

**International and comparative employment relations global crises and institutional responses. G. J.Bamber, F. L.Cooke, V.Doellgast and C.Wright. Sage Publications, 2021. ISBN-978-1-5264-9965-3 (paperback) £39.24.**

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**Citation:**

PROWSE, Peter (2021). International and comparative employment relations global crises and institutional responses. G. J.Bamber, F. L.Cooke, V.Doellgast and C.Wright. Sage Publications, 2021. ISBN-978-1-5264-9965-3 (paperback) £39.24. British Journal of Industrial Relations. [Article]

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## Book Reviews

International & Comparative Employment Relations: Global Crisis and Institutional Responses (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)

Bamber, G.J., Cooke, F.L., Doellengast, V. and C. Wright.

Sage Publications, 2021

ISBN-978-1-5264-9965-3 (paperback) £39.24.

Although this is a seventh edition of a textbook this edition deserves praise for the breadth of scholarship for International and Comparative Employment Relations. It has an introduction which strongly outlines the need for a study for cross-national studies to further understanding national employment systems. It examines thirteen national studies in 'Anglosphere' countries (Australia, Canada, UK, USA), EU countries (Denmark France, Germany, Italy), East Asian countries (China, Japan and South Korea) and emerging economies (India and South Africa). The breadth of classic evaluations use both international comparisons with critical debates on convergence and divergence. One critical issue is the structure and history of development of each national system including actors, institutions and the role of the state, unions, employers, representation and voice, participation and current role of collective bargaining. In addition to classic industrial disputes and their resolution it compares how national institutions have responded to the global covid-19 pandemic through actors and institutions.

The contrasts between countries examined still contrast. Chapter 2 by Johnson and Dobbins outline a clear post Brexit Britain and the positive role of unions and the CBI and the further restrictions of employment protection and restrictive regulations on industrial action and the dramatic effect of covid. UK Unions have a tough challenge in the future with rising gig worker growth with the recent supporting decisions raised by UK unions despite lack of future EU protection of rights for UK workers. Chapter 3 by Katz and Calvin is timely with their USA chapter with the decline of union representation in the USA to ten per cent of all workers has still strong protections to organise with the Wagner Act (1935) and union avoidance. The tension of the US labour movement and supportive regulation has been delayed despite President Bidens pro-union stance. US National minimum wage regulation has been superseded by the Fight for \$15 campaign at state rather than national level. Companies still maintain a successful union avoidance and Amazon's recent success in preventing a vote for union recognition demonstrates this anti-union employer success in union recognition. Public sector actions in health and social care are rising and the labour movement has developed renewed organising efforts in states and focussed Fight for \$15 campaigns in large corporations. But the union membership in emerging sectors remains weak. Canada is analysed by in chapter 4 by Walsworth, O'Brady and Taras and highlights the complex mix of ten Federal Provinces and enterprise-based bargaining, with Canadian strike rates amongst the highest in OECD countries. Union density remains relatively stable at 72 per cent in the public and 14 per cent in the private sector with Canadian collective bargaining compared to the US. Chapter 5 evaluates Australia who experienced no recession in the 2007-8 global financial crisis with a strong link between the state unions and employers with a strong arbitration system but a decline in public and rapidly declining union density and a single Australian Council of Trade Unions and a gradual unions amalgamation into large 'super unions' failed to halt union decline. The organising model has been used to increase membership at workplace level with employers' associations supporting employers in promoting enterprise bargaining. Minimum wage determination methodology was established as early as 1907 with 'The Harvester judgement' setting principles of a basic wage for a family. Unions have focussed

on precarious working of women, temporary migrants, and gig workers. Australia has a weakened union, with an emerging regulations supporting employers which has contributed to lower wage growth. In Chapter 6 Dorigatti and Pedersini outline the resilience of the three main union confederations in Italy with union density of 34 per cent and higher in the public sector (50%) but Italian unions have actively organised precarious workers. To adjust to the global debt crisis Italy suspended collective bargaining from 2010-2016. Workplaces are represented is a single channel where workplace bargaining structures are elected by all workers at establishment level on lists presented by unions. Italy's responses to the covid-19 pandemic workers and unions mobilised to campaign for health and safety at workplaces but employers and unions acted as 'social partner' to determine work protocols.

