeiro, 2016; Bosch, 2015; Haipeter and Lehndorff, 2014; Katz, 1993). Finally, this time period captures ideological change, as Keynesianism and other paradigms were eclipsed by the rise of neoliberal ideology. According to many, this viewpoint overemphasising individualism and economic rationalism has undermined actors' capacity to achieve societal goals (Quiggin, 2012; Crouch, 2011). Thus, this thesis aims to explore how collective bargaining actors have acted in light of these changes in recent decades.

3.2.4 Data collection: Qualitative interviews and official documents

The core data source will be qualitative interview data. One key reason for this is that there exists no comprehensive quantitative data source on collective bargaining strategies towards worker risk. Thus, qualitative interviews will be administered in order to extract information on what strategies, organisational and institutional contexts, and characteristics relating to actors are relevant to worker risk in the context of the retail sector in each country. This strategy is particularly critical as no research on collective bargaining in retail has been carried out for this purpose. This research strategy enables this project to tease out a range of possible explanations, as most quantitative studies are restricted by their data sources, limiting the scope of possible explanations for the phenomena under investigation.

This study combines the use of convenience and snowball sampling, two methodological strategies for identifying and interviewing key informants in the field (Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004). The objective is to select key representatives through my research network who will recommend interviewees that possess critical knowledge pertaining to collective bargaining for each company, as well the sector. These sampling strategies enable this study to target respondents who are best positioned to speak on the topic of collective bargaining and risk in the retail sector of their respective countries

This project draws on semi-structured interviews with respondents who were chosen to capture viewpoints from within and beyond the firm. 97 semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, union representatives, and expert witnesses (think tank researchers, HR consultants, mediators) with insider knowledge of major chains in each country (Table 3.8). This includes special interviews (with older and retired workers) to capture a historical perspective. This also includes 17 preliminary interviews with researchers working with think tanks and academic research centres which were conducted for context. These were carried out with key academics and practitioners through a research placement with the European Trade Union Institute (2015) and related research on employee benefit negotiations conducted with professor Marc-André Gagnon at Carleton University (2012-2015).

Table 3.8 – Interviews by country

Country	Canada	Germany	Sweden	United States
Worker representatives	25	11	10	9
Employer representatives	11	6	4	1
Expert witnesses	7	6	5	2
Total	43	23	19	12

These interviews were *semi-structured*. Semi-structured interviews represent a mid-point between structured and unstructured interviews. According to an influential paper on organisational research by Qu and Dumay (2011: 246), “the semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses”. Generally, these types of interviews use questioning under broad themes, and are flexible in terms of the order and content of interview discussions. Through this broad form of questioning, one can capture different aspects of reality relating to facts, meaning, as well as local contexts. Thus, the major strength of the semi-structured interview is that there are no boundaries in terms of the types of realities that may be uncovered through this methodology.

This study relied on an in-depth interview topic guide to administer the interviews (Annex 1). A consent form was also prepared (Annex 2). In order to test the key hypotheses presented earlier, these semi-structured interviews were organised according to four themes: the evolution of risks since 1980; the impacts of collective bargaining strategies; the impacts of organisational and institutional contexts; and the impacts of actor-related characteristics. These themes contained questions, and often sub-questions, to tease out more elaborate responses from the interviewees. Furthermore, interview respondents were asked to provide information relating to the strategies of other actors in order to arrive at a more balanced understanding of each actor's role in precipitating risk outcomes in collective bargaining. Interviewees were also provided with a consent form which outlined the project's research objective and informed them of their rights in the research process.

This data will be triangulated with other sources made available by the interviewees' organisations and other relevant secondary sources. First, this data was complemented by an analysis of 20 collective agreements. Based on an informed analysis of the secondary literature (Hacker et al., 2014; Bonnet et al., 2003; Standing, 2002), provisions pertaining to wages, working hours, pensions, and health care were examined to identify trends in insecurity over time. This data was used to construct tables analyzing trends in risk from 1980 and 2016. This amounted eight agreements in the year 1980: a sectoral agreement in Germany, a sectoral agreement in Sweden, an industry agreement in New York City, one chain-level agreement in New England, two chain-level agreements in Quebec, and two chain-level agreements in Ontario. Twelve agreements were examined in the year 2016: a sectoral agreement in Germany, a sectoral agreement in Sweden, two chain-level agreements in New York City, one chain-level agreement in New England, five store-level agreements in Quebec, and two chain level agreements in Ontario. These agreements were chosen for their representativeness of trends in the chains examined for this research (as corroborated by company and union representatives in the preliminary research). In Quebec, the agreements were used to analyze trends in bargaining units as opposed to chains, since these units survived transfers of ownerships across various companies during the time periods that were observed. Official documents (corporate, union, and government) and the secondary literature were also reviewed to validate observations drawn from the interviews and collective agreements. Second, other official documents (e.g. company reports) were examined. The overall aim was to identify how the influence of strategies, organisational performance, and institutions, as described in the interviews, matches up with the content of company and union records, as well as any other documentation highlighted by this study's respondents, in other official sources, or in the secondary literature.

3.2.5 Data analysis

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. This was followed by two types of coding. The first type was first-level coding, which involved converting the longer verbatim transcriptions into brief summaries focused on the core elements of the interviews. Thus, the information was condensed into a more succinct and readable format for preliminary analysis. This facilitated "pattern coding". Pattern coding entails "grouping those summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 69). This enabled the bulk of the interview data to be organised into groupings around analytical themes that relate to the core hypotheses tested in this thesis.

This data was then organised into various types of matrices and tables for analysis. The analysis began with the construction of *meta-matrices*, which are "master charts assembling descriptive data from each of several cases in a standard format" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 135). These charts enabled the study to organise the data by case, in order to understand the key experiences of each case with respect to the dynamics of risk and collective bargaining. After identifying specific themes pertaining to each case, the study conducted further analysis through *clustering* in order to capture cross-cutting themes across the companies and jurisdictions. This was achieved through *Clustered Summary Tables*, in which the data was clustered according to themes rather than by case, to understand the commonalities and divergences across the cases. These matrices and tables were used to convey the core results of this study, and the extent that they lead to the validation, rejection, or refinement of the key hypotheses presented in this project.

3.2.6 Ethics

The data gathered for this project also feeds into the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work's (CRIMT) "Restructuring Social Norms in Globalized Workplaces: Asymmetric Integration, Institutions and Actors in Multinational Companies" project. Gregor Murray (CRIMT's Director) and Christian Lévesque (CRIMT's Co-Director) are the principal investigators for this project which was financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Given the thesis' integration into this larger research project, it also falls under the ethics certificate that was approved for this project in the September of 2008. This project therefore conforms to the requirements for maintaining the confidentiality of research participants, the right to refuse participation, and to providing research participants with control over their contribution to the research process, as committed to in the certificate.

3.2.7 Limitations of this study

It is important to recognise that there are two types of limitations to this study; validity and generalizability. As regards validity, a major limitation of this study is its use of qualitative interviews to assess bargaining trends over several decades. This is a challenge for three reasons. First, it will be difficult to find respondents that are knowledgeable of these trends over such a long period. Second, there is the fact many respondents may find it difficult to track the various aspects of economic security since 1980. This is why triangulation is so important. By complimenting the interview data with company and union records, and secondary sources in the scientific and commercial literature, this study will use these records to fill the gaps in interviewers' accounts of how risks and bargaining trends have evolved over recent decades. Third, strategy can be a sensitive topic for practitioners in the field. Thus, this study recognises that even interviews can fail to capture important aspects of collective bargaining that interviewers may be hesitant to reveal through their discussions. For example, interviewees may hide the content of actor strategies that may pertain to trade secrets or may conflict with an organisation's public relations strategy. However, this why a critical analysis of the data and constant interaction with actors in the field to develop practical knowledge, a technique borrowed from phronetic social science (Flyvbjerg, 2001), is integral to the research process. Thus, specific probing questions will be posed and responses will be cross-verified across different categories of interviews to facilitate a deep comprehension of the issues under examination.

In terms of the possibility of generalisation (Payne and Williams, 2005), the interview method will limit the observations to a select group of respondents, whose views may not reflect those of peers in their organisations. There is also an issue as to the representativeness of the companies under study, as their experiences may not be representative of other companies in their jurisdiction. In addition, there is the question of how cases in this particular industry can inform our understanding of the relationship between collective bargaining and risk in workplaces more broadly. While these problems are not unique to this qualitative study, it was an important consideration for the sampling strategy which involves selecting respondents who are most knowledgeable of their sector and companies. The case selection process was rigorous and informed through multiple preliminary interviews with key practitioners and expert witnesses in the field (through the ETUI's professional network in particular), as well as considerable research reviewing industry documentation and other secondary sources. This comparative case study, like all comparative case-studies, are needed to complement large N studies as they provide critical information on both contexts and in developing a sophisticated understanding of critical causal mechanisms of relevance to social science research (Edwards and Belanger, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Thus, this study aims to make an important contribution by capturing key contextual elements that are not present in large N studies.

3.3 Summary and thesis articles

This study employs a comparative contextualised case-study methodology to study how actor strategies, contexts, and actor-attributes impact worker risk. With a focus on food retail, this study uses semi-structured interviews, coupled with official documents and various organisations' databases, to qualitatively assess how collective bargaining has impacted this industry's workers in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States from 1980 to 2016. The objective is to describe trends in risk over time and across cases, and to explain those trends.

The hypotheses flowing from the thesis framework are examined in three articles. The first article examines multi-dimensional risk trends in food retail across each country, exploring how bargaining structures (*H1.6*), social policies (*H3.4*), and employment standards (*H3.5*) affect insecurity. The second article examines how labour-management partnerships (*H3.1*) affect risk in different bargaining structures (*H1.6*). This is achieved by comparing two Canadian supermarkets with two Swedish supermarkets. While bargaining structures and labour-management partnerships are most prominently investigated, this piece also provides insights on the effects of organisational performance (*H1.2*) and employment standards (*H3.5*). The third article examines how contextual factors (price competition [*H1.1*], organisational performance [*H1.2*], financialisation [*H1.3*], workplace fissuring [*H1.4*], market coordination [*H1.5*], and bargaining structures [*H1.6*]), actor attributes (union power and strategic capabilities [*H2*]), and actor strategies (labour-management partnerships [*H3.1*], firm commitment strategies [*H3.2*], union mobilisation strategies [*H3.3*], and employment standards [*H3.5*]) affect insecurity in all eight supermarket chains examined in this thesis. The aim is to delineate the relative influence of each set of factors and how they interact to risk outcomes in each case.

Chapter 4

Rethinking Risk and its Evolution: A Four-Country Study of Work in Food Retail

(Article 1)

Abstract:

This article seeks to chart the evolution of worker risk in different industrialised economies. It engages the welfare regime, risk shift, and segmentation literatures, proposing that each theoretical stream represents an important dimension of risk. A framework incorporating these dimensions is developed and applied to case-study evidence from supermarket chains in four countries. While supermarkets in all four countries have experienced increases in risk, the form and degree of these increases differ markedly in each setting. The argument is that risk research fails to capture its multidimensional nature, leading to the neglect of its variegated sources and outcomes.

Scholars are demonstrating considerable interest in worker risk. Research suggests that workers now count on less to survive while uncertain out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. health care) are threatening many with poverty (Osberg and Sharpe, 2014; Häusermann et al., 2015; Hacker, 2006). Worker precariousness is on the rise, undermining the stability of the traditional employment relationship and its associated benefits for workers (Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009). The ubiquity of risk has led to widespread theorisation on the subject. Researchers have aimed to bring to light what exactly is happening to workers and how we can act to remedy the situation. But are current characterisations of risk adequate for understanding its sources and effects on workers?

This article seeks to chart the evolution of risks in different industrialised economies. In doing so, it identifies three key approaches in the literature. First, welfare regime research examines the generosity of public and private sources of risk alleviation and their outcomes for workers and citizens (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008; Klein, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Second, the risk individualisation literature examines who bears responsibility for risk alleviation, emphasising shifts in its management from firms and states onto individuals (Hacker, 2006; Cobb, 2015;

Beck, 2000). Finally, the segmentation literature examines how the exclusive nature of internal labour markets isolates bad risks to specific categories of workers (Doeringer and Piore, 1971; Cranford et al., 2006; Osterman, 1987; Osterman and Burton, 2005; Crouch, 2015). Each stream treats important aspects of risk in isolation, yet there is a need to bridge these literatures in assessing how risks change over time.

This article argues that the generosity, individualisation, and segmentation literatures each address different dimensions of risk. It develops a *Risk Allocation Framework*, seeking to explore how risks move and interact across these dimensions. The purpose of this article is not to explain what drives risks across these dimensions, but rather to provide a more fine-grained understanding of how risk evolves through time and place. This framework is applied to explore risk trends in low-wage work, drawing from qualitative research of food retail work in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States.

The article is structured as follows: first, a theoretical overview of the dimensions of generosity, individualisation, and segmentation; second, the application of the framework to risk trends facing supermarket workers in four countries; third, an analysis of the framework's contribution to our understanding of these trends; and, finally, an overview of the findings and their implications.

4.1 The risk allocation framework

At its most basic level, risk refers to workers' vulnerability to economic uncertainty (e.g. Hacker et al., 2014; Western et al., 2012; Bossert and D'ambrosio, 2013; Hacker, 2006). The main threat facing workers is variability. This pertains to variability in wages and benefits, but also in the whole gamut of social arrangements that provide workers with some form of safety net in adverse circumstances (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011; Hacker, 2006). Workers are highly exposed to risk when the chances of incurring economic loss and the extent of that loss are high. However, the reverse is true when both are low.

The premise of the risk allocation framework developed below is that a focus on variability alone is insufficient. Rather, it is essential to identify different dimensions of risk. Three such dimensions are presented in Table 4.1. The first dimension, informed by the welfare regime literature, explores the generosity of resources that alleviate worker risk. Second, drawing from the “risk shift” literature (Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000), individualisation reflects the extent that the costs incurred from risks are born by the individual, as opposed to firms or the state. Finally, borrowing from the work on internal and external labour markets, segmentation reflects the extent that poor risk experiences are isolated specific categories of workers. Each of these dimensions is elaborated in the following sections.

Table 4.1 – Definitions of Risk Dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Generosity	The level of private and public resources available to alleviate risks
Individualisation	The extent that the costs incurred from risks are born by the individual, as opposed to firms or the state
Segmentation	The extent that workers’ risk experiences are differentiated by employment status and social location

4.1.1 Generosity

Generosity addresses the resources provided by private and public sources to alleviate risks. In his landmark book, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990) examined the capacities of different welfare regimes for de-commodification, an indication of their generosity in providing individuals with resources to cope with risks inherent in the market. The more generous the welfare provisions of public and private actors, the greater is the regime’s capacity for mitigating undesired risks. This work sparked an interest in the private and public welfare mix, creating a point of departure for further research on the importance of both state-provided and occupational forms of welfare for shielding citizens and workers from uncertainty (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Powell and Barrientos, 2004).

Drawing on public and private sources of risk mitigation, the dimension of *generosity* captures this risk dynamic. This concept refers to the resources workers receive to cushion themselves from financial hardship. It presumes a context where the "dividing line" of public and private spaces for risk mitigation is contested by social actors (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008; Klein, 2003). While the welfare state literature focusses on more conventional forms of social protection (Burchardt and Obolenskaya, 2016; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008; Klein, 2003; Hacker, 2002), such as public and private benefits, the concept of generosity described for this framework focusses on all resources guaranteed to individual workers by their employers and the state. This can refer to salaries, working hours, retirement incomes, health care benefits, and others identified for their relevance to risk (Bonnet et al., 2003). Linking this broader set of resources to risk is not unusual, and can be found in many literatures that link commodification and de-commodification to the entire gamut of resources and social rights that affect them. For example, the citizenship literature has long recognised how both employment and the state figure in risk mitigation (Fudge, 2005; Arthurs, 1967; Marshall, 1950).

4.1.2 Individualisation

While the generosity of private and public resources matters for risk, so too does the pooling of risk amongst workers, citizens, and owners of capital. Research has cast light on how forms of risk sharing once spearheaded by private companies and governments have eroded, resulting in the devolution of responsibility for risks onto individuals (Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000). Collectivised risks bear two key features. First, risks are collectivised when entities, typically firms or the state, cope with uncertainty rather than individuals. Second, in coping with this uncertainty, these entities provide workers with a guarantee. For instance, should there be a downturn in the economy or company profits, the firm or the state is nonetheless bound to providing workers with a minimum contribution to shield them from hardship. Higher guarantees lead to lower risks for workers. When these guarantees erode, risks are individualised, leaving workers and citizens alone in dealing with the consequences.

Collective bargaining matters to risk individualisation. Some examples illustrate trends in this dimension. It can be illustrated through the rise of concession bargaining (MacDonald, 2014) and escalator clauses (Cousineau et al., 1983), both of which erode guarantees in wages and other conditions, leaving workers to cope with costs of market uncertainty that were previously absorbed by corporations. Working hour stability has also been threatened by individualisation, as companies seek more flexible scheduling arrangements in adjusting to supplier flows and consumer demands (Lambert et al., 2012). Finally, in the American context, traditional guarantees for most of the costs associated with health and pension benefits have steadily eroded, only to be replaced by savings accounts or abdicated altogether (Hacker, 2006; Cobb, 2015). While these benefit arrangements may provide more cost certainty to private companies, they produce future instabilities that can lead to high debts and bankruptcies for many workers.

The state has also contributed to individualisation. The core trend is towards welfare state retrenchment, or what some call welfare state restructuring. Governments have faced immense pressures to recalibrate or even privatise critical component of their welfare states, in hopes that unions, employers, and individual workers fill the gaps (Johnston et al., 2011; Schelkle, 2011). Retrenchment has contributed to the growth of private debt which has supplanted public debt as the core driver of economic demand (Crouch, 2009), leading to devastating consequences for citizens and workers. With the state playing a weaker role in the provision of social protection, workers and citizens are facing unprecedented levels of debt and bankruptcies relating to poor wages, illness, and retirement (Hacker, 2006; Porter, 2012; Himmelstein et al., 2009).

4.1.3 Segmentation

The segmentation of risks addresses how forms of generosity and individualisation differ across categories of workers, whose employment status or social location provide few possibilities for cross-over. It draws inspiration from the dual labour market hypothesis, which posits the existence of a privileged "internal labour market" and a "secondary labour market" comprised of the economically disadvantaged (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). However, contemporary segmentation debates have surpassed the simplicities of the initial internal/external dichotomy, by drawing attention to other forms of differentiation within firms or across social location, such as gender, race, or age.

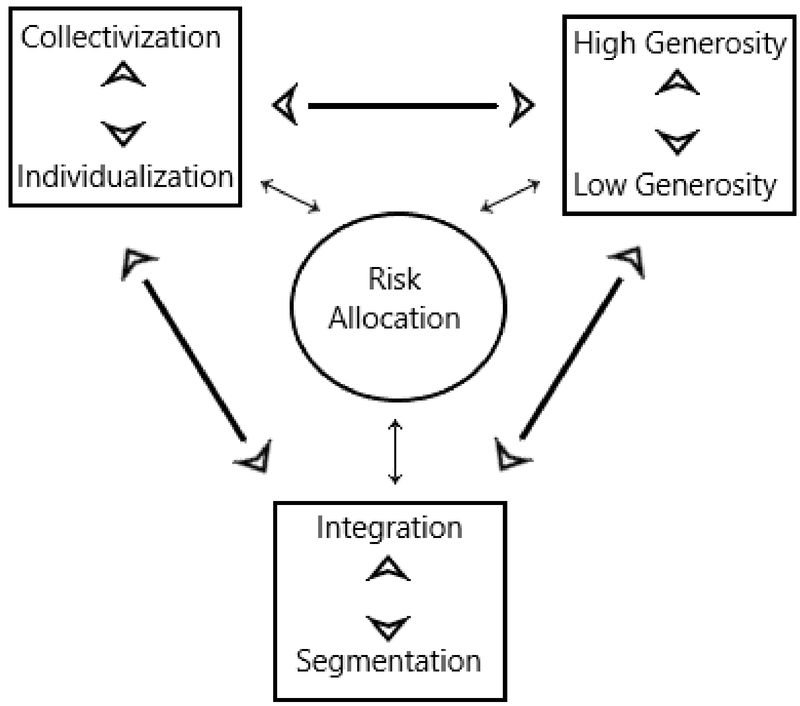
Segmentation addresses how rules generated from within and outside of firms create barriers to better working conditions for certain categories of workers. Within the firm, these include official company policies - as well as norms and customs - that regulate recruitment (limiting “ports of entry”) and promotions, pay scales, allocate training, and basic forms of basic job security (Osterman and Burton, 2005; Osterman, 1987; Osterman, 1982; Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981). The rules tend to be beneficial for those in standard work arrangements Kalleberg, 2003), but also cause discrimination. For example, research finds that women often possess “differentiated access to organisational power”, as firms dominated by male managers tend to reinforce norms and customs that lead lower wage outcomes for women (Hultin, M., & Szulkin, R., 1999; Peetz, 2015; Cranford et al., 2006).

Despite the importance of within-firm segmentation, the importance of external rules such as regulation remains. For instance, some French and German low-wage employers abuse exit options in old state regulations to hire and exploit atypical workers outside of core firm structures (Jaehrling and Méhaut, 2013; Doellgast, 2012). Furthermore, evidence from Canada and the United States demonstrates how two-tiered wage and benefit arrangements in collective agreements inherently discriminate against younger workers (MacNeil, 2013). External rules may diminish segmentation, as research suggests that universal employment standards, comprehensive welfare, and improved access to union structures diminishes differentiation (Häusermann and Schwander, 2012).

4.1.4 The risk allocation framework: An integrative approach

The risk allocation framework addresses how risk trajectories along different dimensions impact workers. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1. The key contribution of this perspective is not in its elaboration of these dimensions, as each has been adequately treated in their respective literature streams. Rather, it provides for a more integrated approach to understanding how risks evolve. First, it posits that all three dimensions are needed to understand the nature and evolution of risk. These dimensions may move in the same direction, leading workers uniformly towards greater or less insecurity. However, risk movements may also be contradictory, leading to different risk combinations for diverse types of workers. Thus, risk trends can be both multi-dimensional and multi-directional. The implications of the argument, as will be explored below, is that such an approach offers greater analytical sensitivity to diverse labour market trends than one-dimensional models, such as the “risk shift” literature (Hacker, 2006).

Figure 4.1 – Risk Allocation Diagram



Second, these dimensions are interconnected. That is, changes in one dimension affect changes in the others. For example, an increase in generosity would be paired with a rise in segmentation, if only privileged workers (e.g. union members) were affected. On the contrary, increases in generosity to marginalised workers, such as a rise in the minimum wage, would lead to more integrated risk outcomes. These interconnections should not distract from the fact that these three dimensions are distinct. They refer to very different features of the risks with which workers must contend: changes in resource generosity; changes in the individualisation of risk burdens; and changes in how risks are segmented across categories of workers.

4.2 Research design and methodology

The research design is a multi-case comparison of supermarket chains in four countries. Risk trajectories in supermarket chains were mapped across two coordinated economies (Germany and Sweden) and two liberal market economies (Canada and the United States). More specifically, the cases were chosen because they exhibit different levels of bargaining coverage and centralisation (see Table 4.2). Given that bargaining coverage and coordination relate to variations in working conditions cross-nationally (Carré et al., 2010; Doellgast and Benassi, 2014; Doellgast et al., 2009), the presumption is that this diversity would also make for an interesting comparison of risks. It was also chosen because North American labour regulations impacting retail tend to be more flexible than those in European countries (Carré et al., 2010). Moreover, since Canada is a federation whose subnational governments hold principal responsibility for social policy and labour regulation, the experiences of supermarkets in these subnational jurisdictions were isolated. Within Canada, Quebec and Ontario are compared because their supermarkets operate under similar labour relations and welfare state models, but food retail in Quebec has decentralised.

The primary focus is on unionised chains, due to their relevance in the sector and the possibility of taking the role of collective bargaining for the different dimensions of risk into account. However, the experiences of non-union chains are also addressed as they are relevant both to trends in segmentation and in collective bargaining.

Table 4.2 – Bargaining Coverage and Centralisation by Case*

	United States	**Canada**		**Germany**	**Sweden**
	NYC	*ON*	*QC*	*NRW*	
Bargaining Coverage*					
2015	30%	50%	80%	30%	95%
1980	80%	80%	90%	100%	95%
Bargaining Coordination					
2015	Chain-wide	Chain-wide	Store-based	Sectoral	Sectoral
1980	Multi-employer	Chain-wide	Chain-wide	Sectoral	Sectoral

Sources: Bargaining coverage is based on estimates provided by the major union in each country. Centralisation was confirmed through interviews and an analysis of the collective agreements.

Food retail was chosen because it represents the epitome of worker insecurity. An ILO (2015: 1) report indicates that "no industry has experienced greater diversification in its waged employment over the last four decades than retail commerce, where different forms of atypical, non-standard employment practices have now attained standard status". Standing (2011) has shown that retail workers writ large are the largest segment of the growing "precariat". Meanwhile, a growing body of research also suggests that job quality in food retail varies considerably across, and even within, countries (Carré and Tilly, 2017; Carré et al., 2010; Coulter, 2014). While this sector is notorious for spreading poor working conditions across large segments of workers, it is also a sector that has been subject to much experimentation across national and sub-national boundaries.

In terms of data collection, 97 semi-structured interviews[2] were conducted with managers, union representatives, and expert witnesses with insider knowledge of major chains in each country. This includes special interviews (with older and retired workers) to capture a historical perspective. This also includes 17 preliminary interviews with researchers working with think tanks and academic research centres which were conducted for context. This data was complemented by an analysis of 20 collective agreements, official documents (corporate, union, and government), and the secondary literature. Trends from 1980 to 2016 were analysed. Based on an informed analysis of the secondary literature (Hacker et al., 2014; Bonnet et al., 2003; Standing, 2002), the empirical analysis focuses on trends in wages, working hours, pensions, and health care. Unless indicated otherwise, all working hour and compensation figures are derived from union estimates in the four countries and an analysis of the collective agreements.

4.3 Research Findings

Table 4.3 presents an overview of the main risk trends facing food retail workers in the four countries investigated. These trends refer to the three dimensions of the risk allocation framework mobilised in this analysis, including trends in wages, working hours, pensions, and health care from 1980 to 2016. As emerges from the analysis below, there were clear cross-

[2] In compliance with research norms for ethics, all interviewees and their organisations will remain anonymous. Interviewees had the right to refuse participation in any aspect of the research process

country differences in risk trends along the three dimensions, even though all workers were from the same sector. Moreover, and notably as regards segmentation, there was also significant variation within cases. Each of the national cases is explored in further detail below, beginning with the liberal market economies (Unites States and Canada) and then proceeding with the coordinated market economies (Germany and Sweden).

