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IRRUBRIEFING

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Trade Union Bill's restrictions to public sector union reps' time off likely to backfire

Kim Hoque and Nicolas Bacon

New research on the Workplace Employment Relations Study indicates the likely negative consequences of government plans to restrict public sector union representatives' rights to time off in the Trade Union Bill.

The Trade Union Bill, introduced on first reading to the House of Commons on 15 July 2015, is widely recognised as the first significant change in collective labour law in Britain since the Trade Union Act 1984. While many elements of the Bill have been subject to intense media debate (its likely impact on Labour Party funding and the introduction of thresholds for strike ballots, for example), one further element of the Bill – the reserve powers for government ministers to restrict paid time off ('facility time') for union representatives in the public sector – has received considerably less attention.

Any attempts to restrict the amount of time public sector union representatives spend on their role are likely to have profound implications for public sector employment relations. A brief look at the history of the development of union representatives' rights to time off helps to explain why. The Donovan Commission's report to the British government in the late 1960s regarded workplace union representatives' lack of official recognition as a major cause of industrial unrest that hindered attempts to introduce change and improve productivity. This argument explicitly recognised the role of workplace union representatives in promoting good employment practice and helping manage change. This in turn provided the impetus for the introduction of statutory backing for union representatives in the 1970s. This backing was subsequently incorporated into the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, which requires employers in workplaces with recognised unions to provide union representatives with reasonable facilities and time off to enable them to perform their duties and engage in training associated with these duties.

Support for the importance of workplace union representatives' rights to time off stems not only from history, however, but also from a number of more recent sources. For example, the government-commissioned Macleod Report on employee engagement, endorsed by Prime Minister David Cameron, suggests that managers should listen to workforce concerns expressed via representatives,

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In 1975, IRRU published its seminal analysis of the Industrial Relations Act 1971. 40 years later, understanding the relations between the law and industrial relations is ever more topical and complex.

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Several EU governments have been recently attempting to regulate public sector strikes. But the continental approaches differ sharply from the one adopted by the Trade Union Bill in the UK.

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Editorial: Industrial Relations and the Limits of the Law, 40 Years After

This issue of IRRU briefing is devoted to the Trade Union Bill that (at the time of printing) is going through parliament. The Bill has been described as the most important legal change in UK industrial relations for thirty years, and IRRU was the first research centre in the country to promptly organise a research workshop, in September 2015, to analyse its implications and design research on it. In a way, that workshop represented a return to the origins. Our Unit was born in 1970, when the new Conservative government was passing through Parliament the Industrial Relations Act, to 'outline what constitutes unfair industrial practice... to introduce new methods of settling disputes... to provide new protection for the community in emergency situations' (from the government's guide to the Act, in a language very similar to that of today). In 1971, IRRU invested its then imposing research capacity to monitor the extent to which the legislation achieved its objectives. That body of research led to the seminal book *Industrial Relations and the Limits of the Law* by B. Weekes, M. Mellish, L. Dickens and J. Lloyd (Macmillan 1975). Although, as happens in academic research, by the time the book came out the Act had already been repealed by the following Labour administration, that research is still worth reading today, for its exemplary empirical coverage and for the sharp conclusions on the interaction, made of contradictions, limitations and unintended consequences, between the law and workplace power dynamics. IRRU never stopped studying legal change in industrial relations, in the UK (e.g. the national minimum wage, the information and consultation of employees regulations) and then, increasingly, in the EU (e.g. the European Works Councils), and here we are again.

