Presentation of the `The Palgrave Handbook of Workers’ Participation at Plant Level´

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Berlin School of Economics and Law
9 am – 10:30 am
Room 512

Berger, Stefan / Pries, Ludger / Wannöffel, Manfred (Eds.)
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BACKGROUND

- Foundation 1975 / 1979
- Contract between Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB) and IG Metall (Industrial Metal Union)
- Central institute of RUB
- Equally represented committee
- Bridge between social science and working world

ACTIVITIES

- Transdisciplinary research
- Learning Factories
- Further education programs
- Interdisciplinary lectures
About the Handbook:

„Most people in the world spend the greater part of their life at their workplace“ (Berger/Pries/Wannöffel, p. 1)

- This handbook specifically considers the structural social conflict within the process of value adding.
- Conflicts are the results of the critical relationship between the continuous development of the main productive forces (technology, information, work, organization) and the social relations of production and services (private ownership of their resources) in market-driven societies.
- This relation is the structural base for the search of sustainable political regulations of social conflicts between different social actors - employers, employees and their organizations – with contradicting economic and social interests.
- From the editors point of view, labour conflicts are not just like any social, religious or ecological contention but the structural dispute of market-driven societies.
About the Handbook

- **Employees** as **citizens** are the real actor bridges between the production system and the civil society where employees enjoy certain **political and civil rights**.

- Main challenges are how to incorporate political and civil rights of formal political democracies into business organizations and how to transform formal political democracies into real **social democracies** through the **institutionalization of workers’ participation rights**.

- Political democracies do not end at the doors of business organizations. Social democracies have their starting point in the **political regulation of the structural conflict** between the continuous development of the main productive forces and the social relations within production and services systems.

- Conceptually, this handbook are related to the concept of **Industrial Citizenship** by **Thomas Marshall** who interpreted Industrial Citizenship as a central element to regulate market-driven market societies (Marshall, 1963).
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PART I  Overviews

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PART III Country Chapters

PART IV Conclusion: Workers´ Participation at Plant Level and its Future
PART I Overviews

1. Workers´ Participation: Comparative Historical Perspectives from the Nineteenth Century to the End of Cold War (Stefan Berger)

2. Workers´ Participation at Plant Level in a Comparative Perspective (Ludger Pries)

3. Workers´ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, an Roles of Social Movements (Manfred Wannöffel)
1. Workers´ Participation: Comparative Historical Perspectives from the Nineteenth Century to the End of Cold War (Stefan Berger)

- **Historical view** on workers’ participation at plant level in a comparative perspective
- Focus on the development of `social Partnership´ in the period from the first half of the twentieth century via the era of the Cold War towards the 1980’s
- `Varieties of Capitalism´ approach to explain the varieties of workers’ representation
- **Multi-factor explanation** to understand the relative success or failure of models of social partnership (characteristics of the state policy, political culture, influence of ideas, values and norms…)
- **Authoritarian traditions** (formerly fascist Germany, Italy, Spain) vs. **liberal traditions** (US, UK, Australia, Nordic states)
2. Workers’ Participation at Plant Level in a Comparative Perspective (Ludger Pries)

- **Analytical framework** for comparing different forms of contemporary workers’ participation between different regions and countries all over the world

- **After World War II and the experience of uncontrolled capitalism of Auschwitz**: great challenges regarding the implementation and extension of participative democracy at plants and enterprises

- **Crucial issues**: arenas of collective bargaining, dominant actor groups, labor regulation, sources of power, shared ideology, cognitive maps, different types of conflict resolutions

- Comparison of Germany and China, European Union member states
3. Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements (Manfred Wannöffel)

- Analysis of selected labour conflicts, practice of conflict solution, and institutionalization processes of workers’ participation at plant level, the role of social movements, and their socio-political effects in different historical and national contexts
- Three examples: Germany, England and the United States
- Argumentation of the chapter is based on the methodological approach of Gidden’s structuration concept

→ core thesis: political regulation / institutionalization does not come from above, rather always a result of social conflict resolution from below
3. **Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements** (Manfred Wannöffel)

