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### Title of presentation:

**New Local Actors of Collective Bargaining in Germany. Derogations of Collective Bargaining Agreements and the Codetermination of Works Councils in the Chemical and the Metalworking Industry**

### Abstract:

Derogations - agreements on plant level that are falling short of collective bargaining agreements - are the most far-reaching step of "organised" decentralisation in the German collective bargaining system. The control of derogation agreements is therefore one of the main tasks the unions are facing today. However, not only the unions are faced with new problems, but also the works councils. Works councils become new actors of collective bargaining. They participate in the negotiations of derogations, they have to coordinate negotiations with the union, they have to gain support by the employees, and, finally, they have to control the implementation of the agreement in their plants.

Being a new actor of collective bargaining is bringing about substantial risks for the works councils along the three interfaces works councils use to deal with: In their relationship to *management*, new conflicts on distributional issues like wages and working times may arise; in their relationship to the *unions*, conflicts about the scope and contents of concessions can emerge; and in their relationship to the *employees*, problems of legitimacy are possible, either because the works councils are too reluctant to make concessions or because they are too willing to make them. I will analyse these risks empirically and try to give hints how a "good practice" may look like that is strengthening the organisational power of works councils and unions in the plants and helps them to defend sustainable working standards.