In Chapter 7 there are still dilemmas and contradictions by a Bethoux and Laroche's evaluation of France's low union density (10%) with higher levels of representatives from union workers from the social and economic committee and works councils. Collective bargaining remains at both national. Industry or sector level despite five confederations. Chapter 8 by Keller and Kirsch illustrate German enduring formal codetermination integrating unions and employers' associations in supervisory boards, vocational educational and training and the consultation of Digitalisation of 'Industrie 4.0' with work/technology design for the future of work. Despite the efforts to institutionalised co-ordination in different sectors, smaller enterprises and increasing inequality of earnings and higher incidences of low paid work. Germany still retains strong worker representation by co-determination and Denmark continues high coverage of collective agreements between employers and unions. In Chapter 9, Andersen, Hansen, Madsen and Due evaluates Denmark as the sole Scandinavian nation in the text, in contrast have high levels of union density (70%) with enduring stability in Danish employee regulations, stable collective bargaining supported by dominant employers' associations, unions and the main political parties-an example of a strongly co-ordinated labour economy in a rising tide of Liberal Market economies.

In Chapter 10 Kubo and Ogura evaluate Japanese enterprise unionism with bargaining based on low with the unionisation rate of 17.3 per cent and collective consultation by enterprises. The federations remain union sector organisation *Rengo* dominated by a lifetime employment model with seniority based -pay with a strict entry of new graduates with 78 per cent of regular employee's total employees with an emerging employer share of non-regular employment share rising from 22 to 38 per cent with the rise in retail and wholesale workers employing low paid and part-time working. Such atypical working has now increased demand for older workers and mobile young workers (*freeters*) emphasising stronger divisions between regular and non-regular working. Covid was a major concern and changing to homeworking to assist remote working. This division between regular workers and *freeters* who are trapped in atypical with no opportunity for regular careers and a low birth rate and rising level of retired people places greater challenge in the future.

Lee in Chapter 11 outlines the development of South Korea, historically a country challenged by instability and authoritarian regimes until democracy in 1997 with a history of industrialisation shaped by government and anti-union policies. Since 1987 unions could organise to establish labour rights and union density rose to ten per cent since 2011 and confronted by challenges of ant-union conglomerates Gradually a move to tripartism whilst strongly opposed by Korean unions in 1998. Since government is Korea's largest employer with union density of 68 per cent and 44 per cent in public enterprises and private sector is organised enterprise unions in metal working, Health and Medical workers and Financial sector. The majority of unions can agree a joint bargaining team. Pay differs between smaller enterprises employing non-regular workers and larger employers employing 300 workers but the drive to recruit protection for non-regular employment have tried to organise

their own unions with strong employer opposition but also innovative campaigns to organise young workers and campaign for policies to resolve precarious workers conditions.

In Chapter 12, Fang Lee-Cooke's evaluation of China's regulations are strongly dominated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with has a single union the ACFTU with a dramatic move from rural to urban employment and a dramatic wave of disputes since 2008. There are critics of the role of the ACFTU as of truly independent union who has little role in organising or representing workers in disputes which tend to be spontaneous, short lived and dealt with local government and enterprises despite dispute resolution processes direct workplace action is emerging as labour contract law, employment rights and Labour Dispute Mediation and Arbitration law in place.

Chapter 14 by Maree, Klerk and Benya introduce South Africa's move from apartheid, with a history of continual challenges to violent clashes in organising excluding black workers and challenged by registration of unions and the formation of COSATU and the Mandela government building a social partnership in a tripartite framework and conciliation, arbitration, and mediation to resolve and conditions of employment. Splits in COSATU have led to four affiliated unions.

On pay issues, Italy and Denmark still has no national minimum wage, Italian, French, Indian unions are still divided among ideological lines, Japan, Korea maintains enterprise bargaining and increases 'non-regular' employment. Finally, the rise of platform 'gig workers' and are usually excluded from employment protection, entitlements, and access to collective representation remains a global challenge to worker mobilisation.

This excellent text also covers a wide range of themes such as gender equality, and resilience of many countries' industrial relations institutions despite global challenges and increasing employer power globally.

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