**GERMANY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social conflict</th>
<th>Social practice</th>
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<th>Social movements</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905–1924</td>
<td>Autocratic management structures (master-of-the-house position) Practical problems of workers at the end of lost World War I</td>
<td>Collective action/strikes first in the mining industry, then expansion of strikes in all German industries</td>
<td>Overall revolutionary movement in the democratic transition process of Germany</td>
<td>Works Councils Act in 1920</td>
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<td>Political integration of noncommunist, reformist unions in the political system; emergence of the dual structure of industrial relations at the end of World War I:</td>
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3. **Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements**

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<td>1944–1952</td>
<td>Workers’ committees emerged spontaneously, assuming responsibility due to the precarious working and living conditions</td>
<td>Reinstallation of the dual structure of workers’ representation in 1946 by allied forces</td>
<td>Movement of workers’ committees at plant level in liberated regions by allies before World War II had ended</td>
<td>Works Constitution Act in 1952</td>
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3. **Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements** (Manfred Wannöffel)

**ENGLAND:**

**Table 4.2** The Feminist Movement (1960s–70s) in England and the institutionalization of workers’ participation

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968–1975 Unequal pay between sexes Less representation of civil rights at plant and company levels (women)</td>
<td>Collective action/strikes first in one of the Ford plants Enlargement of collective action and strikes in English automobile and other industries</td>
<td>Critical position against collective action and strikes at plant level Position changed when increasing female membership could be anticipated</td>
<td>Emergence of the second wave of Women Movement in England Cooperation in social networks was the decisive factor for political success</td>
<td>Equal Pay Act in 1970 Ratification of ILO Convention 100 in 1971 Anti-Discrimination Law in 1975</td>
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3. Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements (Manfred Wannöffel)

UNITED STATES:

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<td>1980–ongoing Deterioration of work and employment conditions through labor contract Poor working conditions</td>
<td>Collective action/strikes at plant level Enlargement of collective actions and strikes through campaigning and civil disobedience</td>
<td>Weakened by concepts of contract labor Fewer institutional resources Change through concept of ‘Social Movement Unionism’</td>
<td>Cooperation in a social network with community groups, migrant associations, and civil rights organizations was the decisive factor for political success</td>
<td>Union recognition at plant level Collective agreements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Workers’ Participation at Plant Level: Conflicts, Institutionalization Processes, and Roles of Social Movements (Manfred Wannöffel)

CONCLUSION:

- The changes in the regulation and structuring of labor and participation opportunities have always been connected to deep labour conflicts, social practice of conflict solution and institutionalization.

- Despite significant national differences, social movements are increasingly important in supporting conflict resolution strategies at plant level.

- Legal structure of workers’ participation = extension of political democracy with its civil and political rights of citizens to the sphere of economy in business organizations → Industrial Citizenship (Thomas Marshall 1963)
PART II Classic Theoretical and Historical Perspective on Workers‘ Participation

- Analysis of seminal authors and crucial texts on workers‘ participation
- Conceptual grounds of workers‘ participation at plant level are summarized in a historical perspective
- Insights into specific historical experiences of workers‘ participation at plant level
- For example:
  - Thomas Haipeter presents Western European experiences of employees participation tracing back the origins of this concept
  - György Széll presents the special case of Yugoslavia where workers‘ participation within the Social Federal Republic was a central pillar of the overall economic and societal model as such
PART III Country Chapters

- 18 Country Studies about the historical backgrounds, development, current situation, and perspectives of workers’ participation / industrial democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>early industrialized countries</th>
<th>late industrialized countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
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<td>Czechia and Slovakia</td>
<td>Russia</td>
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PART IV Workers´ Participation at Plant Level and Its Future

- `History matters´: For dealing with the structural conflict of social participation in business it is essential to reflect the historical dimension of workers’ participation to understand the origin of specific national structures.

- There is no one homogenous strategy of workers´ participation, that can be applied to both early industrialized and late industrialized countries over the world. (Varieties of Capitalism)

- Future of workers’ participation? **Compromise between democracy and capitalism is worldwide under pressure** (Streeck)

- Precarious and digital work outside plants and companies structures, Growing influence of Platform economies (Amazon, Uber, etc.), Process of disembedding of labour of social institutions

- **Market as a devil mill** (Polanyi)
Thank you very much for your attention!