

Summaries

Matthias Ebenau & Felix Nickel: Union crisis and union renewal – Labour Revitalisation Studies as a global conversation. This article provides an overview of the key premises of labour revitalisation studies (LRS) and then discusses how this intellectual and political field might be enriched by an even more sustained focus on experiences of union crisis and revitalisation in the Global South. It discusses a broad range of empirical examples from a variety of world regions documented in scholarly literature, ordered along four thematic lines: transnational unionism, organising among informal and precarious workers, union engagement with the gendered nature of labour, and the complex relationship between unions and the state. On this basis, the article argues that LRS should be conceived of as a ‘global conversation’. Furthermore, it argues for broadening the view beyond traditional union organisations, their key political fields and repertoires of action, but also for overcoming false dichotomies between revitalisation initiatives that develop on the ‘outside’ and on the ‘inside’ of established unions.

Nico Weinmann, Friedrich Bossert & Paul Hecker: The revitalisation of trade union power under centre-left governments in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Since the turn of the century the world has witnessed an important shift in political power towards the left in Latin America. So far, research surrounding this shift has focused on the role of leftist parties and new social movements. This paper aims to complete the picture by shedding light on the evolution of trade union power in three countries with strong traditions of trade unionism: Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Utilising the ‘power resources’ approach recently developed in Jena, Germany, which enables us to trace the evolution of the structural, institutional, associational, and societal power resources of trade unions and to identify underlying driving forces and mechanisms, the article shows that since the shift towards centre-left governments, trade union power resources have undergone a process of recovery in each of the three countries. Most of these positive developments, it is argued, were enabled by benign external factors, such as discrediting neoliberal thought, the economic boom, and favourable policies. With the exception of Uruguay, the increase in trade union density is only moderate and most unions still do not put a lot of effort into renewing their own structures and organising informal workers.

Michael Fütterer: Putting back the Movement into Unionism: The ExChains-Network in the Global Garment Industry. Unionising in the global garment industry has been and continues to be very difficult. Both in production and in retail, trade union work and self-organisation is hindered systematically and miserable working conditions are common. One reason for this are the structures of buyer-driven transnational production networks, within which few global retailers effectively determine the organisation of production, logistics and retail, as well as working conditions. As a reaction to these structures, unions, especially those in the garment industry, use

national and international campaigns to create external pressure, often consumer-oriented, to raise their concerns. While these campaigns help to build awareness, and, in specific cases of violation, put pressure on companies and states to change, they also have limitations. For example, such campaigns do not build sufficient union power in the garment producing countries and are not able to improve fundamental working conditions. This article highlights the alternative approach that the ExChains-network of TIE Global has developed to build transnational solidarity in the global garment industry and to develop unionisation on the ground. Unionists from the retail sector in Germany cooperate with unionists from the garment industry in India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh to develop new transnational strategies. As highlighted, this network takes up social movement unionism and aims to extend this experience.

Michel Jungwirth: Trade Unions and Undocumented Work of Migrants in Austria: The Emergence of Advice and Support Structures in Trade Unions.

How trade unions engage migrants and position themselves in regards to immigration is disputed and contested. While historically trade unions in Austria have faced dilemmas in dealing with migrants and undocumented work, they have recently started to engage new strategies. In the past, trade unions in Austria have often held restrictive positions in regards to immigration and foreign labour. However, over the last couple of years they have changed their position. Trade unions have started to refrain from discussing only the negative aspects of wage dumping and have begun to recognise the negative consequences of undocumented work on immigrants. While trying to implement organising approaches similar to working centres in the United States, Austrian trade unions face various challenges. This paper argues that with the help of actors inside and outside of trade unions, other positions and projects have been able to establish themselves. This has culminated in the emergence of a support structure, namely an advice centre, which acts as a physical manifestation of change implemented in the union structures.

Rainer Dombois & Carlos Miguel Ortiz: The Institutionalisation of Labour Relations in the Midst of Violence: The Paradoxical Case of the Colombian Banana Workers Union Sintrainagro.