Yet if the IRRU workshop on the Trade Union Bill could look like a return to the past, it also quickly focused on the major changes between then and now. First, the apparent shift of regulations from collective to individual employment rights in recent years, far from marking the irrelevance of industrial relations, makes the field more complicated. The state is no less relevant in employment relations that it was in 1971 – but it is so in different ways, as a new special section of *Work, Employment and Society* (30:4), edited by an IRRU team, will be showing. If in 1971 IRRU could concentrate its analysis of the law on some large disputes such as the docks one, one of the expected outcomes of the Trade Union Bill is the further fragmentation of industrial conflict to the point where the political context needs to be closely interwoven, in the analysis, with organisational micro-politics and attention to workforce diversity (the feminisation of strikes is a recent example of change across industrialised countries). Secondly, the Industrial Relations Act was passed before UK accession to the EU and at a time when the international context mattered very little. As we go to press with this Briefing, we do not know if the Trade Union Bill will become law within a EU or a no-longer EU country, but in any case strikes, and employment relations in general, are now closely related to international factors, from arguments for competitiveness to the European Convention of Human Rights and the dynamics of phenomena such as the 2009 strikes for 'British jobs for British workers'. IRRU is now at the forefront of the study of internationalisation of employment relations, including in places where they are extremely important. Our – newly professorial – colleagues Jimmy Donaghey (new Academic Lead of the University's Global Research Priority on Global Governance) and Juliane Reinecke continue their research on Bangladesh, I keep studying Eastern Europe, and our lively doctoral community is engaged in pioneering projects on China, Indonesia, the Balkans and the Caucasus.

The sensitivity of these issues cannot be understated. The terrible death of Giulio Regeni, the Cambridge University PhD student tortured and killed in Cairo for his research on union movements at the beginning of this year comes immediately to mind. We tend today to forget how industrial relations are not just inherently political – they may be violently so (and my thoughts go also to the esteemed industrial relations colleagues, Ezio Tarantelli, Massimo D'Antona and Marco Biagi, killed by left-wing terrorists in Italy not so many years ago). Our commitment to not only robust, but also ethical and responsible research, supportive to both colleagues and students, needs to be reaffirmed more than ever.

Guglielmo Meardi
IRRU Director

IRRU Briefing is published periodically by the Industrial Relations Research Unit. It contains summaries of key findings from current and recent research projects, information on new projects and publications, and analysis of significant industrial relations developments.

IRRU Briefing aims to inform and contribute to the thinking of practitioners in industrial relations and human resource management. Many of our recent papers can be found on our web site. Please go to: www2.warwick.ac.uk/go/irru

For further information on our work, please contact IRRU's Research Coordinator at the address on the final page.

Trade Union Bill's restrictions to public sector union reps' time off likely to backfire

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and that addressing these concerns will increase levels of employee engagement, thereby helping to deliver sustainable economic growth. Beyond this, Acas widely recognises that union representatives play an important dispute resolution role, helping employers resolve conflicts and preventing the escalation of disputes to employment tribunals. Indeed, a Department of Trade and Industry review under the former Labour government found that workplaces with union representatives had fewer industrial tribunal cases, saving the British economy an estimated £22m–£43m per annum.

Added to this is broader research highlighting the beneficial effects of union representatives on workplace employment relations. For example, our own previous research has highlighted the positive impact of new types of union representatives (union learning representatives, equality representatives and disability champions) on training provision and equality outcomes, while research we have conducted with the Unite trade union has highlighted the potential for union representatives to improve their members' job quality. These beneficial effects are unlikely to emerge if restrictions are placed on union representatives' ability to take sufficient time off to play their role.

However, the Coalition government (2010–15) sought to reassess the value of union representative rights to time off in the face of austerity budget cuts. Central to this reassessment were concerns over the wage cost implications of the number of representatives in the public sector, particularly those playing the role on a full-time basis. In response to these concerns, restrictions imposed by Francis Maude, as Head of the Cabinet Office, resulted in a fall in the number of full-time representatives in government departments from 200 in November 2011 to 20 at the start of 2014. Similarly, the Department for Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government issued non-statutory advice that employees should not spend all or the majority of their working hours on trade union duties. The government also expressed concerns over the activities in which union representatives engage. The Department for Communities and Local Government, for example, argued that representatives often fail to 'reflect and respond to the wishes and views of the grassroots members', and that too many representatives use facility time to produce 'political material, or material which incites industrial action'. Government ministers have argued that, if true, this represents an inappropriate use of public money.