Table 4.3 – Description of Main Trends (1980-2016)

Country	Levels of Generosity	Forms of Individualisation	Types of Segmentation
United States	• No real wage increases • Increase in part-time work[3], offset by minimum hour guarantees • Lower private pension and health care contributions	• Fair wage guarantees • Higher scheduling variability, despite minimum hour guarantees • Shifts towards contributory private pensions • Shifts towards health savings accounts and annual health benefits	• Collective agreements discriminate against part-timers and youth • Non-union workers experience inferior working conditions
Canada	• Real wage decline • Increase in part-time work • Lower private pensions contributions and supplemental health benefits, offset by resilience of universal public retirement and health benefits	• Fair wage guarantees and further collectivisation through spread of minimum wage plus clauses (Ontario only) • Higher scheduling variability • Minor shift towards contributory private pensions, offset by universal public retirement benefits • Higher co-pays and deductibles in supp. health benefits	• Collective agreements discriminate against part-timers and younger workers in Ontario, but not Quebec • Non-union workers experience inferior working conditions
Germany	• Real wage increases (for those under CAs), linked to higher pay supplements for unsocial hours • Increase in part-time work • Lower public pension contributions • Higher employee health care contributions	• Real wage increases guaranteed through sectoral agreements, but risk of non-compliance with CA grows • Low scheduling variability in firms with strong works-councils • Higher variability in employee health care contributions	• Youth workers receive lower wages through the apprenticeship system • Workers outside of collective bargaining experience inferior working conditions
Sweden	• Real wage increases, linked to higher pay supplements for unsocial hours • Rise of part-time work • Lower public pension contributions • Stable minimum public retirement and health benefits	• Stable real wage increases guaranteed through sectoral agreements • Low scheduling variabilities due to CAs • Stable public universal retirement and health benefits	• Youth receive lower wage, but are not segmented • Collective agreements do not discriminate against part-timers • All major chains have signed CAs

[3] Defined as workers working typically less than 30 hours per week.

4.3.1 United States

American supermarket workers have been negatively impacted by risk movements in each dimension. So much so that their exposure to risks is more elevated than in the other countries. In the 1980s, these supermarkets operated like cartels (Lichtenstein, 2009), able to control competition and guarantee gainsharing with employees in the process. The most powerful voices in bargaining units were those in more skilled professions, such as bakers and butchers, who could expect full-time hours, stable real wage increases, and generous health and pension benefits. However, less skilled workers (e.g. clerks) also did reasonably well.

In recent years, instability is the fundamental characteristic of work in the industry. Generosity is in decline. Working hours have rendered most workers precarious. On average, 80% of unionised supermarket workers were part-time in 2016, while the reverse was true in the 1980s. Wage stagnation in unionised chains translates low hours into poverty-level incomes for most workers. Unionised chains make lower investments in health and pensions, especially for part-timers and new hires. For example, one agreement provides workers hired after 2013 with one-third of the health benefits received by those workers hired before 2010, and even this is not sufficient to meet basic health needs. Combined with weak welfare state protections, these workers have altogether fewer resources to buffer against adversity than decades ago.

The individualised nature of risk-sharing arrangements facing American food retail workers is severe. This is particularly true for the mass of part-time workers. These workers are typically scheduled only days in advance, and have few controls over their schedules in the long term. Moreover, defined benefit (DB) pension arrangements have been supplanted with uncertain 401k plans. As one union representative illustrates, “many pension funds have not recovered from the recession/depression that we had in 2008-2009. I know for a fact we lost over 25% of our assets, which was a tremendous hit [on] our pension fund”. Due to store closings, fewer companies are participating in joint-employer benefit arrangements. This creates a disequilibrium between the ratio of retirees and incoming funding which threatens the long-term viability of these plans. Health savings-account contributions or annual benefits to protect part-timers continue to replace traditional insurance, reflecting a national trend across industries (Hacker, 2006). Some counter trends are notable, such as the working-hour guarantees of 15 to 21 hours for part-time workers, forcing employers to bear risks for the asymmetries between customer traffic and employee schedules, but they fail to compensate for the large-scale individualisation of risks in most areas.

Segmentation is also ensconced in American supermarkets. Due to competitive pressures, risks have been passed on to some groups in the industry. As illustrated above, part-timers are most effected by declining generosity and individualisation. Collective agreements in the industry typically include clauses that provide newer hires (who are typically younger) with riskier social arrangements. This includes lower hourly rates (including weekends and holidays), reduced sick and holiday leave, and inferior scheduling guarantees. One local union president describes most workers as "career part-timers". Like in most countries, there are few full-time positions available and due to specificities in hiring requirements, existing part-timers cannot expect to secure full-time employment in the foreseeable future. They must thereby choose between accepting hectic scheduling and lower compensation, or leaving the company altogether. Finally, non-unionised workers are most exposed to risks. Research estimates indicate that each Wal-Mart worker replaces 1.4 retail workers in the market, and has a significant negative impact on overall payroll rates (Neumark et al., 2008). Considering that union coverage in United States food retail is approximately 20% of the workforce in this industry (as compared to 70% in 1980), the majority of workers do not benefit from most risk-sharing arrangements offered by unionised chains.

4.3.2 Canada

Canadian food retailers experienced similar risk trajectories as in the United States. Like the United States, the decline of the cartel-like model and the entry of non-union competition in Canada also exposed supermarket workers to negative risk trends across each dimension. However, these trends are limited by the presence of resilient public programs designed to protect workers from risks in old age and illness.

Negative trends in generosity are troubling. The growth of part-time work has been comparable to that of the United States (80% in 2016, compared to 20% in 1980). This trend is exacerbated by plummeting real wages. Supermarket workers in Ontario and Quebec generally earned 50% to 80% of their 1980 real earnings in 2016. Since universal public pensions and most private pension plans in Canada are contributory, lower current incomes provide for less generous incomes in retirement. Furthermore, the main private pension plan in the industry has shifted towards greater employee contributions, while employer contributions have not kept pace with inflation. One former executive describes this as “another thing that has hurt unions and has hurt companies. Some of these multi-employer pension plans are so under-funded, it’s shameful.” The generosity of health care has been relatively stable, due to the existence of universal health care. However, rising co-pays and deductibles have been harmful to workers. This is due to the political nature of drug benefit negotiations (O’Brady et al., 2015).

Risks have also become more individualised in Canada. In a context of declining wealth, this means that workers must cope with greater uncertainty alone and have fewer resources on which they can draw in order to do so. This is most evident in scheduling practices. Most Canadian supermarket chains have adopted computer-operated, just-in-time scheduling, built to reflect last minute inventory fluctuations and customer traffic more than employee needs and lifestyles. More senior workers have priority on the number of hours they receive, but they need to accept whatever hours are offered. According to one union official, “that’s our problem…with people that have kids, people that have parents that are sick, people that are studying at school. You’re telling them…look we’ve got a lot of hours to give you. If you don’t take them all, you’re out...Crazy schedules. That’s the worst part of our industry now.” Furthermore, with no minimum-hour guarantees, part-timers suffer from not knowing their income for the next week. Public and private pension schemes available to retail workers tend to be contributory, with some exceptions. This makes them particularly risky. However, federal Old Age Security providing workers with a guaranteed minimum retirement is not and has proven its effectiveness at reducing poverty by international standards (Fritzell and Ritakallio, 2010). Apart from pharmaceuticals, universal access to free health care has remained stable. Furthermore, there are some counter-trends. For example, some chains in Ontario have negotiated “minimum-wage plus escalator clauses”, compelling companies to augment the salaries of all workers proportionally to increases in the minimum wage, obliging employers to bear some of the risks associated with legislative changes to employment standards. Thus, while individualisation is the dominant trend, there are signs that certain forms of risk may be alleviated in all chains in the years to come.

Trends in segmentation differ markedly by province. In Ontario, risks are strongly segmented. Part-timers are entitled to lower wage and benefit arrangements, while younger workers are indirectly affected by tiered agreements that segment working conditions by date of hire. As one firm-side negotiator described, “over time, we had to reduce some labour rates and benefits. So you negotiated new hire rates, as people left the business you hired at a lesser rate, and you changed some of the benefits that they enjoyed.” Quebec has barred such forms of segmentation in the province. This is due to provisions in the legislation on labour relations and standards, often called “orphan clauses", which prohibit companies from discriminating against workers based on their date of hire. Moreover, non-union workers in both provinces do not benefit from various wage, benefit, and working hour arrangements provided by collective agreements. The gaps between union and non-union workers are narrowed, however, by the existence of universal Old Age Security and health care programs. Being universal, they provide protections to all workers in the country, eliminating the gaps produced by private-sector and union-non-union cleavages.

4.3.3 Germany

The German experience is distinct from that of North America. The major difference is in how negative trends in generosity and individualisation are segmented to workers not covered by collective agreements. In addition, the highly contributory nature of the welfare system multiplies the negative individualising and segmentation effects of declining bargaining coverage.

Negative trends in generosity are evident in Germany. The main negative trend is the decline in working hour generosity (from 20% part-time to 67% part-time) and its corollary outcomes for retirement incomes. The contributory pension scheme provides for low retirement security. One union official explains this as the following: “for a large part, employees in the retail sector clearly cannot live from their public legal pension, and by a long shot. Many employees are at risk of poverty in retirement”. Many low-wage workers in the country are forced into social assistance. However, an important counter-trend concerns real wage increases provided through collective bargaining. For instance, a low-skilled cashier earned 36% more per month in 2016 than in 1980, while the minimum monthly salary of skilled butchers was 30% higher. Moreover, pay supplements for what Europeans call “unsocial hours” (evening, nights, and weekends) are important and vary from 20% to 120% of the hourly rate. This creates a dynamic where some part-timers fare better than full-timers did 30 years ago, though part-timers receiving few shifts struggle to maintain an income needed to survive.

Rates of individualisation have remained largely stable, except for health care. However, there is a major divide across the private and public spheres of risk mitigation for retail workers. Collective agreements serve to collectivize many aspects of wages and working hours, while risks in old age and illness are relegated to risky contributory state programs. Sectoral collective agreements provide workers with guaranteed real wage increases, independent of their store or chain’s profitability. Escalator clauses give firms some reprieve during an economic downturn. However, the social partners affirm that these are applied temporarily and are not subject to abuse.

Collective agreements also limit firms’ ability to deviate from an employee’s average weekly hours. As one union representative puts it, if the “contract says 20 hours, but regularly the company demands 28 hours. Then you can’t just go back on it all of a sudden. Then you have a right to obtain at least 28 hours. Courts have frequently upheld this right”. Moreover, proactive works councillors often negotiate agreements providing workers with 2 to 4 weeks’ notice for scheduling changes, allowing them to plan for their expenses and family obligations accordingly. Contrary to the North American norm of using just-in-time scheduling, German retailers use software that adapt scheduling practices to employee preferences (Carré and Tilly, 2017). When present, works councillors must approve of these schedules before posting.

Unfortunately, public pensions and health care are highly individualised. The public pension regime, the main source of retirement income for retail workers, has historically been contributory. This has been detrimental for low-wage workers whose low current incomes leave them with scant earnings in retirement. Controversially, public health care was traditionally funded through a parity arrangement in which employees and employers both contributed equally. However, the employer’s share has been frozen at a rate of 7.3% since 2005. Employees are thereby responsible for the other 7.3%, but also for any shortfalls in health spending needed to keep the system solvent, adding more uncertainty in expenses for workers.

Trends in segmentation differ from those in North America. Most critically, segmentation within stores is comparatively low. For example, part-timers and younger workers enjoy working conditions comparable to that of full-timers. Mini-jobs have become more common in the industry. These are special work contracts that enable employers to hire workers for less than €450 a month (with important income tax exemptions). Yet even these workers enjoy most of the same labour standards as their peers, especially in stores covered under collective agreements. However, apprentices (usually younger workers from high school) receive lower pay, which some argue leads to the abuse of the system. Most salient is that a growing proportion of supermarkets, not unlike establishments in other sectors (Doellgast and Greer, 2007), are operating outside of traditional bargaining structures. This is due to the steady decline of bargaining coverage in the 2000s as political dynamics within the employers' association eroded support for collective bargaining in the sector (Behrens, 2011). For example, one works councillor reports that cashiers working for an independent franchise earned "6 thousand euros less" than those in corporate stores bound to a collective agreement. This is significant since bargaining coverage is estimated as 30% in the sector. The introduction of the 8.50-euro minimum wage in 2015 has improved their situation somewhat (Bosch, 2018), as many workers earned 5 or 6 euros an hour before this. Nonetheless, the gap remains significant.

4.3.4 Sweden

Swedish supermarket workers fared comparatively better than in other countries. By comparison, risks facing workers in this industry in Sweden are generous, collective, and integrated. However, the rise of part-time work in an industry with no minimum working hours has been critical for many.

The major disturbance in the generosity of resources is the reduction in working hours. While full-time hours were once the norm, an estimated 70% of supermarket workers currently work part-time. This negatively impacts incomes, as some supermarket workers lack the hours needed to maintain a middle-class standard of living. Furthermore, since a significant pillar in the Swedish retirement system is its contributory pension scheme, any reduction in current incomes has effects that endure into retirement. Like Germany, retail workers rely on public pensions for retirement. Also like Germany, the reduction of working hours and its consequences for current and retirement incomes is to some extent offset by trends in wage rates. The typical starting wage rate for an adult worker in Sweden is 52% greater than it was in 1980. Moreover, collective agreements in Sweden oblige employers to compensate workers with a 50% to 100% supplement for work performed during unsocial hours (evenings, nights, and weekends). As an employers' association official put it, "part-timers can make as much as full-timers, since the wage supplements [for] evening and weekends [are] high. However, full-time workers enjoy this too." Thus, overall generosity has diminished for some, but those maintaining a minimum number of hours (many of which are part-timers) can count on a decent income, both currently and in retirement, due to the link between current contributions and future earnings, as well as the strengths of the Swedish retirement system.

The highly collective nature of private and public risk-sharing arrangements makes Swedish retail workers less vulnerable by comparison. The continuity of sectoral bargaining has ensured that workers are guaranteed wage increases, independently of trends in product markets or store profitability. As illustrated by a former corporate negotiator, "We haven't been able to raise the prices on food in any way. If you can buy food elsewhere that's cheaper, you'll go there. So as a consumer, you benefit. But every year you have a higher cost of salary of 2-3%. This creates a pressure on business to be very productive." These agreements have also obliged companies to make advanced guarantees on working hours, including a one-month notice for scheduling and limiting week-to-week, working-hour reductions. Schedules thereby reflect workers' needs for stability. Moreover, the Swedish social democratic welfare state also provides significant guarantees for workers. Its pension system, while containing a pillar based on contributions, still provides workers with a guaranteed pension that - like in Canada - is noted for its success at reducing poverty internationally (Fritzell and Ritakallio, 2010). Universal health care, while under pressure, is still largely government funded and provides access to all who need it. The agglomeration of collectivised social arrangements in Sweden is significant, as it provides supermarket workers with buffers from a litany of risks. Thus, even those workers most negatively affected by decreased working hours enjoy important protections from adverse events pertaining to incomes, working hours and old age.

Finally, segmentation in Sweden has been weak. Part-timers receive all of the same benefits as full-timers, and have the potential to earn as much if pay supplements for unsocial hours are taken into account. The gap between youth and ordinary workers has increased. For example, the starting rates for workers 16 years of age were 16% lower than those of ordinary workers in 1980, whereas the gap now stands at 57% (many of whom are amongst the growing number temporary workers in the industry). However, this minority of workers are guaranteed pay raises with age. Moreover, short-term contract workers are on the rise in the industry. These are renewable contracts for terms of six months. The segmentation effect of these contracts is limited because these contracts must conform to the terms of the collective agreement. Additionally, they may only be renewed four times, after which the employee must be integrated as regular workers into the firm. Most importantly, all major chains in Sweden are covered by sectoral collective agreements. According to a senior economist with the sectoral union; working conditions are “almost the same in every chain”, a fact which prevents the growth of non-union competition that would drive a race to the bottom. This is the only country in our four-country comparison with no segmentation according to union status.

4.4 Comparative analysis

A comparison of these four cases leads to some observations. Two of these were empirical. First, risk is rising everywhere, as can be observed over the period under investigation. This finding resonates with the literature reviewed earlier in this article, confirming that food retail is an exemplar of global trends in low-wage work. Decreases in working-hour generosity were the single common denominator across the four countries. Negative changes in other areas of risk mattered as well.

Second, risk trends vary across the national cases. In fact, there are more variations than similarities in the cross-country differences along the dimensions. However, there are also within-country differences. Table 4.4 presents four tends in risk allocation: highly differentiated risk, as observed in the United States; moderated risk in the Canadian case; segmented risk in Germany; and solidaristic risk in the case of Sweden.

The United States has experienced differentiated risk, with negative risk movements in all three dimensions. Most American workers have fewer resources at their disposal to mitigate risks, and firms are promising them fewer resources to weather economic uncertainty than before. This has taken shape along segmented lines, as collective agreements and human resource practices often bar part-timers and younger workers from forms of risk mitigation available to older full-time workers. Furthermore, most food retail workers are non-union, with protections often inferior to that provided by collective agreements. Canada has experienced moderated risk. Its trends resemble those of the United States, but their impacts are significantly limited by the universal government-provided retirement and health benefits. The gap between workers within and across firms (including union versus non-union workers) is therefore less severe. Private benefits are less important for workers in both circumstances, since these universal programs are most important for mitigating risks in retirement and health. However, segmentation is far more prevalent in Ontario than Quebec, due to legislated differences in the acceptance of two-tier employment standards.

Germany has experienced segmented risk. This is because the gap between core and non-core workers is most significant among the countries. Full-time workers covered under collective agreements have experienced an increase in generosity and no significant form of individualisation. The growing number of part-time workers must grapple with fewer working hours, but are still subject to important protections afforded by collective agreements and will benefit from highly collectivised scheduling arrangements when they have a proactive works councillor. However, a growing number of workers are being segmented in firms and franchises operating outside of bargaining structures. These workers have greatly inferior working conditions, and until 2015, had no minimum wage. This is exacerbated by a welfare regime which favours individualisation and segmentation, by relying on uncertain contributory schemes to fund public retirement and health benefits. The gap between core and non-core workers in Germany is far greater than in the other countries. Finally, Sweden’s experience is one of solidaristic risk. The major trend impacting worker risk in Sweden is the decline of working hour generosity. Beyond this, workers can still count on strong solidaristic forms of security. Risks are still fairly collectivised, since the guarantees in wages, working hours, and benefits ensured by firms and the state remain largely unchanged. They are integrated because collective bargaining structures have remained stable throughout the years and ensure that comparable working conditions are applied throughout the sector.

Table 4.4 – Integrated Analysis of Risk Allocation Trends (1980-2016)

Country	Risk Allocation Trend	Description of Trend
United States	• Differentiated risk	• Negative risks movements in all dimensions for most, though union-affiliated workers still have some protections
Canada	• Moderated risk	• Moderate risk movements in all dimensions, due to the presence of universal retirement and health benefits. Segmentation is higher in Quebec than Ontario.
Germany	• Segmented risk	• High disparities in risk movements along segmented lines, due to gaps in bargaining coverage
Sweden	• Solidaristic risk	• Some declines in generosity, but overall generosity and collectiveness of social arrangements is high for workers

The empirical analysis of risk trends leads to two analytical observations. The first analytical observation concerns the presence of counter-trends to this overall negative movement in risk. It's important to capture the dynamic nature of the interconnections between the different dimensions of risk. In the United States, the increase in part-time work and scheduling variabilities were to some extent offset by the introduction of minimum working-hour guarantees. In Canada, many supermarkets have added minimum-wage plus escalator clauses, compelling employers to provide all workers with wage increases equivalent to that of increases in the minimum wage. Meanwhile, collective agreements in Germany and Sweden have provided workers with real wage increases, offsetting some of the negative effects in incomes from the decline in working hours. These examples illustrate that there is no single trend towards higher levels of risk and that it is a dynamic process that can be countered along one more dimensions of risk allocation. Rather, risk augmentation appears to entail a contradictory dynamic.

Second, the findings illustrate the importance of examining all relevant sources of risk. All three dimensions are needed to analyse risks. This is particularly relevant to comparative research, as some dimensions may be relevant to some cases but not others. For example, while risks rose in supermarkets across all countries, some dimensions mattered more to some cases than others. Most interestingly, the dimensions of individualisation and segmentation were inadequate to describing the growth of risk in Sweden. These workers were most negatively affected by the decline of working hour generosity and the problems this posed for maintaining liveable incomes. However, the highly collective and integrated nature of social arrangements affecting the most relevant risks remained for the most part unchanged in the sector. Meanwhile, in Germany, changes in individualisation were not particularly relevant to workers covered under collective agreements, however it was a central feature of risks in the growing number of establishments operating outside of collective bargaining, where workers did not benefit from wage scales, supplemental hours provisions, works agreements on scheduling, and other benefits associated with employee representation. The framework can be highlighted to compare differences between firms, as there may be considerable cross-dimensional differentiation within sectors.

4.5 Conclusion

This article argues that a multi-dimensional approach to risks is needed to understand their evolution. It proposes a new framework, the Risk Allocation Framework, to explore these dimensions. By examining the generosity of resources that alleviate risk, the extent that actors have individualised the risk burden, and how risks are segmented across worker categories, it is suggested, researchers will be able to see more into what we describe as risk than is the case with other approaches oriented towards only one or two dimensions. By bridging the three traditions evident in the literature through this integrated approach, researchers will be able to capture the holism that is risk, that is, a multi-dimensional and contradictory construct. This argument was developed through an analysis of risks in American, Canadian, German, and Swedish supermarkets from 1980-2016. The findings confirm the now common narrative that risks are rising in most settings (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011; Heery and Salmon, 2000; Hacker, 2006; Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009). However, the analysis also offers insight into the breadth of variety across the cases. Risks have risen in each case, yet often in different ways, and offering different levers for possible mitigation of the worst effects.

This framework need not be bound to the parameters set by this study, which simply used supermarket chains as a testing ground for applying the framework. Future research could emphasize other units of analysis, by comparing occupations, sectors, or even national trends in risk. However, as may be deduced from the above illustration, integrating the concepts of generosity, individualisation, and segmentation may lead research towards multi-level analysis. This is so as this framework teases out various movements of risk not captured by other approaches, and helping researchers make connections with various actors and units of analysis in the process.

The Risk Allocation Framework therefore opens new territory for exploring how actors are affecting each dimension of risk and how, either advertently or inadvertently, this is affecting social arrangements for alleviating risks as a whole. Of great interest is the existence of dynamic and contradictory trends. As illustrated in the above analysis, although risks altogether have risen in each case, there were also positive movements associated with most cases. This suggests not only that risk trends are contradictory, but that they signify a struggle against inevitability. Actor-oriented research could shed some light on this struggle, and help us understand more about the politics of risk dynamics.

New research could examine firms, unions, and the state, as their importance was alluded to in this study, but other actors may be relevant as well, including individual workers, managers, and non-governmental organisations. Furthermore, future research can also address risks in specific settings, such as addressing how risks take shape through organisational restructuring or with the rise of new global value chain configurations. New avenues for research ought to draw on many disciplines and fields, including sociology, industrial relations, management, political science, labour studies, economics, and others. Not doing so would undermine the richness of the theories which underpin this framework. To conclude, the main take-away is that risks are multi-faceted in nature. Therefore, theory and research must be sufficiently rich and robust if we are to explore all of its facets and formulate effective solutions for its mitigation.

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Chapter 5

Partnering Against Risk? An Institutional Comparison of Canadian and Swedish Retailers

(*Article 2*)

Abstract

Risk refers to levels of economic uncertainty facing workers. This article assesses how labour-management partnerships affect risk in different institutional settings. It draws on semi-structured interviews about collective bargaining in Canadian and Swedish retailers – food retail specifically - with company managers, employers' association representatives, worker representatives and expert witnesses. Negotiators in both institutional contexts embraced partnering as a strategy to generate mutual gains for firm competitiveness and enhanced worker security. However, the Swedish partnerships were identified as more compatible with improved worker security than those in Canada. The variation is explained by the centralisation of bargaining structures and their effects on how actors cooperate in response to market competition. Centralised structures had important effects on actor incentives to standardize HR practices across firms, the integration of outsiders, and the structural power of unions. Due to its focus on a local service sector, retail trade, this article suggests that sectoral dynamics are a key factor in understanding the relationship between labour relations and risk.

Risk has risen in most OECD countries (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011). Workers face increased job precariousness (Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009); even middle-class jobs are increasingly vulnerable (Tang, 2015; Hacker, 2006; Doellgast, 2017). Much of the explanation relates to new government policies whereby traditional safety nets have been undermined by welfare-state retrenchment. While social actors such as firms and unions face immense pressures to relieve workers from risk (Johnston et al., 2011, Schelkle, 2011), they are constrained by finite resources and the heavy logic of the market. Is high worker risk the "new normal" (Granter et al., 2015) or does social actor agency offer the opportunity to shape alternative paths to reduce risk?

While partnership has been presented as one strategy for revitalising union influence in collective bargaining (Heery, 2002), its relationship with worker risk remains a paradox (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005). The few studies that exist are rather pessimistic, suggesting that partnerships are too "episodic" (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005) and "asymmetrically" weighted against labour (Jenkins, 2007) to produce any substantial improvements to worker security. However, contemporary partnership research has proven inadequate at capturing how contextual characteristics influence partnerships (Johnstone et al., 2009) and how institutions influence collective bargaining across sectors and countries (Price et al., 2014), thus limiting our understanding of why partnerships may be beneficial to worker risk in some settings but not others.

This research examines how labour-management partnerships affect risk under different bargaining structures. It draws on semi-structured interviews, official records, and collective agreements to examine collective bargaining in Canadian and Swedish retailers between 1980 and 2016, with a focus on food retail. Employers and unions in both countries have fostered partnerships under contexts of heightened market competition. However, while faring best in the 1980s, Canadian workers now suffer from more volatile incomes, unpredictability in scheduling, and declining union coverage than their counterparts in Sweden. The difference is partly explained by how bargaining structures, along with their impacts on the nature of competition, affected the opportunity structures for unions and employers to partner against risk.

The argument is pursued in four steps: first, a theoretical review of labour-management partnerships, their relevance to institutions, and the approach pursued in this article; second, a brief overview of the case selection and methods; third, a presentation of the findings and a comparison of the food retailers in both contexts; and, in conclusion, an analysis of the argument and its contribution to the literature.

5.1 A review of the literature

A theoretical review of the literature is conducted in the next two sections. The first section analyses research on how partnerships interact with risk. The second section outlines the article's approach by identifying institutional factors that matter to labour-management partnerships and risk.

