

Editorial

As of 2012, the *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations* has undergone some important editorial and organizational changes. I, Mia Rönnmär, Professor of Private Law, specializing in labour law and industrial relations at the Faculty of Law at Lund University, Sweden, have recently been appointed as new Editor-in-Chief, collaborating with the existing Managing Editors, William Bromwich and Olga Rymkevich, who are affiliated to the Marco Biagi Foundation at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy. A new International Advisory Board has been appointed comprising distinguished scholars from the fields of labour law and industrial relations from all over the world.

It is an honour and a privilege to have been appointed as Editor-in-Chief of this prestigious Journal. The Journal's focus on comparative labour law and industrial relations and engagement in both interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches and important policy issues coincide with my own research interests and experience, for example, in the areas of the regulation of managerial prerogative, employment contract, employment protection, EU labour law and industrial relations, and EU flexicurity discourse. At the same time, this issue is of a 'transitional' character, while I take on this new Editor-in-Chief position. In future editorials, I intend to present new ideas for developing the Journal.

Several of the papers in this issue advance important arguments in favour of comparative and interdisciplinary research approaches, including gender perspectives. Some of the papers emanate from the International Association of Law Schools Conference on Labour Law and the Labour Markets in the New World Economy, held in Milan in 2010.

Starting from the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy, Richard Hyman's paper discusses both the trade union responses to the European Commission's public consultation on its draft Europe 2020 proposals and – on a more general level – the question of 'why the majority of European trade unions were for so long supportive of a project of European integration in which neoliberal aims predominated'. His interesting, critical, and thorough analysis addresses the ambiguities of the Lisbon Strategy and its 'new start' in 2005 – the Europe 2020 Strategy: Representing a Paradigm Shift or Continuity? – and the

‘democratic deficit’ of European integration. In conclusion, Hyman presents different options for trade unions in response to the challenges of the European political economy.

In South Africa, the vulnerable position of workers placed by employment agencies has prompted a discussion on new policies for the regulation of these employment agencies. Stefan van Eck’s paper starts from the amendments to the South African labour legislation, published in 2010, suggesting a ban on employment agencies. He discusses the development of international standards as regards employment agencies – especially the International Labour Organization (ILO) standards and the current ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention 1997 (No. 181) – and conducts an interesting comparative analysis of the regulation of employment agencies in South Africa and Namibia, highlighting, *inter alia*, national constitutional aspects, such as the balance between the right to economic activity and the protection of workers’ rights. In conclusion, Van Eck argues both that ILO standards have had a meaningful influence on policymakers in South Africa and Namibia (although neither is a signatory to the Convention) and that a ban on employment agencies would contravene international standards.

Two papers approach the theme of gender equality, care work, and work-family balance from different perspectives. Stephanie Bornstein, Joan C. Williams, and Genevieve R. Painter present an interesting overview of current social science research on the ‘motherhood penalty’ and the ‘maternal wall’ and an engaging analysis of how labour lawyers in the US – against the background of this social science research – developed anti-discrimination law to address caregiver bias. Regulation on caregiver discrimination forms an important part of labour law and a national agenda for work-family balance, and there are lessons to be learned from the US. The authors argue that ‘countries that have passed substantial work-family reconciliation legislation still need to be attentive to whether the intended beneficiaries – women who take maternity leaves, men who take parental leaves, and workers who request workplace flexibility – are stigmatized when they do so by gender bias’.

Judy Fudge approaches the theme of gender equality, care work, and work-family balance with an examination of the feminist literature on global care chains, that is, a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid and unpaid work of caring. Female migration from the South to fill the widening care gap in the North has important implications for law and policy – and for labour law research. Fudge argues that global redistribution must be considered in order to fully analyse and advance gender equality. Labour law scholars need to give serious consideration to care work and undertake an integrated analysis of immigration and labour laws.

The issue concludes with two papers reflecting – in different ways – on the challenges and opportunities facing teaching and research in the fields of labour law and industrial relations. Joellen Riley discusses the issue of teaching labour law in a common law jurisdiction and points to the challenges resulting from pressures of globalization and frequent changes in domestic labour legislation and policy. She analyses aspects such as the influence of common law heritage, international law influences, comparative law influences, and teaching methods, and provides inspiring examples from her own experience as a labour law teacher at Law Faculties in Australia. She concludes by advocating the importance of a refreshment of the labour law curriculum through a deeper appreciation of the fundamental principles underpinning the regulation of work, as well as an introduction of topics of relevance for the twenty-first century student.

Luigi Golzio addresses the evolution of doctoral research programmes and presents an overview of recent trends in this area, with a particular focus on Italy and the PhD programme in labour relations at the Marco Biagi Foundation at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia – continuing the legacy of the late Professor Marco Biagi, a great comparative labour law and industrial relations scholar and previous Editor-in-Chief of this Journal. Golzio points to environmental pressures such as the need to seek alternative sources of funding and emerging demands for applied research as background factors for the development of Executive PhD degrees in Italy. The doctoral research school at the Marco Biagi Foundation is presented and analysed, *inter alia*, from an organizational point of view. In conclusion, Golzio discusses the methodological challenges facing a multidisciplinary doctoral research school and the importance of developing theoretical concepts with a shared meaning in a research environment encompassing labour law, organization theory, human resources management, and labour economics.

Mia Rönmmar