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The digital footprints on the building blocks of voice and their implications for contemporary industrial citizenship

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Abstract

This report examines how digitalisation reshapes the building blocks of worker voice and participation and considers what implications this holds for contemporary industrial citizenship. Drawing on Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship and power resource theory, the report develops an analytical framework capturing how digitalisation leaves digital footprints on worker voice and representation along the four building blocks that comprise contemporary industrial citizenship such as identify formation, means of actions, dialogue processes and industrial rights. This analytical framework is then used to review recent literature to consider how digital footprints have reconfigured the building blocks with a focus on non-standard workers. The report shows how digitally mediated forms of organising both challenge and extend traditional models of voice and representation. The paper argues that industrial citizenship remains a useful concept when seen as a dynamic concept, reflecting the impact of digitalisation on broadening the scope of worker voice and representation among non-standard workers.

Preface from project managers

The INDI project (*Integrating Diversity in Social Dialogue: Strengthening the EU Labour Market in the Digital and Green Age*), funded by Horizon Europe (101177913), examines how social dialogue can better include non-standard workers in a transforming labour market shaped by digital and green transitions. Focusing on the EU, the UK and Norway, the project explores existing and emerging models of worker voice and representation, with the aim of preventing rising inequality, in-work poverty, and social exclusion.

While social dialogue is a cornerstone of the EU's social market economy, non-standard workers often find themselves on the margins of such processes. This contributes to an increasing dualization of the labour market, with a clear divide between the better-off 'insiders' and the non-standard 'outsiders', who often find themselves in vulnerable positions. Both the scale and the consequences of such dualization vary significantly across countries, sectors, and business models.

The project adopts a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and comparative approach encompassing eight countries, different business models, various forms of non-standard work, and social dialogue processes at various levels. We place the needs, interests, and motivations of non-standard workers for representation and voice at the centre (bottom-up perspective). These insights will be matched with strategies, willingness, and distributional costs among social partners when including workers in non-standard positions in social dialogue processes, as well as how these dynamics play out within different industrial relations and employment regimes (top-down approach). Our main research questions are:

(i) How can non-standard workers strengthen their power resources?
(ii) How are these processes influenced by prevailing industrial relations regimes, employment regimes, and business models?
(iii) How are these processes shaped by the interests of (different groups of) workers in non-standard positions?
(iv) How are these processes shaped by the interests of employers, investors, and contractors?
(v) How can power resources be translated into social dialogue with favourable outcomes for workers in non-standard positions?

Researchers from Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom are participating. The project is coordinated by The Fafo Foundation in Oslo, Norway. The project was launched in February 2025 and will be completed at the end of January 2029.

We wish to thank the European Commission and the Horizon Europe programme for providing the opportunity to carry out this important and exciting research project.

1 Introduction

Digitalisation has transformed modern work and employment in multiple ways, from algorithmic coordination and labour market fragmentation to new forms of surveillance and control. Yet, while substantial literature examines how digital technologies reshape tasks, autonomy, job quality, and employment status, less researched is how they reconfigure voice, representation and social dialogue, especially among non-standard workers (NSWs) i.e. worker groups without the full-time open-ended employment contracts (Warhurst and Hunt, 2019; Frey and Osborne, 2017). However, digitalisation alters not only how work is organised, but it also reshapes the infrastructures, spaces and mechanisms through which workers connect, mobilise and make claims. This paper explores the digital footprints across processes of worker voice and representation that have shifted individual and collective access to power resources thereby necessitating a reimagining of Industrial citizenship. By digital footprints, we refer not simply to explicitly digital forms of organising but more broadly to the ways digital infrastructures leave traces across worker voice and representation, including how collective identities are formed, workers communicate and coordinate, how power resources are assembled and which actors are addressed as well as how social dialogue is pursued within and beyond the workplace. This broader understanding is significant since several studies on worker voice and representation rely on digital tools and digital infrastructures for initiatives to emerge and function without being necessarily framed as studies of digitalisation (Dasgupta et al., 2025; Alcalde-González et al., 2024; Hau et al., 2025; Molina et al., 2023).

This report builds on work undertaken within the EU Horizon Europe Project *Integrate Dialogue* which examined emerging forms of worker voice and representation among non-standard workers (Larsen et al., 2026). While the earlier work mapped alternative models of voice and representation more broadly, this report revisits that literature with a more specific analytical concern – to understand how digitalisation reshapes the conditions and practices of participation for workers, who have historically occupied a marginal place within traditional industrial relations regimes.

The report draws on Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship and power resource theory in combination with literature on identity formation, dialogue processes and industrial rights. In Marshall's original formulation, industrial citizenship referred to the status and standing of workers within institutions governing management-employee relations, particularly through trade unions and collective bargaining (Marshall, 1965; Fudge, 2005; Barbalet, 1988; Nachtwey and Seeliger, 2020). It is closely tied to industrial rights, responsibilities and forms of participation and rested on the assumption that workers are integrated into an employment relationship and an industrial relations regime. In this report, we focus on one of these pillars in particular: participation, understood as voice, representation and dialogue processes. This is partly an analytical choice and partly a pragmatic one. Questions of rights and responsibilities under digital capitalism have already been explored extensively in adjacent literatures on platform work, legal classifications and algorithmic management. Participation, by contrast,

remains less systematically examined, particularly for non-standard workers, whose voice often emerges outside of conventional unionised workplaces that underpinned Marshall's original concept.

The paper argues that Marshall's concept remains useful only if it is treated as dynamic rather than fixed. A large body of literature has shown that industrial citizenship has never been stable or universal, and it has been shaped by changing labour markets, policies, welfare regimes, industrial relations institutions and the distribution of power between workers and employers (Bagguley 2013; Streeck, 1992; Dukes and Streeck, 2020; Coutu and Murray, 2005; Yildrim and Smyrl, 2021; Condratto and Gibbs, 2018). It has also been criticised for its implicit grounding in standard full-time employment relationships, unionised workplaces and a male-breadwinner model, thereby excluding marginalised workers, including women, migrants and many NSWs (Fudge et al., 2005; Lister, 1994; Nachtwey and Seeliger, 2020). Therefore, we approach industrial citizenship as a concept that is being contested and broadened through new forms of worker participation, representation and claim making. These changes, however, cannot be explained by Marshall's concept alone. We therefore combine industrial citizenship with power resource theory, identity formation, industrial rights and dialogue processes. In this reading, Marshall helps to define what is at stake in modern industrial citizenship, the changing forms through which workers gain recognition, voice and representation. Power resource theory, by contrast, helps explain the mechanisms and means of action through which different forms of industrial citizenship emerge and vary across various contexts. It offers a useful way of specifying how participation becomes possible in practice. Identity formation considers the role of collective solidarity that extends within and beyond traditional workplaces, while dialogue processes are broadened to include traditional collective bargaining as well as emerging reliance on lobbying, judicial claims and other avenues. Industrial citizenship, in this view, is not merely a formal status conferred by law or institutions, but also an outcome of worker's and organisations' access to and mobilisation of different kinds of power resources.

This move is especially important in the context of non-standard work. Many of the worker groups explored in this paper do not have ready access to the forms of associational and institutional power that Marshall's original formulation implicitly presupposed. These workers are often excluded from conventional trade unions, and they often work under legally ambiguous arrangements and in isolated workplaces. Yet we argue that this does not mean they are absent from the field of industrial citizenship altogether. Instead, the literature increasingly points to the emergence of alternative forms of organising and representation including grassroots collectives, indie unions, worker centres, migrant networks, freelancer associations, NGOs, and professional organisations that seek to support workers in precarious labour market positions. These actors often rely on combinations of resources that extend beyond traditional trade union power. In this way, the range of workers and organisations and the range of power resources relevant to industrial citizenship today extend beyond what Marshall originally envisioned.

From this perspective, digitalisation matters because it reshuffles the distribution and accessibility of those resources. It can deepen fragmentation and precarity, but also create new associational, discursive, coalition and instrumental resources for workers

and worker-supporting organisation such as the grassroots initiative Las Kellys where digitalisation was pivotal in shaping and the success of the initiative that mobilised hotel staff in Spain (Alcalde-González et al. 2024). As new groups of workers gain access to such power resources, new claims to participation become possible, requiring a broader and more contemporary understanding of industrial citizenship.

To explore this argument, we conduct a state-of-the-art review of literature on emerging forms of voice and representation among non-standard workers through the lenses of digital footprints. We distinguish between two broad types of initiatives: grassroots initiatives which emerge outside established social partner organisations and collective bargaining systems; and institution-led initiatives which develop within or alongside established organisations such as trade unions, professional organisations and NGOs. Across both, we trace digital footprints in four domains: identity formation, power resources and means of action, dialogue practices and industrial rights. In doing so, the report examines how and under what conditions digital technologies reshape participation, and with it, the scope of contemporary industrial citizenship.

The report is structured as follows: in section two, we briefly introduce Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship, including recent debates, and introduce our model of contemporary industrial citizenship. Section three outlines the methods used for our state-of-the-art review. In section four, we review relevant literature on grassroots and institution led initiatives through the lenses of digital footprints. In section five, we discuss the main findings with the aim to demonstrate the usefulness of our analytical model for contemporary industrial citizenship.