5.1.1 Partnerships and risk

Partnerships have been presented as an alternative to low-road HRM practices focused on Taylorism and aggressive labour cost reductions. However, their impacts on risk remain underexplored (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005). The focus here is on risk, which refers to the extent that social arrangements to protect workers from harm in their material lives are uncertain (Hacker, 2006; Heery and Salmon, 2000; Kalleberg, 2009). Thus, workers' exposure to risks is high when variabilities in wages, working hours, pensions, and other related areas, are high. They are low when they are stable.

The more positive view of partnering is inspired by traditional labour negotiation theory (Walton and McKersie, 1965), suggesting that partnerships yield "mutual gains" for both employers and employees, even in times of heightened competition (Bamber et al., 2009; Kochan and

Osterman, 1994). Employers aspire to higher labour productivity and more flexible work environments. Unions aim to gain substantial improvements tin working conditions and may achieve specific improvements to worker risk, such as employment security, in exchange for their collaboration (Heery, 2002). However, a broader array of outcomes has been linked to such partnerships, including pay and benefit increases, investments in training, positive changes to work organisation, and arrangements for the joint-governance of employment, as the high-performance work systems literature suggests (Osterman, 2018; Bamber et al., 2009; Appelbaum and Batt, 1994; Kochan and Osterman, 1994).

Critical research on partnerships highlights their negative impact on employee risk. One stream has focused on the internal dynamics of partnering (Jenkins, 2007; Evans et al., 2017; Rolfsen, 2011). Partnering is perceived to undermine unions' representativeness, as union leaders behave more like managers in their deepening commitment to the firm and may even become less sensitive to substantive risk concerns, as organisational needs begin to overshadow those of workers. Another stream suggests that external factors, such as weak institutional supports and market volatility, threaten the potential for partnering under modern capitalism. Focusing on the UK, Martinez Lucio and Stuart (2005) find that partnerships tend to be short-lived or hierarchically structured by management under regulatory environments that are not supportive of collaboration. Others show that the dominance of capital markets and powerful multinationals in domestic economies has diminished employers' capacities to maintain their end of the bargain (Thompson, 2003; Dobbins and Dundon, 2015).

A key question arising from both the positive and critical views of partnership is why partnerships are more effective in some settings and not in others. The comparative research that does exist focuses on how national and sub-national institutions influence the adoption of partnering strategies. This research has focused on international service sectors such as airlines (Bamber et al., 2009; Turnbull et al., 2004) and call centers (Doellgast, 2008; Doellgast, 2010). While useful for understanding international product markets, this research excludes local service sectors that are most representative of low-wage work, including retail and restaurants, where the possibilities for value-added services are weak in many settings (Osterman, 2018; Tilly, 2017; Kochan and Osterman, 1994). There are few studies comparing how partnerships impact working conditions in local low-wage services across countries and sectors (Price et al., 2014), and none that examine employee risk.

5.1.2 Understanding partnership and risk in different institutional contexts

This article posits that institutional context influences partnerships' effectiveness at mitigating risk. It highlights the importance of bargaining structures, as they affect the nature of competition in local service sectors. Partnerships in more centralised structures, it is suggested, respond differently to heightened market competition than similar arrangements introduced in decentralised settings. Drawing on a broader literature on collective bargaining, partnerships and risk, the article identifies three features of partnerships that are particularly important for the comparative analysis of the impact of labour-management partnerships on workers' risk.

A first factor concerns how actors partner to standardize or differentiate human resource practices across firms and establishments. This relates to actor calculations on how to align competitive objectives with worker interests. Under centralised arrangements, employers and unions may support multi-employer arrangements to preserve institutional stability and take working conditions out of competition (Sisson, 1987; Katz, 1993; Laroche and Murray, 2012). In other settings, the normative preference of employers is for more local arrangements, which places firms' business conditions at the fore of negotiations, making insecurity a pre-condition to competitiveness under high market competition (Marginson et al., 2014; Marginson, 2015b).

A second factor focuses on how actors cooperate to integrate or exclude outsiders from collective bargaining. The initial formulation of insider-outsider theory suggests that workers covered by collective bargaining hold considerable power - due to the prohibitive costs of hiring, training, and firing employees – which they use to obtain wages above the "market clearing" level at the expense of outsiders (Lindbeck and Snower, 2001; Lindbeck and Snower, 1989). However, research also shows that union and management strategies towards the inclusion of workers are context-laden. They dependent on factors such as the perceived alignment between insider and outsider interests (Benassi and Dorigatti, 2015) and managerial calculations on the importance of skill retention (Crouch, 2015). The integration of outsiders represents a form of standardisation, as it prevents firms from employing workers outside of collective bargaining to acquire a cost-advantage on the competition. However, integration deserves special attention because it represents not simply a form of differentiation in standard-setting through collective bargaining, but the shifting of employment outside of the reach of collective bargaining and its associated protections.

The third factor concerns variation in structural power arising from market competition under different institutional settings. Wright (2000) describes structural power as deriving "from the location of workers within the economic system". Research suggests that low competition may be a source of structural power for unions, providing them with more authority in negotiating forms of security and flexibility in human resource practices (Pulignano et al., 2016). High competitive pressures, however, do not necessarily diminish union power under multi-employer bargaining (Marginson et al., 2014). While competition may pressure unions to yield to firm contingencies in single-employer bargaining, they may be a source of power for unions under centralised bargaining. Under the latter, unions can use employers' vulnerabilities to competition to pressure them to raise labour standards or face potentially crippling industrial action. While industrial action is not typically used in collaborative arrangements, the structural power of unions can influence the agenda of partnerships, ensuring that security-related issues are treated seriously.

The analysis of these three factors will be applied to partnerships in different institutional contexts. The intent is to bridge the divide between analyses of partnerships and bargaining centralisation to provide a more nuanced understanding of how partnerships affect risk outcomes across different bargaining structures.

5.2 Research design and methodology

This study involves contextualised comparative case studies of Canadian and Swedish food retailers. This method complements research on large populations by providing a deep causal analysis through interactions with actors in the field (Edwards and Belanger, 2008). It adheres to a "reflexive" research approach, as it involves multiple on-site and off-site encounters with key actors in the field over time (Burawoy, 2003).

In terms of the choice of sector, retail is the single largest service sector and is emblematic of precarious work in most countries. The food retail experience is of special interest because there remains a significant union presence in this industry internationally, making it a focus for experimentation for the improvement of working conditions through collective bargaining (Carré and Tilly, 2017; Carré et al., 2010; Coulter, 2014).

In terms of institutional settings, Canada and Sweden were chosen to isolate variations in bargaining structures. The Canadian province of Quebec is examined, as its retail union espouses a collaborative strategy in a highly decentralised bargaining context. In 1980, chain-wide agreements covered 90% of food retailers in the province. However, unionised stores chain-wide agreements have since been replaced store-level bargaining. 80% of Canadian supermarket chains were covered by these agreements in 2016. Swedish bargaining has also been deeply collaborative, but in a context where sectoral agreements covered 95% of the retail sector – retail food included - from 1980 to 2016. Thus, while coverage rates have been relatively high in both countries, Swedish bargaining has remained highly centralised and all-encompassing, while Canadian bargaining has been decentralised and much of the workforce is not covered by collective agreements.

The period of observation is from 1980 to 2016. This period captures how major crises in collective bargaining and disruptions to the competitive environment affected partnerships in both countries. These include the bankruptcy of major unionised chains in Canada, short-lived employer militancy in Sweden, and the entry of discount stores in both countries' food retail markets.

The following companies were examined: CAN-1, CAN-2, SWE-1, and SWE-2. They were chosen because each company is involved in a deep partnership with a union, yet under different bargaining structures. CAN-1 and CAN-2 are engaged in a deep partnership with the largest union local in retail food in the province of Quebec. This local negotiates agreements for most stores run under the CAN-1 and CAN-2 banners in the province. This degree of partnership differentiates these cases from Canadian union locals who have never achieved the same levels of trust and collaboration. Swedish bargaining is sectoral. SWE-1 and SWE-2 are represented by employers' associations, both of whom have partnered with the country's only retail union. SWE-1 is represented by the country's employers' association for retail and SWE-2 is represented by a smaller employers' association representing cooperatives in the country. The agreements are virtually the same.

The other main similarity across all companies is that supermarkets constitute the most common, and hence most important, store format. Beyond this, there are more similarities amongst companies across countries than within them (Table 5.1). This aspect of the research design enables the study to account for differences in company characteristics in assessing how partnerships affect worker risk. Collective bargaining covered all stores operated by CAN-2, SWE-1, and SWE-2, but not CAN-1 as some of its independent retailers are not union certified. There are also differences in the centralisation of HR structures. All stores with SWE-1 are independent retailers and thereby set HR policies independently from the lead company. Most stores with CAN-1 are similar as they operate under independent retailer or franchise models. CAN-2 and SWE-2 adhere to centralised structures in which HR practices are controlled by corporate headquarters. Most of the companies are financially stable, in terms of maintaining healthy levels of market share and profitability. SWE-2 is the sole exception, whose market share and profitability has declined over the past decade. Finally, the companies differ in terms of their market share of sales.

Table 5.1 – Overview of Food Retailers

	CAN-1	*CAN-2*	*SWE-1*	*SWE-2*
Bargaining Unit	Store	Store	Sector	Sector
# of employees	65,000	192,000*	7,622	7,349
Main format	Supermarkets	Supermarkets	Supermarkets	Supermarkets
Store coverage under collective bargaining	84%	100%	100%	100%
Centralisation of HR	Mixed	Centralised	Decentralised	Centralised
Financial stability	Stable	Stable	Stable	Unstable
National market share	10.5%	30%	50.8%	19%

Sources: This table is based on information acquired from each company's annual reports and the interviewees.
*Includes some employees outside of non-food retail establishments

The findings are based on the analysis of 62 semi-structured interviews[4] with union and employer representatives with direct experience in collective bargaining, as well as expert witnesses (mediators, consultants, and private researchers). The bulk of these interviews were conducted from 2015 to 2017 (some preliminary interviews were conducted from 2012 to 2015). 43 interviews were conducted on Quebec: 25 with unions, 11 with employer representatives, and 7 with expert witnesses. 19 interviews were conducted in Sweden: 10 with unions, 4 with employer representatives, and 5 with expert witnesses. Most interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes. Many interviewees were contacted multiple times, so that they could elaborate on important themes and new developments. A cluster-analysis was performed to identify common patterns in each country. The interviews were complemented by a review of company reports, media releases and collective agreements to facilitate a deeper analysis of the cases. 6 collective agreements were analysed to assess employee risk trends across cases.

[4] The interview process complied with strict research norms for ethics. All interviewees and their organisations were guaranteed complete anonymity and control over the research process.

5.3 Findings

The next sections explore the research findings of this article. It begins by demonstrating how risk trends diverge across the cases. This is followed by an analysis of partnering across the cases and a comparative analysis of how institutional factors influenced the effects of partnering on risk.

5.3.1 Divergent trends in risk

An analysis of collective agreements demonstrates a considerable divergence in risk trends across workers in both countries. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 compare risk trends in unionised stores that are representative of stores and key occupations in CAN-1 and CAN-2 with trends in sectoral agreements that are representative of SWE-1 and SWE-2, as well as the entire retail sector in Sweden.

In the 1980s, Canadian food retail workers were more secure than those in Sweden. Incomes were considerably higher in Canadian stores; they received significantly higher wage rates and full-time hours were the norm. Furthermore, nearly all store workers were covered by collective agreements. Swedish workers received lower incomes, as their pay rates were lower and most Swedish workers worked part-time. However, the pay was still enough to provide a descent standard of living for many workers, bolstered by high supplemental pay rates for “unsocial hours” (evenings and weekends). Like CAN-1 and CAN-2, all workers with SWE-1 and SWE-2 were covered by collective agreements.

Table 5.2 – Wage Trends from 1980 to 2016*

Bargaining Unit	CAN-1 (Store)		CAN-2 (Store)		SWE-1 & SWE-2 (Sector)
	Clerks	Butchers	Clerks	Butchers	All Employees**
Full-time rates (monthly)					
Maximum - *2016*	$2,208.27	$3,104.40	$2,813.20	$3,562.00	$3,235.90
Maximum - *1980*	$1,549.17	$1,653.17	$1,549.17	$1,653.17	$792.09
Δ in real terms *1980-2016****	-51.11%	-35.59%	-37.71%	-26.09%	+60.00%
Minimum - *2016*	$1,906.67	$2,036.67	$1,872.00	$1,872.00	$3,001.52
Minimum - *1980*	$1,165.67	$1,198.17	$1,165.67	$1,198.17	$760.01
Δ in real terms *1980-2016****	-43.90%	-41.70%	-44.92%	-46.41%	+54.29%
Part-time rates (hourly)					
Maximum - *2016*	$12.74	$17.91	$16.23	$20.55	$19.49
Minimum - *1980*	$8.48	$10.04	$8.48	$10.04	$4.74
Δ in real terms *1980-2016****	-48.47%	-38.81%	-34.35%	-29.79%	+60.53%
Minimum - *2016*	$11.00	$11.75	$10.80	$10.80	$18.08
Minimum - *1980*	$6.38	$7.28	$6.38	$7.28	$4.55
Δ in real terms *1980-2016****	-40.86%	-44.64%	-41.94%	-49.11%	+55.21%
Wage supplements - unsocial hours					
2016	$1.10/hour - nights No evening premium		$.50 per hour - nights No evening premium		50-70% - evenings 100% - weekends
1980****	$2.16/hour - nights $8.65/day - evenings		$2.16/hour - nights $8.65/day - evenings		50-70% - evenings 100% - weekends

Sources: Collective agreements identified by key officials as representative of company trends.
*All figures are expressed in Canadian dollars
**OECD's Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) for Private Consumption data was used to convert Swedish krona to Canadian dollars
*** OECD's Consumer Price Index Data was used to calculate real wage changes using each country's home currency
****Expressed in 2016 Canadian dollars

From 1980 to 2016, the risk trends across national lines could hardly be more different. The first major divergence is in the wage rates (Table 5.2). Wage rates are low-risk when workers can expect real wage stability from one year to the next, but high-risk when they are prone to vary or decline over time. Workers with SWE-1 and SWE-2 could count on yearly real wage increases. This also applies to supplemental pay rates for work conducted during unsocial hours, which remained largely unchanged throughout this period. When normal and supplemental wage rates are accounted for, Swedish workers with three years of tenure can earn up to $39 per hour for work performed after noon on Saturdays, and all-day on Sundays and holidays. Workers with CAN-1 and CAN-2, however, experienced a precipitous decline in the generosity and certainty of wage rates during this period. Even relatively skilled butchers could not count on real wage increases year after year, as cost-cutting concessions even affected this occupation during the 36-year period. Canadian workers also experienced important declines in supplemental pay for evenings and nights, which were negligible in 2016.

The second major divergence concerns uncertainty in working hours (Table 5.3). A major source of risk for workers in all four companies was the rise of part-time work from 1980-2016, especially for Canadian supermarkets that employed mostly full-timers in 1980. However, SWE-1 and SWE-2 maintained more working hour security than CAN-1 and CAN-1 over the 36-year period. Swedish workers benefitted from long-term scheduling notice and limits on the extent that employers can deviate from average weekly hours (9 hours: full-timers, 5 hours: part-timers). Meanwhile, SWE-1 and SWE-2 are obliged to consult the union on scheduling matters, including a special right for workers to enjoy 16 consecutive Saturdays and Sundays off, and other rights concerning scheduling around family obligations. The bargaining units held by CAN-1 and CAN-1 faced a different trend. Scheduling notice has always been short-term, but this is more harmful since work is mostly part-time and store hours have been extended into evenings and on weekends. Moreover, requirements to provide workers with minimum hours have been lifted, along with seniority provisions. The new norm is to provide the most working hours to those workers that are most available to work, regardless of the tenure or personal needs of employees. Thus, the rise of part-time work has affected Canadian workers far more than in

Sweden, because working hours (and hence incomes) in the Canadian cases vary considerably from one week to the next.

Table 5.3 – Trends in Scheduling from 1980-2016

	CAN-1 & CAN-2		**SWE-1 & SWE-2**	
	1980	2016	1980	2016
% Full-time*	80%	20%	42%	30%
Notice of scheduling**	3 days	3 days	1 month	1 month
Minimum hour guarantee (weekly)**	7 hours	No minimum	Within range of annual average (FT:9, PT:5)	Within range of annual average (FT:9, PT:5)
Main criteria for distributing hours**	Seniority	Availability	C.A. scheduling provisions	C.A. scheduling provisions

* Represents union estimates of average part-time rates for supermarkets in CAN-1 and CAN-2, and union data representing the retail sector as a whole for SWE-1 and SWE-2 (where single-store data was not available). Part-time workers are categorised as those working less than 35 hours per week.
**Based on analyses of key collective agreements representative of CAN-1 and CAN-2, and sectoral agreements for SWE-1 and SWE-2.

The final major difference relates to the creation of outsiders. CAN-1 and CAN-2 have permitted the transfer of essential functions to non-union workers. Non-union workers now perform traditional (e.g. shelving) and non-traditional (e.g. cell phone sales) functions within stores. These workers lack access to basic protections such as guaranteed rates of pay under salary scales, pay supplements, or scheduling protections. This has not occurred in SWE-1 and SWE-2. While SWE-1 and SWE-2 have made significant use of temporary 6-month contracts permitted under both collective agreements and the law, these employees enjoy the same forms of protection as those provided to standard employees.

5.3.2 Analysing the effects of partnering on risk

The following sections analyse the effects of three features of the partnerships on risk in Canadian and Swedish supermarkets: in human resource practices across companies and stores, in addressing the insider-outsider problem, and in whether market competition was a source of structural power.

The Canadian Partnerships

The Canadian partnerships were initiated as a response to the bankruptcies of two major unionised food retailers which accounted for 90% of market share in the early 1980s. The bankruptcies came as a shock to the union. Until then, the union's strategy was self-described as "militant", an aggressive bargaining stance relying on strike threats to win improvements to their collective agreements. However, union representatives "saw low-cost competition eating up the market share" of unionised stores and calculated that these stores required more flexibility if they were to survive in the new competitive environment.

Officials in the retail union in Quebec province boast that they stopped treating employers "as the enemy" in response to market change, a view they believe distinguishes them from other locals in the country. Managers in the province also embraced collaboration. Based in a French-speaking province with a unique union friendly heritage, labour relations managers with CAN-1 and CAN-2 indicated that union legitimacy was an important component of "Quebec values". However, they also calculated that combative relations would be unwise in a legal context where, unlike in the neighbouring US, they had no easy exit from collective bargaining.

Furthermore, unionists became aware of the dangers of strike activity in the industry. Strikes threatened store market share and union membership levels. Negotiators for CAN-1 and CAN-2 mentioned a well-known set of strikes initiated against a chain of supermarkets by another union local in the Thunder Bay region of the province of Ontario. In 2002, this company nearly closed three stores –a potential loss of 481 jobs – after a lengthy and costly strike. These stores never regained the market share lost during the strike. Thus, company managers are as eager as the union to avoid lock-outs. According to an industry expert, CAN-2 cannot afford to strike, since "[CAN-2's stores] have been losing share to [competitors] in a big way in terms of the traditional grocers but also to the lower-cost formats".

Recognising the risks of strike action, union and company negotiators rely on "other means of influence". This entails negotiating agreements that foster innovation to maintain sales. For example, a lead union negotiator described how CAN-1 and CAN-2 need to consult the union before introducing any new services that could contravene existing agreements. This creates a dynamic where the union has become a partner in innovation, in exchange for a say in how the innovation affects workers. CAN-1 and CAN-2 use investments as a source of influence. One manager argued that cooperative unions "gets better results" in collective bargaining because they maintain a stable investment climate. The command over investment-making is a source of considerable power for employers in a context where the union cannot use strikes and is fearful of losing members.

To protect their members jobs, the union collaborated with CAN-1 and CAN-2 in adapting their agreements to local market conditions. To facilitate this process, CAN-1 and CAN-2 categorised their stores based on factors such as profitability, real estate costs, and the age of stores. For example, workers in stores with high performance, low real estate costs, and longer tenure can earn up to "2 to 3 dollars more per hour" than stores not matching those metrics. These criteria informed concession-bargaining during the 1980s and 1990s, where wages fell from a peak of around “$12.50 an hour to $8.50” an hour and scheduling protections were lifted.

Comparisons of full-service supermarkets to discount stores fostered downward competition for flexibility in collective agreements. While non-union discount stores such as Wal-Mart posed a problem, it was the discount stores operated by CAN-1 and CAN-2 that posed the most critical threat to traditional stores. As one union leader describes, a CAN-1 discount store can generate “$800,000 per week” in sales with only 50 employees, while a full-service store would require 200 employees for the same volume. Moreover, these discount stores offer lower prices for the same goods (e.g. one industry study finds that sugar, oils, and coffee are 12% cheaper in unionised discount-chains), and are often strategically positioned in the same neighborhoods as supermarkets with CAN-1 and CAN-2.

The Canadian partnerships also promoted flexible insider-outsider dynamics. One example is the introduction of non-union shelvers. Prior to 1983, all shelving was conducted in-house. Based on industry practices with non-union retailers, suppliers of “soft drinks, baby food, spices, and bread” found that they could improve product turnover by assuming responsibility for shelving their products. This put considerable pressure on unionised chains to negotiate purchasing agreements that were like those of non-union retailers.

Another example is the introduction of non-union cell phone kiosks within CAN-2’s stores. The intention was to provide a third-party with a “40-square foot spot’ within stores in which they could test the model’s profitability. However, CAN-2 wanted its unions to cooperate by letting the third-party operate these kiosks with non-union workers during the experimental phase. The intent was to “bring up sales in the store” and to attract “new investment”. If successful, the employees would eventually be incorporated into the collective agreement and the whole store's workforce could benefit from its profitability.

Other locals in the country resisted company efforts to outsource these functions. "No supplier was allowed to stock shelves" across stores in other provinces and CAN-2 faced a wave of grievances for its cell phone kiosk initiative in the rest of the country. Quebec stores faced no net loss in in-store hours from the introduction of non-union shelvers and cell phone kiosk workers were eventually integrated in the collective agreement. However, these practices, along with others, led to the creation of a non-union segment within stores bereft of the protections provided by collective agreements.

Not surprisingly, there is no cooperation across unionised chains to expand collective bargaining coverage. Managers with CAN-1 and CAN-2 have long been vehemently opposed to collective arrangements that bind entire sectors. Along with the third largest Canadian food retailer, CAN-1 and CAN-2 met with the president of the union to discuss how to counter the Wal-Mart threat prior to its entry in the Canadian market in 1994. The union proposed sectoral bargaining as a win-win solution for unionised retailers and their workers. Sectoral bargaining, it was argued, would set working conditions for the entire sector, preventing Wal-Mart from gaining a cost-advantage on unionised retailers by avoiding unions and applying low-road HR practices to cut costs.

Interviewed managers identified two rationales for resisting the introduction of sectoral bargaining. First, managers with CAN-1 and CAN-2 believed that imposing coverage on other employers was against their "management philosophy". They also cited a more pragmatic reason: the worry that sectoral bargaining would have a ripple effect on CAN-1 and CAN-2's non-union operations in retail.

The union's complaint-based approach to organising does not contradict this logic. Only stores whose employees have filed complaints with the union are targeted for certification. Thus, high road firms can continue to exist union free, so long as they respect their employees. "Costco is not a problem for us", said one union leader, who praised this non-union chain for offering high-end wages and benefit packages.

The Swedish Partnerships

The bargaining environment in Swedish retail is highly cooperative. According to a senior economist with the retail union, colleagues in other countries "struggle to understand how we can be enemies at the bargaining table while engaged in such deep collaboration". The Swedish Retail and Wholesale Council is evidence of this "deep collaboration", with its strong investment in research and deliberation in areas of joint-concern to union and management such as occupational health and safety, restructuring and job transitions, and skills.

The current deep collaboration is an outcome of a major conflict that arose in the mid-1990s. According to a senior economist with the retail union, the employers' association for retail was embracing "neoliberal ideas" during this period, not to mention an initiative to pressure the union to decentralize by substituting company-level agreements for sectoral agreements.

The conflict between the employers' association and the union peaked in 1995, when the retail employers' association wanted to lower pay rates for "unsocial hours". These high rates of pay for unsocial hours – the highest in Sweden - were negotiated in the first bargaining round following the deregulation of shop opening hours in 1971. Employers initially accepted these rates, however, opposition to them increased as consumer demand for products in unsocial hours made the cost burden of these pay rates unbearable for employers.

This conflict culminated in a sector-wide strike against most retailers in the industry, but not all of them, a fact which left the employers divided. Thus, when the retail employers' association retaliated by announcing that its members would initiate two-hour lock-outs every morning, those unaffected by the strikes refused to comply in fear of the financial consequences. As put by the employers' association's lead negotiator: "labour negotiations at that specific time were poorly planned and badly executed. Nothing an employers' [association] can be proud of." The employers' association for cooperatives was restricted from entering the conflict, due to an 80-year-old arrangement restricting them from industrial action.

The Swedish retail experience is not typical. Its deep collaboration is unique, as most sectors have shifted towards "more conflictual bargaining relations" in past decades. Due to this, the stability of economic security arrangements in retail is unlike comparable sectors. For example, rates of pay (due to weak supplements for unsocial hours) and working hour protections are drastically inferior in the restaurant and hotel sectors, where gaps in coverage (75%) and a weaker bargaining relationship have prevented the actors from partnering to standardize working conditions across firms.

Unlike Canada, market competition was a source of power for the Swedish retail union. During the strike, the retail union was not worried about protecting the market share of individual stores. All major chains were covered by sectoral agreements. So rather than focus on preserving individual firms' market share to maintain membership levels, the union concentrated its efforts on resisting concessions to please its members.

Union officials describe their win during the 1995 conflict as having precipitated the turn towards deepened collaboration. The employers' association hired new staff that were more sympathetic to the concerns of the labour movement and turned their focus to deepening collaboration.

It is noteworthy that the employers' association for retail still cooperated with the union in other areas throughout the 1995 conflict, including the extension of labour standards to all firms. The union, along with SWE-1 and SWE-2, have benefited from standardisation since the 1980s. First, there is the obvious benefit of requiring all major competitors to adhere to the same labour standards, preventing low-road competitors from undercutting firms that are bound by collective agreements. Second, unlike Canada, Swedish bargaining and labour laws interact to shape important outcomes for work organisation.

Most interesting are provisions that encourage cross-training and job rotation. Sweden's *Work Environment Act*, along with best practices negotiated by the union and the two employers' associations, set industry standards for avoiding monotonous and strenuous work. For example, cashiers "shouldn't sit for more than 2 hours" in peak periods of customer traffic. And similar to other blue-collar agreements in Sweden, workers are trained to occupy various posts within the store. According to an employers' representative: "usually, everybody doesn't do everything, but you could ask them to do anything within the store". The outcome is that job rotation and competition on the basis of reduced working hours (i.e. trying to manage stores with the fewest number of workers possible) represents the most common HR strategy to cut costs.

