



paper assesses to what degree the #14N movement is reflecting a long term change in social class formations and the organization of labour in the Mediterranean countries and Europe in general. Subsequently, the paper confronts the #14N experience with previous European mobilizations that have reached a transnational stage.

Transnational capital's demand for easy available and low cost labour has gradually become paramount in labour markets policy-making. This has been the case at both national and EU level. Arguably, this development shows that the ability of European trade unions to shape policy-making was declining well before the current euro crisis. Already in the late 1960s the maintenance of full employment and high job security constituted the core of organized labour's vision of a "social Europe". After the sea change from Keynesianism to austerity politics in 1974-75, however, most attempts to impose stronger job security in Western Europe have been largely unsuccessful.

In the following historical period, transnational trade unionism in Europe expressed itself in different ways. One mode of action, which also engaged civil society beyond the ranks of organized labour, consists of outbursts and even cycles of contestation in several European countries. Of those, the #14N movement represents, so far, the most visible sign of transnational social class struggle, at least since the breakout of the European finance and debt crisis five years ago. Drawing on previous historical experiences, can the Mediterranean based #14N event be seen in the broader perspective of a recomposed European proletariat in the making?

**Ingo Schmidt** – From Unmaking to Remaking? Neoliberalism and European Working Class Experiences.

Neoliberalism is a project aiming at breaking the power of labour and other social movements. The tools used to this end – industrial restructuring and austerity policies – were effective in unmaking the working classes that had developed in Europe over the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that were integrated into post-WWII welfare states. The same tools, though, produced a crisis of legitimacy, which was looming for a long time and openly broke out over the course of the Euro-crisis and its political management.

This paper looks at various expressions of discontent with neoliberalism in general and its EU-variant in particular. These expressions include protests at EU-summits, the European Marches Against Unemployment, the European Social Forum but also local organizing and strike activities and the rise of protest parties, left and right. It will discuss the question whether such expressions are elements of a remaking of working classes similar to their original making in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Theoretically the paper draws on Beverly Silvers work to understand the unmaking of the old working classes and the ground this prepared for their remaking. This remaking will be analyzed by using the work of E. P. Thompson, stressing the role of struggles, common experiences and ideas for the development of class consciousness, and the work of Rosa Luxemburg that extends Thompson's focus on national experiences to the international level and includes the role of economic development and crisis in shaping working class experiences. Throughout the paper considers left- and right-wing expressions of discontent and ponders the question whether or not right-wing expressions can contribute to the remaking of working classes or not.

Economic crises in the 1970s were accompanied by a wave of labour unrest unseen since the 1930s. In those days, it was widely expected that this surge of unrest would mark the next step in labour's long march forward. Yet, it soon turned out to be labour's last stand. Rather than waging class struggle from below, reenergized capitalist classes, following neoliberal policy scripts, made a strategic effort to unmake the working classes formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and integrated into welfare capitalism after WWII. New spatial and technological fixes tore apart the fabric on which working class identities and organizations had rested and turned workers into pieces of variable capital that could be bought and sold without much interference from unions or state regulations.

Beginning with the Great Recession, neoliberal capitalism entered a great crisis that is as severe as that of welfare capitalism in the 1970s and also saw an upsurge of labour and other popular unrest. Unlike in the 1970s, whose activists and leaders still drew on the strategic ideas that had been developed by labour movements since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, present day activists don't have any overarching ideas that could amalgamate scattered protests into a larger and more unified movement. In this sense, they have more in common with labour rebellions in the early days of 19<sup>th</sup> century class formation than with 20<sup>th</sup> century organized labour movements. The paper argues that these scattered protests are part of a learning process that could eventually lead to the formation of new working classes, potentially more international in scope than those developed over the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper focuses on European experiences; theoretically, it draws on the works of Rosa Luxemburg, E.P. Thompson and Beverly Silver, empirically it uses quantitative indicators, such as strike days and union density, but also qualitative arguments about the role of ideas in the unmaking and remaking of working classes.

**Andreas Bieler** – Free Trade and Transnational Labour Solidarity: structural and agential challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The current drive towards an extended free trade agenda, which does not only include trade in goods, but also services, public procurement, intellectual property rights and financial investment, has put solidarity within the global labour movement under pressure. While especially manufacturing trade unions in the Global North support free trade regarded as securing employment for their members, trade unions in the Global South are strongly opposed. Too often they have experienced free trade as simply resulting in job losses and further deregulation.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the structural and agential dynamics underlying these tensions. The ideas of structural inevitability of tensions as a result of uneven and combined development as well as the agential arguments of 'labour aristocracy' and 'false consciousness' will be critically discussed. Through a focus on the open-ended nature of class struggle, it will be concluded that while transnational solidarity is not inevitable on issues such as free trade, the impossibility of transnational solidarity is not automatic either.

**10.45 am to 11 a.m.**

**Coffee break**

**11. a.m. to 12.30 p.m.**

**Panel 2 – Building Alliances (Chair Roland Erne)**

**Antonina Gentile** – The Hegemonic Making and Breaking of Intra-European Labour Solidarity: How the AFL’s “Free” Trade Unionism and Labour INGOs’ National Sovereignty Clause Skew EU Docker Solidarity Today.