2 Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship and recent debates

Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship remains an important starting point for analysing worker voice and representation, since it refers to the status and standing workers acquire within the institutions governing management-employee relations. In Marshall's account, industrial citizenship is defined as the social contract or relationship between employees and employers which outlines *industrial rights*, *responsibilities* and *forms of worker participation* (Marshall, 1965; Fudge, 2005; Gersuny, 1994). *Industrial rights* concern individual's entitlements to minimum employment standards such as certain wage levels, working conditions etc. *Responsibilities* in turn refer to employers' duty to honour these industrial rights while workers are expected to show appropriate attitudes and conducts as employees to ensure production quota (Imai, 2025; Sullivan, 2021; Gersuny, 1994). *Forms of worker participation* are closely linked to individual workers' rights to freedom of association and their collective rights to representation by autonomous organisations. Marshall (1965) explicitly refers to trade unions and collective bargaining as key mechanisms through which workers exercise collective voice, secure recognition and shape the regulation of wage and working conditions. Industrial citizenship, in this sense, is a worker collective embedded in both the employment relationship and the wider industrial relations system, spanning workplace, sectoral and national arenas of representation and contestation. It reflects both a process of power struggles as well as a set of industrial rights and responsibilities arising as outcomes from these power struggles (Barbalet, 1988; Fudge, 2005; Zhang and Lillie, 2015). In this context, industrial citizenship is typically considered a supplementary set of individual and collective rights, commitments and forms of representation that have developed alongside the modern welfare state and its broader forms of citizenship. In the words by Marshall trade union rights and collective bargaining rights are supplementary to "the system of political citizenship" and considered means of actions for "enabling workers to use their civil rights collectively" (Marshall, 1965: 122 quoted in Fudge, 2005: 635).

Although Marshall only sporadically mentions industrial citizenship and it appears less conceptually developed than civic, political and social citizenship in his work, various scholars across multiple disciplines have since discussed, criticised, examined and further developed Marshall's notion of industrial citizenship across different welfare settlements, industrial relations regimes and workplaces (Streeck, 1992: Fudge, 2005: Bagguley, 2013; Giddens, 1994). Recent studies explore industrial citizenship in the context of welfare retrenchment, weakening of industrial relations institutions, declining trade union densities, technological advancements, rising work fragmentation and increased European integration (see for example Duke et al., 2020; Fudge, 2005; Tomasello, 2022; Zhang and Lillie, 2015; Trampusch, 2007). Their analytical lens and focus tend to differ; and as a result, the debates can broadly speaking be organised around two broad themes: 1) *the mechanisms shaping industrial citizenship* and 2) *industrial citizenship – dualism and alternative forms of worker representation beyond trade unions*. While Marshall provides a framing to understand the constitutive elements

of industrial citizenship, the question of how different forms of industrial citizenship emerge, expand or contract across contexts requires a more explicit account of mechanisms.

2.1 Mechanisms shaping industrial citizenship

Early studies such as Arthurs (1967) embraced the evolutionary assumption embedded within Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship. Later works contest this underpinning logic by arguing and illustrating that it is rather a dynamic process, which evolves with shifting government policies, globalisation, digitalisation, changing labour markets, employment practices and broader economic transformations (Bagguley, 2013; Streeck, 1992; Dukes and Streeck, 2020; Coutu and Murray, 2005; Yildrim and Smyrl, 2021; Condratto and Gibbs, 2018). Much of this literature examines the mechanisms shaping industrial citizenship. For example, Streeck (1992) and Dukes and Streeck (2020) argue that neoliberalism, individualisation and increased work fragmentation erode collective rights and weaken trade union influence. Historical analysis in the UK and the US likewise illustrate that governments can weaken or retract industrial citizenship rights (Bagguley, 2013; Gersung, 1990; Johnston, 2000b). Bagguley (2013) further highlights the intertwined nature of individual and collective rights with trade unions holding distinctive collective rights (i.e. obligations, immunities and legitimacy) as collective bargaining representatives vis a vis other forms of autonomous organisations.

Other studies argue that welfare retrenchment creates new openings for industrial citizenship and trade unions since collectively bargained benefits can supplement or replace welfare provisions, especially in countries where collective institutions and unions continue to play an instrumental role in regulating wage and working conditions (Trampusch, 2007; Strøby Jensen, 2023; Larsen, 2011; Evers and Guillemard, 2012; Fudge, 2005). Technological advancements are argued to remould industrial citizenship: early automation contributed to its very formation while recent digitalisation of work processes, especially platform work, appear to erode and reshape it, prompting calls for new digital rights and new forms of mobilisation (Tomassello, 2022: Nachtwey and Seeliger, 2024: 104). These shifts have led scholars to argue that industrial citizenship is transforming towards market, corporate citizenship, citizenship at work or cosmopolitan or European industrial citizenship beyond the conventional workplace and employment with digitalisation playing an increasingly central role (see for instances, Condratto and Gibbs, 2018; Imay, 2025; Dukes and Streeck, 2020, Strangleman, 2015; Fudge, 2005; Zhang and Lillie, 2015; Mundlak, 2008). Much of the literature, therefore, already points, implicitly, to the role of power struggles and power resources in shaping industrial citizenship. However, these mechanisms are often discussed at a general level, for example, through reference to institutional change, retrenchment, or weakening unions. What is less often specific is how different actors such as non-standard workers gain, lose or enact the resources that make participation possible. This is where power resource theory offers a useful extension, which is further underpinned by social citizenship literature. Welfare scholars such as Korpi (1974) and Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) combine power resource theory with Marshall's notion of social citizenship to explain the development of modern welfare settlements and social rights. More recent work, such as Ferrera et al. (2023) links the idea of individual power resources to social

citizenship, arguing that they complement collective power resources such as associational powers (trade unions) and institutional powers (collective bargaining), which are implicitly embedded in Marshall's original formulation. Individual power resources understood here as individual's capacities to navigate, access and utilise social and industrial rights are particularly relevant for non-standard workers as they are often excluded from conventional trade unions and typically work under legally ambiguous conditions and in isolated workplaces. Collective power resources are therefore often beyond their reach, whereby individual power resources become essential for enabling non-standard workers to enact their acquired industrial rights and forms of worker participation (Keune et al., 2023; Mendoca and Kouiannau, 2025). Insights from these strands of literature and power resource theory may therefore help to conceptualise the mechanisms making participation and industrial rights accessible to non-standard workers.

2.2 Industrial citizenship – dualism and alternative worker representation beyond trade unions

A broad range of scholars has criticised the concept of industrial citizenship for being gender blind and exclusionary as it is built around the conventional physical unionised workplace and the male breadwinner standard employment relationship (Fudge, 2005; Lister, 1994; Zeitlin and Whitehouse, 2003). As a result, the concept has historically marginalised workers outside full-time standard employment, prompting calls to rethink industrial citizenship to better capture recent transformations across European labour markets (Fudge, 2005: Albin and Mantouvalou, 2016; Zeilin and Whitehouse, 2023: Zhang and Lillie, 2015). Industrial citizenship resembles a worker collective, where the individual's status as a citizen is shaped by the "structures of inclusion and exclusion within a demarcated community" (Zhang and Lillie, 2015: 95; Imai, 2025). It is typically organised around union membership and employee status, thus excluding a growing share of the workforce (Albin and Mantouvalou, 2016; Zhang and Lillie, 2015). In some instances, the legal employment status (self-employed) or occupational status (domestic and agricultural workers) explicitly prevents union membership, which further constrain access to collective rights as seen in the US (CLJE, 2024). These exclusions are well-documented within the literature and often shown to limit workers' ability to access and exercise bargained industrial rights, sparking debates of institutionally embedded dualism characterising industrial citizenship (Palier and Thelen, 2010; Keune and Pedacci, 2020; Fudge, 2005).

What we also see as part of these strands of literature is the myriads of novel forms of worker representation beyond trade unions taking the shape of grassroots initiatives and institution led non-unionised initiatives. Trade unions have historically been widely recognised as the cornerstone of worker voice and representation, but the long history of alternative non-union models such as yellow unions, professional bodies, works councils, health and safety committees, worker centres and employer-supported voice channels also illuminates that representation has never been confined to unions alone (Tavora et al., 2025; Donaghey et al., 2011; 2022; Guarin et al., 2025; Larsen et al., 2026). Although these studies rarely use the analytical lens of industrial citizenship, they illuminate where and why these alternative forms of worker voice and representation emerge and evolve. Such arrangements are often shown to flourish in contexts of

union avoidance and conflictual employment relations, where employers or governments seek to limit or bypass union influence (Donaghey et al., 2021; 2022; Guarin et al., 2025; Heery, 2009; Tapia et al. 2015). Others stress that they emerge where trade unions fail to adequately represent marginalised groups (Larsen et al., 2026; Signoretti et al., 2025; Pero and Downey, 2024). For example, Albin and Mantouvalou (2016) show that NGOs, community-based organisations and self-help groups play a more prominent role than trade unions in protecting domestics workers' employment rights in Israel and the UK, prompting calls to broaden industrial citizenship to encompass these actors and forms of representation (Albin and Mantouvalou, 2016).