Due to standardisation, the entry of Danish and German discount stores in 2002 and 2003 respectively did not affect worker risk in SWE-1 and SWE-2. Initially absent from the Swedish economy, these discount stores are now major competitors (e.g. earning 6.1% of market share in 2016). There is no justification for concession bargaining, however, since new entrants conform to Swedish standards for working conditions and work organisation in retail.

When SWE-2 experienced unstable profitability and diminished market share over the last decade, neither side of the negotiating table considered firm-specific concessions to be the solution. One union representative blamed their business strategy: “they are 100% focused on cost-cutting... So, I asked a question…where is [your strategy for] market share? Where is the strategy for increasing the turnover on [inventory]? Not a single word on it. If you’re going to have a strategy where you will cut costs, but not increase sales, close the shop and give it to someone else.”

The Swedish partnership has also favoured the integration of outsiders to prevent unfair competition. This involved extending coverage to competitors. A lawyer with the employer’s association described this in the following terms: “We want the union to represent all or most employers in the [sector]…we usually tell our opponents that we want them to work more in getting more members. It’s not common in other countries, but we’re fairly union friendly.” Foreign companies are aware of union and employer attitudes towards collective bargaining. They engage in frequent consultations with the retail union to ensure a peaceful transition. For example, the German discount store discussed earlier, notorious for its anti-union stance in its home country, was described as “rather good” at conforming to the Swedish retail agreement by a lead official with the retail union.

The entry of Toys R Us in the mid-1990s sent a signal to foreign retailers interested in the Swedish market. After refusing to sign the sectoral retail agreement, the union responded with strikes and sympathy actions that amounted to a full-blown boycott of the company. Most interestingly, the employer’s association representing SWE-1 broke its association with the company, insisting that the company’s actions were not in the interests of its members and collective bargaining. They simply didn’t “want companies that pay less wages and have lower working conditions, to sell toys with other companies", which is why they cooperated with the union on this matter.

The same logic applies to workers within stores. The union and leading grocers have cooperated to ensure that all essential functions performed within the store are carried out by workers covered by the retail agreement. Those whose work within the store does not relate to these core functions, such as "cleaning and janitorial services", are simply covered by another sector's agreement.

5.3.3 Comparative analysis

The findings illustrate the connections between three central features of partnerships in both institutional contexts and their implications for employee risk (Table 5.4). The first addresses the role of structural power in shaping the partnership agenda. The Canadian and Swedish unions both had high rates of coverage in 1980. However, the entry of discount stores only destabilised union power in the Canadian context. Under store-based bargaining, the Canadian partnerships were formed in a context of union weakness, as the ability to strike diminished with the rise of new competitors in the market and the need to maintain market share to preserve union presence in the sector. This limited the capacity of the union and employers to address broader risk-related concerns in collective bargaining. On the other hand, the Swedish partnerships deepened from a conflict in which the union used its structural power to punish and divide employers that demand concessions. This enabled the union to address broader risk-related concerns, without having to worry about maintaining union presence or the individual market share of specific firms.

Table 5.4 – Partnering Strategies in Canadian and Swedish Food Retail

Companies	Bargaining Structure	Central Features	Relation to Risk
CAN-1, CAN-2	Store-based	Low structural power derived from market competition	Limits capacity to address broader risk-related concerns in collective bargaining
		Localisation of HR practices	Cost-cutting and flexibilisation to undercut local competition
		Flexible insider-outsider dynamics	Increased use of outsiders to match HR practices in non-union firms
SWE-1, SWE-2	Sectoral, all-encompassing	High structural power derived from market competition	Enables broader risk-related concerns to be addressed in collective bargaining
		Standardisation of HR practices	Decouples risk from competition by enforcing labour standards across firms
		Integration of outsiders	The transfer of risks to outsiders is barred from a factor of competition

Second, sectoral bargaining in Swedish retail provided both employers and unions with a stake in cooperating to standardize human resource strategies across firms. This enabled risk issues to be decoupled from competition, but also served to protect employers bound to collective agreements from being undercut by unfair competition. On the other hand, the decentralised structure of Canadian bargaining incentivised CAN-1, CAN-2, and the retail union to cooperate in adapting HR practices to local market competition. This negatively impacted risk by subjecting unionised workers to cost-cutting and flexibilisation.

Finally, the different bargaining structures also shaped partnership dynamics with respect to outsiders. The Canadian partnerships accepted that select operations and occupations could be non-union. The major goal pursued in the partnerships was to ensure that HR practices within unionised stores matched those of non-union stores as much as possible, thus introducing the creation of a segment of the workforce without the basic protections provided by collective agreements. The Swedish partnerships focused on integrating firms and occupations into collective agreements, to prevent the transfer of risks to outsiders from being a factor of competition.

5.4 Conclusion

This study explores how institutional contexts – namely bargaining structures – affect the potential for partnerships to yield positive outcomes for worker security. The results are subject to the generalizability limitation of case studies, but are strengthened by how they provide a deeper contextualised analysis of how partnerships shape risk trends in organisations over time.

This study makes three contributions. First, it provides a more nuanced understanding of how partnerships affect employee risk. The underdeveloped literature on this topic generally depicts partnerships as being negative for risks, but relies on select single-country studies (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005; Jenkins, 2007). More broadly, the results suggest that the dichotomy between those supportive of partnerships and those that are not is overly simplistic. For example, it was found that partnerships may be more successful against risk under centralised bargaining structures which mitigated the more negative aspects of market competition. This is not to suggest that a partnership strategy in a context of decentralised bargaining was the wrong strategy. Smaller unions in Quebec province had adopted more militant strategies with no evidence of superior results. The largest retail union in Quebec argues that its long-term partnership strategy that could garner future results but absent major changes to the bargaining structure or competitive environment the prospects seem unlikely.

Second, this research contributes to bridging the gap between research on institutions and strategies by demonstrating how they are interrelated. The fact that working conditions in retail differ across institutional contexts is recognised in the literature (Carré and Tilly, 2017; Carré et al., 2010; Askenazy et al., 2012; Coulter, 2014). Moreover, the importance of bargaining structures to risk is of growing interest (Marginson et al., 2014; Marginson, 2015a). However, this study's focus on companies within two countries limits its generalizability. Further research contrasting partnerships in multiple centralised and decentralised sectors, or contrasting partnerships with more militant bargaining units, would build on the findings of this article.

Third, the argument presented in this article resonates with those who suggest that sectoral dynamics matter to bargaining outcomes (Bechter et al., 2012). It applies to negotiations in local service sectors, as bargaining structures yield considerable influence over the nature of competition in this setting. It does not apply, however, to international service sectors and manufacturing, as the competitive landscape for these sectors is outside of the scope of local bargaining structures. In other words it is important to take into account such societal effects as the importance of national forms of solidarity and coordination (Thelen, 2014). However, a core point in this article is that unique features of the partnerships in Swedish retail, namely the deep collaboration in all-encompassing bargaining, have helped it to maintain levels of security that are higher than in other sectors with the country (e.g. hotels and restaurants).

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Chapter 6

Negotiating Insecurity? A Comparison of Bargaining Strategies in North American and European Supermarkets

(*Article 3*)

Abstract

This article examines the effects of bargaining strategies and related contextual variables on three dimensions of risk in low-skilled service work. It draws on contextualised case studies of 8 supermarket chains in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States from 1980 to 2016. The data consists of 97 interviews with managers, union representatives, and expert witnesses, as well as archival data and collective agreements. Findings point to the importance of both union and employer strategies to risk mitigation. However, their impacts can only be understood in relation to trends in price competition, institutional change, and the financialisation of corporate governance. They also show that union strategies matter less when they are negotiating from a position of weakness.

Risky jobs have proliferated in past decades. This rise has fallen under many labels, whether it's the growth of the "precariat" (Standing, 2011) or dead-end "McJobs" (Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004). Whatever the label, the take-away is that an increasing number of workers, especially low-wage service workers (Kalleberg, 2009; Gautié and Schmitt, 2009), are critically exposed to economic uncertainty. Low-pay, erratic scheduling, and the dismantling of traditional benefit arrangements represent the norm in many industries. It should come as no surprise that growing debt burdens and withering income protections are forcing workers to forego the purchase of life's necessities (e.g. groceries) (Lozza et al., 2013), breaking up families (Roeters et al., 2010; Kalmijn, 2007), and contributing to mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse, and even suicide (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2010).

The rise in insecurity has sparked a vigorous debate on the role of collective bargaining in shaping its trajectories. Collective bargaining's role in mitigating risk is undergoing considerable stress as the "reconfiguration" of welfare states has expanded the bargaining agenda to address new forms of insecurity (Schelkle, 2011) and intensified price competition has contributed to the erosion of institutions for employee voice around the world (Greer and Doellgast, 2017). Union responses to new pressures vary. Militant unions are using strikes and protests to pressure employers into abandoning efforts to shed risks onto their employees. Others have adopted a "mutual gains" approach, preferring to invest in their relationship with managers - sometimes even partnering with them - under the aspiration that worker security will be preserved through the mutual recognition of interests. Meanwhile, some employers are applying commitment strategies to maximize employee productivity and product quality (Bamber et al., 2009; Walton et al., 2000) while others are resorting to compliance strategies based on discipline and cost-cutting to maintain their market edge (Kalleberg's, 2003). Unfortunately, there is a lack of research on how bargaining strategies interact with risk (Lucio and Stuart, 2005) and a need for cross-national comparisons of how contextual factors are affecting work in low-skilled service sectors (Price et al., 2014).

This article provides an in-depth analysis of how collective bargaining strategies affect risk in different contexts. The findings are based on contextualised case studies of 8 supermarket chains divided evenly across four countries: Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. The comparative angle of this study enables it to account for market-related, institutional and organisational factors, by contrasting chain experiences across and within countries. The study also explores how these strategies interacted with contextual change over time (1980 to 2016).

This research finds that all supermarket chains experienced negative risk outcomes. Nevertheless, there was a split across the cases, with four chains being considerably less affected by negative risk trends than the others. The findings show that bargaining strategies were of much significance to risk outcomes, but that their effects must be understood in relation to those of contextual factors.

This article is organised in five parts: 1) a review of the relevant literatures on risk; 2) the research design and case selection; 3) a presentation of the research results; 4) comparative analysis to explain the variations across cases; and 5) a conclusion.

6.1 A review of the literature

6.1.1 Defining risk

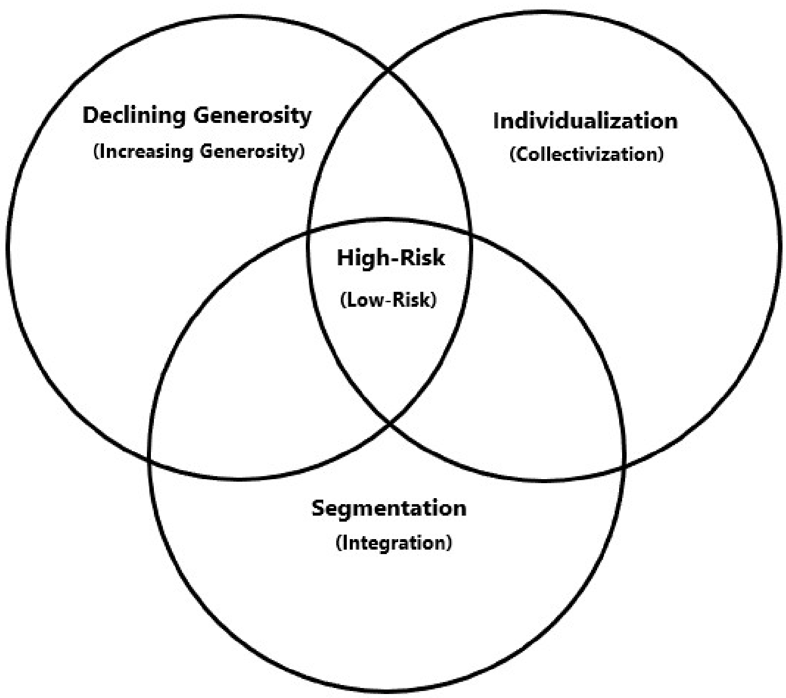
This research focuses on risk. Risk refers to the extent that workers face uncertainty in their material lives (Kalleberg, 2009; Heery and Salmon, 2000). It encompasses variabilities in incomes and benefits, but also other areas that affect workers' ability to cover basic expenses, such as scheduling and health benefit arrangements. This article proposes that risks manifest themselves through three dimensions (described in Table 6.1). First, originating in the "welfare mix" literature (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Esping-Andersen, 1990), *generosity* represents the resources provided by social actors (firms and states) to mitigate risk, such as wages or benefit contributions. Workers are less hurt by variable working conditions when high resource provision helped them save for the future. Second, *individualisation* is based in the "risk shift" literature (Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000), representing the extent that the costs of economic adversity are borne by individuals as opposed to firms or the state. Much of this relates to whether firms or states are bound to providing minimum guarantees independently of economic circumstances. For example, working hour risks are highly individualised when firms have full discretion to reduce them when faced with real or declining revenues, but collectivised when firms are committed to minimum hour guarantees, advanced scheduling notice, or some other standard. Third, *segmentation* draws inspiration from the dualisation literature (Doeringer and Piore, 1971), focusing on how working conditions are isolated across labour market segments based on employment status and social location (race, age, gender) (Osterman and Burton, 2005; Cranford et al., 2006). Its contribution to risk is negative when risks are disproportionately offloaded to specific worker segments that have weak opportunities for cross-over.

Table 6.1 – Description of Risk Dimensions: The Case of Increased Risk

Dimensions	Definition	Examples of increased risk
Declining generosity **(Increasing generosity)**	A reduction in the level of private and public resources available to alleviate risks *An Increase in the level of private and public resources available to alleviate risks*	Wage rate reductions, working hour reductions, lower employer benefit contributions
Individualisation **(Collectivisation)**	The extent that workers must bear responsibility for risk mitigation alone *The extent that firms and states provide minimum guarantees to protect workers from adverse circumstances*	Abandonment of real wage increase commitments, weakened scheduling guarantees, shifts from collectivised insurance to savings accounts
Segmentation **(Integration)**	The extent that risks are confined to workers by social location or employment status *The extent that risks are more equally spread across categories of workers*	Development of riskier terms of employment for part-timers, creation of non-union jobs or establishments, tiered wages and benefits discriminate against newer employees

These three dimensions constitute an integrated framework for analyzing risk trajectories across firms. Low-risk scenarios arise when social arrangements that mitigate risks are generous, collectivised, and integrated (i.e. segmentation is weak). High-risk scenarios arise when social arrangements are not generous, individualised, and segmented (see Figure 6.1). Mixed outcomes are also possible. This is a strength of the framework, in that it facilitates a more nuanced understanding of risk by tracing trends across these three dimensions.

Figure: 6.1: An Illustration of High-Low Risk Trends



6.1.2 What factors affect risk?

The aim of this article is to examine the effects of collective bargaining strategies on risk (the dependent variable). In order to do so, it explores the effects of a broader range of factors, including changes in market dynamics, institutions, and organisational factors, in order to delineate the influence of bargaining strategies.

Markets

The concept of marketisation is mobilised to examine how market dynamics affect bargaining outcomes. It is defined as the "intensification of price-based competition" (Greer and Doellgast, 2017). This intensification can be precipitated by many factors, including the entry of new competitors to domestic markets, the internationalisation of markets, labour market deregulation, the vertical disintegration of the firm, and the arrival of new technology. When marketisation is high, profit-margins grow tighter and employers experience considerable pressure to cut costs. For example, historical research has documented how Wal-Mart's successes in supply-chain optimisation, anti-union avoidance strategies, and aggressive control of in-store labour costs have undermined traditional retailers' competitive position, pushing them to introduce extreme forms of insecurity to compete based on low costs (Lichtenstein, 2009; Carré and Tilly, 2017). Marketisation also matters for collective bargaining because it drives competition for weaker working conditions across bargaining units (Greer and Hauptmeier, 2016), making it difficult for unions to avoid concessions (Pulignano et al., 2016). Thus, intensified price competition should exert negative effects on worker risk (Proposition 1).

Institutions

Institutional factors are also identified. The first factor is market coordination. The *Varieties of Capitalism* framework (Hall and Soskice, 2001) suggests that firms in coordinated market economies invest more in improving working conditions because *institutional complementarities* in their industrial relations institutions emphasize the long term and quality-focused HR systems. Its proponents identify complementarities across four areas: corporate governance, training and education, collective bargaining, and inter-firm relations. For example, research on Denmark, Canada, Germany, Korea and the USA shows that vocational and educational training (VET) is embedded in other national institutions, demonstrating why training fosters innovation and improved work outcomes in coordinated market economies (Bosch and Charest, 2008). The general premise from this literature is that firms in coordinated economies are less likely to impose negative risks on workers, since doing so would contradict incentives derived from their institutional contexts (Proposition 2a).

The second factor is bargaining structure. Research on multi-employer bargaining arrangements shows that they mitigate against the negative "externalities" of market competition and "firm contingency" on workers (Marginson et al., 2014). This has important effects for insecurity, particularly when bargaining coverage is high. This argument speaks to the old adage that large firms and unions often-times prefer centralised structures to drive "out low-cost competition" (Katz, 1993). By setting common standards across firms, multi-employer agreements prevent low-road competition from arising, providing employers with more institutional certainty in terms of the competitive environment (Laroche and Murray, 2012). These results presume that multi-employer agreements covering high proportions of workers should be associated with lower levels of worker risk than single-employer or establishment-level agreements (Proposition 2b).

Organisations

Organisational factors are also of relevance to worker risk. The financialisation of corporate governance is singled out for its importance to risk. Krippner (2005: 181) argues that financialisation denotes "a pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production". Publicly listed firms have been criticised for their aggressive focus on shareholder value at the expense of stakeholders, including customers and workers. Employers can now boost share value by stripping assets and cutting labour costs, even when doing so may damage potential sales growth and product quality over the long-term (Foroohar, 2016; Appelbaum and Batt, 2014). Risk outcomes are thereby likely to be poorest in companies that are publicly owned (Proposition 3a), especially those whose major shareholder is an institutional investor (Proposition 3b).

Bargaining Strategies

Firm and union bargaining strategies represent the focus of this paper. First, firm bargaining strategies are related to their desired HR outcomes. Employers can opt for a *compliance* strategy seeking to bargain for changes that provide them with greater control over their employees (Walton et al., 2000; Walton, 1985). Consistent with "Taylorist" doctrine, this strategy does not require much concern for the well-being of workers, as its core focus is on applying disciplinary actions and routinisation to maintain productivity. Kalleberg's (2003) critique is that control-oriented HR models treat workers as "disposable" inputs of production, as "numerical flexibility" has become the over-riding objective of firms committed to this strategy.

Other employers motivate their employees through a *commitment* strategy. This entails investing in employee training, generous compensation practices, and in providing workers with a pleasant work environment (Walton et al., 2000; Kochan and Osterman, 1994; Bamber et al., 2009). In a sense, commitment strategies resemble "high road" approaches to labour in that employers reap the benefits of not being the lowest payer in their market segment (Osterman, 2018). Employers committed to this strategy adhere to above-industry labour standards to maintain low levels of turnover and loyalty to the organisation. While they benefit from increased commitment, they tend to face cost problems (Walton, 1985), particularly in low-skilled service industries where tight profit-margins and low skill requirements (Batt, 2000; Kochan and Osterman, 1994). For this reason, firms catering to higher value-added customers are more likely to invest in employee commitment than those that do not, due to the higher costs of goods and skill requirements in these market segments (Batt, 2000; Batt, 2001). Taking this into account, while commitment strategies, as opposed to flexibility strategies, should be associated with lower levels of risk (Proposition 4a), their positive impacts will be stronger when coupled with business strategies geared towards customer segmentation (Proposition 4b).

Three types of union strategies are identified. First, a considerable body of literature points to mobilisation strategies as a key source of influence for unions (Frege and Kelly, 2003; Heery, 2002; Boxall and Haynes, 1997) A mobilisation strategy is one in which unions engage their workers and other stakeholders (other unions and community groups) to exert coordinated pressures onto employers. The premise is that employers facing union mobilisation are less likely to propose risky concessions, in fear that union retaliation – in the form of strikes or protests – would damage profitability. It follows that union mobilisation strategies will be associated with low levels of risk (Proposition 4c).

Second, "servicing" strategies are those in which unions provide basic collective bargaining services to their constituents (consultation and negotiation) and rely on their relationships with managers to influence bargaining outcomes (Boxall and Haynes, 1997). The use of servicing alone is perceived as strategically "flawed" as it leaves unions unprepared to threaten industrial action when their relationships with managers deteriorate (Heery, 2002). Third, partnerships complement servicing with a joint commitment to organisational performance (Kochan and Osterman, 1994). These strategies have been criticised for facilitating the managerialisation of union functions (Rolfsen, 2011; Evans et al., 2017) and risky concessions in environments where leverage is “asymmetrically” stacked against workers (Lucio and Stuart, 2005; Jenkins, 2007). While many researchers are critical of these strategies, important research also points to some successes with both servicing (Price et al., 2014) and partnering (Bamber et al., 2009; Kochan and Osterman). The majority view, on which we draw here, is that servicing (Proposition 4d) and partnering (Proposition 4e) are likely to be associated with negative impacts on risk.

It would be nonsensical to examine actor strategies without paying heed to actors’ ability to implement them. The concept of power is therefore mobilised to understand the potential impact of union bargaining strategies. Solidaristic power is identified, both internal and external (Levesque and Murray, 2010; Levesque and Murray, 2002). Internal solidarity refers to fostering “deliberative vitality” and “cohesive collective identities” towards common goals for workers. External solidarity addresses coalition building between unions and community actors. The strength of this conception of power is its relevance to unions irrespective of their geographical location. Addressing these two types, solidaristic power should be associated with lower levels of risk (Proposition 4f).

Each of these propositions are tested to delineate the impacts of both contextual and bargaining strategies on risk. They are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 – Summary of Propositions

Propositions	**Description of proposition**
1	Intensified price competition is associated with higher risk outcomes
2a	Firms in coordinated market economies expose their workers to lower risk outcomes
2b	Multi-employer bargaining structures are associated with lower risk outcomes
3a	Publicly owned companies expose their workers to higher risk outcomes
3b	Firms governed by institutional investors expose their workers to higher risk outcomes
4a	Firm commitment strategies are associated with higher risks outcomes than compliance strategies
4b	Firms catering to high value-added customers expose their workers to lower risk outcomes
4c	Union mobilisation strategies are associated with lower risk outcomes
4d	Servicing strategies are associated with higher risk outcomes
4e	Partnering strategies are associated with higher risk outcomes
4f	Higher levels of solidaristic power are associated with lower risk outcomes

6.2 Research design and methodology

Comparative contextualised case studies of supermarket chains in the retail sector were chosen as the best way to conduct this research. The retail sector was chosen for being an iconic low-wage sector. It is the single largest segment of the growing precariat (Standing, 2011). However, international research also points to significant cross-national divergences in job quality in this sector (Carré and Tilly, 2017; Grugulis and Bozkurt, 2011; Carré et al., 2010), facilitating fruitful comparisons for debunking the "inevitable" nature of bad jobs in low-skilled service work. The food retail experience is of focus. Union presence in food retail tends to be much higher than in other industries in retail (amongst developed countries), making it a window for the study of collective bargaining in the sector.

Supermarket chains were examined in four national contexts: Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. This strategy had the dual purpose of contrasting the effects of coordinated (Germany and Sweden) and liberal market (Canada and U.S.) institutions, as well as holding them constant by comparing chains within each institutional cluster. Informed by preliminary field research, variations within Canada and the United States were also examined to isolate the importance of actor strategies and collective bargaining arrangements across sub-national jurisdictions. Thus, collective bargaining dynamics in Ontario and Quebec (Canada), as well as New York City and New England (U.S.), are compared.

Two chains were examined in each country. The chains exhibit important similarities. The core sales focus of each chain is grocery and they all operate on a full-service model (meat cutting, baking, cheese stands, and so forth). Table 6.3 illustrates major differences across chains. The chains differ by their jurisdictions' bargaining level, size (number of stores), ownership structures (firm and store), and profitability.

The historical period examined in each case is from 1980 to 2016. This timeline was chosen because it reflects significant changes in the industry and collective bargaining across the cases (identified through preliminary interviews). This enables the research to capture key trends in risk, as well as how actors responded to these trends over time.

To summarize, this research design entails comparative and historical contextualisation of these cases. The objective is to chart and account for differences in risk outcomes in different institutional contexts over time. In particular, the focus is on the relative role of collective bargaining in shaping these risk outcomes.

Table 6.3 – Case Background: 2016

Chains	Jurisdiction Examined	Bargaining Level	# of stores nationally	Firm Ownership	Store Ownership	Profitability
USA-1	New England	Chain	413	Shares spread out thinly across various minority shareholders	Corporate	Strong
USA-2	New York City	Chain	14	Privately owned by an institutional investor	Corporate	Weak
CAN-1	Ontario and Quebec	Chain (ON) & Store (QC)	343	Major shareholder is an institutional investor	Corporate, Franchise, & Independent Retail	Strong
CAN-2	Ontario and Quebec	Chain (ON) & Store (QC)	400	Major shareholder is a family	Corporate	Strong
DEU-1	Country-wide	Sector	7,181*	Self-owned by several independent retailer cooperatives	Corporate & Independent Retail	Strong
DEU-2	Country-wide	Sector	282	Major shareholders are families	Corporate	Weak
SWE-1	Country-wide	Sector	429	Owned by independent retailers	Independent Retail	Strong
SWE-2	Country-wide	Sector	241	Consumers cooperative	Corporate	Weak

* This estimate is inflated because the store doesn't disaggregate traditional supermarkets from other store formats (e.g. convenience stores)

Table 6.4 – Interviews by Country

Country	Canada	Germany	Sweden	United States
Worker representatives	25	11	10	9
Employer representatives	11	6	4	1
Expert witnesses	7	6	5	2
Total	43	23	19	12

The contextualised case-study methodology employs a "reflexive" ethnographical approach (Burawoy, 2003), consisting of numerous on-site and off-site interviews, at different points in time with labour market actors and observers able to share their case experience through the period of observation. These interviews are complemented by other data sources to situate actor strategies in their broader contexts (Edwards and Belanger, 2008). 97 semi-structured interviews[5] were conducted with union representatives, managers and employers' association representatives, and expert witnesses exposed to collective bargaining (e.g. HR consultants, mediators, private researchers) (Table 6.4). 17 of these interviews were preliminary. Most of the interviews took place from 2015 to 2018 (some preliminary interviews were conducted earlier). The higher number of interviews in Canada is explained by the need to investigate the experiences of chains (CAN-1 and CAN-2) in two different provinces. Follow-up interviews were conducted with certain officials to expand on key areas.