By contrast to Marxist-derived theories of labour internationalism and imperialism, prominent theories of transnational contention of the last two decades have been founded on Kantian anti-statism and liberal internationalism, complete with precepts of INGO detachment from structures of national and hegemonic power. These theories predict that, after half a century of Cold War polarisation and a century of the secular-religious divide, labour INGOs can more readily overcome the limitations of national sovereignty and create seamless transnational campaigns through which to defend the rights of labour against globalising capital. This study of an INGO-led campaign against a neo-liberalising EU directive finds instead that key problems encountered by INGO leaders today derive from institutions of representation created by their ancestors in the 1940s, when those same INGOs’ leaders colluded in the construction of a US-led international order. As such, it pleads the re-development of a historically-attuned theory of labour transnationalism, one that places (US) hegemony at centre stage. The study first identifies the coordination and mobilization problems encountered by labour INGO organizers over the course of a contemporary docker campaign in Europe, reducing the more implacable problems to the long term operation of “the national sovereignty clause” which, archival process tracing shows, was introduced into labour INGO constitutions in the 1940s when the AFL and select INGO leaders sought to exclude communist unions from the emerging order and to create a new anti-communist international organisation of labour, while their social democratic partners sought to exclude Christian unions as well. Over the long term, this path dependent institution has helped produce a hierarchical stratification of union representation in labour INGOs that disadvantages whole swaths of European labour, especially those that cluster into southern Europe, where communist unions once dominated. These excluded unions have been denied entry into the INGO community by the sovereigns of national labour that INGOs and their erstwhile AFL partners helped create and certify long ago. Today’s INGO leaders have succeeded in creating a series of by-pass mechanisms that serve to camouflage their cooperation with these excluded unions – mechanisms such as “hat-switching” and the creation of new mobilising structures at the local level that can claim or feign autonomy from the INGO. But short of major constitutional change that privileges labour solidarity over competing cultural norms, the application of those by-pass mechanisms remains contingent on the proclivities of individual INGO leaders’. This paper will conclude with a preliminary theory of labour transnationalism that introduces not only the struggle against uneven and unequal representation, but also reintroduces the struggle against hegemonic power and norms.

**Cristina Brovia** – The mobilizations of migrant seasonal workers in Europe: towards transnational and cross-class action?

The massive industrialization of agricultural production in several areas of Europe during the 20th century have led to important changes in work organisation. Peasants and family labour are disappearing, leaving place to big farms, looking for a large amount of available and flexible seasonal labour force at a minimum cost, in order to remain competitive in the global market. Today, the great majority of these workers is constituted of migrants. A part of them is recruited through specific governmental immigration programs, while the others are employed informally. In both cases, as shown by some recent researches, they generally work in very precarious conditions, subdued to their employers, and live in geographical and social isolation.

Although protests are generally considered as unlikely in this sort of situations, seasonal migrant workers have been participants, in the last fifteen years and in different European countries, of mobilisations, such as demonstrations, organised strikes, riots in reaction to violence committed by the local population. In most cases they have been supported by trade unions, NGO, charities. Some of them operate –or try to operate- at an European and international level, claiming both for better conditions for seasonal workers and a more sustainable and fair agricultural system.

Starting from the analysis of these organisations and networks, the paper aims to discuss some of the main challenges they have to face: is it possible to combine labour claims with peasants interests?

**Bruno Dobrusin** – Labour beyond borders and beyond the factory: transnational and trans-sectoral alliances in the past decade in Latin America.

Neoliberal globalization has extended throughout the world and placed labour movements in a defensive state. Trade unions have for many decades begun to replace the historically strong factory-bias with more open conceptualization of labour and workers. This has led to broaden the base of labour movements and also to establish alliance with social movements on central issues for workers. Latin American trade unions have been at the forefront of these changes, and cross-sectoral alliances with social movements became leading elements of transnational labour action.

This paper intends to analyze the reactions of the trade union movement in Latin America to challenges presented by neoliberal globalization during the past decades, by focusing on the alliance-building, and its complexities, realized during the process of resistance. The main example will be placed on the experience of the mobilization against the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which ended in success when the project was rejected by governments of South America in 2005. The need to reconstruct this strategic outlook is fundamental today in the view of the advances of primary extractive industries on the one side and Neoliberal ‘green economy’ proposals on the other.

The paper intends to conceptualize and discuss the need for transnational alliances not only with labour but also with social movements, as an effective tool for challenging neoliberal globalization. This analysis will include a critical perspective on labour’s

identity and reality, and the capacities of incorporating broader sectors of society into its struggles. The paper intends to bring to the fore the potentialities of this alliance together with the challenges to conventional trade union practices and actions.

**John Logan** – Transnational Organizing Campaigns in Logistics and Retail: UPS, DHL and IDEA in Turkey.

During the past decade, several global union federations (GUF) have become increasingly active in coordinating transnational organizing campaigns at key multinational corporations. This paper examines three recent case studies of GUF-led transnational organizing campaigns: the International Transport Federation's (ITF) campaign for union recognition at the logistics companies UPS and DHL in Turkey, and the Union Network International (UNI) campaign for a global framework agreement at IKEA – which has a close business relationship with DHL in Turkey -- which has also focused on the company's anti-union practices in Turkey. ITF and UNI jointly coordinated the DHL campaign. Tumtis, the Turkish transport union, won recognition and a bargaining agreement at UPS in 2011, and gained recognition at DHL in October 2013. The IKEA campaign is on-going and has not yet resulted in union recognition in Turkey or an international framework agreement.

Based on an analysis of these three cases (which I have had direct involvement with), the paper discusses the role of GUFs in transnational organizing campaigns, the usefulness of various “soft law” mechanisms – such as the UN's Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises – in global campaigns, the role of support from the union in the corporation's home country (the United States, Germany and Sweden/Holland, respectively), the relationship between the company's labor practices in its home country and those in “problem countries” (in these cases Turkey), and the role of the union and its organizing strategy in the target country. The paper concludes with an analysis of the range of factors that are most likely to result in a successful transnational campaign.