The proposals in the Trade Union Bill to provide ministers with reserve powers to restrict public sector facility time are, therefore, being introduced against a background of significant controversy over the benefits of statutory rights to time off for workplace union representatives. Central to this controversy, however, are a number of key questions. For example, just how many representatives (and full-time representatives in particular) are there in the public sector, and should that number be considered (as alluded to by the government) to be too high? In addition, what are managers' views of the role played by union representatives in the public sector? If the government is correct that facility time should be restricted because union representatives are engaged in activities that incite industrial action and do not reflect their members' wishes one might expect levels of trust between managers and representatives to be low. One might also expect union representative involvement in joint consultation and the implementation of workplace change to be limited.

These are precisely the questions we have sought to answer in a recent joint IRRU/Cass Business School working paper (IRRU working paper No. 101, available at: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/irru/wpir/). In the event, the analysis, which draws on data from the government's nationally representative 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS 2011), reveals a number of notable findings. In terms of the number of union representatives in the public sector, the WERS survey, based on a sample of 2680 workplaces with a response rate of 46 per cent, clearly indicates that union representatives are more widespread in public than private workplaces. In workplaces with union recognition, 38 per cent of public sector workplaces have a union representative, compared with 26 per cent of private sector workplaces, and in workplaces with union representatives, there is a ratio of one representative to 42 employees in the public sector compared with one representative to 66 employees in the private sector. However, the government's specific concerns regarding the number of full-time representatives would appear somewhat misplaced, given that the number of such representatives is in fact very low. Only 2.8 per cent of public sector workplaces with recognised unions have a union representative that spends all or nearly all of their working time on their representative duties. This is not statistically different than the figure of 2.2 per cent in the private sector. Also notable is that full-time representatives are located in much larger workplaces (509 employees on average compared with 97 employees for workplaces with non-full-time representatives in the public sector). As such, where union representatives perform their role on a full-time basis, they do so simply because they are in workplaces where they have a large number of employees to represent.

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In relation to the government's concern that public sector union representatives may be engaging in activities that undermine good workplace industrial relations, the analysis does not find any support for this. Instead, it demonstrates notable levels of collaborative working between union representatives and managers in the public sector. First, 72 per cent of public sector representatives sit on joint consultative committees (JCC), where such committees exist (this is almost identical to the figure of 71 per cent for private sector representatives). Where full-time public sector representatives are concerned, this figure rises to 85 per cent. If this is viewed as an indicator of the willingness of union representatives to work

with management with a view to adding value to the workplace, the figures here suggest that the vast majority of (both public and private sector) union representatives operate in this manner.

Second, a further key indication of employers and unions working together in a constructive manner is the level of trust that exists between managers and union representatives. With regard to this, 86 per cent of management respondents in public sector workplaces in which workplace union representatives are present either agree or strongly agree that union representatives can be trusted to act with honesty and integrity, while fewer than 4 per cent of managers in such workplaces disagree. These figures are notable in light of the higher number of representatives and the higher ratio of representatives to employees in the public sector than the private sector as reported above. The suggestion here is that public sector managers do not view union representative numbers to be excessive or their contributions to be unhelpful– were they to do so, it is unlikely that they would report such high levels of trust in them.

Third, the figures reveal significant evidence of joint consultation over the introduction of workplace. Sixty-six per cent of union representatives in the public sector either agree or strongly agree that union representatives work closely with management when changes are being introduced in their workplace. This figure, which is no different from the figure in the private sector, rises to 82 per cent where full-time lead representatives are concerned. They would, of course, be less able to work with management in this manner were facility time to be reduced.

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Overall, therefore, on the basis of these figures from the government’s own nationally representative WERS data, it appears difficult to justify the claim that there are too many workplace union representatives (full-time or otherwise) in the public sector. The high levels of trust between union representatives and managers in the public sector and the widespread evidence of joint consultation also indicate that the government’s arguments that union representatives are engaging in activities that have negative effects on employment relations are difficult to justify. Our hope, therefore, is that our analysis will inform parliamentary scrutiny of the proposals to restrict public sector facility time in the Trade Union Bill (indeed, Lord John Monks cited the research during the Bill’s second reading in the House of Lords in January). More broadly, the research raises concerns that the provisions on public sector facility time contained within the Trade Union Bill are likely to undermine the trust and co-operation that currently exists between workplace union representatives and public sector managers. Given the many challenges facing the public sector, this is likely to hinder rather than help the government in its attempts to improve public services in the years ahead.