Coding was used to analyse the data. First-level coding (converting longer transcriptions into brief) was followed by "pattern coding" to organize the data by themes used to test the hypotheses (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Archival data (company reports, press releases, and news media) and collective agreements were analysed to provide contextual understanding and triangulate the interview data.

The strength of this research design and methodology is that it facilitates a deep investigation of causal mechanisms pertaining to factors that impact risk. The historical angle is also notable. This feature of the research design enables the study to capture dynamics between factors that are not possible in research focusing on a single time frame. Two weaknesses in the research design and methodology are noteworthy. First, as a limited number of interviewees are examined per case, there is the problem of whether these interviewees' responses are representative of their

[5] These interviewees were provided the complete right to consent. In addition to maintaining complete control over the research process, they (and their organisations) have been guaranteed complete anonymity in related research outputs.

cases. This problem is addressed by selecting knowledgeable interviewees and triangulating their responses with other data from the field (e.g. archival sources). The study also made use of preliminary interviews to inform case and interviewee selection, ensuring that the highest quality of data was obtained. Second, there is the challenge of conducting historical research using present data sources. Research strategies were used to overcome this challenge. Older generation negotiators, retirees, and younger professionals were interviewed to capture dynamics occurring at different points of time across the cases. Archival data sources, especially collective agreements and media releases, were also analysed to trace risk trends and critical events affecting labour relations within the chains.

6.3 Research results

The following sections present how the cases differ in terms of their exposure to risk, contextual factors, and the bargaining strategies of different actors. The first section shows how the risk experiences of the supermarket chains are split between high and low risks. The subsequent sections examine the contextual and strategic factors associated with each chain.

6.3.1 Comparison of risk trends

The data suggests that workers in all the supermarket chains experienced some rise in risk. As the data exploring its three dimensions (generosity, individualisation, segmentation) reveals, however, half of the chains were subject to considerably higher risk increases from 1980 to 2016 (see Table 6.5).

DEU-1, USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2 experienced *high-risk* increases. Most workers in these chains experienced a significant net decline in real wages. DEU-1 is an exception, since a minority of its workers received wage increases, however these increases did not apply to the majority of its workers which were in franchises. Second, not only has part-time work become more prevalent in these chains, but scheduling protections are weak. The Canadian chains post schedules a few days in advance and provide workers with no input on how scheduling practices may meet their personal needs. USA-1 has adopted some restrictions, including a 15-hour weekly guarantee for part-timers and rights to refuse work on weekends. However, USA-1 is also the only chain whose workers are no longer covered by collectivised health benefits, which have been replaced with health savings accounts and annual health benefits that are grossly insufficient to meets employee health care needs. In addition, employer contributions to pension schemes have declined across all the cases. Segmentation was also high in most of these chains. Older full-time workers in USA-1, and CAN-1 and CAN-2's Ontario subsidiaries received superior wage and benefit protections than workers who were either younger or part-time. Legislated employment standards prohibited these forms of segmentation in DEU-1 and CAN-1 and CAN-2's Quebec subsidiaries. Instead, DEU-1 segmented high risks to its franchises operating without collective agreements (60% as of 2016) and the Quebec subsidiaries segment risks to workers in less profitable stores.

SWE-1, SWE-2, DEU-2, and USA-2 experienced *low-risk* increases. Except for USA-2, workers in these chains experienced high real-wage increases. Workers in these chains also receive significant wage supplements for work performed in evenings and weekends (SWE-1, SWE-2: 50-100%; DEU-2: 20-120%; USA-2: 50%). Unlike DEU-1, all of DEU-2's workers are covered by collective agreements and thereby benefit from stable wage rate increases. USA-1's wage rates have stagnated over the decades. However, it compensates for this by providing most of its workers (70%) with full-time hours (exceeding 30 hours per week), with the weekly average being 43 hours for those with over two years of tenure with the company. Strong working-hour protections are evident across all the cases, for different reasons. For example, SWE-1 and SWE-2 are required to provide their workers with a month's scheduling notice, USA-2 provides workers with a minimum 21-hour per week guarantee, and DEU-2's works councils enforce strong working-hour protections through their works agreements and veto powers over scheduling. Public pensions and health benefits were available in all chains, except for USA-2. Unlike USA-1, however, USA-2 provides collectivised defined-benefit pensions and standard health insurance (though fees and co-pay arrangements have been introduced) to all its workers. These chains also exhibited weak segmentation. All workers in SWE-1 and SWE-2 benefit from the same conditions provided by sectoral collective agreements. Like DEU-1's stores bound by collective agreements, DEU-2's unionised stores are not highly segmented. However, DEU-2 differs from DEU-1 in that it does not operate stores outside of the collective agreement and its works councils are a counterweight to managers wishing to outsource (making it less of a problem). USA-2 is far less segmented than its North American counterparts, in that its agreements apply to all stores equally and provide all younger workers and part-timers significant opportunities to obtain full-time work and enjoy all of the privileges provided to standard workers (after 2 years of tenure). It is also remarkable that USA-2 has managed to retain traditional pension and health benefits for all of its workers.

Table 6.5 - Company Risk Trajectories from 1980 to 2016

	Generosity				*Individualisation / Collectivisation*				*Segmentation*			
Chains	Wage Rates	Trend in prevalence of PT	Pension Rates	Health Care Contributions	Real Wage Certainty	Working Hour Protections	Pensions	Health Care	Segmentation of younger workers	Segmentation of part-timers	Segmentation based on union affiliation	Overall Risk Increase
USA-1	Reduced rates of pay	Part-time –> more part-time	Reduced employer contributions	High decrease in employer contributions	Lower	Moderate decrease, weak scheduling protections	Higher private individualization, public scheme remains individualized	High increase in individualization	High increase, high segmentation	High increase, high segmentation	High increase, high segmentation	High
USA-2	Reduced rates of pay	Full-time –> Full-time	Reduced employer contributions	Medium decrease in employer contributions	Lower	Little change, strong scheduling protections	No change, still collectivized	Little change, high collectivization	Low increase, low segmentation	Low increase, low segmentation	Low increase, low segmentation	Low
CAN-1	Reduced rates of pay for new entrants	Full-time –> Part-time	Reduced employer contributions	Low decrease in employer contributions	Lower	High decrease, very weak scheduling protections	Private plan increasingly individualized, public pillar remains collectivized	Little change, high collectivization	ON: High increase, high segmentation QC: No trend, low segmentation	ON: High increase, high segmentation QC: No trend, low segmentation	ON: Medium increase medium segmentation QC: Medium increase, medium segmentation	High
CAN-2	Reduced rates of pay for new entrants	Full-time –> Part-time	Reduced employer contributions	Low decrease in employer contributions	Lower	High decrease, very weak scheduling protections	Private plan increasingly individualized, public pillar remains collectivized	Little change, high collectivization	ON: High increase, high segmentation QC: No trend, low segmentation	ON: High increase, high segmentation QC: No trend, low segmentation	ON: Medium increase, medium segmentation QC: Medium increase, medium segmentation	High
DEU-1	Reduced rates of pay (franchises), higher rates of pay (corporate)	Full-time –> Part-time	No change	Low decrease in employer contributions	Lower (franchises) / No change (corporate)	High decrease, weak scheduling protections (franchises) / Little change, strong scheduling protections (corporate)	Public pillar remains individualized, no significant private plan	Low increase in individualization	Low increase, low segmentation	Low increase, low segmentation	High increase, high segmentation	High
DEU-2	Higher rates of pay	Full-time –> Part-time	No change	Low decrease in employer contributions	No change	Little change, strong scheduling protections	Public pillar remains individualized, no significant private plan	Low increase in individualization	Low increase, low segmentation	Low increase, low segmentation	Low increase, low segmentation	Low
SWE-1	Higher rates of pay	Part-time –> more part-time	No change	No change	Higher	Little change, strong scheduling protections	Public pillar remains collectivized, no significant private plan	Little change, highly collectivized	No trend, very low segmentation	No trend, very low segmentation	No trend, no segmentation	Low
SWE-2	Higher rates of pay	Part-time –> more part-time	No change	No change	Higher	Little change, strong scheduling protections	Public pillar remains collectivized, no significant private plan	Little change, highly collectivized	No trend, very low segmentation	No trend, very low segmentation	No trend, no segmentation	Low

6.3.2 Contextual change

Interview respondents highlighted the importance of contextual factors to risk outcomes. Many of these factors posed challenges for negotiating improved risk outcomes.

The first factor was intensified price competition. First, all chains faced cost pressures from low-cost competitors. Discount and super store formats undercut costs by offering fewer services (no bagging, less in-store food preparation, etc.), spending less on store appearance, and maintaining aggressive supply-chain strategies. For example, one union official in Quebec described how its supermarkets' labour costs represent "13-16%" of sales, more than double that of discounters ("5-6%"), even when both are unionised. Second, non-union chains undercut unionised chains by providing their workers with lower compensation and greater labour flexibility. Labour costs in DEU-1's franchises are 12% of sales, compared to 15% in its corporate stores. The lower prices offered by these independent operators undermines the competitive edge of stores operated by the same lead firm.

These sources of competition affected the chains at different points in time. USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2 were impacted by the opening of discount stores and super centers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. USA-2 caters to an upscale New York City clientele whose demand for premium organic and local products bring its stores some of the highest levels of customer traffic in the United States. However, this chain has faced unprecedented competition by the gradual entry of non-union competitors (e.g. Whole Foods) in its market niche. DEU-1 and DEU-2 have had to rethink their competitive strategy since half of stores in the industry provide working conditions inferior to that guaranteed through collective bargaining. Discount stores entered the market late in Sweden, as foreign discounters from Germany and Denmark entered the market in 2002 and 2003 respectively, gaining market share ever since.

The second factor was institutional, this being the decentralisation of collective bargaining. This factor relates to price competition, as bargaining structures affect competitors' capacities to reduce prices through labour cost reductions and flexibility. Bargaining coverage has declined in each jurisdiction – except for Sweden. Most German and American competitors were covered by agreements in 1980, but unionised chains become part of the shrinking minority over the last two decades. Most major chains are still unionised in Canada, but the growth of non-union discount chains has added considerable pressures on unionised chains to lower costs. All large chains were covered by sectoral agreements in Sweden throughout the 36-year period.

Bargaining coordination has also declined, especially in the North American cases. USA-1's predicament is that no other major chains are left to force a pattern, due to the mass decline in coverage. USA-2 still sets a pattern, but it covers only 30% of the industry (compared to 80% in 1980). In Ontario province, CAN-1 and CAN-2 have not only abandoned pattern bargaining, but negotiate multiple agreements with different sets of working conditions within chains. For example, CAN-1 tiered its stores into two separate agreements, providing workers in poor performing stores with lower wage and benefit rates. This practice ended in 2012, incorporating all workers into a weaker agreement. Pattern bargaining ended in Quebec when CAN-1 and CAN-2 enforced store-level bargaining (replacing chain-wide agreements) based on local competitiveness factors. Sectoral agreements and works-councils function similarly in Germany; they just cover fewer workers now than before. SWE-1 and SWE-2 have increased discretion in negotiating some working conditions (including bonus pay), but minimum standards set by collective bargaining are still very comprehensive.

The third factor, an organisational factor, is the financialisation of corporate governance. This was particularly important to USA-1, USA-2, and CAN-2. Each of these chains are publicly listed. CAN-2 and DEU-2 are also publicly listed, but their major shareholders are families. Negotiators on both sides argued that this distinction made CAN-2 and DEU-2 more oriented towards the long-term. USA-1 is owned by a Dutch conglomerate whose owners, mostly private equity firms, do not have a controlling stake in the company. USA-2 went public in 2013, a move initiated by the institutional investor that acquired the chain through a leveraged buy-out in 2007. After filing for bankruptcy in 2016, the chain became private again and was acquired by another institutional investor in exchange for debt forgiveness. CAN-1's major shareholder has long been an institutional investor. Due to their focus on shareholder value, union officials argued that managers in financialised companies faced more constraints in negotiating. For example, the local president in New York City described how "[USA-1] was [once] owned by a family in Boston. Now...They come with cuts. They give a billion dollars in profits back to their shareholders. It is getting tougher to withhold concession-making with the new company."

There was no support for the importance of market coordination - the other institutional factor examined for this research - in shaping how collective bargaining outcomes affected risk. For example, German respondents described how bargaining coverage and works-councils were the key institutions that affected risk, not others relating to their being a coordinated economy. German stores not covered by collective agreements or works-councils, such as DEU-1's franchises (as well as stores associated with other chains), offered markedly lower wage rates and no scheduling protections, even though they invested heavily in training and operated under forms of corporate governance emphasising long-term business strategies.

6.3.3 Strategic responses to change

Employers and unions across the chains adopted different strategies in response to the contextual changes examined above. An overview of their strategies and associated risk outcomes is described below. It should be noted that DEU-1's case is a bit more complex, in that its corporate stores are subject to different strategic dynamics compared to its franchises.

In terms of union strategies, USA-1, and CAN-1, and CAN-2's Ontario locals pursued servicing strategies throughout the entire period, relying on their relationship with managers to preserve working conditions. CAN-1 and CAN-2's Quebec local embraced a partnering strategy to protect worker interests, but differed from the other locals by how it actively cooperated with management in introducing more flexibility in the workplace. None of these strategies proved successful in preventing high-risk from arising. USA-2's local and the European unions all responded to contextual change with mobilisation strategies, however DEU-1 is the only chain whose mobilisation strategies were not effective at influencing risk outcomes.

The role of employer strategies is more complicated. Some chains clearly adopted compliance strategies. These were USA-1 and CAN-2 who attempted to lower labour costs as much as possible through employee discipline and cuts to compensation. However, the commitment strategies of the other chains differed considerably. For this reason, this paper identifies three types of commitment. First, CAN-1 and DEU-1's franchises pursued a soft commitment strategy. This involved making some minor investments in worker well-being to have a committed and productive workforce, such as investing in above-average pay rates (CAN-1) or employee training (DEU-1's franchises), yet opting to make the fewest investments possible to ensure that the cost-discrepancy between their stores and that of competitors is minimal. This partly explains the similar risk outcomes between firms adhering to compliance and soft commitment strategies.

Second, USA-2's commitment strategy may be uniquely described as hard. This chain made investments in training, work climate, and working conditions far exceeding that of its competitors. The chain prides itself on tracking its service and product quality compared to other chains through internal surveys and "secret shopper" results. The chain leads competitors in the same market niche across most service quality categories. This high level of voluntary commitment to employee well-being makes the chain exceptional compared to rest of the industry. Third, SWE-1, SWE-2, DEU-2, and DEU-1's corporate stores' commitment strategies may be described as embedded. This occurs when collective bargaining and industrial relations legislation make compliance strategies impractical. For example, the high wages associated with Swedish and German collective agreements incentivize the use of high-performance practices – such as investing in training, consulting employees on business strategies, and job autonomy – to extract the most value from each worker.

Each firm attempted to attract some value-added customers, but USA-2 and DEU-1 exceeded the others in targeting customers searching for premium products. USA-2 fostered very collaborative relationships with their workers and union, and even absorbed higher personnel costs associated with maintaining sophisticated employee training programs and a large full-time workforce. According to its VP of Human Resources, the "first thing that you have to worry about is employee satisfaction", which he believed was essential to providing high service quality to retain the chain's upscale New York clientele. The company could absorb these costs through the high margins associated with its premium natural and organic products. DEU-1 also focused on value-added customers, but the positive effects on risk were not evident in their franchises who were not forced to provide significant ameliorations to working conditions. While the franchises took advantage of state subsidised training to acquire a highly skilled workforce to provide higher quality products compared to discounters, they were not willing to provide high wages and scheduling protections to these workers.

Union power differed across the cases. The weakness of unions negotiating with USA-1, CAN-1, CAN-2, and DEU-1 was cited as a barrier to resisting negative risk trends. USA-1 faced the problem of low union density. While the union attempted to build relationships with its members and ties with other local unions, it couldn't muster up the staff and financial means needed to effectively build solidarity. Union representatives from CAN-1, and CAN-2 discussed how the lack of union involvement in store workplaces was a "weakness" for them, as most workers had little to no contact with their union. Furthermore, their union had tense relations with other Canadian unions involved in retail, preventing them from pooling their resources to oppose employers. DEU-1's union suffered from low levels of union membership and works-council presence within stores. The works-councils that did exist faced severe coordination problems, unable to harmonise their strategies over using veto powers and negotiating works agreements.

Union power was highest in unions negotiating with USA-2, DEU-1, SWE-1, and SWE-2. This was considered a source of influence to resisting negative risk trends. USA-2's union has close ties with its workers. Its stores receive bi-monthly visits from union representatives and each store has a steward. The NYC local also has close ties to other unions and the community. Union presence is strong in DEU-2. This union enjoys high union membership levels within stores. In addition, works-councils have been set-up in each store. These works-councils maintain open lines of communication and have been able to coordinate for the sake of introducing common standards in key risk areas (e.g. works agreements for scheduling). The Swedish retail union that negotiates with SWE-1 and SWE-2 is extremely powerful. A high proportion of store workers are voluntary members of the union and the union is proud of its capacity to initiate strikes.

Moreover, the union maintains a close relationship with other unions, stemming from their interactions in enforcing wage rates across different sectors of the economy.

6.4 Explaining the variations

While the preceding part explored the risk trajectories and the factors that mattered for each chain, the following sections seek to provide an integrated analysis of how the factors affect the variations observed across the cases. The first two sections examine the interactions across contextual and strategic factors to explain the high-risk and low-risk outcomes separately. The third section draws out the key factors that explain the differences between the two sets of cases.

6.4.1 Explaining the high-risk cases: USA-1, CAN-1, CAN-2, DEU-1

The high-risk cases, USA-1, CAN-1, CAN-2, and DEU-1, were negatively affected by contextual change. Their unions struggled to negotiate protections for workers while employer strategies evolved in response to new pressures facing their stores.

The strengths of servicing unraveled for USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2. While initially successful, union representatives with USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2 cited weaker gains from their relationships with managers over time. Managers cited cost pressures and shareholder interests as obstacles to investing in workers and in maintaining collaborative relationships with unions. For example, USA-1's acquisition by a shareholder-driven Dutch retailer in 1995 transformed the bargaining relationship. USA-1's managers who never asked for steep concessions before came to the table with "pages and pages of take aways" after the acquisition. The New England locals gradually lost crucial provisions from their collective agreement, such as generous pay scales and their defined benefit pension plan. In the latest bargaining round, a Massachusetts local President stirred controversy by taking a strike vote to resist important wage and benefit concessions, citing that they "were ready to go out at Easter if management didn't settle 3 days prior". This shift "landed a respectable deal" for all five locals, yet these gains were hardly sufficient to counter the major losses experienced in past decades

Unlike the other North American union locals, the Quebec union local partnered with management in introducing concessions, though its local president calls this "adjusting to the market". This was the justification for a 47% wage reduction in the late 1980s, when CAN-1 and CAN-2 renegotiated store contracts purchased from defunct union chains. In addition to cuts in wages and benefits, the union also permitted more flexible forms of union coverage. For instance, CAN-1 and CAN-2 faced no resistance from the union when they negotiated contracts granting certain suppliers the right to stock their own goods. CAN-2 also collaborated with the local in setting up non-union mobile phone kiosks, with union affiliation to be negotiated once the sales model was perfected. The chains faced grievances for these practices in Ontario. Nevertheless, CAN-1 and CAN-2's contracts are remarkably similar in both provinces.

USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2, union locals felt powerless to resist major concessions. First, the unions feared decimating membership levels by invoking strike actions. The New England union locals feared that losing their only major chain would cripple the union's influence in the region. Canadian union locals feared a repeat of the chain bankruptcies witnessed in the 1980s and 1990s. North American union local leaders also worried about employer exit options. For example, USA-1 had double breasted operations in New England and could easily shift investments to non-union chains should the union become inflexible. CAN-1 and CAN-2 had a tradition of providing voluntary recognition to the union when developing new chains, a practice likely to stop if union and employer interests did not align. Second, union democracy was weak in stores. A union delegate with CAN-1 observed that “many workers don’t even know that they have a union”. The Quebec union local president admitted that this was a “weakness” of theirs. Third, union officials complained about not being able to level the playing field through organising.

DEU-1 adopted a double-breasted approach to coping the growth of low-cost competition. Its larger corporate stores embraced sectoral agreements, while a growing number of franchises affiliated with the chain did not. Only 40% of stores were covered by the agreement as of 2015. One works-council study found that workers in franchises earned 6,000 Euros less than those in corporate stores, since they earned lower wage rates and were not entitled to cashier and holiday bonuses. They also did not benefit from any scheduling protections.

DEU-1’s union attempted to mobilize its members to resists forms of insecurity within the chain. It has a rich history in initiating industrial action and mobilising protests and petitions to counter management prerogatives. However, union officials cite weak union presence in the company as an obstacle to change. Works councils are difficult to organize in these franchises. These stores are close-knit communities where owners work alongside their workers. Even if it is a right to do so in Germany, workers are therefore disinclined to organize works councils out of “loyalty” to the owners or in fear of retaliation from peers. This has a negative impact on DEU-1’s corporate stores, since “whenever a [corporate supermarket] isn’t doing well, there is always a fear of it getting sold to a franchisee”. The union has struggled to coordinate across works councils in DEU-1’s corporate stores. Their effects are differentiated as a result. Some works councillors negotiate several weeks of scheduling notice and exercise important vetoes over scheduling and staffing. Others are less militant and will not get involved in these matters. Without a strong union to enforce a pattern across works councils, some elected officials have catered to management needs in exchange for favours such as the promise of full-time employment.

Since works councils are a "conduit" to organising and membership mobilisation within stores, it is no surprise that many regions have difficulty initiating strikes or protests. Officials recognize the need to provide better resources to works councils in these stores. As one works councillor recounted, "the union is too focused on [DEU-2] since it refused to sign the collective agreement…They forget that other companies need their help too, if they are to maintain their influence".

6.4.2 Explaining the low-risk cases: SWE-1, SWE-2, DEU-2, USA-2

The low-risk cases, SWE-1, SWE-2, DEU-2, and USA-2, were exposed to new pressures from contextual change. However, they also faced strong union resistance in response to their efforts to introduce concessions. In addition, these chains maintained hard commitment strategies in some form to workers throughout the last few decades.

SWE-1 and SWE-2's low-risk outcomes are explained by sector-wide union mobilisation and solidarity to resist concessions and maintain all-encompassing collective agreements. Strike action in the mid-1990s was critical to evading concession-making. The retail employers' association wanted to cut supplementary pay rates for evenings and weekends (the highest in the country), culminating in a two-week strike against most retailers in 1995. The employers' association retaliated by instituting two-hour daily lock-outs. Its lead negotiator described this measure as "poorly planned and badly executed". By striking against some employers and not others, the union left the employers divided, as many refused to comply with their own association in fear of being implicated in the strike. “This caused a lot of discussion within the organisation, so they changed the name and had to start up again…and became more cooperative”, said a senior union official.

SWE-1 and SWE-2 are very supportive of collective bargaining because it provides stability in the competitive environment. Unlike in North America, discount chains share no human resource advantage in Swedish retail. For example, Lidl maintains a cost advantage over its competitors in other countries by operating its stores with as little staff as possible, relying on cross-trained workers to man multiple departments in a single shift. However, the Swedish retail agreement requires retailers to cross-train their employees while Sweden’s *Work Environment Act* requires them to rotate their workers across departments within chains (e.g. to prevent strain from operating the cash for long periods of time). And since high wages and scheduling protections are protected by sectoral agreements, all Swedish retailers operate stores with a small number of highly trained workers. This is perceived as the only means to cutting labour costs in the industry. Interestingly, SWE-1 is the only traditional retailer examined in this study who has managed to increase its market share in recent years (est. 50% in 2016) without fear of being undercut by low-road competitors. SWE-2 has faced some financial difficulties, yet its representatives don’t see collective agreements as the problem. In fact, they believe that SWE-2 would fare worse if collective bargaining was weakened.

The commitment model of Swedish retailers hinges on union action to provide them with institutional stability. Without this, SWE-1 and SWE-2 would fear that new entrants could undermine their high-performance approach in the workplace. For example, Toys R Us tried entering the Swedish market without signing the retail agreement in 1995. The retail union strike turned into an all-out boycott of the company when the union forced Toys R Us to sign the agreement. Even the employers' association sided with the union, not only because doing so was "rational" from a competitiveness perspective, but because this would "preserve the bargaining relationship with the union". Foreign chains now know that consulting the union is a pre-requisite to peacefully entering the Swedish retail market. Even Aldi, known for its anti-union tactics in Germany was described as "rather good" for its peaceful integration into the Swedish retail agreement.

Compared to DEU-1, DEU-2 was significantly impacted by the German retail union's mobilisation strategies. Moreover, like the Swedish chains, its commitment strategy is embedded. Interview respondents from both sides indicated that the chain actively participates in the government subsidised training system and would manage workers with considerable job autonomy regardless of union-affiliation. However, DEU-1 has long strived to exit the cost constraints associated with collective bargaining. A recent conflict with DEU-2 is a striking example. The chain exited the agreement in 2015 citing that personnel costs were 30% higher than the competition. Until then, DEU-2 had been the only German supermarket chain to fully adhere to sectoral agreements. The German retail union succeeded in pressuring the company into signing the agreement. Temporary concessions were made by the union, including a 2-year wage freeze (returning to rates specified in the sectoral agreement in 2017) and short-term cuts to vacation and Christmas allowances. DEU-2 agreed to freeze executive pay from 2015-2019 in return.

Union officials highlight the importance of union presence within DEU-2's stores as a factor to resisting its exit from the agreement. As explained by one official: "works-councils exist in every store in [DEU-2] …In all chains and companies, if we don't have any works-councils, we don't have any influence”. The high presence of works-councils was a resource for recruiting workers into the union as members and activists. For example, the union organised a protest of over 4,000 workers at DEU-2’s headquarters and got over 25,000 petition signatures shortly after the company left the union in 2015. It threatened further action if DEU-2 did not return to the bargaining table.

DEU-2’s re-entry into the agreement poses some cost problems for the company. Union officials noted that it is simpler to pressure chains with “big profit margins” to enter into collective bargaining. DEU-2 was historically a big margin store, until German consumers preferences began to shift away from big box stores, towards online and small local vendors. As of 2017, DEU-2 and the retail union were still in negotiations over a cost structure that could make the chain competitive in an imbalanced market. Furthermore, the chain is also integrating new forms of automation in their stores. The intent of these innovations is not to create redundancies, but to make better use of their high-skilled workers by training them to operate more efficiently.

