

Invitation - Call for Applications

WSI Summer School 2012

17 September – 21 September 2012 in Berlin

Industrial Relations and Crisis Management in Germany: a model for Europe?

There is a widespread perception that the German economy did comparatively well during the 'Great Recession' from 2008 – 2010. The reasons for which the German crisis management receives attention, however, differ. Some, such as former ECB president Claude Trichet, praise the ability of German employers to adjust to globalization, the importance of the labour market reforms and wage moderation. Others, such as the German unions, while being relieved that they managed to limit the job losses in their core constituencies, are aware the esteem for their cooperation in managing the crisis is elusive and that the further European austerity programmes might result in new rounds of deregulation.

The German model of industrial relations is based on multi-employer bargaining, and workers' representation by way of works councils and co-determination in supervisory boards of large companies. When the crisis hit Germany in 2008, it was hard to predict to what degree it would influence industrial relations institutions and bargaining outcomes. To what degree would the crisis affect employment relationships and wages? Would the crisis hurt labour by way of accelerating union decline and weakening works councils power vis-à-vis management? Or could

organized labour position itself as a powerful force in handling the crisis and regain new strength through “social partnership” and “crisis corporatism”?

Now, shortly after the economy has picked up speed again, observers from throughout Europe (and beyond) seem to have a clear answer to these questions. Many have emphasized the positive development of the German labour market, even calling it the German “job miracle”, and have widely recommended this experience as being worthy of imitation by other countries. While, at least in quantitative terms, German labour market performance is truly impressive, there is also doubt about whether this also holds true in terms of the quality of employment relationships, fearing that the crisis would give a boost to low wage employment, agency work, fixed term work and other forms of atypical employment.

The WSI summer school wants to engage in this debate and will explore crisis management against the background of the changing contours of German industrial relations since the 1990s. We will observe key areas of the German industrial relations system and ask whether the experience with the world economic crisis has accelerated existing developments, slowed it down or changed its direction. Participants of the summer school are invited to participate in this current debate but will also be provided with the opportunity to present and discuss their own research projects.

What are the aims of the WSI Summer School?

At the centre of the WSI Summer School will be a thorough examination of the developments of the German model of industrial relations since the 1990s. The Summer School aims at giving participants an overview on the history, institutions and actors in German industrial relations in order to understand the features and logic of the crisis corporatism of 2008 – 2010. Based on this, it will focus on three areas:

Trade unions:

- ➔ *Trade unions and crisis management*
The balance of the union crisis management 2008 - 2010
- ➔ *Building inclusive solidarity*
Unions and the challenge of precarious employment
- ➔ *Unions in the service economy*
What future for trade unions in private services?

Workplace relations

- ➔ *Workplace representation: extent and green fields*
Where are the works councils?
Workplace representation beyond the works council
- ➔ *Trade unions and works councils: a complicated relationship*
Collective bargaining and works councils
Is the dual system still dual?

Collective bargaining

- ➔ *Decentralisation of collective bargaining*
Are the trade unions still in control?
- ➔ *Declining bargaining coverage*
What implications for wage developments and wage dispersion?

The WSI Summer School is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the current features of industrial relations in Germany and the challenges ahead for organised labour. We want also to provide scope for a critical assessment of the topics presented and encourage a discussion of political alternatives. Finally, we will ask to what extent **German industrial relations are currently taken as a model for Europe?**

Who is organising the WSI Summer School?

The WSI Summer School is organised by various researchers of the Institute of Economic and Social Research WSI (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut) within the Hans Böckler Foundation, which is the foundation closely related to the German trade unions. There will be contributions from several WSI researchers such as Martin Behrens, Reinhard Bispinck, Heiner Dribbusch and Thorsten Schulten.

Who can participate in the WSI Summer School?

The WSI Summer School addresses students and doctoral students as well as young researchers from all social sciences (Economics, Law, Sociology, Political Science etc.). The WSI aims to have an international composition of participants. **Therefore, the working language during the WSI Summer School will be English.**

Application:

Applications for the participation at the WSI Summer School should be sent at latest by **27 April 2012** to wsi-summerschool@boeckler.de. Please use the application form enclosed with this invitation.

Fees:

All participants have to pay a lump-sum of **50.00 Euro** for accommodation and meals during the Summer School. Travel costs have to be covered by the participants. In individual cases the WSI can award a grant towards the travel costs.

Where does the WSI Summer School take place?

The WSI Summer School takes place at the IG Metall Bildungsstätte Berlin Pichelssee which is a training college of the German Metalworkers' Union IG Metall.

For more information see: <http://netkey40.igmetall.de/homepages/bs-berlin.pichelssee/>



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