**12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.      Lunch**

**1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m.              Panel 3 – Communication in Action** (Chair Darragh Golden)

**Bianca Föhrer** – What role can trade union education play in enhancing transnational labour solidarity?

There are numerous empirical examples which tell us that trade union education can have a vital impact on building transnational labour solidarity (e.g. see Bernaciak, 2010; Bicknell, 2007; Croucher & Cotton, 2009; Erne, 2008; Knudsen, 2004; Müller & Rüb, 2007; Novelli, 2011; Pulignano, 2007; Telljohann, 2007; Whittall, 2000). Consequently, Martínez Lucio and Weston (2007: 191) demand “more focused approaches to trade union training and industrial relations capacity-building programmes”. However, on what are professionals working in trade union education

supposed to focus? At the moment, we do not know much about trade union training in theory. Research on labour education has remained somewhat sparse, especially in Europe (Bridgford & Stirling, 2000). What we do know is that trade union education can support union activism (Shelley, 2007; Spencer, 2007). But why is this? Arguably, education activities are opportunities to meet other workers' representatives, to exchange experiences and ideas, to reflect on self, others and the context as well as to act in a safe environment. The purpose of this paper is hence to suggest that, theoretically, trade union education provides four spaces: 1. space of encounter (Ort der Begegnung), 2. space of exchange (Ort des Austausches), 3. space of insight (Ort der Erkenntnis) and 4. space of action (Ort des Handelns). Together they can form a further space, i.e. of development (Ort der Entwicklung) as a person as well as a group. This model shall be derived from the author's recent observations of the Beckers EWC training in Brussels.

**Markos Vogiatzoglou** – Workers' trans-national networks in austerity times: The case of Italy and Greece.

Italy and Greece share a long tradition of cross-national movement networking. Yet, only lately has the networking field expanded to include labor issues or labor-related organizations. The purpose of this paper is to describe the development of transnational labor networks between the two countries and explain why some of the attempts managed to produce concrete results, whilst others were not met with success.

My starting point is the identification of three types of inter-movement networks: (a) *coordination*, where organizations choose a given point in time and/or space to jointly perform their collective action; (b) *solidarity*, i.e. the transfer of material and immaterial resources from one entity to another; (c) *collaboration*, where the organizations actively engage in a mutual exchange of resources, know-how, and experience.

Subsequently, specific cases of labor networking are examined. First, the large Italian and Greek union confederations' attempt to coordinate their actions, in the occasion of the European Days of Action. Then, the focus turns to the case of precarious workers' mobilization. In 2005-2006, several Greek activist groups worked together with Italian anti-precarity organizations in order to introduce the Euro May Day protest in the Greek political scene, as well as to refine and reinforce the debate on what precarity is. Finally, after the arrival of the crisis (and the accompanying austerity measures) in the European South, several attempts were made in both countries to bring together shared experiences of dealing with the crisis, build strong solidarity networks and construct a common anti-austerity discourse.

Whilst the two former attempts failed to come up with any solid outcomes, the latter has already produced a fertile collaboration ground and stabilized trans-national channels of communication.

The article, based on rich empirical data gathered during five years of research, concludes in three main points: (1) Collaborative networks are much more difficult to construct, yet may prove much stronger and productive than the co-ordination or solidarity ones. (2) Cross-national structural similarities should not be considered as a

sufficient condition for labor collaboration; the discursive context of each country needs to be taken into account. (3) Transnational action attempts stand a higher chance of succeeding, when their immediate goals are tangible and rooted in real-life experiences, rather than more generic declarations.

**Jenny Junghülsing** – Labor transnationalism in the era of transnational migration: what prospects for international labor solidarity?

Neoliberal globalization and the global restructuring of production make the need for international labor solidarity in confronting an increasingly transnational capital ever more pressing. Serious challenges to building a global labor movement remain, such as the seemingly growing gaps between workers in North and South due to capital's strategy of pitting workers against each other. However, economic and social transnationalization processes may open up new opportunities for international solidarity: while the international migration flows accelerated by neoliberal globalization entail hardships for large numbers of migrant workers, labor migration may at the same time help overcome some of the major pitfalls of international labor solidarity.

The close transnational social ties many migrants have to their countries of origin and the emergence of so-called 'transnational societal spaces'<sup>1</sup> – as well documented by transnational migration research – together with the increasing organization of migrant workers in many destination countries' labor unions, might contribute to overcoming such notorious obstacles as cross-border communication difficulties, prejudices, and language and cultural barriers. Migration could potentially also push unions with little previous commitment to international solidarity to embrace more internationalist policies. Surprisingly, there has been a marked separation between transnational migration and international labor solidarity studies until now. This paper intends to overcome this gap by asking if transnational migration opens up new possibilities that need to be considered in today's thinking about international labor solidarity. It is based on an empirical analysis of the role migration plays in unions' international solidarity in two US labor unions, focusing on three areas: the content and (geographical) focus of unions' solidarity work; the interpersonal relations involving cross-border cooperation; and union members' attitude towards international solidarity. While differences between unions and migrant groups exist, the findings suggest that migrants' transnational social ties can indeed lead to the inclusion of novel topics in, and the initiation of, new solidarity activities by unions. Also, they can ease cross-border interpersonal relationships, and contribute to strengthening identification with workers abroad as well as to a stronger support for international solidarity among union members.

**Geraint Harvey and Peter Turnbull** – Union Suppression and Union Obstruction: Industrial Relations at the European Low Fares Airlines.

