

Editorial

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The first issue in 2018 contains articles dealing with various aspects of works councils, different forms of employment contracts, employee involvement, green and decent jobs, and the role of the unions discussed from different fields of research.

The first article in this issue, ‘Towards a Europeanization of indirect employee participation: Polish experiences’, by Katarzyna Skorupińska, University of Lodz, Poland, relates to the discussion regarding indirect employee participation and the role of works councils in Polish industrial relations. The author concludes that works councils still play a marginal role in Poland. The implementation of European law has been far from successful, according to the author. The case of Poland corresponds to other countries in Eastern and Central Europe regarding the impact of works councils. However, in contrast, the Polish participation in European Works Councils has been more visible over the years.

The second article, by Peter Boxall, University of Auckland, New Zealand and Jonathan Winterton, Curtin University Sarawak, Malaysia, ‘Which conditions foster high-involvement work processes? A synthesis of the literature and agenda for research’, discusses various conditions regarding high-involvement work processes. The authors suggest that such work processes are closely related to the involvement of employees, when discussing the private sector in particular. The role of production systems and how managers develop such systems are found to be important in order to understand the employee involvement. Various incentives, both economic incentives and other forms, are discussed in the article. The authors conclude that economic incentives can be of great importance, but that other forms, such as socio-political factors, might yield different outcomes in this respect, thus emphasizing the need for greater worker involvement, according to the authors.

The third article, ‘The associations between job insecurity, depressive symptoms and burnout: The role of performance-based self-esteem’, by Victoria Blom, Karolinska Institutet, and Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences, Sweden, Anne Richter, Stockholm University and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, Lennart Hallsten, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, and Pia Svedberg, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, contributes with more knowledge on the interrelation between insecure jobs and mental ill-health. The authors show that insecure jobs have an impact in terms of depressive and burnout symptoms. Especially the role of performance-based self-esteem (PBSE) is studied. Individuals with a high degree of PBSE might be more vulnerable to job insecurity. However, the moderating effects of PBSE were more modest than expected, according to the authors’ findings.

The article ‘Explaining leaving union membership by the degree of labour market attachment: Exploring the case of Germany’, by Janine Leschke, Copenhagen Business

School, Denmark, and Kurt Vandaele, European Trade Union Institute, Brussels, discusses the outflow of union members, by studying the case of Germany. The declining union rate and the growing trend of weaker labour market connections in terms of the non-standard contract were studied to see if other factors outside the unions themselves could explain the outflow from the unions. The authors' results suggest an impact of a weaker connection to the labour market and the outflow of union members, but also different outcomes between branches, firm-level characteristics, as well as gender differences.

The article 'Governments matter for capitalist economies: Regeneration and transition to green and decent jobs', by Dean Stroud, Cardiff University, Peter Fairbrother, RMIT University, Melbourne, Claire Evans, Cardiff University, and Joanne Blake, Cardiff University, suggests that regions going through a process of industrial decline can experience various outcomes in terms of new green and decent jobs, due to a complex interaction between various local actors and government. By using the variety of capitalism model, the authors discuss various trajectories in Germany and Britain regarding the transition towards the creation of green and decent jobs. The authors emphasize the role of the state, as well as training and skills in the process of creating such jobs.

Richard Croucher, Middlesex University, London, UK, Sumeetra Ramakrishnan, Middlesex University, London, UK, Marian Rizov, Middlesex University, London, UK, and Diana Zdravkovic, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria, discuss issues regarding low-paid employees in London in the article 'Perceptions of employability among London's low-paid: "Self-determination" or ethnicity?' The authors investigate how employees with low-wage jobs vary in terms of perceptions of their employability. They suggest that there is a variety in such attitudes between ethnicity and gender, but an even greater difference is found within the groups examined. Thus, between-group differences were less important compared with within-group differences, according to the results.

Nadja Doerflinger and Valeria Pulignano, both at Catholic University Leuven, Belgium, investigate collective bargaining during economic crisis in the article 'Crisis-related collective bargaining and its effects on different contractual groups of workers in German and Belgian workplaces'. The authors compare workplaces in Germany and Belgium during the latest crisis in 2008. The unions adapted different strategies in terms of protecting employment also for the temporarily employed, which was the case in the studied multinational firm in Belgium, compared to the multinational firm in Germany. At least in the short-run perspective, the Belgian unions were able to protect the jobs for the temporarily employed to a higher degree, compared with Germany.

Gill Kirton, Queen Mary University of London, UK, discusses small professional unions and the role of women's participation in the article 'Anatomy of women's participation in small professional unions'. Various barriers as well as enablers are discussed based on the case of probation officers. Important enablers were long-time women's representation, strong occupational identity in line with unionism, as well as longevity of gender equality strategies. Constraints were found in the high pressure working climate, as well as hostile industrial relations, to mention a few of such factors presented by the author. In conclusion, the author points to the importance of small unions and a long tradition of gender equality.

The last article in this issue discusses the British experience of information regulations in relation to the research on the European Works Council (EWC) Directive: ‘Skating on thin ICE? A critical evaluation of a decade of research on the British Information and Consultation Regulations (2004)’, by Peter Butler, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, Jonathan Lavelle, University of Limerick, Ireland, Patrick Gunnigle, University of Limerick, Ireland, and Michelle O’Sullivan, University of Limerick, Ireland. The authors find there is a lack of research which can be potentially rewarding to fulfil by examining the literature on, for example, EWC at a European level. Therefore, among other factors mentioned in the article, comparative international research on these matters is suggested.

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