

## Editorial

This issue opens with a Guest Editorial, written by Alan C. Neal, Founding Editor of the *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*. The Guest Editorial aims to mark and celebrate the Thirtieth Anniversary of the *Journal* and outlines its interesting and eventful history and content over the years. It is my great honour and privilege as the current Editor-in-Chief to carry on this legacy through the publication and advancement of innovative and topical international and comparative labour law and industrial relations research.

The articles in this issue address a number of interesting contemporary labour law and industrial relations themes, such as the informal economy, employment protection and flexible work, worker participation and the role and reach of collective bargaining.

The first article, by Claire La Hovary, 'The Informal Economy and the ILO: A Legal Perspective', aims at a discussion of the concept of the informal economy as it has developed within the ILO (including the recent suggestion to adopt a recommendation in this field), and at a critical legal analysis of various understandings of the informal economy and challenges in this field. La Hovary concludes that 'the aim of formalisation only makes sense if it is embedded in a broader concept of decent work for all', and argues that a better solution than adopting a new recommendation might be 'to abandon the concept of "informality" altogether, and focus instead on the underlying nature of work'.

The two following articles discuss aspects related to the individual employment relationship, flexible work and employment protection. The article by Timothy J. Bartkiw, 'Labour Law and Triangular Employment Growth: A Theory of Regulatory Differentials', focuses on the growth of triangular employment. The article offers a multi-faceted theoretical analysis of the understanding and explanation of this phenomenon, and develops a conceptual framework on so-called regulatory differentials, i.e., 'ways in which a legal regime produces different regulatory effects across direct and triangular forms of employment'. One conclusion by Bartkiw is that the conceptual framework of 'regulatory differentials' can serve as a useful tool in comparative labour law and industrial relations research.

The article by Bengt Furåker, Kristine Nergaard and Antti Saloniemi, 'Lock-in Patterns among Employees: A Nordic Comparison', examines patterns of lock-in – situations in which employees have difficulty finding another job – among employees in the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish labour markets. Despite many commonalities, often referred to as the Nordic model of industrial relations, the article casts light on differences between the countries in this respect, using survey data, and points to how various factors, such as gender, age, family situation, health and education, are linked to being locked-in. By way of conclusion, the authors highlight that 'lock-in (and employability more generally) is a matter of interaction between individual characteristics and demand for labour in the market'.

The last two articles in this issue focus on collective labour law issues. In another comparative article, 'On the Uses and Misuses of Worker Participation: Different Forms for Different Aims of Employee Involvement', Marco Biasi conducts a critical comparative analysis of different legal elements of worker participation in the German, Italian, UK and EU systems. The German system of co-determination is used as a starting point and reference model in the discussion and analysis of rules such as the EU European Works Council Directive, the worker's right to cooperate in Article 46 of the Italian Constitution, and the employee-shareholder scheme in the UK. Biasi concludes that 'it remains to be seen whether worker participation is an instrument aimed at granting workers a stronger (co-determination) or a weaker (information and consultation) voice . . . [and] whether employees can be equally involved by exchanging their individual rights for participatory rights in the form of shares in the firm of profit-sharing'.

Kadi Pärnits's article 'Legal Regulation of Representativeness and the Extension of Collective Agreements in Estonia' offers a critical analysis of the existing Estonian regulation of collective bargaining and collective agreements – including references to EU law and the national regulation in different EU Member States – and discusses specifically the extension of the coverage of collective agreements, the improvement of the representativeness of the collective bargaining parties and the modernization of industrial relations. The Estonian industrial relations system is characterized *inter alia* by low trade union density and a limited role of employers' organizations – which complicates effective collective bargaining. Informed by the previous discussion and analysis, Pärnits concludes by presenting some specific proposals for legal reform of the Estonian regulation of collective bargaining.

Finally, to assist the reader, this issue contains a list of abbreviations, an article index and a subject index for Volume 30.

Mia Rönnmar