From their humble origins flying a handful of domestic routes just 20 years ago, the European low fares airlines (LFAs) easyJet and Ryanair have become dominant short haul carriers in Europe. Each of these airlines operates from around 30 countries and is a truly transnational organisation. Liberalisation of the European civil aviation

industry amplified the motivation and opportunity for airline management to cut costs (Blyton et al., 2001). Workers and their representatives face a Sisyphean task in dealing with the LFAs in this context as these airlines i) pursue an operational strategy marked by continuous cost reduction, with few options available to parsimonious management beyond labour costs (Turnbull and Harvey 2001) and ii) represent hyper mobile capital (exemplified by the frequent changes in base network comparative to traditional airlines). Moreover, the employment relationship between worker and manager at these airlines makes collective organisation extremely difficult. First, Ryanair adopts a vehement union suppression strategy while easyJet, although ostensibly more positively disposed to trade unions, nevertheless hampers collective activity with a strategy of union obstruction. Second, both airlines adopt employment policies such as the use of short term, temporary contracts, so that staff are predominantly young, with insecure contracts and consequently less inclined to join a trade union. Third, considerable geographical flexibility is expected of staff who might be a national of country A, based at country B, and flying to countries C, D and E. This raises the issue of jurisdiction, i.e., which national trade union takes responsibility for these staff? The paper presents data collected during a study undertaken for the European Transport Workers' Federation and the European Commission (Harvey and Turnbull 2012a). The paper sets out the problems facing European trade unions in organising and representing workers at Europe's largest LFAs and, drawing on concepts of transnational activism (Erne 2008; Tarrow 2005), evaluates the prospects and possibilities for matrix solidarity and transnational occupational solidarity (Harvey and Turnbull 2012b) in civil aviation.

**3 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.                      Coffee break**

**3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.                      Panel 4 – Power Resources (Chair Andreas Bieler)**

**Eddie Webster** – Labor after Globalization: new forms of organization, new sources power.

In his widely acclaimed book, *Work after Globalization*, Guy Standing concludes that labourism is coming to an end and in its place a precariat has emerged. But the rapid growth of a new labor studies presents us with a puzzle: in a context where the traditional labor movement in advanced industrialized countries is declining, a new global labor studies is thriving. What this new labor studies is identifying are the new initiatives, organizational forms and sources of power that are emerging at the periphery of traditional labor. There is a “growing interest in a new political subject of labor .... women, immigrants, people of color, low-paid service workers, precarious workers ... Groups that have been historically excluded from the moral and material boundaries of union membership..... Rather than traditional scholarship on industrial relations, new labor scholars are exploring transformations occurring at the periphery of mainstream labor movements” (Jennifer Chun, *The Power of the Powerless*, 2012: 40)

Drawing on recent conceptual and theoretical innovations in the power resources approach I propose an overall dynamic of working class deconstruction and

reconstruction on a global scale based on a Marx-Polanyi dialectic. I identify five examples of old and new sources of power ; market power amongst teachers in the United States , workplace bargaining amongst farm workers in Brazil, associational power amongst informal workers in India, symbolic power amongst immigrant workers in California and municipal workers in Johannesburg, and logistical power amongst mine workers in Marikana , South Africa.

What are the implications of this reconstruction of the global labor market for the future of labor? Will there be a shift to a new kind of labor movement inside the existing union structures – transformation from within? Or will it, as happened with the CIO industrial unions in the United States some eighty years ago, lead to the formation of a new worker movement, with different strategies, different political values and different political subjects? Will a distinct movement emerge in the Global South, separate from the Global North? Will these initiatives lead to a convergence and the emergence of a new global movement?

**Marissa Brookes** – Power, Labor, and Globalization: How Context-Appropriate Strategies Help Transnational Labor Alliances Succeed.

Workers are increasingly cooperating across national borders in campaigns aimed at influencing employers to improve working conditions and labor rights. In every case, transnational labor alliances are attempting to alter an employer’s behavior by exercising power. Nevertheless, the nature and exercise of workers’ power in transnational campaigns is under-theorized in the literature and only partially understood in practice. In order to understand why some transnational labor alliances succeed and others do not, closer attention to the specific ways in which workers exercise power collectively on multiple scales is essential.

This paper therefore contributes to our comprehension of labor transnationalism in the present era of globalization by analyzing the three types of power workers exercise in transnational campaigns: *structural power*, *institutional power*, and *coalitional power*. These three power types entail, respectively, the capacity to physically disrupt an employer’s operations beyond a single worksite, the capacity to hold an employer accountable through legal or regulatory institutions, and the capacity to expand the scope of conflict by mobilizing non-labor stakeholders to whom the employer must respond.

Using empirical evidence drawn from recently concluded transnational campaigns, I argue that transnational labor alliances succeed only when they exercise a context-appropriate power type – that is, a power type that directly challenges the core interests of the employer in question. In presenting this argument, I show how global production networks, overlapping institutional contexts, and networks of stakeholders outside the labor movement create and constrain power for workers and employers engaged in conflict on the international scale.

**Jörg Nowak** – A state-theoretical approach to the current limitations of transnational solidarity: The mass strikes after 2008 in India, Brazil and South Africa.

