

Call for Papers

Public sector industrial relations: Continuity, change, and crisis

Special issue

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Guest editors: Andrea Müller and Werner Schmidt

In many countries the public sector has been exposed to problems of legitimacy and cost and competition pressures for some time now. Processes of outsourcing and privatization, growing competition, as well as new forms of collaboration with private service providers characterize the development, but also the reforms of public administration and efforts to change workforce policies are mostly high on the agenda. Since not only concepts of modernization but also cost and debt pressures as well as austerity policies can be regarded as major causes of the pressure for change, in several countries reshaping and reduction of the public sector have intensified in the course of the recent financial market crisis and the following sovereign debt and Euro crisis. This development has a considerable impact on the employment and labour policies of the state as an employer and thus also engenders reactions of employees and trade unions, which can range from helpless adaptation to strategic reorientation. Being directly affected by policies of austerity and cutbacks, the behaviour of public sector workers as quasi-natural stakeholders of the public sector is playing an important role here. Moreover, in the public sector the power of industrial relations actors is always to a considerable extent mediated by society. Hence, effects on the service provision (not only in the case of industrial action) and how they are assessed by the citizens is also highly relevant for industrial relations.

This special issue illuminates the development of industrial relations in the public sector in different countries. Besides contributions which focus on single countries, country comparisons are particularly welcome. The issue is intended to contribute to the clarification of two questions: Which differences and similarities can be found in public sector industrial relations across different countries in a short- and medium-term perspective? What are the reasons for similar and diverging developments and what are possible empirical or theoretical explanations?

Please submit papers which address one or several of the following issues:

- The development of public sector industrial relations in general (actors, conflicts, agreements, heterogeneity) or in special parts of the public sector (such as local government, ministerial bureaucracy, health, police, etc.)
- Re-orientation and continuities in trade unions and/or employers as industrial relations actors (e.g. oppositional or affirmative policy of trade unions, self-conception of the state as a ‘model employer’, conflict behaviour, mobilization of citizens)

- Specific aspects of working and employment conditions from an industrial relations perspective (e.g. comparisons of trade union strategies concerning privatizations, pay and working time, collective bargaining, etc.)
- Differences and similarities in the development of industrial relations in the public sector and the private sector against the backdrop of shifting boundaries and interactions between the sectors (e.g. alliances, competition, relevance of sectoral and inter-sectoral forms of trade union organization)
- The role the politics of the European Commission and the ‘institutions’ play in the changes to industrial relations in member states

All contributions should be submitted in either German or English.

Timetable:

15 Nov 2015	Submission of abstracts (5,000 characters)
1 Jan 2016	Notification of acceptance of abstract
1 July 2016	Deadline for submission of the full paper for the double-blind review process by two academic referees
1 Nov 2016	Notification based on the peer review process
1 March 2017	Revision if needed
1 April 2017	Second review
1 June 2017	Second revision if needed and final decision
August 2017	Publication of the issue

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