

ILR Review: CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference and Special Issue on

Transnational Employment Relations in the European Union

The *ILR Review* invites submissions for a conference and subsequent special issue devoted to transnational employment relations in the European Union (EU). Roland Erne (University College Dublin), Marco Hauptmeier (Cardiff University), Valeria Pulignano (KU Leuven), and Peter Turnbull (University of Bristol) will serve as guest editors of this special issue.

Overview

The aim of the special issue is to examine the actors, processes, and outcomes of transnational employment relations in the EU, including the impact of EU interventions on employment relations within and across member states, as well as the effects of countervailing collective action on the European integration process.

Employment relations in the EU exist in an antagonistic context of market-making (economic) and market-correcting (social) integration. The EU has acknowledged the need to reconcile economic and social integration, as stated in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and illustrated by numerous EU initiatives and laws in the area of work and employment relations. At the same time, EU laws have liberalized markets, removed trade barriers, and created the Single Market and the European currency. Although these EU interventions were designed to enhance Europe's economic competitiveness, they drove greater labor competition and downward pressures on wages and working standards. In the wake of the 2008–2009 economic crisis and the following Euro crisis, the EU's austerity policies and "Six-Pack" laws further constrained member states' budgets. These actions limited member state's capacity to finance unemployment protection and social policies and led them to further deregulate labor markets and reduce social protection.

In response to the consequent social protests and populist backlash caused by the EU interventions, member state governments and EU leaders reaffirmed the EU's Social Europe agenda and promised to deliver new and more effective social rights for citizens, as stipulated in the European Pillar of Social Rights of 2017. Nonetheless, the tensions between economic and social integration in the EU remain strong. They may likely be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which renders even more apparent the social and political effects of the EU's new economic governance regime on labor, health care, and welfare policies.

Assessments of EU governance and institutions vary from viewing the social and employment initiatives as mere window dressing in the context of far-reaching economic liberalization, to recognizing that the EU has promoted employment regulations that provide better conditions for workers compared to other world regions. This debate about the current state and future development of European employment relations will continue to resound, in particular in the context of the current COVID-19 crisis. How does the current level of EU employment regulation affect the way the COVID-19 pandemic affects working

people? And how will the pandemic reduce or intensify the existing tensions in employment relations caused by European integration?

To answer these and other questions, research needs to examine the processes through which specific EU institutions affect employment relations, on the one hand, and the ways in which employment relations actors affect EU institutions, on the other. Specifically:

- To what extent do EU institutions shape employment relations and social policies in the context of transnational competition and the fragmentation of work, whether in traditional jobs or the new workspaces of the gig and platform economy? Under what conditions and why?
- Will the European Pillar of Social Rights, the new European Labor Authority, and the EU's Platform for tackling undeclared work and other initiatives stem the tide of liberalization and offer workers better protection?
- What type of EU regulations provide more robust models to protect workers' jobs and wages as well as to provide labor and social protections within a transnational context characterized by the risk of pandemics, climate change, and employment fragmentation?
- How will COVID-19 and the variety of European policy responses to the pandemic affect the future direction of European integration and employment relations?

Answers to these and other questions will advance our theories of transnational and European employment relations as well as the construction of appropriate policies to advance social protections in the European context, with potential lessons for employment relations in other regions of the global economy. These are core aims of the special issue.

Articles are invited for the special issue that deal with any aspect of transnational employment relations in the EU before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Such topics might include current research on actors, processes, policies, and outcomes of European employment relations. Contributions may be quantitative or qualitative empirical studies but can also address transnational employment relations in the EU from a historical and/or comparative perspective. Thus, the special issue aims to sample leading research in the field and spell out possibilities for future research.

Schedule and Submission

Scholars interested in participating in this conference and special issue should submit an extended abstract of 4 to 5 pages (up to 2,500 words) by March 31, 2021, to Valeria Pulignano valeria.pulignano@kuleuven.be. Abstracts must include the research questions, theoretical framework, contribution to the literature, expected or preliminary findings, methods and data, and references. In the subject line of the e-mail, please write "Special Issue: Transnational ER in the EU."

Authors will be notified by June 30, 2021, if their paper has been accepted for presentation at the Conference that will be held in September 2021. A subset of authors will be asked to submit their papers to the *ILR Review* with the expectation that their papers will be published in the special issue provided

their papers pass the journal's normal peer review process. Papers of high quality that are not selected for the special issue will be considered for publication in a regular issue of the journal.

We encourage prospective contributors to consult the guest editors regarding preliminary proposals. Queries may be sent to Roland Erne roland.erne@ucd.ie, Marco Hauptmeier hauptmeierm@cf.ac.uk, Valeria Pulignano valeria.pulignano@kuleuven.be, or Peter Turnbull peter.turnbull@bristol.ac.uk.

Please note that if changes to the above schedule are necessary because of the COVID-19 pandemic, an updated call for papers will be posted on the *ILR Review* website:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/page/ilr/cfps-competitions>.