The years after 2008 saw the most militant labour struggles since two decades in India (struggle at Maruti Suzuki plant 2011/12), Brazil (strikes in the construction sector) and South Africa (miners' strike 2012). These mass strikes shared a lot of features in spite of the impact of national path dependencies. But transnational solidarity did not emerge either between the actors of the mass strikes itself nor between the actors of the mass strikes and other trade unions or workers. Although, for example, the labour unrest in the Indian Maruti Suzuki company in July 18, 2012, happened just a few weeks ahead of the strikes and the massacre at the Karee mine in Rustenburg in early August 2012, there was no exchange or mutual reference between the activists involved in the mass strikes. But, on the other side, the workers at the Maruti Suzuki Manesar plant compared their occupation of the factory in June 2011 with the Occupy Wall Street Movement that emerged in the same month and that they saw on TV during their own occupation. The decisive support of these (to a large extent successful) mass strikes from outside of the workplaces did not consist in transnational labour solidarity, but rather came from the local, regional or national level.

So, how can the non-contemporaneity of common global causes and common forms of struggles on the one hand, and the largely national political arena of these struggles on the other hand be explained? I propose to extend Beverly Silver's approach that explains labour unrest with reference to power resources, product cycles and spatial, financial and technological fixes. A state-theoretical approach inspired by the works of Nicos Poulantzas and Bob Jessop can provide for explanations to the largely successful containment of labour struggles to the national terrain. While the organization of the economy and political regimes are dominated by transnational strategies, the reproduction of political legitimacy is still confined to the national level, as is most of labour law. This spatial separation of labour mobilization disables the rather strong workplace bargaining power that is given with global production networks. Although the main trade unions of the BRIC states start to hold common meetings and define common frameworks, these efforts do not translate into effective transnational solidarity of the respective trade union bodies in the case of major labour unrest and labour repression. How can more immediate channels of communication translate the synchronicity of struggles into effective solidarity?

**Ines Wagner** – Solidarity and resistance in a pan-European labour market: posted workers and transnational action in Germany.

Worker 'posting', or temporary migration of low-wage workers sent by their employers to work abroad has become increasingly prominent in the European Union. While this workforce remains largely isolated from the host country institutional structure of labour representation, this paper argues that the existing literature on union and posted worker relations may not capture the specific nature of posted worker resistance. The aim of this article is: 1) to explore transnational labour action in posting workspaces; and 2) to discuss their effects for the capital-labour power relation in a Pan-European labour market. Based on in-depth interviews with transnational posted workers and industrial relations actors in the German meat and

construction sector the article discusses a case of posted worker resistance that took place in isolation from traditional channels of worker representation.

Different forms of labour action have implications on how we conceptualize power dynamics within the EU. Instead of **regarding power relations as binary opposites this paper considers labour** power as a relational dynamic. It regards protest and government as mutually constitutive, undermining as well as strengthening dominant forms of governance. Binary power approaches often imagine resistance as standing in direct confrontation with the power they oppose and not necessarily recognize the ambiguity resistance usually entails. More reflection is needed because different forms of power structures, such as posting in a Pan-European labour market, may call for different forms of resistance. A more nuanced understanding of labour differentiation is useful in light of increasingly poorly regulated workspaces that exist in isolation from traditional channels of worker representation.

**7 p.m. Conference Dinner**

**Friday, 28 February 2013**

**9a.m. Coffee**

**9.15 a.m. to 10.45 a.m. Panel 5 – Resisting Public Sector Restructuring**  
(Chair Knut Kjeldstadli)

**Jane Hardy** – Marketisation, migration and the transnational solidarity of health workers in an enlarged Europe.

The European Commission estimated that by 2020 there would be a Europe-wide shortage of between one and two million health workers. In the core economies of the European Union (EU) this problem has been addressed, in part, by the recruitment of health workers from elsewhere in Europe and beyond. However, the marketization of health care, impact of austerity and the increased mobility of health workers, facilitated by the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2007 is promoting unevenness in the distribution of health care workers. This is both, between and within EU economies, with a particularly deleterious effect on the countries and regions of New Member States and the health care workers within them.

Drawing on primary research data, which comprises EU-wide questionnaires of trade unions and interviews and case studies of two sender countries from New Member States (NMS) (Poland and Romania) the paper will map emerging patterns of labour mobility in an enlarged Europe and analyses its drivers and impacts. In particular, the paper will examine how the trade unions that represent health workers in sender and receiver countries have intervened to support mobility, but also prevent a race to the bottom in terms of the pay and conditions of migrant workers. We examine how the European Public Service Union has played a key role in raising demands that provide the basis for trade union solidarity across Europe.

## **Sabina Stan** – Capitalism, care work and transnational collective action

Care work is crucial for capitalism as it contributes to the reproduction of the labor force. However, until recently care work in Europe has been largely seen as situated outside transnational capitalist relations of production and exchange. Indeed, the mid-century class compromise led to a combination of formal institutional care provided by national, ‘sheltered’, public care services, and informal, ‘unwaged’, domestic care mainly provided by women. Neither area was seen as affected by transnational forces. The decline of class compromise after the 1970s and the neo-liberal character of EU integration in the last two decades increasingly integrated reproductive relations central to care work into transnational capitalist relations. On the one hand, care work in the formal institutional sector has been increasingly privatised and commodified. In as much as the care privatisation is also driven, among other things, by EU-level governance (through ECJ judgments, Troika austerity programmes, or the new EU economic governance measures) and also fosters important expansionary moves by transnational corporations, its particular shape within the EU is increasingly transnational. On the other hand, care work in the domestic sector rose in importance while being increasingly commodified through capitalist wage arrangements. In as much as this process is driven by a combination of the rising access to the formal labor market of women in Old Europe, and the replacement of their domestic work by female domestic migrant workers from the NMS or outside the EU, this second process is also transnational.

The paper will outline the challenges and opportunities that the integration of care work in transnational capitalist relations within the European Union is posing to transnational collective action in this area.