USA-2’s union local is the most militant among the North American cases. As put by the local’s President, “that thin line is do I keep them working, or do I put the company out of business”. In 1980, 80% of the industry was unionised. Bargaining was centralised, with 200 people negotiating for all ten companies in the same hotel. Collective bargaining has decentralised considerably. However, while chain-wide agreements apply to only 30% of stores, this union local is among the few in North American retail capable of enforcing pattern bargaining. USA-2 is pressured to accept basic protections negotiated with other chains. For example, a competing chain attempted to abandon the defined benefit plan. “We had to take a strike vote. It was nearly unanimous.” (Local President, NYC retail union), which served as a signal that renegotiating benefit plans was off the table for USA-2. Nonetheless, other New York locals have given up these plans, placing even more pressure on this local to do the same.

The NYC local's capacity to mobilize its workers legitimizes its strike threats. It has developed a sophisticated technological system to reach its members through social media and texts. According to its president, "if we have an emergency meeting, people attend". The company also invests heavily in organising. A union staff member disclosed that "it's our fear be like our union's New England locals. They rely on [USA-1]. If it closes, they're finished and they know it". Its 21,000-membership base comes with financial resources to run commercials, rent billboard trucks, and organize pickets against non-union chains. Moreover, it participated in successful movements that barred Wal-Mart from competing in New York and raised the city's minimum wage. The solidarity across progressive groups was described by officials as a "New York thing". Thus, the union resists risks through both pattern bargaining and in maintaining external solidarity to mitigate the threats of low-cost competition.

USA-2 is the only chain in this study that voluntarily makes substantial investments in workers. Its VP of Human Resources prioritizes "employee satisfaction" as a means to providing high levels of service to satisfy its upscale New York City clientele. In-house studies suggest that USA-2's employees perform better on a series of indicators (including product knowledge, attentiveness, friendliness) than comparable chains. Trend analyses of same-store secret shopper results indicate that the company's service quality has improved over the last eight years. The company hires full-time workers because this practice fosters employee commitment and lower turnover. The chain financed investments in labour through the high margins of its premium products, including specialty items and organics. Consistent with its high-road strategy, USA-2's

HR team also maintains a collaborative relationship with its union local. This includes cooperating on many joint-committees and even using union networks as a recruitment tool.

Working conditions within USA-2 remained intact despite important organisational pressures in the past decade. In 2007, a private equity group purchased a controlling stake in the company through a leveraged buy-out aimed to expand the chain across the Northeastern US. Financial pressures heightened when the company went public in 2013. Faced with the aggressive expansion of Whole Foods and Trader Joe's in USA-2's market niche, among other factors, the company filed for bankruptcy in 2016 after declining same-store sales plummeted the company's stock value. Its chief lender, an investment firm, accepted a 90% equity share and reduced debt-load to keep the company running. The VP of Human Resources argued that these changes did not affect workers because company executives left the HR team "alone for the sake of employer-employee relationships… I think there's some level where they think if they mess people's lives service will be worse".

6.4.3 Comparative analysis

Why did four of the eight chains impose greater risks on their workers compared to the others? Several factors explain the difference (summarised in Table 6.6). This analysis begins by exploring the effects of contextual factors. First, the chains were similar in that they remained full-service and faced heightened cost pressures through the entry of new low-cost competitors (Proposition 1). Each chain shed risks onto workers in response to these pressures, seeking to lower prices through labour cost reductions.

The centralisation of collective bargaining was also a factor (Proposition 2b). Actors with each of the chains reported that their bargaining structures had decentralised. In the 1980s, SWE-1, SWE-2, USA-2, DEU-1 and DEU-2 negotiated centralised agreements alongside employers, mitigating the effects of market competition by imposing common labour standards to all firms. While USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2 negotiated chain-wide agreements in that same period, they achieved similar control over the competitive landscape by enforcing a pattern across their largest local competitors.

The competitive landscape was destabilised by decentralisation in all jurisdictions except for Sweden. Despite some increases in managerial discretion, the scope of Swedish agreements is nonetheless very comprehensive, preventing chains like SWE-1 and SWE-2 from having any disadvantage compared to new low-cost competitors in the market. While mobilisation strategies have prevented USA-2 and DEU-2 from driving up risk levels through concessions comparable to that of the high-risk chains, they still face a cost disadvantage which threatens their long-term viability on the market. The continuity of centralised bargaining relates to a "virtuous circle" between union solidarity and institutional stability (Doellgast et al., 2018). It is thereby not surprising that weaker forms of external solidarity in New England and Canada left their unions' chains increasingly exposed to cost-based competition.

Evidence on the other contextual factors is mixed. Financialisation was perceived to be negatively driving risk in the North American cases, however its effects were circumstantial (Propositions 3a-3b). The fact that USA-2's risk outcomes were superior to that of USA-1 is most surprising. USA-2 was driven to bankruptcy by a leveraged buyout from an institutional investor after several unprofitable years. Its small size would also lead one to believe that its susceptibility to market pressures is insurmountable. USA-1 may have been publicly listed as of

1995, but its acquisition was not leveraged. In addition, it remained highly profitable and maintained its dominant market share in New England. Firm and union representatives with USA-2 indicated that union strength and militancy mattered to preventing important concessions on important working hour and benefit arrangements, suggesting that the obstacles posed by financialisation are not insurmountable. DEU-2 is the only European chain that is publicly held, but union strategy and power dynamics have made its workers the most secure in German food retail.

None of the evidence lends supports to the proposition that market coordination matters to bargaining outcomes affecting risk (Proposition 2a). The divergence between DEU-1 and DEU-2's risk outcomes are significant in this regard. Since 2000, DEU-1's franchises embraced all aspects of Germany's coordinated market economy, except for collective bargaining. Union officials reported that these stores invested as heavily in training as DEU-1's corporate stores and exceeded the industry's average. Unlike DEU-2, DEU-1 does not adhere to a shareholder model of corporate governance (as a consumer cooperative), and in compliance with German legislation, union representatives sit on its supervisory board. Despite this, workers in these stores were among the most insecure in this study, which suggests that collective bargaining arrangements, not market coordination, matter for risk.

Strategic factors were also of importance. A key factor related to union bargaining strategies. The most successful cases were those in which unions adopted mobilisation strategies and had the power resources required to implement them (Propositions 4c-4f). SWE-1 and SWE-2's union was successful in mobilising store workers and its national union networks to resist employer efforts to lower wage rates and do away with all-encompassing collective agreements. DEU-2's effort to exit sectoral bargaining was thwarted by union coordination to mobilize workers through its works-councils and use them to organize successful protests to damage the company's reputation. Despite the unfavorable legal context for American unions, USA-2 confronted strong pattern bargaining enforced by the union in collaboration with its militant New York coalition of actors.

Table 6.6 – Overview of Case Comparison

	Contextual Factors				*Strategic Factors*			
Chains	Intensified Price Competition	National Institutional Framework	Industry bargaining decentralisation	Financialisation	Employer Strategies*	Union strategies**	Customer Segmentation	Union Solidarity
High-risk								
USA-1	High	LME	High	High	CP	S	Medium	Low
CAN-1	High	LME	High	High	SC	S (ON) / P (QC)	Medium	Low
CAN-2	High	LME	High	Medium	CP	S (ON) / P (QC)	Medium	Low
DEU-1	High	CME	High	Absent	EC / SC	M	High	Low
Low-risk								
USA-2	High	LME	High	High	HC	M	High	Medium
SWE-1	High	CME	Low	Absent	EC	M	Medium	High
SWE-2	High	CME	Low	Absent	EC	M	Medium	High
DEU-2	High	CME	High	Medium	EC	M	Medium	High

*CP= Compliance, SC = Soft Commitment, HC= Hard Commitment, FC = Embedded Commitment
** S = servicing, P = partnership, M = mobilisation

Unions with the least successful cases pursued alternatives to mobilisation or pursued it from a position of weakness. USA-1, CAN-1, and CAN-2's unions pursued servicing strategies, relying on their historical relationship with managers to resist negative changes. The successes of this strategy in New England and Ontario eroded as employers demanded more aggressive concessions and their unions turned to grievances and occasional strike votes to resist wage cuts and managerial efforts to permit non-union personnel within stores. These efforts may have prevented minor concessions, but proved insufficient to preventing the most egregious concessions made throughout the last several decades. CAN-1 and CAN-2's Quebec local was unique in that it partnered with the companies in introducing concessions to foster trust and protect jobs. Interestingly, their outcomes were very similar to these chains' subsidiaries in Ontario. DEU-1's union had a mobilisation approach to bargaining with the chain, yet lacked union presence (via works-councils) within stores and the resources needed to amount an effective resistance to transfer risks to franchise workers.

Firm strategies also mattered. Chains adhering to compliance (USA-1 and CAN-1) or soft commitment (CAN-2, DEU-1's franchises) strategies fared considerably worse than those whose commitment strategies were hard (USA-2) or embedded (SWE-1, SWE-2, and DEU-1's corporate stores) (Proposition 4a). However, USA-2 was the only successful chain whose dedication to employee well-being was entirely voluntary. This was rooted in a perceived alignment between employee satisfaction and the chain's customer segmentation strategy (Proposition 4b). Even then, USA-2's militant union was instrumental in maintaining critical components of its high-road strategy, such as preventing the abandonment of traditional benefit arrangements through pattern bargaining. The embedded commitment strategies of the European chains are a response to union successes in preventing wage and scheduling concessions, as well as their influence in maintaining institutions that facilitate high-road forms of work organisation (e.g. job rotation in Sweden and skills-oriented production in Germany). None of the cases point to managerial decision-making as being at the root of enhanced risk outcomes. On the contrary, they are - more often than not - an outcome of union strategy and power.

An integrated analysis highlights how many factors affect risk. All cases faced higher pressures from contextual factors relating to intensified price competition, bargaining decentralisation, or financialisation. While employers in the low-risk chains were more committed to employee well-being than those in high-risk chains, this is more a consequence of union strategies and power than the voluntary ambitions of their managers. Thus, what mattered most to the risk outcomes facing these chains? The findings discussed above point to the importance of union mobilisation and its effects on the solidaristic power held by unions. These effects matter not only for resisting the concession-making attempts of employers, but because of their effects on union capacities to extend standards set by collective agreements to the competition.

6.5 Conclusion

This article has investigated the effects of bargaining strategies on risk in different market-related, institutional, and organisational contexts. This study is unique in that it traces how bargaining strategies affect risk over time within and across countries. Some key findings are evident. First, it finds that mobilisation strategies and union power are crucial to resisting risk through collective bargaining, even in chains facing immense pressures from contextual change. Second, it finds that firm commitment strategies also matter, however these strategies were rarely entirely voluntary and evolved out of labour-management bargaining interactions. Third, union weakness was identified as a significant indicator of success, as unions lacking the power to influence chains exhibited very few successes in resisting insecurity, regardless of their chosen strategy. Fourth, these strategies did not evolve in a closed system, but evolved from pressures emanating from intensified price competition, bargaining decentralisation, and financialisation.

These findings contribute to a growing body of research that highlights the importance of actor strategies to producing secure forms of work (Pulignano and Signoretti, 2016; Benassi and Dorigatti, 2015; Dupuis, 2017), however it is the first to contrast various types of strategies comparatively. The within-country and cross-country variations show that market-related, organisational and institutional factors do not dictate working conditions with firms. These outcomes also reflect a process of political contestation by actors pursuing distinct strategies and with differential access to power. Thus, this analysis provides a more nuanced understanding of risk outcomes than is provided by more singular lines of analysis, such as those more narrowly focused on national models (Baccaro and Howell, 2017; Hall and Soskice, 2001).

The fact that mobilisation strategies were associated with superior risk outcomes should not imply that they suit all circumstances. Bargaining relationships evolve out of specific histories and opportunity structures that impact the feasibility of more militant forms of strategising. Taking on more aggressive forms of mobilisation could reap considerable rewards in resisting concession-making and extending representation across firms in North America, yet also bear the risk of provoking even more intense employer opposition and contributing further to the decline of labour.

Two research limitations are noteworthy. First, the case selection does not include unions that have combined union strength with a servicing strategy. This exposes the study to criticisms that union power may be the deciding factor and that strong unions pursuing a servicing strategy may be just as successful as more militant unions. Further research could identify cases in which other types of power (structural or institutional, for instance) manifested themselves in instances where mobilisation strategies were not implemented. Second, the case's generalizability is limited to a service sector in which competition is largely local. Unions in retail play a special dual role by strategizing to resist concession-making while mobilising resources to level the competitive landscape by extending coverage or lobbying for new employment standards. Moreover, forms of employer exit are limited by geography. The political dynamics are likely very different in sectors where competition sets prices internally and where employers have greater capacity for exit by relocating capital to other parts of the globe.

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Chapter 7

Integrated Analysis: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Risk Outcomes in Collective Bargaining

This chapter discusses the findings from the preceding three chapters. Since each chapter constitutes an article, chapters 4 (Article 1), 5 (Article 2), and 6 (Article 3) will hereafter be referred to as articles for the sake of this discussion. The discussion is divided into three parts. The first part examines what factors matter to risk, referring to the hypotheses presented earlier in this thesis. The second part discusses the major contributions to theory and the relevant literatures. The third part provides a synthesised response to the research questions presented at the beginning of the thesis.

7.1 What matters to risk?

The following sections explore the main research findings and their contributions to understanding risk trajectories in low-skilled service work. First, these findings relate to how risks have evolved over time in supermarkets across Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. Second, they also address how various factors have contributed to risk outcomes in stores. The main findings are divided into three articles. Each article addresses variables derived from the thesis framework. Table 7.1 outlines the results associated with each of the hypotheses presented earlier in this thesis. It also indicates the hypotheses discussed in each article. Some of the variables listed in the thesis framework are not explicitly identified in the articles, due to their weaker relevance to risk outcomes. Why these variables received less attention and some observations concerning their effects are also discussed.

Table 7.1 – Evaluation of Hypotheses Presented in the Thesis Framework

	Hypotheses	Key Findings
Contexts		
H1.1 *A3*	Risk outcomes are higher under intensified price competition	*Partially true* - Intensified price competition drives risk by imposing labour cost pressures - Effects are contingent on actor strategies and bargaining structures
H1.2 *A2, A3*	Risk outcomes are higher when organisational performance is weak	*False* - Organisational performance outcomes were not associated with risk
H1.3 *A3*	Risk outcomes are higher when firm governance is financialised	*Partially true* - Particularly when governed by institutional investors - Effects are subject to contestation
H1.4 *A3*	Risk outcomes are higher when workplace governance is fissured	*False* - Fissured workplaces were not associated with risk in unionised settings
H1.5 *A3*	Risk outcomes are lower in coordinated market economies	*False* - Complementarities in coordinated market institutions were not associated with risk outcomes
H1.6 *A1, A2, A3*	Risk outcomes are lower under centralised bargaining structures	*True* - Centralised bargaining institutions were associated with lower risk outcomes
Actor Attributes		
H2 *A3*	Risk outcomes are lower when unions are strong and possess strategic capabilities	*True* - Unions possessing solidaristic power resources were more capable of resisting risk
Strategies		
H3.1 *A2, A3*	Risk outcomes are lower under labour-management partnerships	*Mixed* - The effects of partnerships were contingent on institutional settings
H3.2 *A3*	Risk outcomes are lower when firms adopt commitment strategies	*Mixed* - Firm commitment strategies mattered, when combined with other strategic and institutional factors
H3.3 *A3*	Risk outcomes are lower when unions adopt mobilisation strategies	*Mostly True* - Mobilisation strategies were critical to resisting risk - Effects were linked to their role in building and exercising union power
H3.4 *A1*	Risk outcomes are lower when states adopt social policies to mitigate risk	*True* - Social policies mattered - Their effects alone were not sufficient to prevent the most egregious forms of risk
H3.5 *A1, A2, A3*	Risk outcomes are lower in the presence of interventionist pro-labour employment standards	*True* - Employment standards mattered - Their effects alone were not sufficient to prevent the most egregious forms of risk

7.1.1 Risk trends in supermarkets

The research results show that risks have risen in each of the supermarket chains explored in this study, regardless of their institutional and organisational context (Articles 1-3). This is not surprising. Standing's (2011) work on the "precariat" has shown how more variable working conditions is a global phenomenon. Others have shown that more workers are on the brink of poverty than was the case decades ago (Osberg and Sharpe, 2014; Hacker, 2006). However, it was nonetheless important to demonstrate that trends in these supermarkets are also indicative of augmented risks.

After finding that risks increased in each supermarket, the articles delved deeper into exploring the risk trends facing the supermarkets across countries. By exploring trends in generosity, individualisation, and segmentation, it was shown that there was much diversity in the risk increases faced by the different supermarkets.

Article 1 demonstrated the cross-national differences in how risks are spread in food retail. It highlighted forms of differentiation across and within countries. First, American workers experienced *differentiated risk* outcomes, as trends along the three dimensions were largely negative. These workers have been affected by negative declines in the generosity of wage and benefit arrangements, and the gradual diminishment in the number of full-time positions within stores. Their risks have also individualised, particularly due to the replacement of traditional benefit arrangements with retirement and health savings accounts, or in some cases no benefits at all. Furthermore, the most extreme risk experiences have been segmented to part-timers and younger workers. Second, Canadian workers have experienced *moderated* risk outcomes. Trends across the dimensions are comparable to American food retail, and even worse in terms of the individualisation of scheduling arrangements. However, the risk outcomes across all three dimensions are moderated by the importance of universal public retirement and health care schemes. These regimes boost the generosity of resources allocated to retirement and health care for these workers, provide forms of collectivisation that make them readily available to workers, even under uncertain economic conditions, and reduce segmentation by providing access universally to all workers. This is not to say that working conditions are not segmented in Canada. Ontario's supermarket chains segment risks to part-timers and younger workers, while Quebec's supermarket chains provide inferior working conditions to stores deemed of less strategic importance according to certain performance criteria. However, the most severe segmentation effects are limited to pay and working hour arrangements, since public policies provide minimum protections for retirement and illness.

German workers were affected by *segmented* risk outcomes, since negative trends in generosity and individualisation are most apparent in non-core employment. Workers covered under collective agreements faced few negative changes in risk, while workers in franchises not covered by collective agreements and without works-council representation were exposed to extreme forms of uncertainty. These workers were covered by less generous work arrangements, such as lower wages and no pay supplements for unsocial hours, and greater forms of individualisation, especially the lack of scheduling guarantees. Swedish workers experienced *solidaristic* risk outcomes, the least negative risk trends among the countries. The only negative trend was in generosity, namely expressed through the rise of part-time work. Beyond this, Swedish supermarkets provide their workers with highly generous conditions, such as real wage guarantees and high supplementary pay for unsocial hours, enabling workers to enjoy a decent standard of living. They also collectivize important risks for workers, through strong scheduling protections for instance. What makes their risk outcomes so solidaristic is that all of their workers have faced remarkably low increases in risk, since segmentation in terms of employment status and social location were weak.

Article 3 focused on the risk trends of specific supermarkets, as opposed to food retail as a whole. It found that some supermarkets were exposed to significantly higher risk increases than others. Interestingly, the risk outcomes of chains did not fall into national patterns. While the Canadian chains were predominantly high-risk and the Swedish chains were low-risk, there were German and American chains in either category.

Importantly, the major forms of risk experienced by chains in either category stemmed from different sources. In terms of the high-risk cases, the American chain that fared worst did so because of the low generosity provided in the form of wages and working hour availability, the high individualisation of employee benefit arrangements, and in how it segments riskier work arrangements to youth and part-time workers. The Canadian cases were high-risk because of declines in wage and working hour generosity, the extreme individualisation of scheduling, and how they segment workers through tiered bargaining arrangements (Ontario) or across stores (Quebec). Meanwhile, the high-risk chain in Germany has shifted few negative risks to workers in stores covered by collective agreements, while workers in its franchise stores (60% of all stores) have few protections at all, including low generosity in terms of wage and supplemental pay arrangements and highly individualised scheduling arrangements that provide no guarantees to workers.

The low-risk cases were so for different reasons as well. This is most evident in contrasting the American chain with those in Europe. The American chain may lack the generous pay rates of the European low-risk cases, but it is the only supermarket chain that collectivizes scheduling risks by providing full-time work to most workers who need it, on top of a strong weekly hour guarantee for part-time workers. In addition, it is remarkable that the American chain retained collectivised benefit structures (defined-benefit pensions and traditional health care) with weak forms of segmentation across different employee groups. The low-risk chains in Europe are relatively similar. They benefit from highly generous wage and supplemental pay rates, collectivised working hour arrangements with strong scheduling protections, and enable most employees (all in the Swedish cases) to benefit from these arrangements. A key difference is that the German chain has experimented with controversial forms of precarious work (e.g. mini-jobs) and has less wage certainty compared to the Swedish stores, yet these trends have not been significant enough to erode the most important forms of protection within this chain.

The outcomes assessed in these articles show that multiple dimensions are needed to assess risk. This was ascertained by comparing risk trends in different settings and over time. Since risk configurations across the dimensions were differentiated in both the industry and store comparisons, these findings show that there is considerable variety in the risk outcomes facing workplaces. Risks stemmed from different sources and impacted the dimensions to different degrees across the cases. Thus, the chain comparison showed how some can fare better or worse than the others for different reasons. This demonstrates the high level of complexity facing risk outcomes and why this thesis sought to explore various hypotheses to explain them.

7.1.2 Contextual factors that affect risk

The first contextual factor that mattered was intensified price competition. As explored in Article 3, risk was negatively affected by price competition (Hypothesis 1.1), yet some exceptions were notable. Research in the area shows the importance of price-based competition to firms' willingness to invest in workers (Greer and Doellgast, 2017; Kochan et al., 1986). As firms' willingness to invest in workers declines, so does their ability to mitigate workers' exposure to risk. Actors from each of the supermarkets in this study cited the importance of intensified price competition to their ability to maintain forms of social protection for workers. The rising importance of super centers and discounters destabilised the competitive strategies of most supermarkets. By relying on few personnel, lower real estate overhead, and lean supply-chain strategies, low-cost competitors have gained market share in every jurisdiction. Notably, the effects of intensified price competition were negative in many of the cases, except those in social Sweden. Sweden's exceptionality is not because their chains felt less cost pressures from the rise in price competition, but because of how their bargaining structures made individual firms' business conditions irrelevant to bargaining outcomes.

The second contextual factor was financialisation. Article 3 illustrated that financialisation had negative impacts on risk, but that its impacts were contested (Hypothesis 1.3). The financialisation literature shows how publicly owned firms and the implication of institutional investors in firm governance restructure the priorities of firms to privilege short-term shareholder value at the expense of investing in production and services, workers included (Foroohar, 2016; Appelbaum and Rosemary Batt, 2014). This was undoubtedly true for many chains examined in this thesis (Article 3). Firms whose major shareholders were institutional investors were less inclined to invest in their workers compared to those whose major shareholder was a private family or who operated under a different ownership structure (e.g. consumers cooperative). However, the effects of financialisation were not linear and subject to political contestation (as will be discussed later).

The third contextual factor was the bargaining structure. All three articles showed that risks were lower under more centralised structures (Hypothesis 1.6). Recent literature finds that multi-employer arrangements are more conducive to low risk, particularly when they cover a sizeable proportion of employers (Marginson et al., 2014; Pulignano et al., 2016). In grouping employers together, individual firms' business conditions become of weaker relevance to collective bargaining. Bargaining decentralisation had negative effects on risk outcomes in most of the cases (Articles 2 and 3). The increase in low-cost competitors not bound to collective agreements contributed to unfair competition, as firms bound to collective agreements experienced pressures to lower prices by cutting labour costs. Decentralised bargaining also negatively affected unions. Low bargaining coverage caused unions to become fearful that the cost disadvantage faced by their employers would negatively affect their ability to survive under an increasingly competitive context and prevent their ability to retain levels of bargaining coverage and members.

The exceptionality of Swedish retail is notable. One reason that traditional supermarket chains in Sweden have embraced sectoral bargaining is for competitive purposes. First, all-encompassing sectoral agreements prevent new low-cost discount chains from undermining their competitive position by offering working conditions below standards set in their agreements. Second, collective agreements and government regulations have combined effects on work organisation, creating a certain level of uniformity across the entire sector. For example, the chief means of cutting costs in Swedish stores is to operate many departments with as few workers as possible. This is so because collective bargaining and government regulations incentivize job-rotation and cross-training for all employers. Thus, while job rotation and cross-training is employed to acquire a cost advantage by European discounters in other countries, the regulatory environment eliminates this advantage in Sweden.

The other contextual factors examined in this thesis were of little or no significance to risk outcomes. Most surprisingly, market coordination did not matter (Hypothesis 1.5), as illustrated in Article 3. Hall and Soskice's (2001) varieties of capitalism framework would predict that firms in coordinated market economies invest more in their employees to seize on the institutional complementarities of their industrial relations institutions. Others have expanded the application of this framework to explaining outcomes in job quality (Doellgast et al., 2009; Esser and Olsen, 2011). For market coordination to matter, low-risks would need to be evident in Germany, which the literature considers to be among the most coordinated economies in the West (Hall and Gingerich, 2009). Yet surprisingly, German stores not bound to collective bargaining coverage experienced some of the highest risks amongst the cases examined in this research. The high-risk outcomes in these stores are comparable to those of many North American chains, not those in Sweden, the second most coordinated economy (Hall and Gingerich, 2009).

The divide across stores bound to collective agreements and those which are not demonstrates the importance of bargaining arrangements, not coordinated capitalism, to risk outcomes. German stores outside of collective bargaining structures manifested all of the features associated with coordinated economies, including participation in the government subsidised training system, patient forms of corporate government, and strong inter-firm relations. Yet none of these institutions were associated with greater investments in worker security. Once a store was shifted outside of collective bargaining institutions, working conditions in that store deteriorated precipitously. If institutional complementarities really mattered to risk, firms would have maintained some form of commitment to maintaining forms of social protection for workers, even after collective bargaining eroded within the sector.

The last two contextual factors, organisational performance (Hypothesis 1.2) and fissured workplaces (Hypothesis 1.4), were so insignificant that they were not analysed in-depth within the articles. As examined in articles 2 and 3, organisational performance was of little relevance to risk outcomes within supermarket chains. However, one surprising finding was that the three chains whose profitability was most unstable (one in Germany, Sweden, and the United States) were among the four chains exhibiting the lowest risk outcomes. This result shows that there is no linear relationship between performance and risk outcomes.

Finally, none of the evidence presented in Article 3 showed that fissured workplaces were more conducive to risks in the context of collective bargaining. The franchise model was investigated to test its importance. Franchise stores were examined in all of the countries except the United States. It is important to distinguish unionised franchise operations from those with no agreements. The conditions of unionised franchise stores were comparable to those of corporate stores operated in the same jurisdictions in every instance. Thus, while Weil's (2014) fissured workplace theory identifies an important driver of poor working conditions in modern workplaces, it does not bear much relevance to situations in which employers are bound to collective agreements. However, the fact that franchise stores not bound to collective bargaining fared worse is obvious. In these scenarios (e.g. Germany), franchises were a loophole used to avoid collective agreements. Thus, the evidence shows that franchise operations negatively impacted risk when they represented a form of exit, but not in terms of their fissuring effects.

