

Call for Papers for a Special Issue of

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Trade Unions and Social Policy in the Process of European Integration

Guest-edited by Johannes Kiess and Martin Seeliger

The special issue aims at bringing together innovative theoretical perspectives and timely empirical research on trade unions' impact on the formation and implementation of social policy across Europe and on the European level. Insofar as “welfare state development requires the exercise of public authority and incurs distributive consequences, social policy change and continuity remain inherently political phenomena, shaped by institutions, policy legacies, and power relations” (Hemerijck 2012: 46). From the traditional angle of welfare state research and social policy analysis, these power relations emerge within a triangle of three groups of collective actors – the state, capital and labor (Korpi 2018).

In the course of European integration, the constellation between these three has been fundamentally transformed in several regards (Höpner/Schäfer 2015). While labor mobility, tax competition and the constant threat of business relocating their activities to far- (or less far-) off sites have weakened the ability to produce political lock-in effects (or: spatial fixes) in national production systems, a new system of European labor relations (Hyman 2005; Erne 2008) and (allegedly) a political reference frame of ‘Social Europe’ has been emerging (or at least announced to emerge) (Seeliger 2019).

In the special issue, we aim at the role that trade unions take on in creating and maintaining social policies in the course of European integration. In order to understand these dynamics, the contributions should (individually or taken together) pursue a combination of multiple epistemologies. *Firstly*, through international comparisons, we can improve our understanding of national policy-dynamics and make sense of the institutional heterogeneity within the EU-27.

Secondly, such comparisons can reach their theoretical potential when applied in explaining institutional dynamics within the multi-level political system of the EU. As recent debates around the reform of the Posting of Workers Directive or the European Trade Union Confederations proposal on the European Minimum wage illustrate, finding common positions on supranational level, mainly depends on the particular national backgrounds of the national affiliates involved.

Thirdly, analyses could aim at transnational effects, stemming from mutual observation or bilateral initiatives, such as wage coordination or transnational organizations, like the Council of Nordic Trade Unions.

This special issue will aim at trade union strategies, actions, coalitions, debates, and positioning regarding social policies in these three epistemological perspectives. More detailed, we invite authors to submit contributions on or related to the following topics:

- Prevalent **action fields** on the European level (European minimum wage, worker's protection standards, etc.) or across European countries (national campaigns for minimum wages, labor standards, etc.)
- Trade unions and their **policy coalitions** with regards to specific social policy debates on the European level or from a comparative perspective
- Coalition building (attempts), framing processes, **relative positioning** of trade unions towards specific social policy debates
- **Internal debates** on social policies, conceptualizations (of tasks) of the welfare state, Social Europe, etc.
- **Recent challenges** to social policy development across Europe or on the European level (for example the gig economy and digitalization, or the Corona pandemic)
- **National specificities** regarding the processes of re-nationalization and internationalization

Contributions from different disciplines, including political science, sociology, economics, or legal research are welcome. We encourage everybody, and especially encourage non-male colleagues to send **abstracts of 500 words in length until July 10th 2020** to martin.seeliger@uni-hamburg.de and kiess@soziologie.uni-siegen.de (you will be notified about the proceedings shortly after). Full papers of not more than 72.000 characters in length (including tables, references, figures) must be submitted until December 1st 2020. Please note that all contributions to this special issue have to be submitted in English. For further information on the journal please visit <https://www.degruyter.com/view/journals/zsr/zsr-overview.xml>. The special issue is scheduled to be published September 2021.

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