## **David Jordhus-Lier** – Motivations for up-scaling public sector unionism during times of crisis.

This paper explores the strategic possibilities of public sector workers facing neoliberal restructuring and austerity measures. This is part of a long-term exploration of public sector labour geographies of the author which so far has included explorations of the local struggles around local government restructuring (Lier 2009), and a review of public sector unions in the geography literature (Jordhus-Lier 2012). While several attempts have been made at understanding how public sector unions meet and respond to neoliberalism worldwide (e.g. Dibben et al. 2004, Fairbrother and Rainnie 2005, Tattersall 2006), less focus has been directed at the attempts of public sector unions to join forces at a global scale. In this paper I will examine some of the motivations to do so, both as stated in the literature and in interviews with representatives of the Public Service International and other unionists involved in global union federations. While the global economic integration of production networks have prompted internationalism among certain sectors, the nation-state remains a powerful employer and institutional apparatus workers employed by the state *and* workers performing public services (due to neoliberal restructuring, these are increasingly becoming distinct categories in practice). However, there might be other rationales that are being conceptualised as common ground (or rather a common enemy) for solidarity and action among public sector unions. Among these are: the policy convergence around New Public Management reforms and increased

managerial control in the public sector; a perceived process of ‘proletarianisation’ in public services; the increasing penetration and dominance of global corporate actors (such as TNCs in the water sector); the austerity discourse promoted by conservative media of public sector workers’ wage demands being an unaffordable cost. All these dimensions might be perceived as reasons for transcending the notion of the public sector as contained in nationally distinct, state-dominated employee-employer relationships.

**10.45 am to 11 a.m.                      Coffee break**

**11. a.m. to 12.30 p.m.                      Panel 6 – Politicizing the Transnational** (Chair Idar Helle)

**Sabrina Zajak** – Pathways of activism: Theorizing transnational labor rights activism within global governance.

Research has acknowledged that global economic and political integration poses serious constraints on the organization and power of labour, but also opened up new possibilities for trade unions and social movement organizations. But while there is a considerable amount of empirical case studies on how trade unions respond to neoliberal-globalization and e.g. by transnationalizing, forming alliances with social movement organizations, targeting or cooperating with transnational companies, international organizations and states, an integrative analytical framework which analyses multi-level strategizing across different contexts at once is still missing. This paper presents a framework of studying labor rights activism in transnational pathways of influence, which conceptualizes the dynamic interplay between activism, transnational institutions, and domestic contexts. The framework integrates insights from social movement studies, institutional theorists and industrial relation scholars to study how labor rights activists mobilize along four different paths: Activists can try to mobilize within or target international organizations (the international-organizational pathway), other states or regions (the bilateral pathway), transnational companies and private regulatory arrangements (the market pathway). Last they also support and try to empower domestic labor rights organizations (the civil society paths). By conceptualizing how labor activists mobilize and interact across different contexts at once the paper contributes to the conference’s aim to theorize opportunities and constraints of transnational labor rights activism.

**Sacha Dierckx** – Global capital, national labour? Re-politicizing the transnationalisation of capital.

This article argues that labour and social movements should re-politicize the transnationalisation of capital in production and finance. The neoliberal era has demonstrated the power asymmetry between global capital and national labour. Based on a historical material perspective, a “leftist trilemma” can be observed: the incommensurability between global capital, national labour and successful class struggle against capital. It seems that both academics, labour movements and progressive politicians have accepted this upscaling of capital to the global level as an

irreversible fact that cannot be challenged. Therefore, they argue that the transnationalisation of labour is the only way forward. This article claims that while the transnationalisation of labour could be one way to deal with this power asymmetry, this is not a sufficient strategy to challenge the authority of global capital. Therefore, progressive labour and social movements should re-politicize and try to scale back the transnationalisation of capital. While this will not be an easy task, the article uses two examples from the European Union to demonstrate that the transnationalisation of capital can be and should indeed be challenged: the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) and investor-state arbitration that is included in the negotiations between the US and EU on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Both examples prove that challenging the power of transnational capital is not impossible, but that labour movements need to focus more on these struggles. This will give more space to labour agency to wage successful class struggles.

**Tamara Kay** – Theorizing Overlap Between National and Transnational Fields: The Case of Labor Union Alliance-Building to Deal with Crisis.

The ascendancy of neoliberalism and anti-state ideologies, the increase in corporate power and the global financial crisis have taken their toll on labor movements around the globe. Today the proportion of unionized workers in OECD countries is half what it was in the 1970s. This paper examines how North American unions are dealing with the crisis by entering nontraditional advocacy areas -- immigration, environment, and trade -- to increase their relevance, influence, and allies. North American union positions vis-à-vis immigrants have shifted dramatically in recent years from support of draconian legislation to leading a broad-based movement for immigrants' rights. Unions joined with environmental organizations to form the BlueGreen Alliance in 2006 to advocate for environmental and worker protections through a green economy and green jobs. In an unprecedented move the AFL-CIO is even poised to offer membership to members of environmental, immigrant, and civil-rights organizations. Unions have also continued their fair trade advocacy into the post-NAFTA era, fighting the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Trans-Atlantic free trade agreements, as well as investor-state enforcement mechanisms and WTO loan conditions. My research suggests that historically, North American unions' inability to deal effectively with immigration and environmental protection has been a major obstacle to labor transnationalism. However, their advocacy on these issues and their continued struggles against free trade could provide fertile ground for transnational collaboration and cooperation with unions engaged in similar struggles across the globe, particularly in Europe. The paper uses union alliance building across these new advocacy areas to theorize the relationship between national and transnational fields.