Studies by Sullivan (2021) and Johnston (2000b) highlight the role of worker centres and community-based mobilisation efforts in integrating the voice and representation of migrants and undocumented workers in the US. These organisations become especially important, where statutory constraints limit trade unions' ability to engage in political actions, protests and boycotts, prompting calls for recognising their activities as forms of industrial citizenship (Sullivan, 2021: 833, 880; Johnston, 2000b). Together, this literature illustrates the emergence of alternative and non-union forms of worker representation that complement rather than directly compete with trade unions yet remains largely excluded from traditional understandings of industrial citizenship despite representing typically marginalised groups being they migrants, women, young people and non-standard workers.

2.3 Rethinking the concept of industrial citizenship – towards an analytical framework

Our brief review of the recent scholarly debates around Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship points to an erosion of the conventional understanding of industrial citizenship due to shrinking union densities, weakened collective bargaining institutions and increased work fragmentation fuelled by technological advancements and digitalisation. At the same time, scholarly work highlights the emergence of new and alternative forms of worker representation, especially among groups struggling to be considered full-fledged industrial citizens based on union membership, collective bargaining coverage and standard full-time employment within the conventional physical workplace. These developments indicate that rather than eroding, industrial citizenship is being remoulded and takes new forms than initially envisaged by Marshall and other scholars. It illustrates that it is a dynamic concept that gradually evolves and adjusts to the changing labour market and welfare transformations, which are not necessarily captured by the original understanding of industrial citizenship.

Recent transformations in industrial citizenship cannot be explained through Marshall's original concept, alone. Rethinking this framework allows us to incorporate alternative forms of worker voice and representation that operate within and beyond trade unions, collective bargaining and physical workspaces. To develop such an analytical framework, we draw on the literature on voice and representation among precarious and non-standard workers with a particular focus on how access to digital tools and resources has opened access to a wider variety of power resources, shaped their notion of identity, dialogue processes and industrial rights, thereby allowing for claims of industrial citizenship's rights and responsibilities to be available to a broader group of workers

and organisations than Marshall originally theorised. This will allow us to better apprehend the factors that may trigger workers that rarely act collectively to mobilise and join forces as well as identify the type of resources both trade unions and non-union organisations utilise when seeking to mobilise workers, raise wage and working conditions and prevent worker exploitation beyond and within the conventional labour market. To capture these developments Marshall's concept needs to be combined with a more explicit account of the notion of identity formation, means of actions, dialogue processes and industrial rights as each of these elements are often considered key building blocks for voice and representation in ample literature. In this paper, industrial citizenship provides the object of analysis – the changing forms through which workers gain participation, voice and representation, while power resource theory, literature on identity formation and workers collective, dialogue processes and industrial rights help explain how these forms emerge and vary across industrial relations and welfare settings. Each of these elements are considered pivotal important elements or building blocks for shaping industrial citizenship.

2.3.1 Identity formation

To capture the variety of workers collectives beyond trade unions, which is especially important in the context of non-standard work as they rarely are union members and often work under ambiguous work arrangements, we adopt a broad definition of worker voice that transcends the conventional physical workplace and conventional unionised and non-unionised representation structures and regulatory settings (Dasgupta et al., 2025). Voice is here defined as "encompassing expressions and/or actions undertaken by workers to influence key stakeholders in order to advance their interests and defend their rights within a working relationship" (Dasgupta et al., 2025: 652). By representation, we do not refer to a purely formal or mechanical process of acting on behalf of workers organised around trade unionism, but a dynamic and political process of claim-making in which interests are formulated, mediated across different constituencies and translated into collective priorities – often extending beyond established membership boundaries (Meardi et al., 2021; Keune, 2026).

Within this broad understanding of worker voice and representation, we focus on two types of worker collectives or initiatives: grassroots-led and institution-led initiatives both of which may involve elements of digital organising in their efforts to mobilise non-standard workers. Grassroot initiatives are here defined as self-organising worker groups that emerge at least initially outside the established systems of representation that seek to collectivise grievances to improve the working conditions of non-standard workers. Institution-led initiatives refer to collective actions emerging within established organisations such as trade unions and non-union organisations that aim to support non-standard workers. Across both grassroots or institution-led initiatives, these worker collectives tend to emphasise multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities and adopt an intersectional lens that connects work issues with broader community or societal concerns, thereby opening spaces for broader (often local) advocacy coalitions in shaping their collective identities (Alberti et al., 2013). In this context, digital means have reshaped how workers and institutions build collective voice by facilitating access to and engagement of non-standard workers. By overcoming the constraints of the physical

workplace and isolation experienced by many non-standard workers digital means broaden the targets of collective voice beyond the traditional employer-employee domain envisaged by Marshall (1965) to include the online spaces, policymakers, public etc.

2.3.2 Mechanisms/means of action

In our model, we integrate power resource theory into Marshall's conception of industrial citizenship and treat power resources as a building block of voice, within and beyond collective bargaining and trade unions. Power resource theory has become a key approach for industrial relations scholars especially regaining momentum in recent years (see for instance Arnholtz & Refslund, 2024; Refslund & Arnholtz, 2022). It argues that societal development is, to an important extent, driven by power struggles and distribution of power resources between key economic actors, most importantly workers, trade unions, and employers. Power refers to the capacity of actors to shape or resist change. The literature identifies multiple types of power resource, but there is no agreement on classification, which results in overlapping and complementary typologies of collective and individual power resources (Lévesque and Murray, 2010; Ferrera et al., 2023; Arnholtz and Refslund, 2024; Schmaltz et al., 2018). In this report we distinguish between five types of collective power resources as defined by Arnholtz and Refslund (2024):

- *Structural power:* Power that arises from workers' position in the economy and labour process: e.g. their ability to disrupt production (workplace power) or the condition of labour supply/demand (marketplace power).
- *Institutional power:* Power that comes from formal rules, laws, regulations or institutional arrangements that actors can use to influence labour market and welfare.
- *Associational power:* Power stemming from collective organisation: the capacity of workers to form associations, recruit members and mobilise members.
- *Ideational power:* Power based on ideas, norms, frames or discourses: the ability to shape beliefs, values, and legitimize certain interests or social arrangements, thereby influencing what is seen as acceptable or desirable.
- *Coalitional power:* Power derived from building alliances or coalitions with other actors: aligning interests, coordinating action across groups, and expanding the scale and scope of influence through cooperation.

We consider, in line with Ferrera et al. (2023) that the aforementioned power resources are mainly available to collective actors and thus typically beyond the reach of non-standard workers as they are non-union members and often work under ambiguous employment arrangements and in isolated workplaces. Individual power resources become therefore essential for enabling non-standard workers to enact their acquired industrial rights and forms of worker participation (Keune et al., 2023; Mendoca and Kouiannau, 2025), which is why we complement these collective power resources with individual power resources understood here as individual's capacities to navigate, access and utilise their industrial rights. We differentiate in line with Ferrera et al. (2023) between three types of individual power resources (instrumental, normative and enforcement) of which we focus in this report on instrumental resources (i.e. initiatives that facilitate, support and ensure awareness and access to entitlements). Both normative and

enforcement power resources are engrained and accessible to individual workers despite being, by nature, collective resources.

This will allow us to consider the individual approach to power resources which is typically overlooked within most power resource frameworks, but particularly relevant for non-standard workers' ability to mobilise, enact their industrial rights and exploit worker participation where digital technologies are assumed to remould not only collective but also individual power resources. Research shows that digital means are not only used as structural resources by employers to fragment and depoliticise the workforce, but the very same technologies also enable grassroots, unions and non-union organisations to swiftly mobilise workers across multiple sites (associational power resources), build online communities and coalitions with multiple stakeholders (coalitional power) (Alcalde-González et al., 2024; Hau et al., 2025). Studies also reveal that digital technologies are important means to create awareness of industrial rights and injustices via social media campaigns (discursive powers, instrumental powers) and these may pressurise employers to collectively bargain and enforce industrial rights especially if combined with litigation (institutional powers) (Bertolini and Dukes, 2021).

2.3.3 Dialogue Process

In Marshall's original conception, dialogue was largely equated with collective bargaining that is embedded within stable employment relations. While later critiques of industrial citizenship have problematised its exclusions and institutional bias (Zhang and Lillie, 2015; Fudge, 2005), there has been relatively little attention paid to the transformation of dialogue as a process. In our model, an expansive dialogue process is treated as a building block of voice which has expanded beyond collective bargaining and operates across multiple spaces, levels and domains.

Building on Dasgupta et al.'s (2025) typology of grassroots voice mechanisms within the platform economy, we conceive of dialogue as a multi-directional and multi-actor process including voice for mutual aid wherein workers, often with assistance from digital communication tools, provide peer-to-peer support. It also includes voice for visibility as workers and allies mobilise public spaces on- and offline to build support and press for recognition of claims. Voice also incorporates confrontation within the judicial system and organising with alternative worker-led organisations. In this way, we expand voice beyond collective bargaining mediated through trade unions and traditional social partners to include the wider spectrum of voice mechanisms frequently utilised by non-trade union institutions and grassroots movements. Key actors include policymakers, regulators, consumers and civil society organisations. Digitalisation facilitates these by lowering coordination costs and extending the reach and connections of workers and allies.

