

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Solidarity Reloaded

Trade Unions and other Social Movements: Between the Challenges and Opportunities of Globalisation

Graduate Conference 2014

April 1-4, 2014

Georg-August University of Göttingen, Conference Centre by the Historical Observatory. Organised by the Hans Böckler Foundation in cooperation with the Göttingen Graduate School of Social Sciences (GGG)

Against the backdrop of economic globalisation, the transnational networking and cooperation of trade unions and other social movements has increasingly gained attention in social movement and trade union research. As capital now increasingly moves in global terms and political and economic decision-making processes no longer occur exclusively at the national level, trade unions and other social movements now also face the challenge of collaborating across borders. International solidarity seems more necessary than ever – while simultaneously 'uneven geographical development' (Harvey) often makes this increasingly difficult. At the same time, however, globalisation as well as social transnationalisation processes seem to open up new possibilities for international solidarity. Simplified travel and communication options facilitated especially by the internet as well as the emergence of a global public at large all make easier cross-border diffusion of ideas, frames and collective identities.

These developments are analysed by different disciplines, with scientists often referring to international solidarity as a natural basis for transnational action. However, the concept of international solidarity proper often remains vague in scientific debates. A particular shortfall here is the lack of noteworthy theoretical development about what international solidarity actually *is* and what conditions favour or inhibit it. In this context, equally meagre attention has hitherto focused on the relationship between solidarity, interest and empathy on an international scale.

This multi-disciplinary conference aims to contribute to a better understanding of the foundations for international solidarity among workers, trade unions and other social movements in such areas as

migration, feminism, climate change, and in view of the protests against European austerity policies. Furthermore, it intends to analyse what windows of opportunity might open up in the age of economic globalisation and social transnationalisation. The conference aims to bring together trade union and social movement research as well as research and practice in a debate on international solidarity, thereby contributing to the development of theories. To this end, questions as to the relationship between shared interests and identification and/or empathy in a globalised and transnationalised world are to be re-formulated. Forming a special focus here will be the commonalities and differences between workers' movements and other social movements.

The questions to be debated at the conference include:

- What is solidarity across borders based upon? What are its foundations and prerequisites? What is the difference between international workers' solidarity and the solidarity of other social movements?
- What contribution do concepts from movement research such as *frames* and *opportunity structures* bring to the understanding of international solidarity?
- How can the relationship between common interests and “emotional” factors and/or empathy and shared identity be determined? How could this relationship change within the context of globalisation and transnationalisation?
- What are the obstacles to, but also opportunities for, international solidarity in social movements and trade unions?
- What are the prerequisites for organising international solidarity along supply chains and/or in transnational corporate networks? What role does international solidarity play in the revitalisation of trade unions?
- What specific role do developments such as the transnationalisation of social life, the digitalisation of communication and extended travel possibilities play in promoting international solidarity?
- What role does the internet play as a space for the transnational public at large? What (catalyst) effects are proven to result from transnational solidarity?
- What can trade unions learn from other social movements such as the feminist, environmental or development policy movements, and vice versa?
- What difficulties – but also perspectives and needs – exist for alliances between trade unions and other social movements on an international scale?

Addressees of the Conference

The conference targets doctoral candidates, post-doctoral researchers as well as researchers on the cusp of research and practice. It provides a forum for discussing one's own questions, theses, theoretical ramifications, methodological approaches and challenges. Interested scientists are requested to submit exposés that deal with international solidarity issues of labour organisations and social movements in general, against the background of growing transnationalisation. A special focus at the conference will be to debate cross-border approaches pursued by trade unions and social movements which contribute to further theoretical understanding of solidarity and its prerequisites.

Programme and Organisation

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(Hans Böckler Foundation doctoral scholarship holders)

Doctoral Scholarship Department of the Hans Böckler Foundation

Göttingen Graduate School of Social Sciences

Details and Deadlines

Interested parties are kindly requested to e-mail a 1 to 2-page abstract in German or English as well as a brief biography and details on their research profile to **WT@boeckler.de** by **no later than 6 September 2013**.

For enquiries also contact this address or call the Scholarship Department of the Hans Böckler Foundation (Dr Susanne Schedel on tel. ++49(0)211/7778-301).

The contributions will be selected in late September. Conference languages are German and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided. The Hans Böckler Foundation will bear the costs of board and lodging. It will also bear the travel costs of conference speakers and Hans Böckler Foundation scholarship holders.

Contact

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