**Roland Erne** – Explaining transnational union action – Lessons from the European integration process.

Whereas numerous case studies of successful and failed instances of transnational union cooperation have been published during recent years, there have been only a few attempts to theorize cross-border union action. In *European Unions* (Erne 2008), I argued that neither diverse national backgrounds nor technocratic supranational

governance structures rules out transnational action. Other studies came to similar conclusions (Crespy 2012, Meardi 2012, Gajewska 2009). Conversely, however, economic integration does not necessarily trigger transnational union cooperation either, arguably because of the difficulties to reveal the social relations that constitute markets. In fact, all cases of successful transnational mobilizations of organised labour that I analysed so far occurred only if unions were able to ‘politicize’ socio-economic interactions – either within multinational companies or (supranational) public policy arenas. Thus, transnational union action may be related to the degree of centralisation of decision making within multinational corporations, to the decision-making power of supranational organisations, and to the degree of cross-border mobility of migrant workers; hence, to instances that not only limit the autonomy of local unions but also provide crystallisation points for transnational action. Hence, the ‘politics’ of labour transnationalism (Kay 2009) seems to be a crucial factor. Conversely, however, the more actors believe in the availability of national exit options, the more a politicisation of the EU integration process can lead to a ‘renationalisation’ of trade union politics (Erne 2008: 23). Therefore, this paper aim to reassess of the role ‘politicisation’ processes play in triggering transnational union action based on a comparative assessment of European trade unions’ responses to the EU’s ‘silent revolution’ in economic governance (Barroso 2011) which subsumed national economic policy-making (including wage policies) under a close oversight of EU institutions.

**12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.      Lunch**

**1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m.              Panel 7 – European integration and transnational labour** (Chair Sabina Stan)

**Anne Dufresne** – Euro-Unionism and Wage Policy.

With the European economic governance, besides wages freeze in the public sector and demand for more decentralization, one of the key recommendations of the Euro-plus Pact consists in "Reviewing wage-setting arrangements and/or wage indexation ». This recommendation process constitutes a particularly strong attack on the unions since it means intervening in their bargaining autonomy and undermining their power. Moreover, the attack on the wage under way here is part of a broader plan instituting a radical, counter-democratic regime change.

How can European unions react to this attack considering that at European Union level, the Euro-unions relinquished the topic of pay for many years, accepting the convergence on wage restraint that emerged in the 1980s. The present contribution will analyse the ways in which they are now seeking to (re)construct the Europeanisation of the wage via initiatives to coordinate national collective bargaining in the sectors, and more recently, by formulating a new demand for a European minimum wage. In the times of Europact and European economic governance, will these strategies enable the Euro-unions to acquire sufficient legitimacy to intervene in the field of wages at the supranational level? A further discussion will be also opened on the possibilities to recover, for the trade-unionism, the fundamental right of the strike.

**Steffen Lehndorff** – Crisis losers vs. crisis profiteers? Challenges to transnational labour solidarity in the Eurozone crisis.

In today's Europe, trade unions are facing the challenge of 'building bridges' across borders. In the course of the ongoing crisis in, and of, the Eurozone, the mutual dependency of unions has popped to the surface. It has become more obvious than ever that trade unions at EU level are confronted with the need to go beyond what Richard Hyman once called "the preserve of the professional trade union diplomat". When it comes to decisions about joint days of action, let alone Europe-wide campaigns, however, the dilemma appears almost unsurmountable: How to bridge the gap between the issues at stake at EU level and the areas of conflict trade unions have to confront at their respective national levels. Thus, the question what 'solidarity' actually means in practice is far from trivial. The paper proposed to the workshop argues that unions in individual countries have no choice but to fight the dominant EU crisis management policies primarily at national level. This is where transnational action must be *founded*, unless solidarity becomes a matter of lip service.

The argument is developed by a comparison between the problems faced by trade unions in Greece and Spain on the one hand, and in Germany on the other. In the so-called periphery countries, trade unions confront a dramatic dismantling of labour standards which impacts substantially on the institutional potentials of future interest representation of labour. In contrast, unions in Germany may give the impression of crisis profiteers as they appear to focus on cooperative measures geared to moderate wage increases and the safeguarding of jobs at firm level. As a closer look at the first half of the 2000s reveals, however, German trade unions were the big pre-crisis losers. The weakening of the German collective bargaining system and the defeat in the struggles around the Agenda 2010 were at the heart of the growing economic imbalances within the Eurozone which have surfaced dramatically in today's Eurozone crisis. Now, the ongoing, in some cases even deepening recession is being exploited to dismantle trade unions' institutional power resources in other countries with a degree of radicalism that goes far beyond the German model. Thus, mainstream policy approaches within the EU have made the disempowerment of one union into a problem for the others. To acknowledge this mutual dependency could be the starting point of serious transnational cooperation.

**Heiner Dribbusch** – Where is the European General Strike? Prospects of transnational union action against austerity.

In 2012 when in a number of European countries the protests against the European austerity programs escalated most notably in the Southern European Countries, Vasco Pedrina, the then representative of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SGB), put forward the idea of an European general strike being at the same time very cautious about the chances that the European Trade Union Confederation would effectively call such a strike in the near future (Pedrina 2012). The paper takes this as a starting point to first explore some major determinants for solidarity with reference to the relevant literature (e.g. Richard Hyman and Rainer Zoll). It then identifies some major constraints to international solidarity most notably the drawing of boundaries by employers and workers alike (Silver 2003). This is followed by a brief outline of the determinants of collective action identifying perceptions and expectations of workers

and the role of unions/activists as crucial factors. The transnational campaign of dock workers across Europe against the so-called Port Packages 1 and 2 in 2003 and 2006 and the mobilization against the Bolkestein directive in 2006 are chosen as positive examples for both favourable conditions for solidarity (including the partial support of employers) and successful international action. The paper will conclude with a brief discussion of the more difficult conditions and prospects of transnational action against the current European austerity measures.