In summary, the findings with regards to the bargaining contexts make important contributions to how we understand risk trends. Market-related and organisational factors exert negative pressures on risk. However, the outcomes are complex. As will be illustrated in the next section, in the case of retail, a focus on contextual characteristics alone is insufficient to explaining risk trends facing low-skilled service workers. While these contextual factors exert some pressures on employers and unions, their outcomes tend to be contested by actors. It is for this reason that an in-depth understanding of actor strategies towards collective bargaining is necessary.

7.1.3 Factors relating to bargaining strategies and power

The central aim of this thesis has been to examine the role of bargaining strategies in affecting risk. Union and employer strategies were found to be of much importance to risk. Article 3 demonstrated how union mobilisation strategies were critical to resisting negative risk trends (Hypothesis 3.3). In this sense, this research supports literature streams which are critical of servicing and partnering (Lucio and Stuart, 2005; Jenkins, 2007). However, unlike what is argued by these streams, it was not the managerialisation of union identities and functions that made servicing so ineffective. It was the lack of a mobilisation strategy and its effects on union power. The findings from Article 3 best illustrate its importance. Four of eight supermarket chains were found to have experienced significantly lower risk outcomes than the others. Each of these chains faced resistance from militant unions that were successful in mobilising both their employees and coalitions outside of the organisation. Whether it was in the form of labour protests, strikes, or all out boycotts, only unions that fought to retain important forms of protection were successful.

Mobilisation strategies perform the dual role of shifting firms' internal priorities to address worker risk concerns while enforcing standards across the competition to help unionised employers cope with the costs of maintaining important forms of protection. By pursuing mobilisation, unions seek to alter firm priorities through the threat of actualising some form of pressure. In doing so, firms may lose interest in aggressive concession-making tactics. Firms were more fearful of attempting to break agreements when their unions were powerful enough to enforce high costs on them for breaking the agreement. This is why only those firms who faced immense resistance from their unions abandoned their efforts to pass on risks to workers.

Article 3 illustrated the importance of firm commitment strategies (Hypothesis 3.2), which tend to be of secondary importance relative to other contextual factors. Commitment strategies are often treated as a singular concept, juxtaposed with compliance (Walton et al., 2000; Walton, 1985). The first problem is in fitting employer strategies into two discrete categories. Employers either seek commitment from their employees or they do not, leaving no conceptual space for the varieties associated with them. The second problem is that this classification is not sensitive to the contextual characteristics in which commitment strategies originate.

Three types of commitment strategies were identified in this thesis. *Soft commitment* strategies involve seeking to motivate workers and acquire their loyalty by providing working conditions slightly above those of competitors. *Hard commitment* strategies involve seeking commitment through a deep dedication to employee satisfaction and well-being, beyond simply aiming to exceed industry standards for labour conditions. *Embedded commitment* is a hard commitment strategy in which work practices dedicated to improved employee satisfaction and well-being are a response to incentives in a particular institutional context.

Drawing on this classification, the evidence showed that managers differed in their levels of commitment and that contexts mattered. In the European chains, commitment strategies were the result of institutional constraints associated with collective bargaining or industrial relations legislation. None of the actors associated with these chains described their dedication to employee commitment as being entirely voluntary, as most commitment-related HR practices were either mandatory or highly incentivised by the institutional setting. The only supermarket chain whose hard commitment strategy was voluntary was in New York City, and even then, this strategy complemented their customer segmentation strategy and was fostered through negotiations with their union. In addition, this chain could only afford its superior investments in workers because it catered to high-valued added customers and needed to satisfy the union leadership.

As examined in articles 2 and 3, the effects of labour-management partnerships on risk are mixed due to the importance of contextual factors (Hypothesis 3.1). Article 2 found that labour-management partnerships may be conducive to improved risk outcomes under centralised bargaining structures. Drawing on the Swedish cases, unions and employers in this country cooperated to prevent new competitors in the market from operating without collective agreements and sought to standardize working conditions across the sector to prevent some firms from maintaining a cost advantage by lowering labour standards. In addition, the Swedish union negotiated from a position of strength, as all-encompassing agreements enabled it to punish firms with industrial action without fear of decimating their membership levels. Meanwhile, decentralised bargaining in Quebec had the opposite effects on the actors. Due to the presence of non-union competition, unions and employers cooperated to differentiate working conditions to ensure that stores were competitive in their neighborhoods and introduced more flexible forms of union coverage. The aim was to help unionised stores mimic the human resource practices of non-union stores to maintain their competitiveness. Furthermore, Quebec's unions negotiated from a position of weakness, as their single-employer bargaining arrangements left them fearful that bankrupting their stores would erode their presence in the sector.

While Article 2 examined the compatibility of labour-management partnerships with risk outcomes in different institutional settings, Article 3 found that the negative outcomes associated with partnering in Quebec were no different than those of the union locals that opted for a servicing approach in North America. The fact that they were no better than servicing strategies at fostering union strength accounted for this similarity.

It should also be noted that the Swedish union was characterised as having opted for a mobilisation strategy in Article 3, paying no attention to the partnering aspect of their bargaining strategy in Article 2. The Swedish union has actively pursued both strategies, yet their primary response to pressures to augment risk has been to mobilize workers; hence why this core strategy was discussed in Article 3, while Article 2 simply sought to tease the relevance of the partnering aspects of the union's strategy towards risk. The strategies adopted by actors are never black and white, which is why this thesis focused on the strategic factors that most characterised each case. This should not discount the possibility that these cases have experimented with other types of strategies, as nearly all actors do.

The importance of union power was supported in Articles 2 and 3 (Hypothesis 2). It mattered to union mobilisation. It is difficult to speak of mobilisation without discussing the concept of union power explicitly. This thesis pointed to the importance of solidaristic power – both internal and external (Levesque and Murray, 2010). As the comparison in Article 3 shows, opting for a mobilisation strategy alone is not enough. Unions need to harness critical forms of internal solidarity (e.g. close ties between union leadership and store workers in New York City and Sweden, high works-council presence and coordination in Germany) and external solidarity (e.g. New York City's left-wing coalition, inter-union cooperation in Sweden) if they are to activate them. Of course, other forms of power matter too. Article 2 mobilised Wright's (2000) conception of "structural power" to explain why Quebec's unions chose not to mobilize their members and networks to resist concessions, while Swedish unions remained committed to doing so. This was because all-encompassing sectoral bargaining gave Swedish unions the power to punish individual employers for demanding concessions, even in times of intense competition, since they did not worry about losing members by resisting concessions. Even then, sectoral bargaining arrangements were only stable because Swedish unions had the strength required to keep them in place.

Power also matters to firm commitment. The chains whose commitment strategies mattered most negotiated with powerful unions. On the one hand, these unions mobilised to force their employers to adopt high standards for working conditions, such as retaining traditional benefits in New York City or the high levels of pay associated with European collective agreements in retail. Once employers are mandated to make significant investments in their workers, they often make further ones to ensure that they harness the most productivity from them. On the other hand, militant unions may help to maintain some stability in the competitive climate by preventing the increase of low-cost competitors. The German retail union was particularly successful in forcing discounters to pay collectively bargaining wages, even though they never formally signed on to collective agreements. The New York City union local partnered with other organisations at the municipal level to prevent the entry of Wal-Mart. These strategies offset some of the risks associated with employers' commitment strategies. These examples show that union mobilisation and power can play an important role in fostering the right climate for enabling firm commitment. In return, these firms may be more supportive of the union's role in workplace governance, as it begins to appreciate some of the advantages of union affiliation.

7.1.4 Factors relating to state strategies

To maintain a logical flow between the articles, the role of state strategies was not addressed explicitly. Nonetheless, the findings show that the social policies examined in Article 1 (Hypothesis 3.4) and employment standards examined in the three articles (Hypothesis 3.5) exerted positive effects on risk. First, welfare regimes mattered to risk. Esping-Andersen's (1990) famous welfare regime research has highlighted their importance to decommodifying citizens. In other terms, decommodification refers to citizens' ability to maintain economic security irrespective of market conditions. Risk outcomes are likely to be lower under more comprehensive welfare regimes. For example, the importance of private retirement and health care benefits in the United States was a problem for retail workers in the country. When firms are committed to workers, unions are strong, and product competition is stable, workers may enjoy considerable protections through private benefit plans. However, the reverse has been true when firms become less committed, unions are weakened, and product competition intensifies.

This was less of an issue in the other three countries, especially Canada and Sweden (Article 1), due to the strength of their universal public retirement and health care programs. Not only do these programs provide workers with important forms of security, but they reduce segmentation, as universal public programs generally apply equally to everyone. In many cases, private benefits in North America are segmented across workers based on their employment status or date of hire. The segmentation effects would be eliminated if these private benefits were replaced with universal programs.

Second, labour regulation was also of importance. This includes labour standards. One labour standard that was identified for its importance to risk was the minimum wage. These have impacts on the generosity of risk mitigation arrangements. For example, Germany and New York City have introduced minimum wage increases, which offset some of the negative wage trends experienced by workers. Minimum wages also have important effects on segmentation. By increasing the minimum wage provided to the lowest paid employees, these regulations reduce the disparities across occupational categories within the firm. Another important employment standard includes those addressing equal pay for equal work. These have important effects on segmentation. For example, Quebec and Germany are both similar in that their laws prevent employers from introducing tiered benefits based on part-time status and date of hire. Ontario has since introduced similar types of legislation. Segmentation is reduced by enforcing equal working conditions for workers who perform the same tasks.

These two types of state strategies may have had some impacts on the nature and degree of risk in the cases. Yet interestingly, high-risk chains were found even in countries whose governments have introduced strong policies to provide protections to workers. This includes Canada, whose federal and provincial governments have committed themselves to a comprehensive welfare state and labour regulations that are of significant importance for risk (such as the minimum wage in Ontario and legislation barring tiered wages and benefits in Quebec). The key reason for this is that these public policies are restricted to specific aspects of risk. As illustrated throughout this thesis, risks come from various sources and manifest themselves across various dimensions.

Canadian workers may have access to strong retirement and health care benefits, but low wages, few working hours, and weak scheduling protections leave workers unable to meet basic expenses. Since public policies never address the full gamut of risk outcomes, they often need to be complemented by collective bargaining to address sources of risk that are not being mitigated by the state.

7.2 Core contributions to theory and industrial relations literatures

The exploration of the major research findings of this thesis in the last part made some connections to both theory and the literature. However, this was not done explicitly. We now address four main theoretical contributions of this thesis: first, to how we understand and measure risk; second, to how power dynamics matter to the implementation of actor strategies; third, by highlighting the contested nature of contextual factors; and fourth, to the importance of an integrated analysis of multiple factors in explaining risk outcomes in collective bargaining.

7.2.1 Highlighting the multidimensional nature of risk

A major contribution of this work was in developing the theoretical tools to capture the diverse ways in which risks change across organisations, sectors, and countries. It does so by mobilising three strands in the risk literature. First, "welfare regime" research has mobilised the concept of generosity to explain how public and private actors contribute to the social arrangements that protect workers and citizens from risk (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Esping-Andersen, 1990). Second, "risk shift" research has focused on how trends in individualisation have shifted responsibility from who bears the burden for risk from firms and the state onto workers and individuals (Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000). Third, "segmentation" research focuses on the extent that negative risk trends concentrate on specific categories of workers – based on employment status and social location (Osterman and Burton, 2005; Doeringer and Piore, 1971; D'Amours et al., 2017). The problem with these strands is that they examine different dimensions of risk in isolation from one another. This thesis has shown that exploring all three is necessary to capturing how risks change in workplaces.

A number of analytical observations stem from the theoretical and empirical work in risk in this thesis. First, the framework provides for a more integrated understanding of risk by exploring its three dimensions. Integrating these three dimensions of risk enables risk research to capture related trends that are often discounted in one-dimensional models. For example, Swedish supermarkets were most affected by declines in generosity. A focus on individualisation and segmentation alone would have failed to capture this change. Meanwhile, the segmented nature of risk trends was most important in Germany. One would have to capture how trends in segmentation and individualisation differed between workers covered and not covered by collective agreements to understand the evolution of risk in the country's supermarkets. Neglecting the multidimensional nature of risk leads one towards an incomplete picture of its trajectories. It is for this reason that the welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), risk shift (Hacker, 2006; Beck, 200), and segmentation (Osterman and Burton, 2005; Doeringer and Piore, 1971) literatures should complement one another, rather than exist in isolation.

Second, this thesis highlights the contradictory nature of risk trends. Many point to the growth of risk as an international phenomenon (Osberg and Sharpe, 2011; Hacker, 2006; Heery, 2000). However, in applying the Risk Allocation Framework, this thesis has shown that the simple pronouncement that risks have increased is unsatisfactory. Risks may be rising along some dimensions, but they may be declining in others. For example, the “risk shift” argument focuses on the rise of individualised risk sharing arrangements spearheaded by companies and governments (Cobb, 2015; Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000). Unfortunately, the line of analysis adopted by this argument’s chief proponents is ill-equipped to capture how relevant changes in generosity and segmentation affect risk outcomes. For example, by neglecting the segmented nature of risk outcomes in the United States, they lose out on how risk trends differentially affect different sub-groups of the working population. American chains examined in this research may have resorted to hiring more part-time workers in past years, but they have also strengthened scheduling guarantees for these workers (up to 21 hours guaranteed weekly). Since research shows that vulnerable female workers are over-represented in part-time employment and tend to have fewer labour market advantages to fall back on compared to men (Cranford et al., 2003; Fudge and Vosko, 2001; Bernier et al., 2003), improved scheduling provisions for part-timers provides important forms of protection to some female workers. Thus, risk outcomes are rarely linear.

Third, risk trends are interconnected. The risk shift (Cobb, 2015; Hacker, 2006; Beck, 2000), welfare regime (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Esping-Andersen, 1990), and segmentation (Seeleib-Kaiser et al., 2012; Esping-Andersen, 1990) literatures have focused on how various factors affect risk trends in their own dimension. Yet, trends in one dimension affect the other, a point which highlights the importance of the linkages between them. For example, some German chains committed to stronger pay and scheduling arrangements in stores covered by collective agreements offset these costs by hiring more mini-jobbers and contract workers. In addition, stores in Quebec are more willing to offer performance-related pay supplements instead of simple pay increases, demonstrating the trade-offs between the generosity and individualisation dimensions of wage setting. While similar linkages are recognised elsewhere in the literature (Pulignano et al, 2016), the Risk Allocation Framework provides a means to explicitly recognize how different components of insecurity relate to one another.

Fourth, exploring risk's multiple dimensions provides for a more nuanced understanding of what causes changes to risk. Other literatures have given considerable attention to explaining the causes of risk. The welfare regime literature has focused on factors that shift the public-private mix, including left-wing social movements (Baldwin, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1990) and identity politics (Béland and Lecours, 2009; Béland and Lecours, 2006). The "risk shift" literature has pointed to factors such as the "Personal Responsibility Crusade" policy agenda (Hacker, 2006) or the role of unions as the great collectivizer (Cobb, 2015). The segmentation literature has focused on the power of insiders (Crouch, 2015) and the rise of nonstandard work (Kalleberg et al., 2009).

This research provides for more integrated explanations of risk outcomes than current risk literature by highlighting what factors have influenced change in each dimension. Take the New York City chain for example. One of its key successes, the generous provision of full-time work, is maintained as part of the employer's commitment strategy to boost service quality by maintaining high worker satisfaction. However, its other key success is in maintaining collectivised retirement and health benefits, which is not explained by management strategy, but rather the union's success in enforcing a strong pattern across employers through effective worker mobilisation. The German case is also telling, where it is the trade union's role to negotiate for more generous wage rates, yet the works-council's role in negotiating works-agreements that affect the individualisation of working hours.

The multidimensional approach to risk not only shows that various explanations relating to these three dimensions of risk need to be integrated to understand how they have changed, but it paves the way for new sets of explanations that address how they relate to one another. For example, a key take-away is that unions have greater influence over the outcomes of risk when they have a degree of control over the factors that affect each of the dimensions. The Swedish case exemplifies this. Its retail union can influence the generosity of wage rates through its role in cross-sectoral wage coordination in the country. It can also influence collectivisation through its relative power in collective bargaining over scheduling protections (e.g. one month's scheduling notice) with the employers' association for retail. Finally, the union has the power eliminate segmentation by applying blockades against employers who attempt to operate without collective agreements or undermine their minimum standards. We see here how the union's ability to strategize and apply its power resources across multiple levels (in some cases directly with the employer, in other cases through solidaristic actions with other unions in the country) and to different ends (negotiating better agreements or imposing agreements on employers) matters to preventing negative trends in the different dimensions of risk.

7.2.2 The contested nature of contextual effects

In their book *Where Bad Jobs are Better: Retail Jobs Across Countries and Companies*, Carré and Tilly (2017) criticize researchers who overstate the "inevitability" of bad jobs in the face of changing contexts. They focus on the importance of institutions and actor strategies in shaping job quality outcomes in retail, a sector whose jobs have been wrongly condemned for being necessarily low-wage and dead-end in many countries. A growing number of scholars have made similar pronouncements regarding low-wage work in recent years (Doellgast, 2018; Carré and Schmitt, 2009). This thesis speaks to this research in its emphasis on the contestability of low-skilled service work. It finds that contextual effects on service occupations are not linear. Rather, they are often subject to contestation. This section focuses on theoretical approaches relating to marketisation, financialisation, fissured workplaces, and bargaining decentralisation.

Some overplay the importance of markets in structuring work outcomes. In *The Mutual Gains Enterprise*, Kochan and Osterman (1994) argue that fast food chain McDonald's is not a suitable candidate for high-road HR systems that promote gainsharing and cooperative labour relations. The market environment facing the fast-food industry - among other industries where low-wage, low-skilled work is common – forces employers into a narrow model focused on low-pay and routinised work to compete. Unless employment standards are modified, poor working conditions are likely due to the current competitive requirements of the firm. Meanwhile, Greer and Doellgast (2017) mobilised marketisation as an overarching framework to explain the negative effects of intensified price competition on institutions and work outcomes. Yet, this framework is designed to explain its negative effects on workers, discounting the ways in which the effects of marketisation are mitigated or even nullified by actors and institutions.

This thesis identified some of the ways in which marketisation can be contested. First, its negative effects can be resisted by institutional means. The findings point to the importance of multi-employer bargaining arrangements in Sweden. By enforcing common labour standards through all-encompassing collective agreements, the entry of low-cost competitors could not be used as a factor to negotiate concessions, as discount stores were bound to the same standards as traditional employers in the sector. This finding is consistent with Marginson et al.'s (2014) research which shows how firm contingencies are removed from collective bargaining under strong multi-employer arrangements. A second means relates to firm strategies. The New York chain in this study maintained above-average work standards because doing so was consistent with its strategic focus on value-added customers, a fact that resonates with the customer segmentation literature (Batt, 2000; Batt, 2001).

The financialisation literature has shown how financialised firms invest less in production or services and more in financial methods of profit-making (e.g. share buy-backs) to boost shareholder value, leaving workers negatively affected by cycles of cutbacks (Foroohar, 2016; Baud and Durand, 2011). The growing role played by institutional investors in corporate governance has also been linked to financialisation (Appelbaum and Batt, 2014). Contrary to privately owned firms, they are more likely to incur high debt loads (e.g. through leveraged buy-outs) and introduce forms of restructuring that worsen working conditions in exchange for short-term gains. The findings show important exceptions to the effects of financialisation argument. When the New York chain's VP of HR was asked why this firm supported his progressive HR policies, even though the chain just emerged from bankruptcy, the response was simple: "they support the model because it works". The firm's business strategy was perceived as a means to obtaining extremely high levels of service quality. It was also seen as a means to preventing conflict with the union. These strategic concerns mattered, even after the chain was financially crippled by a leveraged buy-out that undermined its ability to remain solvent.

Does this mean that the "maximization of shareholder value" has emerged as a dominant ideology (Lazonick and O'Sullivan, 2000) rather than a structural constraint on actors? Can shareholder driven interests be pushed into directions that provide more opportunities for workers? Addressing these questions more deeply is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it does show that there are opportunities to promote positive workplace change even in companies that cater heavily to shareholders and other types of investors with short-term interests.

The fissured workplaces thesis has shown how lead firms are shedding the responsibilities for workplace governance to other value-chain actors (Weil, 2014). It argues that the blurring lines of authority over the workplace coupled with unrealistic performance expectations set for subsidiary organisations are eroding working conditions as subsidiary organisations aggressively constrain labour costs to remain solvent. However, none of the findings of this research supported this theory in unionised settings. Why is this so? The fissured workplace argument applies to firms in which union presence is low or lacking. However, this research joins those who highlight the important role played by unions in the enforcement of labour standards, including those set through collective bargaining (Fine, 2017; Howe, 2017). Employee voice mechanisms were used to ensure that both employment standards and collective agreements were applied in these cases. This emphasizes the role that unions can play in preventing the negative effects typically associated with the fissuring of employment relationships.

The bargaining decentralisation literature has emphasised how declining bargaining coverage and the shift to single-employer agreements is exposing bargaining units to greater market uncertainty. Decentralisation has been associated with a reorientation of bargaining agendas to reflect "firm contingencies" (Marginson et al., 2014), greater managerial control over the employment relationship (2003), and the weakening of union power (Pulignano et al., 2016; Doellgast and Benassi, 2014). The fact that decentralisation has added new pressures on collective bargaining is supported by the research findings. However, this thesis also shows how the effects of decentralisation are contested by actors, by highlighting the importance of alternative means to extending labour standards by unions. Most particularly, the unions in

Germany and New York City have used protest actions and government lobbying to force low-road employers into raising their labour standards, thereby reducing their competitive edge in the market. This speaks to the importance of union capacities in shaping standard setting, both within and outside of traditional institutions for exercising employee voice in times of change (Bosch, 2018; D'Amours et al., 2017). Since collective bargaining is only one means of extending labour standards across employers, this thesis has shown that research on the politics of standard setting needs to extend its focus to the variety of standards that are enforced by collective worker representation.

Overall, this thesis has emphasised the contested nature of contextual effects on workers. The separate strands of literature discussed above have emphasised the negative outcomes associated with specific changes in the workplace. While this may work for uncovering the controversial and negative features of marketisation, financialisation, fissuring, and bargaining decentralisation, the reality is far more complex. There needs to be greater research attention to the role of actors in resisting contextual pressures and the tools that they have at their disposal in doing so. It is for this reason that this thesis emphasised the importance of strategies and power to risk outcomes. This is discussed in the next section.

7.2.3 The importance of power to strategies

Mainstream industrial relations research has strangely neglected the importance of power to actor strategies in collective bargaining. This constitutes a major critique in this thesis. The targets of this critique are strategic choice theory (Kochan, 1986), behavioral theory (Walton and McKersie, 1965), and institutional theory (Hall and Soskice, 2001), for the sake of illustration.

Each of these theories has done a fair job in capturing the rational, emotive, and contextual aspects of decision-making. Yet they are all rather naive in refusing to acknowledge the importance of power to actor strategies and their outcomes for workers.

First, this thesis has shown that a focus on "strategic choices" alone neglects the importance of how actor power effects the implementation of those choices. Strategic choice theory has highlighted how bargaining strategies are a response to changing circumstances (Kochan, 1986). These changing circumstances refer to external contexts, such as market change and technological innovation, as well as the internal values of managers. This view of bargaining strategies presumes that the major problem facing workers lies in actors making the right choices and seizing on critical opportunities in a time where markets and technological change are shifting the nature of competition.

However, it seems futile to discuss these choices without assessing the relative power and capabilities of actors in enacting these choices. For example, do unions exhibiting weak solidarity possess less influence on firm priority setting compared to those where ties with members and external actors are robust? This answer presented in this thesis was clearly yes. This is perhaps best illustrated by the comparison of two chains in Germany. These chains were represented by the same union adhering to the same strategy. They also faced similar threats from low-cost competitors and technological change. Yet the work outcomes were remarkably superior in one relative to the other. What explains the difference? The answer was simple. The union could maintain strong ties with its workers via works-councils in one chain but not the other. It was through this vehicle that the union was more successful in challenging managerial prerogatives than in other German supermarket chains.

Second, this thesis has shown how power dynamics underpin the negotiation process. Behavioral theory focuses on how actors make rational calculations to influence the expectations and attitudes of their opponents at the bargaining table (Walton and McKersie, 1965). This theory of labour negotiation discounts the relevance of contexts and the importance of power to the negotiation process. Of course, the initial formulation this theory was designed to inform actor strategies at the negotiating table. Its purpose was not to situate actor strategies in their broader societal contexts. However, it constitutes the foundation for an entire body of research dedicated to exploring the impacts of union and employer decision-making on bargaining outcomes. The distinction between *integrative* and *distributive* bargaining processes has led many to question how managerial strategies to seek commitment or compliance from their workers, or union decisions to oppose or collaborate with managers, matters to work outcomes (Walton et al., 2000; Walton, 1985; Bamber et al., 2009; Kochan and Osterman, 1994; Kochan et al., 2013). Not only does this literature maintain a bias in favour of collaborative bargaining dynamics, but it negates the importance of power in shaping the outcomes achieved by actors through the negotiation process.

The research findings challenge this literature by questioning whether collaborative labour relations can be achieved when workers and their representatives are negotiating from a position of weakness. Not only was there little evidence that weak unions can benefit from collaborating with managers, but unions enjoy few benefits from collaborating with managers altogether. What mattered most was whether unions could build capacity and use their solidaristic power to pressure firms into prioritising worker interests. These findings do not fit within the processual approach to bargaining which seeks to emphasize the importance of actor strategies within the negotiating process. Rather, it speaks to the growing body of research which points to the importance of power dynamics in determining the effects of strategies on workers (Doellgast et al. 2018; Dupuis, 2017; Benassi and Vlandas, 2016; Levesque and Murray, 2010). Most significantly, this research has highlighted the importance of solidaristic power, both internally and externally (Levesque and Murray, 2010), to unions' capacity to challenge managerial discretion. However, it has also shown that a focus on how actors are situated within a broader economic context by identifying how "structural power" (Wright, 2000) rooted from unions' relationship with market conditions matters to resisting negative trends in work.

