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# International Labour Review

## SPECIAL ISSUE WHAT FUTURE FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS?

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In her introductory paper, the coordinator of this Special Issue puts the selection of subsequent contributions into context. Traditional industrial relations institutions, born of labour law's premise of unbalanced power relations between the worker and the employer, are being undermined by unprecedented global changes in patterns of work and forms of employment. This trend, compounded by the emergence of alternative forms of worker representation, poses a major challenge not only to conventional trade unionism but also to policy and to industrial relations scholarship. This Special Issue is intended as a contribution to the ensuing, ongoing debate about the direction of future change.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, TRADE UNIONISM, PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT, QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE, TREND.

- 5 Three scenarios for industrial relations in Europe Richard HYMAN

The author outlines three scenarios for the future of industrial relations in Europe. The first – perhaps the most realistic – projects continuing erosion of national industrial relations systems and conditions of employment, in line with current trends. The second envisages that “elite reform” from above will succeed in re-engineering industrial relations and workers’ protection according to an ideal social policy agenda – an unlikely prospect given the overriding importance of financial considerations and globalized competition. The third scenario centres on a counter-movement from below which presents trade unions with the daunting challenge of mobilizing the discontented far beyond their traditional constituency.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, EMPLOYMENT, INFORMAL ECONOMY, MARKET ECONOMY, TRADE UNIONISM, TREND, EU COUNTRIES.



- 15 **Alternative labour protection movements in the United States:  
Reshaping industrial relations?** Janice FINE

The United States is one of the developed countries that have experienced the steepest declines of unionization and collective bargaining in recent decades. Its traditional industrial relations institutions, premised on the prevalence of "standard" employment relationships, have long been eroded by restrictive legislation and employer opposition. Meanwhile, precarious employment, sub-standard conditions and marginalization have become widespread features of the labour market, leading to the spontaneous emergence of alternative, often community-based initiatives to protect vulnerable workers using highly innovative strategies. "Worker centres", in particular, have been very active to that end, often teaming up with formal trade unions to pursue their objectives.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, WORKERS REPRESENTATION, TRADE UNION, FUTURE, USA.

- 27 **The shifting boundaries of industrial relations:  
Insights from South Africa** Edward WEBSTER

Post-apartheid South Africa's turbulent industrial relations and experience of wider social protest movements mirror the challenges confronting industrial relations systems globally, suggesting how workers' representation could be reconfigured in the future. Traditional trade unions have so far failed to address the agenda of marginalization, inequality and poverty which might have enabled them to organize workers currently excluded from union membership. Meanwhile, globalization has been opening up opportunities for new forms of organization and institutional innovation. The outcome, the author argues, will be determined by how key actors in the world of work respond to the marginalized workers of the world.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL DIALOGUE, CASUAL WORKER, SELF EMPLOYED, INFORMAL WORKERS, TEMPORARY WORKER, UNIONIZED WORKER, NONUNIONIZED WORKER, SOUTH AFRICA.

- 37 **Workers and social movements of the developing world:  
Time to rethink the scope of industrial relations?** Ratna SEN and Chang-Hee LEE

Against the background of decline in traditional industrial relations institutions in post-Fordist economies, the authors review the patterns of counter-movement to globalization that are emerging in the defence of workers in developing countries, with a particular focus on Asia. From the Marxian struggle they identify in China to the widely varied forms of protest and representational organization they observe in India, they argue for a more inclusive approach to industrial relations, both in practice and in research. The future, they suggest, will be shaped by the interplay of reform from above and the social movements spontaneously filling today's representational vacuum.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT, INFORMAL ECONOMY, INFORMAL WORKERS, NONUNIONIZED WORKER, TREND, BRAZIL, CHINA, INDIA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SOUTH AFRICA.

- 47 **Shaping the future of industrial relations in the EU:  
Ideas, paradoxes and drivers of change** Maarten KEUNE

The author argues that Europe's future industrial relations will be shaped by the resolution of three paradoxes embedded in today's labour markets, unionization dynamics, and EU policy. The first is the increasing individualization of employment relationships versus fictional "individual autonomy" and workers' growing market dependency and vulnerability. The second centres on the deterioration of job quality and precarious workers' growing need for protection versus their low unionization and the failure of unions to reach out to them despite declining membership. The third is the EU's current market-oriented stance, encouraging employment conditions ultimately conducive to a political backlash against the EU itself.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, TRADE UNIONISM, PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT, MARKET ECONOMY, QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE, EU COUNTRIES.

- 57 **Shrinking collective bargaining coverage, increasing income inequality:  
A comparison of five EU countries** Gerhard BOSCH

Wage-setting institutions can play a crucial part in containing the socio-economically destabilizing growth of income inequality. Using an analytical framework that distinguishes between protective and participative standards, the author examines their



respective effects on the incidence of low-paid employment and income inequality under the wage-setting systems of Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. His comparative focus on the interplay of statutory minimum wages and collective wage bargaining shows that while the latter is more effective than the former at reducing inequality, both require state intervention, with particular emphasis on participative standards to counter the erosion of industrial relations institutions.

KEYWORDS: WAGE DETERMINATION, WAGE DIFFERENTIAL, EQUAL RIGHTS, SOCIAL DIALOGUE, TRADE UNION, GERMANY, SWEDEN.

## BOOK REVIEW SYMPOSIUM:

### *THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY*, BY FRANCIS MAUPAIN

The short papers in this book review symposium are based on the authors' contributions to a workshop held in Montreal in May 2014, where they were invited to comment on Francis Maupain's (2013) book *The future of the International Labour Organization in the global economy*. The workshop took place within the framework of the International Conference "New frontiers for citizenship at work" organized by the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work (CRIMT).

KEYWORDS: ILO STANDARD SETTING, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS, GLOBALIZATION, TRIPARTISM, SUPERVISORY MACHINERY, FUTURE, ROLE OF ILO.

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