2.3.4 Industrial Rights

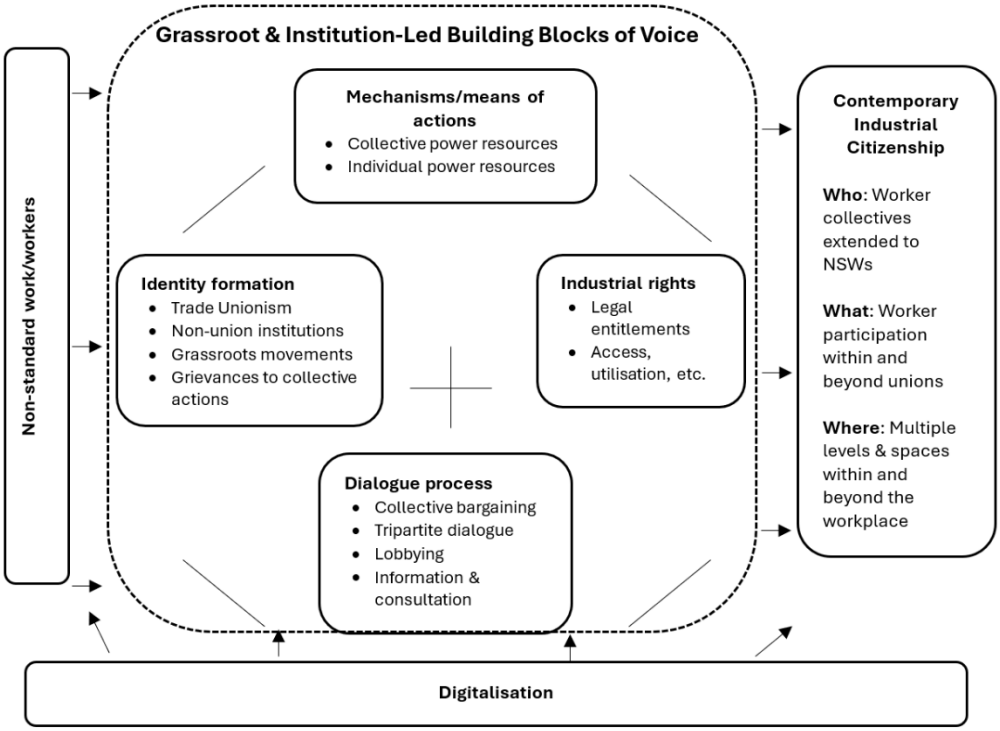
Marshall's conception relies on a strong assumption that voice and participation are underpinned by de jure industrial rights, secured through legislation and collective agreements. These rights define the formal content of industrial citizenship and create reciprocal commitments between employers and employees (Fudge, 2005). However, as a growing body of literature demonstrates, the existence of rights on paper does not

guarantee their realisation in practice, particularly for non-standard workers who often face fragmented employment relations, ambiguous legal status and weak enforcement. In our model, industrial rights are therefore understood not only as formal legal entitlements but also as de facto rights, rights as they are accessed and utilised in everyday working lives. In this way, we foreground the conditions under which workers can translate formal rules into meaningful and genuine protections and voice.

Revisiting Marshall's commitment pillar through this lens highlights the growing asymmetry for NSW. While workers are assumed to comply with commitments tied to performance there is often slittle corresponding obligation on employers or platforms to facilitate access to collective agreements or formal voice mechanisms. For many NSWs, this weakens the enforceability of rights. Industrial rights then become conditional not only on legal recognition but the availability of supportive mechanisms, intermediaries and power resources that enable workers to claim them. By incorporating de facto rights into our framework, industrial citizenship is an outcome of formal rulemaking and the capacity of workers to engage and mobilise to secure compliance and access to acquired rights.

In sum, the four building blocks (identity formation, means of action, dialogue processes and industrial rights) of voice and representation are closely intertwined and can be combined in multiple ways but are increasingly impacted by digitalisation. Jointly, they enable a contemporary form of industrial citizenship which expands the subject, substance and domains to include non-standard workers across multiple levels and spaces. These outcomes may then feedback into the building blocks resulting in new claims being raised. For simplicity this feedback loop is not represented in the figure. Figure 1 presents our model of contemporary industrial citizenship, illustrating how digitalisation has reshaped the building blocks of voice and enabled the integration of non-standard workers.

Figure 1: Building blocks of contemporary industrial citizenship



Taken together, we use this analytical framework to help clarify when and why workers come together, whether their efforts succeed and how viable these emerging models of representation, voice and social dialogue may be across workplace, sectoral, national and EU levels. It also supports analysis of who these initiatives address including governments, employers, platforms and clients, and what motivates these actors to engage in dialogue. In doing so, it highlights how alternative forms of representation, made possible in some instances through reshuffled access to power resources, is creating new forms of industrial citizenship for nonstandard workers.

3 State of the art review– used methods and literature

3.1 State-of-the-art review: methods and literature selection

The report draws on a state-of-the-art review of recent scholarship examining worker voice, representation and dialogue among non-standard workers, with particular attention to novel or innovative forms of collective action. The review builds on work undertaken within the *Integrate Dialogue* project, which explored emerging forms of voice and representation among non-standard workers. It follows a structured search and screening process informed by PRISMA principles to support transparency with explicit criteria for inclusion and exclusion. In line with the aims of a state-of-the-art review, the objective was not exhaustive coverage of all relevant scholarship but rather the identification and synthesis of the most relevant empirical studies addressing emerging forms of collective organising and representation among NSWs. The approach, then, combines systematic search procedures with interpretive synthesis to identify patterns and emerging themes across a heterogenous body of industrial relations scholarship.

3.1.1 Search strategy

The literature search was conducted in July and August of 2025 across several major interdisciplinary academic databases, including Web of Science and Scopus. These databases were selected because of their strong coverage in industrial relations, sociology of work, labour and management scholarship. Searches were limited to publications in English from 2010 onwards to capture contemporary debates. The time frame reflects the rapid expansion of non-standard employment and digitally mediated labour markets across the past 15 years.

The search strategy combined keywords across three conceptual clusters reflecting the core themes of the review. The first cluster captured literature related to dialogue and worker voice, including terms such as: worker representation, collective bargaining, employee voice, etc. The second cluster of keywords target non-standard forms of work incorporating terms such as: non-standard work, atypical employment, precarious work, platform work, freelance, etc. The third cluster addressed innovation and organising strategies using terms such as: innovation, organising, grassroots, novel, alternative, means of action. These clusters were combined using Boolean operators to identify studies that simultaneously addressed worker representation, non-standard work and innovative or emerging forms of voice and representation. Across the databases, the combined search strategy generated an initial pool of 974 results prior to the removal of duplicates.

While digitalisation is central to the analytic focus of the paper, it was not applied as a strict filtering criterion within the initial search strategy. This reflects the fact that many studies analysing digitally mediated forms of organising, work and voice among non-standard workers do not explicitly frame their analysis in terms of digitalisation. Instead, the digital dimensions or footprints, often appear through empirical cases of platform

work, digitally enabled organising, or online communication infrastructure. The search strategy was designed to capture a broader body of scholarship on innovative organising and representation practices, within which digitalisation often plays and enabling or sharping role.

3.1.2 Screening and selection

The initial search results were exported to EndNote reference management software and screened through a two-stage process. First, duplicate records were removed. Second, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the research focus. Studies were excluded if they primarily addressed legal classification of employment, regulatory debates without reference to voice and representation, or purely conceptual discussions lacking empirical analysis. Screening was also undertaken to only include studies from Europe and North America. This resulted in a pool of 83 sources. These studies form the evidentiary basis for the state-of-the-art review presented in this article. These sources were divided across the research team for systematic information extraction into an excel workbook to enable meaningful analysis across the domains addressed below. In addition to the sources identified through this systematic process, snowballing and drawing on existing knowledge of the authors also supplemented the sources under review.

The final sample is also geographically bounded rather than globally exhaustive since the review was limited to English-language publications, and at the screening stage, to studies from Europe, North America. Therefore, the resulting evidence base is concentrated in those regions. The review should therefore be understood as a mapping of the most relevant strands of scholarship for this project rather than as a comprehensive account of worker voice and representation among NSWs across the globe.

3.1.3 Analytical strategy

To synthesise this diverse body of scholarship, we adopt an analytical strategy that connects the literature review directly to the paper's broader theoretical objective of reconsidering Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship and power resource theory in the light of increased digitalisation, non-standard employment and alternative forms of worker presentation beyond trade unions. The framework therefore organises literature around two broad types of initiatives through which voice and representation emerge among NSWs: grassroots led-initiatives and institution-led initiatives.

Across these broad categories, the literature is analysed across the building blocks of industrial citizenship. First is the process of identity formation, examining how workers in fragmented or individualised forms of employment as well as marginalised groups construct collective identities as workers or non-work-based identity (e.g. migrant or gender-based organising) capable of supporting sustained mobilisation. Second, the means of action through which workers articulate voice and the power resources which may be digitally shaped and enabled. Here, the analysis draws on power resource theory, examining how these resources are mobilised or reconfigured in digitally mediated contexts. Third is the process of dialogue which includes the not only collective bargaining but judicial and expansive approaches. Finally, the review assesses the industrial rights, both de jure and de facto, which are the outcomes of voice activities.