Since the 1980s, unions and union members in Colombia have been the victims of physical violence to an extent hardly found in any other country. This article analyses the paradoxical case of Sintrainagro, the banana workers union: While one of the unions most affected by the violence, Sintrainagro has become a powerful representative organisation which – unique in Colombia – negotiates collective agreements covering almost the whole banana zone of Urabá. Through its efforts, industrial relations within the banana industry have changed from an antagonistic to a cooperative style. The article shows the fundamental role that legal and illegal armed actors – public security forces, guerrillas, and paramilitary groups – and their strategies have played in the evolution of the union and in industrial relations. The case of Sintrainagro highlights the limited applicability of concepts from industrial relations research in a context like Colombia, a country marked by a differential territorial and regulatory state presence.

Melanie Müller: Conflicts around Mining in South Africa: An Opportunity for Alliances between Unions and Social Movements. South Africa is a prominent example of the development of ‘social movement unionism’, which describes strong coalitions between social movements and unions. While this historically strong relationship has changed since the political takeover of the African National Congress (ANC) and the foundation of a corporatist alliance which includes unions, the 2012 Marikana massacre brought unions and social movements closer together again. Since then, the metal workers’ union NUMSA has been trying to build up a United Front which can provide an alternative to government policy. This article explores to what extent a revival of social movement unionism in South Africa on a non-parliamentary level can be observed. Looking at the example of mining, the article describes both the potentialities and challenges regarding the cooperation between unions and social movements. In so doing, it highlights the manifold conflicts and controversies around the extension of mining in South Africa.

Frauke Banse: Money for Trade Unions: On the Intentions and Impacts of Trade Union Funding in the Global South. When people or organisations of the Global North give funds to trade unions in the Global South sounds like a ‘good’ act of international solidarity. Moving beyond this assumption, this article explores and discusses the interests of donors and the impacts that such external funding has on trade unions in the periphery. Trade unions are membership-based organisations. They have complex institutional structures, represent their members’ interests, and have very specific ‘power resources’, all which mark them as substantially different from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Likewise, trade union donors act in a complex institutional structure and have the potential to influence trade union democracy, agendas, and power resources. Funding trade unions in the periphery brings international donors into contact with the structural power of workers. This paper highlights how the donor’s political orientation and its relationship to state institutions not only impacts on the donor-recipient relationship, but also how such funding can be a foreign policy strategy. Based on various historical and empirical examples, the article discusses the intentions and impacts of external trade union funding, focussing on its relevance for trade union renewal, democracy and agenda setting.

Selma Cristina Silva: New Fields of Action for Brazilian Trade Unions: The CUT Confederation and the Solidarity Economy. The deregulation of the labour market, stemming from the crisis of fordism and the transition to a model of flexible accumulation, which has been followed by structural unemployment and new forms of hiring, impose challenges for the Brazilian trade union movement. To face these challenges, unions have begun to incorporate new agendas and practices that had once been neglected, such as racial and gender relations, as well as the solidarity economy. This article focuses on the experience of the *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (CUT) in the area of the solidarity economy. More precisely, it explores whether CUT’s engagement with the solidarity economy have contributed towards the realisation of CUT’s discourse, which argues that support for cooperative-ism

responds to income generation needs. The article argues that the solidarity economy is one avenue for strengthening political representation of informal workers and the unemployed in urban settings. To this end, broad bibliographical research on the subject, a survey of secondary data, and field research in 15 solidarity ventures in the Brazilian state of Bahian were carried out. The article is structured along three sections. In the first section, it briefly covers the strategies adopted by the CUT in the face of changes in the world of labour since the 1990s. In the second section, the paper explains why CUT incorporated the solidarity economy and created the Solidarity Development Agency (ADS), as well as explains the establishment of the constitution of the *Central de Cooperativas e Empreendimentos Solidários do Brasil* (Unisol Brasil) at the national level. Finally, in the last section, it analyses the work of the ADS-CUT and Unisol Brasil in the urban solidarity ventures researched, exploring if these institutions have achieved success in regards to income generation and shifts in the political representation of the working class.