**Darragh Golden** – The role of trade union internationalism in explaining the position of Irish and Italian trade unions on European integration.

Trade union internationalism has been an integral component of the labour movement, at least rhetorically. The underpinning principle being that workers' interest override the so-called 'national interest.' This idea is of utmost relevance in today's setting of regional integration and globalisation. Moreover, this idea needs to be more than aspirational if labour is to remain a relevant social force in the twenty-first century. However, there are different starting points and trade unions are products of their own environments. While the contexts in which they operate may differ, however, the challenges trade unions face are similar in nature. This paper will assess the role of internationalism in the Italian and Irish trade union movements and to what extent did it feature within the respective labour movements. Also, how has European economic integration influenced these positions and does internationalization have the same meaning for both labour movements in today's settings? It has been well documented that capital can take advantage of 'disappearing' boundaries. Can the same be said of trade unions?

**3 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.**                      **Coffee break**

**3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.**                      **Panel 8 – Scales of Action** (Chair Andreas Bieler)

**Robert O'Brien** – Six Faces of Labour Internationalism.

This paper argues that contrary to many labour studies approaches internationalism should not been seen as a question of possibility or impossibility, but as a continuum of behaviours. Rather than being divided into strong or weak forms of internationalism this approach argues that there are six faces, shades or strains of internationalism. The differences between the categories are generated by a range of stances along two sets of variables. The first variable is the degree to which the actors stress the primacy of the national or transnational. The second variable is the degree to which each position begins analysis rooted in the economy, the state or ideas. This leads to a matrix with six possible positions covering those that focus on national or global production, national or global regulation, nationalist or cosmopolitan ideas.

Each of these stances to labour internationalism contains its own theories, practices and intellectual influences. They exist both in theory and reality, and they reoccur over time. A single organization or person can contain more than one strain or pivot between different faces depending upon time and context. The paper illustrates the

presence of the six faces by drawing upon a wide variety of labour studies literature and case studies, including an examination of the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR). For each category the key concepts, actions and indicative authors will be highlighted.

**Jamie K. McCallum** – Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing.

This paper addresses a new “spirit” of transnational labor activity in the last thirty years—the strategies of workers and their organizations to exert governance over multinational companies. This has happened in a variety of ways, but I address the most recent strategy, global framework agreements. I focus on the interplay between global and national-level priorities, and how they create varied and uneven outcomes within campaigns. The question posed here is simple: How can global unions build local power?

The paper addresses the global campaign of private security guards who work for G4S, one of the most aggressive and controversial campaigns ever waged by a global union federation. I focus on the varied local outcomes as a bellwether for evaluating global unionism. The research is based on 50 in-person interviews in nine countries, but specifically compares outcomes among unions in South Africa, India, Brazil, and the US.

However, this local activity is made only possible because unions were able to govern, or constrain, the power and freedom of their employer at the global level. I therefore view framework agreements not as policy instruments, as is often the case, but as one part of a long-term industrial strategy to discipline large companies. I argue that this new spirit of labor activism, though it contains remnants of an older vision, constitutes a growing tendency in the global labor movement.

**Charles Umney** – Cosmopolitanism and international trade unionism: Managerial and mobilizing forms.

This conceptual article argues that the well-established sociological concept of cosmopolitanism has been inadequately applied to organised labour, and specifically to the international activities of trade unions. Taking a Marxian perspective, it sets these subjects side-by-side, considering what the experience of international trade unionism can reveal about cosmopolitanism, and theorising the forms cosmopolitanism may take in international union activity. Regarding the first question, it argues that the development of cosmopolitanism assumes radically different forms among union members and managerial elites. Regarding the second question, it categorises international trade unionism using two categories termed ‘managerial’ and ‘mobilising’ internationalisms. These categories have material determinants, and in each the interaction between material interest representation and cosmopolitan normativity assumes different forms.

**Mark Anner – Labor Control & Local and Transnational Resistance in the Global Apparel Industry.**

The end of controlled trade in apparel and the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 fundamentally altered the competitive dynamics of the global apparel industry. The emerging group of countries that now dominate the global apparel industry have done so through three models of labor control: State Despotism (China and Vietnam), Market Despotism (Bangladesh and Indonesia), and Employer Despotism (Honduras and El Salvador). In the case of State Despotism, labor is controlled by a system of legal and extra-legal mechanisms designed to prevent independent worker actions, most especially coordinated collective action. In the case of Market Despotism, extremely unfavorable labor market conditions discipline labor; many workers do not rebel because they are afraid of losing their job and facing unemployment and destitution. Finally, Employer Despotism refers to efforts by employers to use or exploit a climate of fear in countries with high gang violence in order to control labor. Honduras and El Salvador, two of the most violent countries in the world, are now two of the largest Latin American apparel exporters to the United States. These three models of labor control have engendered three form of localized, national and cross-border worker solidarity: Wildcat strikes in China and Vietnam to circumvent official, state-controlled labor unions; International Buyer-Labor Accords to address safety and other costs (market) related issues in Bangladesh by requiring binding pricing mechanisms, and Transnational Activists Campaigns that leverage symbolic power (the right to voice and human dignity) to organize workers in Central America and improve working conditions.

**7 p.m.**

**Conference Party**