3.2 Characteristics of the literature reviewed

The selected literature is methodologically diverse but uneven in composition. A significant share of studies relies on qualitative case studies, ethnographic work and interview-based analysis of worker voice and representation, with fewer cross-national comparisons and most of those limited to two or three countries (Holgate, 2015; Keune and Pedacci, 2020; Larsen et al., 2022). That gives the field substantial depth on the emergence and internal dynamics of particular campaigns and organisations but less breadth when it comes to comparing trajectories across groups of NSWs, sectors, countries and governance structures.

The literature is also substantively skewed. Platform work, especially food delivery and ride-hailing, occupies a disproportionate share of the scholarships on innovative forms of organising and representation especially around grass-root led initiatives (Dasgupta et al., 2025; Vandaele and Rainone, 2025). Comparative studies frequently centre on large digital labour platforms or logistics firms, while other forms of non-standard work including freelance, solo self-employed, temporary agency work, posted work and other forms of precarious work, receive less systematic attention. Much of the literature further approaches alternative voice and representation from a worker or trade union perspective, whereas employers, governments and non-governmental institutions are less frequently the focus of study. Similarly, most studies are situated at the company or sector level, while EU-level and genuinely multi-level analysis remain more limited. In addition, although the patterns of digitalisation seem prominent in shaping worker mobilisation across both conventional trade unions and grassroots movements, digital technologies and how they reshape worker participation, collective bargaining and power resources are rarely the main focus of such studies. Instead, the literature offers glimpses of how digitalisation is used for organising and worker mobilisation to push for improved wages and working conditions, most visible in scholarship where labour relations are already highly contested above all platform labour.

Together the review allow us to move beyond descriptive accounts of individual cases and instead identify broader patterns of how worker voice and representation are being reconfigured in contexts characterised by market fragmentation and digital transformation – all of which opens the possibility of a reimagining of Marshall's industrial citizenship.

4 Non-standard work-centred initiatives utilisation of digital tools: grassroot and institution-led perspectives

In this section we discuss what the literature tells us about the use and effects of digital means in the representation and organization of NSWs. We do this from the two perspectives earlier identified: grassroots initiatives and institution-led initiatives.

Grassroots initiatives refer here to bottom-up forms of collective action and representation that emerge outside of established social partner organisations or formal collective bargaining systems. These include self-organised platform worker collectives, indie unions, freelancer association and migrant worker networks. Such initiatives have become critical actors in sectors which are characterised by fragmented employment relations, algorithmic management and solo self-employment (Murgia et al., 2020; Joyce et al., 2023). While platform mediated work has provided a visible laboratory for many of these developments, similar dynamics are increasingly seen in other sectors and labour markets, including freelance creative industries (Nelson and O'Brien, 2025), solo self-employment in publishing (Bottalico and Murgia, 2024) and academic precarity (Gallas and Shah, 2024). The analytical challenge, therefore, is not to treat grassroots digital enabled or influenced mobilisation as sector-specific but rather as indicative of broader transformations in the spatiality, temporarily and visibility of worker voice. As Johnston (2020a) suggests, the expansion of platform work has been accompanied by a parallel growth of workers organising, making platform labour a particularly visible laboratory for observing these new forms of collective action. At the same time, these mobilisations often combine industrial-relations claims with social movement repertoires (Cini, 2023) which is why they are best understood not as an anomaly but as part of a broader reconfiguration of worker voice.

Apart from grassroots initiatives to represent and organize non-standard workers, there are also institution-led initiatives by established organisations. These are often trade unions. Even though non-standard workers are rarely union members, with the growth of non-standard work, many trade unions have been searching for ways to represent and/or organize non-standard workers, aiming to be inclusive towards this group of workers and to improve their employment conditions (Keune & Pedaci, 2020; Dorigatti, 2017). They do so for two main reasons: their identity and their interests (Keune 2026). Concerning identity, starting from Hyman's three ideal-types of trade union identities (Hyman 2001), unions that are mainly market actors will have little inclination to represent non-standard worker. However, unions that are mainly class actors or societal actors will do so. The former will see them as part of the broader worker universe that struggles against capitalism, while for the latter unions represent all workers and citizens, in particular the weaker unions, in their pursuit of social justice and improved welfare (Keune 2026).

The success of unions in representing and organising non-standard workers has been dependent on the economic and institutional conditions as well as the power resources they could draw on and the means of action they had at their disposal (Keizer et al., 2024; Keune, 2026; Trif et al., 2023; Doellgast et al., 2018; Dorigatti & Mori, 2025). Institution-led initiatives can also be headed by non-union organisations. These can be organizations representing the self-employed, representing certain professions, or representing certain social groups (e.g. migrants, youth, women). In the literature these organisations are only scarcely discussed and with a few exceptions limited to single cases. They can emerge in different ways. In a top-down approach, they can be purposefully established by public authorities, trade unions, employers' organisations, NGOs, etc. with the goal of representing certain groups of non-standard workers. Bottom-up they can be the institutionalized outcome of a grassroots type of initiative.

A growing body of research examines grassroots and institutional led initiatives that seek to strengthen voice and representation among NSWs outside and within conventional trade unions and the established industrial relations structures (Tavora et al., 2025; Joyce et al., 2023). This literature shows among others how new collective organisations, social movements and forms of grassroots unionism have emerged to fill the gaps left by traditional unions struggling to reach these workers across conventional and online labour markets (e.g., Dasgupta et al., 2025; Masta and Kaushiva, 2024). Across these studies digitally mediated tools are identified as shaping the emergence, development, effectiveness and sustainability of both grassroots led initiatives as well as the social dialogue practices and power resources they deploy to strengthen NSWs' voice, representation and working conditions. Parallel to this, an expanding set of studies focuses specifically on how digital technologies are being incorporated into institution-led initiatives, particularly by trade unions. Here we review these studies focusing on both trade unions and grassroots led initiatives, aiming to answer a series of questions like have digital means eased trade unions and grassroot movements appeal to and communicate with NSWs, to provide them with information, or to listen to their opinions and wishes? Have they made it easier to mobilize or organize them, and for especially trade unions to be more inclusive and democratic with respect to NSWs? In what way have power resources and means of action been affected by the increasing availability of digital means like social media, messaging apps, etc.? Have they strengthened trade unions and grassroot movements' capacity to bargain or dialogue on behalf of non-standard workers and to serve their interests? Or to influence public opinion in favour of better contracts, remuneration and/or working conditions? And do unions and grassroots movements have the capacity and the will to invest in a strong digital presence and to use digital means for innovation of their activities in general and in particular those related to NSWs?

In the sections below, we analyse the grassroots and institution-led initiatives based on our literature review along the four building blocks identified as central to developing our analytical framework for modernising Marshall's concept of industrial citizenship: identity formation, means of action, dialogue processes, and outcomes/industrial rights. Across each of these building blocks, digitalisation leaves distinct footprints that shape how non-standard workers mobilise, articulate voice and pursue recognition.

4.1 Identity formation through digital infrastructures

4.1.1 Grassroots initiatives

Collective identity formation and leadership in transforming worker discontent or grievances into collective actions are often highlighted as critical for any form of worker mobilisation (López-Andreu, 2020; Petrini and Wettergren 2023; Cini, 2023; Simms and Dean, 2015; Kelly, 1998; Ibsen and Tapia, 2017). However, a defining trait of contemporary NSWs is fragmentation: spatial, contractual and social fragmentation, making it difficult to develop collective identify among such workers. NSWs further tend to lack a shared physical workspace, work under diverse contractual statuses and are often without the traditional models of workplace-based unions and face therefore additional structural obstacles to meet and fuel mobilisation (Johnston, 2020a; López-Andreu, 2020). Digital infrastructure go partially towards reconfiguring or reassembling this fragmentation by enabling what is referred to as network collectivism. For example, a study of Danish bike couriers demonstrates how Facebook groups facilitated the emergence of "social media unionism" which enabled migrant couriers to remain autonomous while receiving strategic support from established unions (Hau and Savage, 2023). Yet these digital collectives are fragile and contested as the same online networks that facilitate low-cost and rapid mobilisation can also be crowded out by competing narratives, misinformation (Hau and Savage, 2023). Likewise, migrant networks operating through digital platforms in Denmark created a social infrastructure which shifts between coping and resistance among members (Hau and Borello, 2024). However, Hau and Borello (2024) caution that "migrant networks are not labour organisations" (1074) and we should not overstate the power of a digital connection as alone it does not necessarily result in mobilisation. Cini's (2023) study of platform workers' organising demonstrates that a supportive community, virtual or local, and the presence of grassroots organisations and activities are "pivotal to the rise of these workers' collective action" (138).