The full report of this research is published as a Warwick Industrial Relations Paper No 101 (2015): https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/irru/wpir/wpir101.pdf

Regulating strikes in essential public sectors: Lessons from Europe?

Guglielmo Meardi

Concerns over public sector strikes have increased across Europe and beyond, and even emerged in more authoritarian countries. Guglielmo Meardi, who has recently completed an ESRC-funded six-country study of employment relations, reviews the developments in three countries with very different approaches to industrial action, but which have all recently legislated on public sector strikes, and tries to draw some cautious lessons for the UK.

Paraphrasing Marx, it seems that a spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of public sector strikes. As a whole, in advanced economies industrial action continues its long decline in volume: days lost for strikes, according to ILO figures, are in most countries about twenty times fewer than at their 1970s peak. The decline has been driven by structural changes in employment, rather than by legislation. But it results from strikes becoming shorter and smaller, more than less frequent. At the same time, industrial action has largely shifted from the private to the public sector, where working days lost could include those of the affected public, whether commuters or schoolchildren's parents. While there is no reliable estimate yet of these alleged 'externalities', the perceived effects on the public explain the apparent paradox of European governments being more worried about regulating strikes now, than they were when industrial action was actually a large-scale phenomenon.

There are some structural conditions that make some public sectors naturally more prone to strikes. Natural monopolies, high technical disruption power, and scope for political exchange in the form of employees-management collusion for pressure on policy-makers are features that no legislation can change. A typical example is public sector, which is strike prone regardless of the employment relations regime: commuters are familiar with tube strikes not just in London and Paris, but also in socially disciplined Berlin and in authoritarian Moscow. Yet this does not mean that regulations don't matter, and many European governments have been particularly active on this front in recent years. We compare here three countries characterised by different 'strike regimes':

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social-partnership Germany, statist France, and voluntaristic Italy. All have tried different solutions for public sector strikes: do their experiences tell us anything useful for the UK situation?

Germany

Germany has long been proud of having the lowest strike frequency in the western world. Yet in recent years an increase in public transport strikes has led to deep apprehension. Wolfgang Streeck, possibly the most influential German industrial relations expert (and a former IRRU Visiting Professor) wrote in *the Guardian* last year that 'the German wage-setting system is approaching a condition of normlessness, similar to what Britain experienced in the 1970s' ('The strikes sweeping Germany are here to stay', 23rd May 2015) – even if strike density in Germany remains fifty times lower than in 1970s Britain. Worrying Streeck are the recent waves of strikes by public services professions with independent unions, and especially doctors, train drivers, air pilots, which have been exacerbated by a Federal Labour Court ruling in 2010 that granted collective bargaining rights to minority unions. Strikes have also become more frequent in some categories organised by the main industrial unions, such as nursery teachers and postal workers.

Consistently with the principle of collective bargaining autonomy, Germany has no specific legislation on industrial action and relies mostly on self-regulation. The right to strike is considered implicit in the constitutional principle of freedom of association, but has been subject to extensive case law in the labour courts, which have defined a strict proportionality test to admit work stoppages, including a 'ultima ratio' principle that prescribes negotiations before any industrial action. The main trade unions, federated in the umbrella DGB, have long adopted a self-regulating code that foresees notice periods and a 75% ballot threshold to call a strike, as well as to continue it in case of proposed settlement. Ballots are organised autonomously by the trade unions, mostly in the workplaces. Short warning strikes are tolerated without ballots or notices. The use of agency workers to replace strikers is not forbidden, but agency workers have the right to refuse work in contracting companies affected by strikes, and their employment is anyway subject to co-determination with the works councils. As a result, despite the recent rise of agency work, its use to break strikes occurs rarely, as in the postal services dispute last year.