Third, this thesis shows how the strategic use of union power matters to firm strategies that affect workers in coordinated market economies. Hall and Soskice's (2001) Varieties of Capitalism theory views strategies as rational responses to the opportunity structures associated with coordinated market economies or liberal market economies. They argue that firm strategies must be in harmony with their industrial relations institutions if these firms are to succeed. Interestingly, managers and union officials in the German and Swedish chains emphasised the importance of union power, not institutions, to working conditions within their supermarkets. In fact, working conditions were poor in the German franchises that reported remarkably weak levels of union presence and influence. The European employers only provided workers with superior working conditions when they were forced to do so by unions. Moreover, each of these employers has engaged in efforts to escape the constraints imposed by collective agreements at some point within the last few decades.

Relatedly, this focus on union strategies and power highlights the importance of sectoral dynamics to work outcomes in the firm. The Varieties of Capitalism approach has been criticised for situating industrialised economies into two ideal types. This thesis rejoins the critics who argue that greater attention to the political dynamics that occur within sectors and firms is needed to understand firm strategies towards workers (Bechter et al., 2012; Jaehrling and Mehaut, 2013; Doellgast and Greer, 2007). It found that actor strategies result from political interactions between unions and firms in response to various types of contextual change in their sector.

So what does this analysis say about the state of theory in collective bargaining? It suggests that mainstream theoretical approaches to collective bargaining are ill-equipped to fully understand how strategies interact with work outcomes such as risk. More work on integrating the concept of power into our analysis of collective bargaining outcomes is required. Much theorisation has been conducted to show how forms of solidaristic (Levesque and Murray, 2010; Levesque and Murray, 2002), institutional (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick, 2010), or structural (Pulignano et al., 2016; Wright, 2000) power matter to what unions do. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that these notions of power are integrated into future analyses on how bargaining strategies impact workers.

7.2.4 Conclusion - Towards an integrated analysis of risk outcomes

This thesis argues for an integrated analysis of risk outcomes. First, it proposed analysing the dimensions of generosity, individualisation, and segmentation to capture holistically the dynamics that affect risk. By highlighting these different dimensions of risk, it shows how risk outcomes stem from many sources. In some cases, the main instigator of negative risk trends may be rooted in a single dimension. In other cases, multiple dimensions may be accountable. In addition, risk outcomes represent a variety of both positive and negative trends in risk. Thus, risks are only effectively mitigated if their net effect is positive. In addition, these trends do not take place in isolation from one another, but are interconnected. Understanding how these three dimensions is inter-related is important to tracing risk trajectories as a whole.

Second, this thesis has shown how risk outcomes are affected by a variety of factors relating to contexts, strategies, and union power. Since changes in risk stem from different dimensions, it becomes necessary to explore how a variety of factors influence each dimension to understand the entirety that is risk. It also explains why insecurity becomes so difficult to avoid. For instance, while unions may achieve some success in stopping risk trends in some dimensions, they may not be sufficient to offset those emanating from the other dimensions. This is why the concept of power is important to risk. More powerful unions can yield influence in multiple arenas to resist negative trends in each risk dimension. The less influence a union has on governance within the multinational or standard setting within their sector, the less they are able to resist negative risk trends.

7.3 The research questions revisited

Chapter 1 presented the two fundamental research questions addressed in this thesis. The first addressed how risk trends diverge across unionised contexts. The thesis has sought to respond to this question by developing and applying the Risk Allocation Framework to capture these divergences in supermarkets across countries. It found that companies face a considerable diversity of risk experiences, even among those whose risk trends have been negative. This distinction represented some novelty for this research. Beyond characterising the growth of risks facing workers (Kalleberg, 2009; Heery, 2000; Beck, 2000), this thesis takes the analysis one step further, by showing that not all risk increases are equal. Rather, they reflect trends across multiple dimensions, namely generosity, individualisation, and segmentation.

This background work on the first question raised at the outset of this thesis facilitated an in-depth examination of a second, and more central question; namely, the impacts of collective bargaining strategies on risk outcomes. First, this research found that collective bargaining strategies do yield important impacts on risk. Union decisions to mobilise workers, rely on servicing, or partner with managers matter for workers. By contrasting union strategies across institutional and organisational settings, union mobilisation strategies were found to be a powerful tool for resisting negative risk trends and have proven successful in a variety of contexts. In addition, firm commitment strategies could yield positive results for workers under certain conditions, but only under certain contextual settings and when the level of commitment is high.

Second, strategies adopted to resist risk are power-laden. The importance of union mobilisation makes this point obvious. While union mobilisation as a strategy was positively associated with risk outcomes, it should also be understood as both an expression of power and a means to building power. Unions mobilise workers in order to command more authority in negotiating with their employers. However, if they fail to dedicate resources to mobilisation, their capacity to do so withers. Commitment strategies are also power-laden. The contexts in which firms develop and implement strategies are rooted in power dynamics. This emphasis on power shows how powerful unions play an important role in nudging employers towards deepening their commitments towards workers and reducing risk in the process.

Third, the effects of strategies on risk are sensitive to contextual pressures. Union mobilisation and firm commitment are more effective when price competition is low, bargaining structures are centralised, and firms are privately held. However, they face important challenges when price competition is high, bargaining structures are decentralised, and firm governance is financialised. As this research highlights, an analysis of the decisions made by actors alone is insufficient to understanding their effects on workers. We need to understand how contextual factors impose real constraints on organisations, as these constraints may negatively affect firms' abilities to provide positive working conditions when faced with stresses.

Finally, actor strategies yield important effects on contexts. Contextual changes can have negative effects on worker risk, but these are not without contestation. For example, unions can resist bargaining decentralisation through strikes and protests that pressure employers to comply with collective agreements. They may also bypass collective bargaining altogether by lobbying governments to raise employment standards or to boycott companies that offer poor working conditions. Thus, strategies and contexts may be understood as a feedback loop in which one always influences the outcomes of the other. Not surprisingly, the more unions influence their bargaining contexts, the better it is for workers.

Conclusion

8.1 Summary of thesis

This thesis contributed to contemporary debates on the evolution of risks in industrialised nations and modern corporations. It sought to contribute to these debates by assessing risk trends in unionised firms, and the role that contexts, strategies, and actor-attributes play in influencing these trends. Below is a summary of the contents and contributions to this debate.

Chapter 1 examined the international risk literature and surmised that there was a consensus that rising risks is a problem in most industrialised nations. It discussed scholarly research on the role of states, firms, and unions and found that they have all played a role in shaping risk outcomes for workers and citizens. However, it also found that there was insufficient research on the role of collective bargaining in shaping risk outcomes for workers. It outlined two research questions in response to this problem. First, it asked how risks have evolved across unionised settings. Second, it asked what the impacts of collective bargaining strategies are on risk outcomes in unionised firms. These two research questions were used to guide the rest of the thesis.

Chapter 2 sought to explore the role of different theories in explaining how risks diverge across unionised settings and the role of collective bargaining strategies in shaping these trends. It accomplished this through two objectives. First, it provided the conceptual foundation needed to compare risk trends across workplaces; through a Risk Allocation Framework used to measure and compare risk outcomes across three dimensions: generosity, individualisation, and segmentation. Second, it identified theories relating to the potential role of contextual factors, strategies, and actor-attributes in explaining risk outcomes.

Chapter 3 identified the research hypotheses and methodology used to guide this thesis. It identified several hypotheses associated with the contextual, strategic, and actor-related theories presented in Chapter 2. This aim was to delineate the importance of competing explanations of risk and to draw connections between the different variables that affect risk. This chapter also provided an overview of the comparative longitudinal case-study methodology used for this thesis. Eight supermarket chains were examined over time in four countries: Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. The experiences of chains in two Canadian provinces were examined to contrast differences in institutional and union dynamics within this particular national setting.

The research results are presented in three articles (chapters). Chapter 4 (Article 1) laid the theoretical groundwork for exploring risk along the three dimensions proposed for the Risk Allocation Framework. Empirically, it found that applying the framework could provide for a more nuanced understanding of risk trends. While risks increased in supermarkets across all four countries, the increases witnessed in each case differed across the dimensions of generosity, segmentation and individualisation. Assessing trends along these dimensions highlighted the diverse nature in which risks increase in industries. It provided a useful tool for assessing the degree of these shifts and their sources across dimensions. These results demonstrated the validity of the multi-dimensional framework to examining risk and provided some analytical observations on how it captures aspects of risk that are not typically addressed by one-dimensional models.

Chapter 5 (Article 2) conducted a comparison of labour-management partnerships in the Canadian and Swedish supermarkets examined in this thesis. It found that bargaining structures yield important effects on how employers and unions partner together, which in turn have consequences for risk. Partnering efforts under centralised bargaining structures were oriented around the standardisation of HR practices across firms, the integration of outsiders, and positively affected the structural power of unions. Meanwhile, partnering in decentralised structures were oriented around the localisation of HR practices, flexible insider-outsider dynamics, and negatively affected the structural power of unions. While considerable institutional research has overplayed the importance of national models to risk outcomes, this article showed how the embeddedness of actor strategies in sectoral bargaining structures mattered for workers.

Chapter 6 (Article 3) examined various hypotheses relating to contexts, strategies, and actor-attributes in order to test the relative influence of bargaining strategies on risk. These hypotheses were examined in relation to eight supermarket chains in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. The results point to the importance of union and firm bargaining strategies. They also show that the effects of bargaining strategies are closely linked to the levels of solidaristic power possessed by unions. In addition, they find that contextual factors matter to risk outcomes, but that these effects are not linear and subject to contestation by actors.

Chapter 7 discusses the research results and their contributions to relevant theories and literatures on risk and industrial relations. In addition to providing a synthesised discussion of the research findings, the contributions to theory are highlighted. First, it shows how the Risk Allocation Framework developed in this thesis surpasses one-dimensional theories of risk by capturing a greater variety of risk dynamics. Second, it highlights the contested nature of contextual effects on workers, contradicting those who have adopted more deterministic interpretations of how marketisation, financialisation, fissured workplaces, and bargaining decentralisation affect bargaining outcomes. Third, it criticizes mainstream industrial relations theories for neglecting to incorporate important considerations of power into their analyses of actor strategies. This thesis has shown that power must be analysed in explaining the effects of strategies on workers. Fourth, it proposes a more integrated frame of analysis for understanding risk outcomes. It does so by focusing on how different contexts, strategies, and power effect the different dimensions of risk. In doing so, this thesis has emphasised the political nature of risk outcomes. This chapter concludes by demonstrating how the results correspond to the research questions presented in Chapter 1.

8.2 Research limitations

The core contributions of this thesis are subject to certain research limitations. Four of these are discussed. First, the case selection limits the generalizability of the findings. The goal was to provide an in-depth examination of how different bargaining strategies affected risk. This was carried out through an examination of bargaining dynamics in eight supermarket chains across five jurisdictions. Furthermore, the research design sought to capture the role of numerous variables relating to contexts and actor attributes. The obvious strength of this approach is that it enables one to find commonalities across different types of settings and actors. The challenge is doing so with only two chains per jurisdiction, which limits the extent that the findings may apply to cases exhibiting certain similarities. For example, one of the main findings of the thesis was that servicing and partnering strategies are ineffective at resisting insecurity, due to their relationship with union power. However, research has shown that servicing strategies may be conducive to greater union influence on collective bargaining and working conditions under certain conditions, such as when unions demonstrate strengths in leadership and in employing narrative resources (Foster, 2018; Foster, 2017) or in institutional contexts that positively affect union security (Price et al., 2014). Thus, are the North American locals examined in this study typical of retail (or even local services in general) or are they anomalies?

Second, a single sector was examined for this research. The contextual specificity of retail is important. Retail is a local service sector in that competition for sales is isolated to customers in a single geographical location. This is especially true for food retail. For example, while e-commerce has drastically impacted the sales growth of brick and mortar operations in fashion, electronics, and other industries in the sector, the growth of online food sales has been relatively modest (Coe and Wrigley, 2017). Thus, grocery sales occur in physical proximity to the customers' place of residence. Two implications are most significant. First, retailers do not possess the option of relocation when collective bargaining dynamics are deemed not desirable. Of course, Wal-Mart has gained infamy for closing North American outlets when unionisation drives have succeeded or appeared likely. However, few retailers can afford to pursue the same strategy since losses in sales and infrastructural investments would prove too costly for these companies. Moreover, unlike manufacturers, retailers cannot shift service jobs overseas. Second, the nature of competition in local service sectors is significantly affected by bargaining structures. This was demonstrated in Article 2, where it was shown that Swedish retailers wanted to preserve high labour standards through strong centralised agreements to prevent low-road competition, while Canadian retailers sought cost cutting and labour flexibility to offer prices comparable to the non-union competition. This focus on retail limits the generalizability of the findings as they do not apply to manufacturing or international service sectors in which price-setting and sales take place internationally and are thereby outside the reach of local bargaining structures.

Third, the choice of variables may also be perceived as a limitation. In attempting to explain the effects of bargaining strategies on risk, a broad and multi-dimensional concept, this thesis integrated numerous variables to provide a comprehensive account of the phenomenon. Due to resource constraints, it became necessary to provide more detailed accounts of those variables deemed of most importance in the interviews. This leaves a few blind spots in the thesis. For example, the role of the state was relegated in importance to other variables, including union strategies and power. However, an influential stream in the literature views union mobilisation and solidaristic power as rooted in labour law, as European legal frameworks provide unions with greater freedoms in exercising their rights to organise and apply industrial actions than those of North America (Boyer and Drache, 1996). The differences across the cases examined in this thesis speak to this debate. A more detailed examination of the role of the state would usefully complement the research findings and address the need to disentangle actor strategies from sources of institutional power.

Fourth, this thesis mobilised a narrow conception of power. This is particularly important since the findings highlighted the importance of union power not only to union strategies, but in influencing those of employers. The power resources framework developed by Levesque and Murray (2010) drawing on forms of union solidarity, narrative resources, and infrastructural resources guided the analysis of power in this research. The problem with this conceptualisation of union power is its focus on union characteristics and decision-making as opposed to their positioning within broader societal structures. It was this reason that Wright's notion of structural power (2000) – focusing on the position of workers within the economic system - was mobilised in Article 2. However, the application of this societal conception of power was done after the fact, and even this conception of power is limited. Understanding how institutional and markets affect union power could have better captured the role of power in collective bargaining over risk. For example, recent research on precarious work has highlighted the importance of institutional power to explaining precariousness in low-wage work, particularly in European settings (Doellgast et al., 2018). Neglecting the influences of broader societal structures and union power could have made the findings more superficial, particularly with respect to the understanding bargaining outcomes in social Sweden.

8.3 Implications for practice

The research findings yield some important implications for practice. Implications for unions, firms, and the state are discussed. In terms of unions, union mobilisation was found to be a valuable tool for resisting negative risk trends. However, their importance was not identified for mobilisation's sake alone, but reflected a much larger purpose relating to union power. Drawing from this, one recommendation is that unions focus on capacity-building to build solidarity in their workplaces and communities. This includes not simply organising and coalition-building, but in shifting union priorities to work on various capabilities that would enhance their effectiveness at mobilising various actors to resist risks in the workplace. Unions also need to engage in learning to undertake this change. The ability to critically rethink their roles in collective bargaining and social movements is necessary to building solidarity. Some unions are trapped in old mindsets, focusing too heavily on servicing their members, inter-union competition, or in believing that more militant narratives present too many risks for their members. Many union officials fail to see how their actions fit within larger societal movements that represent important opportunities for change. Thus, revitalising union capacities involves not only strategic considerations, but normative changes that challenge the ideologies and identities of union officials.

The implication for employers is clear, particularly those in North America. Managers interviewed in North America believe that their HR practices are dictated by market forces. The high-road is perceived as limited by the extent that market conditions allow. Employers believe that providing a relatively pleasant work climate and compensation rates only slightly above industry standards is sufficient to retain a productive workforce and moral obligations of a modern corporation. The fact that their workers are low-paid and face few consistencies in their working conditions is deemed an inevitable consequence of market dynamics.

The problem with these views is that they are formed in a narrow institutional context. What this research shows is that supermarkets can better meet workers' needs for economic security, but that there needs to be a different institutional set-up to achieve this. In Article 2, interviews with Canadian negotiators found that employers resisted attempts to introduce sectoral standards on the basis that doing so would harm their non-union operations and would contradict the philosophy that managers function best autonomously. Employers should reconsider this approach. This study and others (e.g. Carré and Tilly, 2017; Laroche and Murray, 2012) has shown that employers can benefit from the institutional stability provided by sectoral bargaining for competitive purposes. Instead of worrying about how new low-cost entrants might destroy their company's bottom line and pressure them to cut costs so aggressively that they generate serious HR problems (e.g. high turnover), employers can seek out to standardize working conditions across the sector. This can be done through sectoral bargaining, as in the case of Sweden. It can also be done through other institutional means, such as the awards system in Australia (Price et al., 2014). In either case, raising sectoral labour standards could improve working conditions and attract a more motivated workforce while eliminating the threats posed by low-road competitors.

This research also has implications for the state. Through public policies, the state can play various direct and indirect roles in mitigating the risks experienced by workers (Vallée, 2005). It can play a direct role by introducing social policies (e.g. pension programs, universal health care) and employment standards (e.g. minimum wages, paid sick leave requirements, equal pay legislation) to mitigate worker risk. In doing so, the addressed risk becomes irrelevant to collective bargaining, creating space for employers and unions to negotiate other aspects of working conditions. The state can also play an indirect role by introducing public policies that make it easier to organise and negotiate collective agreements. For example, Hogler (2015) shows that right-to-work legislation has contributed to the decline of collective bargaining in the United States. Given the rise of radical right-wing politics in the country, many fear that any attempts to introduce new laws - such as the Employee Free Choice Act – are bound to fail in the current political climate. However, there is hope from abroad. Germany has recently made it easier to extend collective agreements. In 2014, the German government has introduced legislation facilitating the extension of collective agreements when doing so is in the "public interest". Till then, the German legal requirement was that 50% of workers be covered by collective agreements for them to be extended. Any efforts to expand coverage helps to set standards across the industry and prevent unfair competition from eroding working conditions. The Germans have also experimented with minimum wage setting, which unlike most (if not all) Anglo-Saxon jurisdictions, provides trade unions with considerable influence over the process by integrating the principles of collective bargaining into its governance (Bosch, 2018). For these purposes, the state plays an important role in directly and indirectly shaping risk outcomes for workers.

To some extent, this analysis begs the question of whether the state should invest more in direct or indirect forms of risk mitigation. Investing in direct forms of risk mitigation provides a quick fix for a given risk-related area. However, the politics associated with expanding welfare regimes or introducing employment standards are so troublesome that the successes of progressive governments tend to be restricted to narrow solutions affecting specific areas of risk. These often fail to reverse the more significant trends that manifest themselves across many dimensions. Governments can also promote collective bargaining indirectly, which yields the potential to address a larger number of risk areas through a single mechanism. If sufficiently fostered, collective bargaining offers an important form of private governance which can be used to make multiple gains independently of the state.

However, there lies a real risk of what would happen if this strategy failed. Unions have become weaker in most OECD countries. A coordinated strategy to strengthen unions, especially in environments hostile to these actors (e.g. the United States), undoubtedly presents many challenges for public policy. Unfortunately, there is no straight-forward answer to this question. Political movements will need to seize opportunities where they are available. So far, North American governments have centered on direct means of risk mitigation, such as responding to the Fight for 15 or making changes to employment standards. Few policy solutions for some form of sectoral standardisation, such as sectoral bargaining, have gained much traction in North America. Yet given the results of this research, perhaps the time has come to give more serious consideration to this option.

8.4 Avenues for further research

This thesis opens some opportunities for further research on risk. Two are notable. First, the Risk Allocation Framework opens new territories for investigating the causes and consequences of risk. Comparing risk trends along the three dimensions enables researchers to engage in a deeper analysis of why risks differ across different settings. This thesis explored how bargaining strategies affect risk in unionised retail. Yet, others could contribute to this research by exploring how collective bargaining affects these dimensions in other sectors where the trends, strategies, and contexts differ. In addition, further research could focus on the role of other actors in shaping risk outcomes. How do management strategies affect these three dimensions of risk across different sectors? What is the role of public policy in risk mitigation? This framework opens a new space for inquiry into risk dynamics that merits further investigation and could provide important insights on how to address the problem of insecurity facing the modern workforce.

Second, the exploration of bargaining strategies in this thesis has emphasised the relevance of power to their adoption and implementation. It also showed how unions play a key role in embedding firm strategies, sometimes to the betterment of workers. While considerable research has highlighted the role of union strategies to challenging managerial efforts to exploit workers (Doellgast et al., 2018, Dupuis, 2017; Benassi and Dorigatti, 2015), there is much more work to be done on situating the role of power in the execution of collective bargaining strategies. So many have focused on the processes and institutions that shape bargaining strategies without adequately accounting for how actor power figures in bargaining dynamics. While the decisions taken by actors matter to work outcomes, their relative influence in executing these decisions is decisive to their success.

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Annexes

Annex 1 - Interview Topic Guide

Interview Topic Guide

Name of Researcher:
Sean O'Brady, Doctoral Student and CRIMT Doctoral Researcher, School of Industrial Relations, University of Montreal

Supervisor:
Dr. Gregor Murray, Professor and CRIMT Director, School of Industrial Relations, University of Montreal

Title of Thesis:
What Drives Worker Insecurity in Collective Bargaining? A Comparative Study of Food Retail in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States

Title of Affiliate Research Project:
Restructuring Social Norms in Globalized Workplaces

Please note that this *Interview Topic Guide* is only provisional and that you have a significant degree of control over the process and contents of the interview. You also have the right to refuse participation in the project at any point in the interview process (including the right to participate in the first place). As indicated in the consent form, your individual identity, in addition to that of your organisation, will not be disclosed in any of the research outputs associated with this research.

This thesis examines the influence of labour-management relations, in light of organisational and institutional contexts, on workers' economic security in Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. In this thesis, the concept of economic security refers to workers' uncertainties in incomes and expenses, particularly in terms of their access to stable salaries, working hours, retirement, training, and health care. The general aim is to understand how company managers, employee representatives, and the state influence economic security across different firm and country contexts. Where possible, changes from 1980 till today will be examined.

This doctoral research is affiliated with the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work's (CRIMT) "Restructuring Social Norms in Globalized Workplaces" project. This project examines the role of different actors in shaping social norms pertaining to flexibility in the workplace across different regions of the world. On account of this, your research contributions will contribute to research outputs associated with both the thesis and this broader research project.

The below themes and questions will be used to guide the interview. These themes serve only as discussion aid and you should feel free to phrase your own views and to elaborate on the issues you feel are most relevant and important.

Introduction.

1.1 Please provide a brief description of the work you do with your organisation.

Theme 1: **Evolution of economic security in your supermarkets**

2.1 Please describe trends facing your workers in the following areas:

- Current incomes (salaries, sick leave, vacations, severance pay, and other types of leave) and retirement incomes
- Job security
- Working hours (e.g. control over schedules)
- Health care expenses (e.g. for medicine)
- Types of skills and training
- Payment for training and equipment needed for job

2.2 Please describe how these trends affect different workers:

- Are employees treated differently according to their age, ethnicity, or gender?
- Are part-timers, subcontracted workers, or workers in franchises treated differently?
- How about workers across different supermarket chains?

Theme 2: **Actor strategies towards workers' economic security**

3.1 What are the supermarket chains' strategies towards both their workers and the union, and how have they positively or negatively impacted worker security?

3.2 What are the union's strategies (e.g. cooperative or adversarial, solidaristic or not)?

3.3 How about government policies?

Theme 3: **Contextual factors and workers' economic security**

4.1 How have changes in worker treatment affected financial and worker-related performance?

4.2 Do the supermarket chains' ownership structures matter?

4.3 Do trends in sectoral versus establishment-level bargaining matter?

4.4 How about competition across firms in this sector?

Theme 4: **Factors relating to unions and values**

5.1 How powerful is the union, and how competent is it in using its resources?

5.2 What are the types of values and rationales which inform company managers in introducing new human resource practices that affect risk?

Annex 2 – Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Project title:
Restructuring Social Norms in Globalized Workplaces

Name of the persons responsible for the research:
Gregor Murray, professor, Université de Montréal (gregor.murray@umontreal.ca)
Christian Lévesque, professor, HEC Montréal (christian.levesque@hec.ca)

Other researchers:
University researchers: Christian Dufour and Adelheid Hege, CRIMT, Université de Montréal, and Institut de recherches économiques et sociales, Paris
Doctoral researchers: Sean O'Brady, Mathieu Dupuis*, Raoul Gebert*, and Pierre-Antoine Harvey*, School of Industrial Relations, Université de Montréal
Master's students: Joelle Cuillerier*, Yinyi Cai*, School of Industrial Relations, Université de Montréal
* Graduated

Research objectives

This research aims to assess the impact of transnational regulation, institutional settings and the organizational dynamics on the patterns of workplace relations and practices. More specifically, this research pursues three objectives:

- To assess the evolution of workplace practices, notably those related to the organization of production and work, human resource management and labour and work relations;
- To identify the links between organizational dynamics (ownership, localisation within the commodity chain, strategies the actors at different level, resources of power, etc.) and the evolution of these practices;
- To evaluate how transnational regulation (Codes of conduct, European Work Councils, Global Union Federation, etc.) and institutional settings (for example, national laws and practices) intertwine to facilitate or hinder the diffusion of innovative practices and relations at the workplace level.

Research strategy

Our research strategy is based on several case studies in state and privately-owned enterprises operating in different institutional settings, notably in Canada, Mexico, UK, Belgium, Germany, China and Vietnam. Each case study will entail interviews with representatives of management at different levels (corporation, division and plant level) and the local union representatives also at different levels (international, national, regional, industrial and local). The collection of data will take place in successive phases from 2004 to 2010.

Since the researchers will be able to identity the participants, each of them will sign this engagement of confidentiality. Considering the nature of this project, a good part of the data will be collected abroad. Our team is committed to respecting the ethical requirements in each of these countries before gathering the data. In the countries where such a policy does not exist, we will apply the same procedures by which we are bound as professors in Canadian universities.

Involvement to the project and confidentiality

The participation in this research remains voluntary. At each phase of the research the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data will be assured by the team's members. Only the members of the research team (the two researchers and the student researchers under the direction of the team leaders) will have access to the information collected and to the identity of the participants. In our publications (scientific journals, chapters of books, conferences, etc.), the name of the organizations (firms or unions) and of the participants will remain confidential, unless they give us specific permission to state the name of their organization.

Advantages and risks

The participation in this research does not include any specific risks for the organizations (firms and unions) nor for the individuals. On the other hand, they may obtain several advantages. Indeed, this research fits into a larger research program concerning the impact of internationalization on the regulation of work in several countries which opens up rich comparative possibilities. The participants will have access to all these publications.

Financial aspects

This project is financed by the FQRSC (Fonds québécois de recherche en sciences sociales) and the SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). The participation in this research doesn't imply any cost or financial compensation on behalf of the participants.

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Sean O'Brady
Université de Montréal

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Interview conducted on ………..with
Name of individual
Name of organization