Dasgupta et al.,'s (2025) 'grassroots voice mechanisms' is particularly insightful as it describes that in the absence of formal channels, workers engage in bottom-up voice channels which are oriented to mutual aid, visibility and organising. These channels extend beyond the employer to address and include multiple stakeholders, including platform customers, regulators, the media and policy makers. In doing so, they expand the spatial boundaries of worker voice beyond the conventional firm-level employment relationship. This dynamic echo earlier findings from research on organising among precarious migrant workers where 'communities of struggle' emerged outside of established unions (Peró, 2020). What appears novel in contemporary cases is the speed and scalability through which dispersed workers can form collective identities – both work-based and intersectional-identity based – through digital communication tools. However, mobilisation is not automatic via digital means and comparative evidence further demonstrates cases, where fragmentation persists despite the deployment of digital tools. Ride-hailing drivers in Berlin and Tallin have not overcome isolation embedded within the business models (Animento et al., 2025). Attempts to organise migrant cleaners in Berlin also struggled to scale up beyond informal information exchange (Niebler and Animento, 2023). These cases caution against technological determinism as digital

infrastructure provides necessary but not sufficient or guaranteed conditions for collective organising, actions and sustained mobilisation. Indeed, scholars often point to the importance of both collective leadership for channelling grievances and what is often considered "spontaneous solidarity" for collective action to emerge (Atzeni, 2009; López-Andreu, 2020).

While most of the aforementioned studies concentrate on platform work, a recent study by Redacta, Bottalico and Murgia (2024) provides an example of mobilisation efforts among the solo self-employed in Italy's publishing sector which broadens the argument beyond platform labour. Their case study suggests that digital identity formation is not only about connecting dispersed workers through online networks but also building socio-emotional sense of shared condition and collective purpose, echoing other recent studies on identity formation (Atzeni, 2009; Simms and Dean, 2015: López-Andreu, 2020; Cini, 2023). Rather than producing one-off moments of online action, digital tools can underpin what they describe as "deep organising" focused on the "whole worker" with unique interests and identities. Read alongside the platform-based cases above, this reinforces the point that digital infrastructures can support sustained collective identity formation among NSWs, but only through active organising work rather than relying on technology alone.

4.1.2 Institution-led initiatives

The fragmentation of NSWs and the difficulties to communicate with and be inclusive towards this group of workers is also a major challenge for trade unions and other institutional actors (Vandaele, 2018). NSWs are dispersed in the labour market and are seldomly members of trade unions or other representative organisations. Digital means may make it easier to reach out to these groups because they are cost effective and can instantly reach large groups of people (Earl and Kimport, 2011). Inevitably, all trade unions these days have a digital presence, using webpages, social media and digital communication means like WhatsApp to engage with workers and other actors (Carneiro & Costa, 2022; Hodder & Houghton, 2019). Such means are more cost effective and offer more potential for reaching large and new groups of constituents. Also, there have been a number of authors highlighting that digital technologies can play an important part in union renewal and the inclusion of non-standard or weaker groups of workers (Kerr and Waddington, 2014; Whittal et al., 2009). Digital means also appear to be crucial to reach younger generations of workers, often NSWs, which rely strongly on technology as a means of communication and a source of knowledge and information (Trennery et al., 2022).

Unions seem, however, to have been slower than grassroots movements in adopting such means, even though there are signs of unions catching up (Hau and Hansen, 2025). More importantly, in spite of some isolated success stories, unions seem to underutilize digital means and to employ them in relatively unproductive ways leading to only limited achievements in terms of engaging with groups like NSWs (Llanes, 2024). Their communication on platforms like Facebook or Twitter (X) is largely of a top-down character, using them for vertical communication of information in a bulletin board style, rather than for horizontal, interactive and inclusive communication aiming to engage new constituencies (Carneiro & Costa, 2022; Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Hodder &

Houghton, 2019). Engagement with union posts on social media is also often very low (e.g. Hodder & Houghton, 2021). Llanes (2024) presents a few counter cases where engagement with trade unions TikTok accounts is indeed very high. But while he underlines the success of these accounts as being exceptional, at the same time he shows that even these cases fail to be truly interactive:

"...this is where the accounts fall short of utilizing the platform's potential. Of the hundreds of supportive commenters who expressed interest and curiosity, most were not followed up with. Likewise, the dozens of comments spreading misinformation about unions and workers were left untouched by the accounts. The size, positivity, and youth of these TikTok audiences pose a unique opportunity for the accounts. The posts already convey pro-union themes, but the accounts could further educate their viewers by engaging with the comment sections. Educated audiences could potentially transform into supporters, organizers, and union members (Llanes, 2024: 117-118)." This then limits the possibilities for online strategies to foster union renewal, as this will only materialise when unions manage to convert online engagement into offline mobilization (Carneiro & Costa, 2022).

4.2 Digital means of actions and power resources

4.2.1 Grassroots initiatives

The literature identifies a wide range of actions and power resources deployed by grassroots movements, which may differ but also complement conventional means of industrial actions such as strikes, picketing, campaigns and demonstrations (Dasgupta et al., 2025; Joyce et al., 2023; Alcalde-González et al., 2024; Holgate, 2015; Las Heras and Ribera-Almandoz, 2017). Grassroots movements often employ more radical strategies than trade unions and professional organisations, which typically prioritise dialogue and rely on established mechanisms such as workplace bodies, tripartite consultations and collective bargaining. Indeed, the literature on grassroots movements suggests that actions by grassroots movements often extend beyond the workplace into public spaces through mass demonstrations, social media campaigns, using both traditional outlets and newer platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. to influence public debate (Cini, 2023; Joyce et al., 2023; Holgate, 2015). Studies further imply that these groups rely heavy on digital tools, social media platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Slack etc.) and online networks to communicate, organise and mobilise workers across both online and offline labour markets.

Lacking access to traditional structural and institutional power resources, grassroots initiatives often rely heavily on innovative combinations of power resources. Many substantial gains for NSWs depend instead on a regulatory framework capable of enforceability (Johnston, 2020a). Bringing the power resources approach to bear on the literature, we find that associational, discursive and coalitional resources are recombined in digital organising and under digital employment regimes (López et al., 2025; Joyce et al., 2023). In grassroots contexts, associational power is often built through informal online networks before more formalised membership structures emerge. Jesnes (2023) provides an example of this with couriers building associational power through the use of Slack (a messaging platform). Indie unions in the UK demonstrate how precarious

migrant workers amassed associational power through digitally mediated mobilisation and community building (Peró and Downey, 2024; Peró, 2020). Inclusion and membership, in these forms, extend beyond traditional union roles.

In addition to collective power resources, grassroots initiatives also draw on individual power resources, understood as workers' capacity to access, invite and enforce institutional arrangements. In the cases reviewed here, these are primarily institutional power resources as digital tools facilitate individual and collective access to courts, regulatory bodies, complaint mechanisms, enabling NSWs to pursue claims despite weak or non-existent collective bargaining coverage (Johnston, 2020a; Ferrera, Corti and Keune, 2023).

Digital infrastructures also amplify discursive power resources. For example, in the case of UK Indie Unions (Peró and Downey, 2024), communicative unionism was deployed strategically to integrate direct action among members with digital messaging designed to resonate and evoke response from the broader public. Hashtag activism seen in Germany's #IchbinHanna campaign shows how social media can bring precarious working conditions quickly into a national political debate (Gallas and Shah, 2024). In these cases, digital communication is not only publicising claims but contributing to the reshaping the scale and audiences of labour conflict and organising. Coalitional power is often utilised within grassroots initiatives, as groups build alliances across sectors and even borders. Translational alliances among the solo self-employed workers and platform workers (Borghi et al., 2025) and the challenges faced by those seeking to translate global gig economy activism into local contexts (Pei, 2025) provide examples of how digital infrastructure facilitate organising on multiple scales while also requiring sustained effort to ensure its relevance locally.

A somewhat novel development seen in the literature is related to knowledge-based power resources. A case from Scotland introduces the concept of 'worker data science' to describe the process where platform workers collectively analyse algorithmic management systems to expose obscured control mechanisms to which they are subject (Gallagher et al., 2025). This practice updates earlier traditions of worker inquiry by applying them to algorithmically managed workplaces. James (2024) shares examples such as WeClock, Spotlight, Turkopticon and Alia which demonstrate digital tools as instrumental resources reducing information asymmetries which exist under algorithmic management regimes. These digital tools do not only generate knowledge but function as instrumental resources supporting workers to interpret, evidence and challenge opaque forms of algorithmic control. Jesnes (2023) cautions that access to information about the algorithmic systems may not be sufficient without access to training and organisational support to convert the insights into leverage.

4.2.2 Institution-led initiatives

Trade unions have massively adopted digital tools like Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, email, WhatsApp, Zoom or Teams, and in particular since Covid-19 these tools have penetrated all their activities (Eurofound, 2021; Ford & Sinpeng, 2022). The respective use of such tools is widespread across the labour movement, although there is a wide diversity in the kind of tools used and how they are used (ibid.). However, this

does not necessarily mean that unions have become effective users of these technologies and there is an ongoing scholarly debate as to what effective digital activism looks like, in particular where NSWs are concerned (Ford & Sinpeng, 2025).

Using digital tools interacts with trade unions' power resources. While this seems less the case for structural and institutional power resources, it is clearly so where associational, coalitional, discursive and instrumental power resources are concerned.

