

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Employee Relations Special Issue: Workplace regulation, employment and the State

#### Guest Editors:

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This Special Issue follows from the ESRC Seminar Series on Regulation, Work and Employment<sup>1</sup> and aims to provide a forum for discussions about the relationship between workplace regulation, employment and the State. This relationship has traditionally focused on the role of the State in addressing inequalities generated by economic policies and processes. However, in the context of economic globalisation, the State has been a driver to changes to the global political economy of labour. This has seen reforms to the State apparatus that have transformed it into both a service provider and a control provider. As a result, the role of the State has been reconfigured from regulator to facilitator in the creation of a new regime of control and employment relations (Martínez Lucio & Stuart, 2011). This has important implications for organisations as they take on more explicit roles as increasingly political and regulatory actors.

These changes hint at the need for new forms of regulation that address the interplay between the transformation of the State and the increasingly dominant role of private sector ideologies. In particular, the need for effective public regulation that reconciles social and market needs (c.f. Aghion et al., 2011) raises questions about the 'what' and 'who' of regulation. In this new context, the State plays a fundamental role in regulation that simultaneously promotes and protects stakeholders with diverse interests (e.g. organisations, workers, unions, governments and countries) to help them to deal with the ongoing pressures of competition and economic globalisation. Conversely, the corporatisation of the State has created new dynamics where regulation is linked to negotiated reforms through 'pacting' with social partners (Culpepper, 2002), hence legitimising desirable outcomes before they are implemented. However, in the context of discourses of austerity and global economic crisis, the role of regulation is shaky given that both State and organisations have resorted back to logics of corporatism as a means to resolve the pressures of economic collapse (Siegel, 2005).

For governments, policy-makers and inter-governmental agencies, this translates into struggles to set the 'rules of the game' and the degree of intervention. On the one hand, employers and industry representatives (e.g. Confederation of British Industry) increasingly challenge the role and purpose of regulation, presenting it as a barrier to economic growth and prosperity, and lobbying for less regulation on the grounds that it stymies performance and hinders investment (BIS, 2012). On the other hand, the labour movement sees that such arguments can precipitate an international 'race to the bottom' in terms of employers offering poor conditions rather than decent opportunities. Ultimately, while there is recognition that a regulatory framework is essential to efficient markets and effective government (OECD, 2012), key questions remain in relation to what form this regulation should take and whose role it should be to develop, implement and monitor it.

The Special Issue welcomes conceptual, theoretical and empirical contributions that fall within the general topic of this call. Some areas of particular interest for the special issue

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<sup>1</sup> ESRC Grant ES/L000660/1. More information at [www.regulationseminars.org.uk](http://www.regulationseminars.org.uk).

are detailed below. However, this list is not exhaustive and editors encourage contributions within the broader theme of the Special Issue.

- The role of the State in shaping regulation of work and employment
- The political dimension of workplace regulation
- State regulation as a driver for workplace inequality(ies)
- Labour regulation and informality
- Negotiated reforms and the regulation of work and employment
- Impact of the interaction between supranational authority and national regulation on work and employment
- Management as a regulatory actor
- Unions, workplace regulation and the State
- Regulation and work intensification
- Workplace regulation, surveillance and control
- Worker experiences of State regulation
- Regulation of work and employment in informal labour markets
- Organisations, employment and State regulation

### **Manuscript submission**

The deadline for submissions is **1<sup>st</sup> February 2016**. All submissions will undergo double-blind peer review.

Submissions to Employee Relations are made using ScholarOne Manuscripts, which can be found here: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/erel>

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The editors of the Special Issue welcome discussion of initial ideas for articles via e-mail: Jenny Rodriguez ([jenny.rodriquez@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:jenny.rodriquez@ncl.ac.uk)), Tracy Scurry ([tracy.scurry@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:tracy.scurry@ncl.ac.uk)) and Paul Stewart ([paul.stewart.100@strath.ac.uk](mailto:paul.stewart.100@strath.ac.uk)).

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