Unions across the board have turned to digital means to strengthen their associational power resources. Digital means are widely used to communicate with their members and to strengthen the relations with these members, aiming to engage them with the union, also with a view to possible future industrial action (Eurofound, 2021). Digital tools are also widely used as instruments to support organising and recruitment efforts, often aimed at groups of workers that are harder to contact and engage with in person, in particular groups of NSWs like platform workers, self-employed, migrant workers or temporary agency workers (Vandaele & Piasna, 2023; Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Molina, 2021; Panagiotopoulos, 2021; Ford & Sinpeng, 2022). Doubts remain, however, on the effectiveness of these approaches, which seems to depend, among other things, on the question if online efforts are linked to in person contacts, which remain key in organising and activating new constituents.

Where coalitional power resources are concerned, digital communication enables unions to communicate and cooperate intensively with other actors in a rapid and cost-effective way. In this way, digital communication amplifies their coalitional power resources. Firstly, it facilitates cooperation with other unions across borders: digital means make it much simpler to alert each other about problematic developments, share large amounts of information, have virtual meetings, set up joint union campaigns or to engage in transnational industrial action (Trennery et al., 2022; Burgman, 2016; Pulignano, 2009). This may concern union cooperation in neighbouring countries but also cooperation between international unions like the ITUC, the ETUC or the GUFs and local affiliates (Ford & Sinpeng, 2025). This is not specific to activities related to NSWs but indeed includes such activities.

Secondly, the same arguments can be made about the use of digital tools when unions aim to build coalitions with other, non-union, non-standard worker-oriented actors like grassroots worker initiatives (see above section), social movements, migrant organisations, etc. Such cooperation can be crucial to get NSWs on board in union activities and in this way foster union revitalisation, build the necessary collective strength to achieve objectives, and also to increase the social legitimacy of unions (Frege and Kelly, 2003; Ibsen and Tapia, 2017; Ford and Sinpeng, 2025; Keizer et al., 2024).

The effect of digital means on ideational power resources has already been discussed above in section 4.1. Digital communication tools enable unions to, instantly and in a cost-effective way, to address broad audiences with the messages that unions want to send. Indeed, unions' attempts to influence and shape public debates and sentiments related to political and legislative processes, bargaining rounds or industrial actions are eased through communication on YouTube, Facebook and other social media (Uba and Jansson, 2021; Pera et al., 2025). This is especially the case for unions that lack other

means of influencing political processes (Uba and Jansson 2021). The literature dealing with specific NSWs campaigns seems scarce.

Where instrumental power resources are concerned, unions first of all use digital means to inform NSWs, and in particular migrant workers, self-employed and platform workers, of the rights they have (Molina, 2021; Kintominas et al., 2021; Fitzgerald et al., 2012). This concerns on the one hand information about substantive rights like entitlements (working time or holiday entitlements, wages or fees, social security rights, etc.), On the other it concerns information on procedural channels that can be used to get access to rights (application, mediation, judicial routes, etc.). Many unions also offer services in this respect (e.g. advice, to go to court), although often mainly to members (Bertinoli and Dukes, 2001). Also, quite some unions have started court cases to clarify the status and rights of NSWs, recently especially concerning platform workers (Greville & Gauci, 2026; Dias-Abey, 2023).

4.3 Digital footprints across phases of social dialogue

Digital footprints are visible across the multiple phases of social dialogue – pre-phase coordination, negotiation and confrontation, and dissemination and formalisation. Digital communication channels are essential in generating interest, airing and sharing of grievances, and developing a shared identity in advance of formal negotiations. Facebook groups, WhatsApp chats and other online forums like Reddit function as incubators for collective consciousness (Hau and Savage, 2023). Digital communication creates both opportunity and constraint for grassroot engagement with traditional union campaigns (Hennebert et al., 2021 in Hau and Savage, 2023). Tensions between union engagement and grassroot courier groups on Facebook in Denmark exposed the difficulty of institutions engaging through these closed Facebook groups serving migrant couriers. Early phases of social dialogue are not only about mobilisation but also about access, and competition to define a narrative. Cant and Woodcock (2020) provide an example of traditional unions utilising WhatsApp networks within the fast-food sector which supported specific actions but did not necessarily drive-up union memberships or dues. The relationship between digital mobilisation and organisation consolidation is nebulous.

During negotiation and confrontation, digital tools can facilitate rapid mobilisation and coordination (Cant and Woodcock, 2020). These tools also amplify campaigns to the public through media and political channels (Peró and Downey, 2024). Digital infrastructures, then, help grassroots actors project their claims beyond the immediate workplace and into wider arenas of political debate. Borghi and Murgia (2022)'s study of a 'metropolitan union' in Italy demonstrates that the domain of action is not limited to the workplace or even the platform but includes the public, urban, spaces in which precarious work is organised and made visible.

These activities and platforms also enable campaigns to shape narratives within the broader public about the precarity of working conditions faced by NSWs. The 'struggle for alternative social imaginaries' discussed in Italian platform organising highlights how collective actors work to contest dominant narratives (Borghi and Murgia, 2022). In this

case, digital communication contributes not only to organising but also redefining the normative understanding of work, rights and citizenship.

Established unions extensively use digital tools like mailing lists, WhatsApp lists or social media during collective bargaining processes, informing their members (and possibly non-members) of the bargaining process, taking stock of worker priorities, strengthening worker participation, communicating results, and organising voting on bargaining outcomes or industrial action (Schoemann, 2018; Rego and Ramos, 2020). Such digital means are especially important to reach the often more dispersed NSWs.

4.4 Outcomes – industrial rights

While a wealth of literature has examined mobilisation, identity formation and dialogue processes with particular attention to the underpinning means of actions, it pays far less attention to outcomes, particularly the industrial rights gained by non-standard workers, their implementation, enforcement and their implications for management practices and non-standard workers access and take-up of these entitlements at ground level. The literature on grass-roots initiatives is particularly silent on these issues, while institutional-led initiatives, especially bargained rights arising from union-led initiatives have received somewhat more scholarly attention. These studies often explore the outcomes of collective bargaining, union lobbying, tripartite negotiations and legal litigation as well as show that there is no guarantee that especially non-standard workers can claim their acquired industrial rights (Keune and Pedacci, 2020: Larsen and Mailand, 2018; Keizer et al., 2024; Ryan et al., 2019; Lavelle et al. 2024). Legal litigation are also pathways increasingly used by grassroot movements as channels to raise concerns and successfully improve wage and working conditions of non-standard workers such as fixed-term workers, platform workers and part-time workers. This is particularly the case in terms of clarifying non-standard workers industrial rights, but with less research on their de facto access and entitlements (Lewshuk, 2021; Boonstra et al., 2012; Dasgupta et al. 2025; Aloisi, 2021; De al Porte and Emmenegger, 2016; Kullmann, 2024). However, the role of digitalisation in shaping these outcomes remains largely overlooked within the literature.

4.4.1 Grassroots initiatives

Different studies show that different grassroots initiatives such as campaigns, demonstrations and legal litigation through civil courts where digital means to varying degrees played a role in mobilising and organising these events have led to improved industrial rights for groups of non-standard workers. For example, the living wage campaign in the UK, started by the grassroots movement TELCO (later Citizen UK) under the slogan "Justice for Cleaners" relied especially in the later stages on digital means to scale up mobilisation and amplify worker voice. Through their digitally mediated campaigns, they managed to change government policy and management practices, improve wage and working conditions for subcontracted cleaners and other groups of low wage and non-standard workers, involving among others pay rises (Holgate, 2011; Wills, 2008; Alberti, 2016; Petrini and Westergreen, 2023; Pero and Downey, 2024; Heery, et al. 2023; 2025). A similar successful example is seen in Spain, where Alcalde-González and colleagues (2024) find that digital means such as social media platforms were instrumental

infrastructures for the success of the grassroot initiative Las Kellys. This digital mediated initiative led to improved wage and working conditions among hotel room attendants by increasing public scrutiny of employment practices within the hotel sector and greater recognition of occupational health and safety issues (Alcalde-González et al., 2024).

Recent studies from Denmark, Italy and Norway also show that grassroots initiatives do not always result in successful outcomes. For example, Hau and Savage (2023) show how a group of food delivery couriers in Denmark successfully managed to develop an online worker community through digital means– the so-called Wolt's workers group but was unable to secure a collective agreement lifting food delivery couriers' wage and working conditions despite numerous demonstrations, wildcat strikes. Likewise, Bonifacio and Marcolin (2024) examine the successful outcome of the JustEat takeaway agreement in Italy, including the usage of digital means. However, they also stress that these improved industrial rights disproportionately benefit less precarious couriers while offering limited improvements to the most precarious groups as it failed to recognise couriers' diverse interests. Recent studies by Jesnes (2023) and López et al. (2025) on the success of food delivery couriers mobilising through digital means and securing a collective agreement with the food delivery platform Foodora also find that although these couriers gained new industrial rights, these rights were subsequently undermined when the platform later changed its employment model from relying on employees to self-employed due to market pressures. While these various studies stress the important role of digital means in mobilising workers and coordinating activities, they are silent on the role of digital tools in shaping the implementation, enforcement and take-up of the different acquired industrial rights and thus assist non-standard workers and their representatives ability to translate formal rules into meaningful protections and voice on the ground.

4.4.2 Institution-led initiatives

Digital tools are also increasingly used by trade unions to mobilise and reach workers beyond their typical reach, coordinate bargaining and lobbying activities, raise awareness of industrial rights and build legal cases to ensure the implementation and enforcement of employment rights (Aloisi, 2019). For example, Greville and Gauci (2026) find in their comparative study that trade unions rely on digital tools to coordinate, publish and support strategic litigation against platforms, where also social media campaigns and press releases are used to raise awareness of claims against platforms. Country specific studies such as the work by Bertolini and Dukes (2021) similarly show that British trade unions rely on digital means such as Facebook to facilitate union-worker contact, organise collective actions and generate crowdfunding for legal activism and subsequently use court rulings to bring platform companies to the bargaining table and secure industrial rights through collective agreements. In the Netherlands, Boonstra et al. (2021) also show that Dutch trade unions have teamed up with grassroots movements through digital mediated campaigns and subsequently used the juridical system to contest non-standard workers' low wages and poor working conditions with ripple effects for the way wage and working conditions more generally are regulated within specific national, sector or workplace contexts (Bonstra et al., 2012). Also,

in Spain trade unions have used digital evidence to build claims against platforms that contributed to the Spanish Riders Act (2021), which changed many platforms employment models from self-employed to increasingly directly employing their couriers or use so-called fleet companies. However, these regulatory changes did not necessarily improve wages and working conditions as many couriers continue to work as bogus self-employed via fleet companies, receive low pay etc. (Viera and Mendonça, 2025; Aloisi, 2019; Molina and Godino, 2021). Likewise, in Belgium, different studies show that Belgium unions are using various digital devices to communicate and reach for example freelancers, provide online legal advice etc (Kelemen and Leanert, 2021). These papers indicate that while trade unions are increasingly using digital devices and various online forum to reach, assist and raise awareness among non-standard workers and build legal claims against employers, notably platforms, how digital tools are used by unions to translate statutory or bargained labour standards to encourage take-up and genuine exploitation of acquired industrial rights among non-standard workers remain less researched.

5 Discussion and Conclusion: Contemporary Industrial Citizenship in the Digital Era

Grassroots and institution-led digital mobilisations challenge Marshall's original understanding of industrial citizenship. Rights and responsibilities are no longer exclusively dependant on institutional recognition through trade unions. Instead, the literature demonstrates how digitally mediated collective action may operate within and outside of formal structures. The sustainability of these activities remains uncertain. The literature suggests that digital visibility is not equivalent to durable gains. More substantial improvements tend to arise, where grassroots and institution-led mobilisation become connected to enforceable regulatory, judicial or bargaining mechanisms (Johnston, 2020a). In this sense, digital repertoires may widen the domain of claim-making by both grassroots and institutional (trade union and non-trade union) organisations, but they do not remove the continued importance of institutional power. Digital communities also bring their own privacy and security concerns, as seen in the Redacta case from Bottalico and Murgia (2024) where social media, photography, and group memberships were carefully monitored to prevent exposure of member's identity. Similarly, in situations where trade unions use digital evidence to build cases for litigation against employers are also associated with certain privacy and ethical concerns.

Our review also finds that digital mobilisation can generate visibility, but long-term bargaining often requires engagement with institutional actors. In many cases, grassroots initiatives therefore pivot between autonomy and institutionalisation, sometimes evolving into recognised unions or influencing regulatory reforms. In other cases, trade unions power can be strengthened through collaboration with grassroot organisation, especially in areas of the labour market characterised by weak or low union density. Where institutional powers are restricted even for trade unions, engagement with grassroots movements and non-union organisations can create opportunity for change. Digital footprints, then, can expand the possibilities for voice and enable new forms of collectivism through coalition building. Viewed through the lens of Marshall's industrial citizenship, these developments suggest that the enactment of worker citizenship is increasingly occurring within digitally mediated publics rather than solely through institutionalised bargaining arenas.

Taken together, our literature review supports a rethinking of industrial citizenship along the lines of Fudge (2005), differentiating between the subject (who), the substance (what) and the domain (where). First, the subject of industrial citizenship expands as NSWs gain access to forms of voice and representation through digitally mediated organising. Second, the substance of industrial citizenship is reshaped as formal rights won and enforced by trade unions and grassroots movements are expanded to reflect workers' ability to access and enforce rights, building on both individual and collective power resources. Third, the domain (where) of industrial citizenship expands beyond traditional workplaces and formal industrial relations institutions into digital and public arenas across multiple levels where claims are made and contested.

These questions of who, what and where we consider across the four building blocks of voice and representation proposed in our analytic framework. Firstly, the review indicates that *identity formation* is increasingly shaped through digitally mediated tools for both grassroots and institution led collective actions. Digital tools enable trade unions to access worker groups that are historically difficult to reach, such as non-standard workers, and we see evidence of emerging online trade unionism and communities. Grassroots movements are increasingly emerging in the online space, not just as ad hoc but also developing into online communities that over time evolve and may transcend into the physical space, as seen in much of the platform literature. Across both institution led and grassroots led collectives, we see increasing intersectional identity, not only confined to workspaces or occupational groups but engaging with the wider society and transcending national borders and multiple levels. This suggests the need to broaden the worker collectives beyond trade unions and the traditional employer-employee domain, as envisaged by Marshall.

Secondly, *means of actions* are increasingly accessible through digitalisation to new groups such as NSWs, and thus not only confined to institutional powers (rights to collective bargaining) and associational powers (trade unions), which is Marshall's primary focus. Digital means allow unions and grassroots to mobilise swiftly, build coalitions with multiple stakeholders and across regulatory domains, jurisdictions, as well as raise awareness of ambiguous working arrangements through social media campaigns and demonstrations, as seen in the name shaming of certain companies. It has also given rise to new institutional power resources such as, rights to online representation as seen with the EU's platform directive and access to online litigation to enforce acquired industrial rights. While digitalisation is often portrayed as a structural power resources utilised by employers to fragment and depoliticise labour and industrial rights, digital footprints can also re-politicise voice, representation and rights. It allows workers and their representatives access to and possibilities to exploit the various means to organise for collective action through both grassroots-led and institution-led initiatives. This indicates that power resource theory is a useful extension to illustrate how NSWs gain, lose or enact the resources which make participation possible. In this context, supplementing traditional collective power resources with individual power resources prove particularly useful since collective power resources are typically beyond the reach of NSWs as they are neither union members nor in unionised workplaces. Individual power resources enable NSWs to enact their rights and forms of participation.

Thirdly, our review of the dialogue processes around grassroots and institution-led initiatives show that digital means enhances communication and extends participation to include judicial systems (labour and civil courts) and the public. It also extends beyond the workplace to incorporate courts, consumers, peers, and platforms. Digital infrastructure support grassroot and institution-led actors project claims beyond the immediate workplace and into wider arenas along with shaping narratives within the broader public. Digital tools also allow unions and grassroots organisations to easily and swiftly communicate with their members and non-members about the input, process and outcomes of collective bargaining, to organise respective voting procedures, and to organise related industrial action. This is especially relevant in relation to NSWs that are often dispersed and hard to reach physically. This indicates that the dialogue process

becomes increasingly digitalised and extends beyond collective bargaining and trade unions and the boundaries of the conventional, physical workspace.

Fourthly, the last element, *industrial rights*, in both our building blocks and in Marshall's original concept concern legal rights but we extend this to include de facto rights and entitlements, which seems particularly relevant for NSWs as they tend to face barriers claiming and utilising their rights for various entitlements and modes of representation. However, while a wealth of literature focuses on mobilisation, identity formation, dialogue processes and means of actions, there is a relative dearth of literature exploring the outcomes of these actions, both in terms of acquired rights and enforcement and take up of these rights, with broader effects on wages and working conditions. New digital industrial rights, such as virtual representation bodies, rights to challenge automated decisions, etc. are also increasingly emerging but have been, so far, subject to limited research, especially linked to the notion of citizenship. Key questions also remain as to the efficacy of digital infrastructures in translating formal rights into take-up in practice, as seen in the UK's living wage campaign. Potential beneficiaries of an industrial right such as non-standard workers may not know they have the right, and in this context, digital infrastructures may help to provide supportive processes for these groups to access their acquired rights, etc.

In sum, our review of the four building blocks of voice and representation demonstrates that when seen through the lens of non-standard workers, industrial citizenship is a dynamic process which extends beyond Marshall's original concept. To capture recent developments, Marshall's concept therefore needs to be combined with a more explicit account of the notion of identify formation, means of actions, dialogue processes and industrial rights as each of these elements are key building blocks for voice and representation. They help to understand why workers that rarely act collectively mobilise and join forces as well as identify the type of resources both grassroots movements, trade unions and non-union organisations utilise when seeking to mobilise workers, raise wage and working conditions and prevent worker exploitation beyond and within the conventional labour market. Our review also illustrates that rather than eroding, industrial citizenship is being remoulded through digitalisation and takes new forms than initially envisaged by Marshall and other scholars. The paper has illustrated that it is a dynamic concept that gradually evolves and adjusts to the changing labour market and welfare transformations, which are not necessarily captured by the original understanding of industrial citizenship.

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