An exception to legal abstention regards civil servants (*Beamte*) who have no right to strike or collective bargaining – this

included railways employees before railways privatisation, and still includes university teachers.

What has been the policy response to the rise in strikes? The current 'Grand coalition' government passed a law in 2015 to codify the principle of unitary unionism and exclude strike-prone minority unions from collective bargaining (*Tarifeinheitsgestetz* 2015). There are serious doubts as to the constitutionality of that law, but its passing confirms the broad attachment of all main actors (conservatives and social-democrats, main trade unions and employer associations) to the traditional system of centralised collective bargaining as the best barrier to fragmentation and conflict. A further important law in that direction has facilitated the legally binding extension of sectoral collective agreements to all companies in affected sectors (*Tarifautonomiestärkungsgesetz* 2014). There have been more radical reform proposals, such as the one for a binding 4-day warning coming from the conservative state of Bayern, but the dominant response has been of strengthening social dialogue with the umbrella organisations – which seems the opposite orientation to that of the UK Trade Union Bill.

France

The strike-proneness of the French is notorious, but even there the volume of strikes has declined enormously in the last decades. The Preamble of the French Constitution of 1946 stated that 'the right of strike is exerted within the laws that regulate it', and in line with its inclination to state regulation a number of acts and ministerial decrees have been passed, especially for the public sector, including a ban for judiciary, police and other security forces, guaranteed essential services in healthcare and energy, restrictions for civil servants, and a minimum 1-day pay deduction in the public sector to discourage short-duration work stoppages. There is also a total ban on the use of agency workers or other strike-breakers, which is punished with a maximum 6-month jail sentence.

Case law is much less restrictive than in Germany, and it tends to accept work-to-rule strikes, occupation strikes and pickets, so long as they respect the right to work. Given the constitutional right to strike, the police are not allowed into occupied workplaces unless there is an immediate threat to somebody's safety. In recent years cases of so-called 'bossnapping' (holding managers captive until an agreement is reached) have been tolerated, and occupation strikes by undocumented migrants have been an effective mobilisation strategy to achieve regularisation.

The 'December strike' of 1995, when a month of work stoppage by transport workers (alongside other categories) brought Paris to a standstill and succeeded in blocking pension cuts, had a traumatic effect on the then conservative government, which was soon ousted in the elections. Once back in power in the 2000s, the conservatives legislated to reduce the risk of similarly disruptive events, with the 'Sarkozy laws' of 2007 (nr1224) and 2008 (nr790). These laws focussed on guaranteeing minimum services in transport and education, introducing a minimum 8-day negotiation period, the nomination of a mediator, and promoting the holding of a (not binding) ballot. The guaranteed services are decided by Transport Authorities for transport, while in education they consist of alternative childcare for all children if the strike is joined by more than 25% of teachers. Arguably, these laws were instrumental in avoiding a repetition of the 1995 situation in 2010, when the government managed to pass a pension reform despite mass protests.

While the Sarkozy laws were opposed by unions and socialist opposition, social dialogue was not interrupted by them. In fact, bilateral agreements had already been signed on strike procedures in the RATP Paris transport in 1996 and in railways in 2004. After the Sarkozy laws, the government did intensify social consultation, with important tripartite agreements on employment and notably on trade union representativeness, in order to strengthen the position of the largest unions to the detriment of the smaller, and more strike-prone ones. In 2008, the 'Bercy agreement' with the main trade unions paved the road for a new agreed framework of collective bargaining in the public sector, which was transposed into law (nr 154) in 2010.

> "Strikes are a socio-political phenomenon intimately related to each country's political system, and regulations that work in one country may well be inadequate elsewhere"

In 2013, an Evaluation Report on the 2007 Sarkozy law by the (by then socialist-dominated) Senate concluded that users benefited from more information on the strikes, but there had been no actual decline in strikes, and it recommended more social dialogue. In 2013 the rightwing opposition proposed a new Bill to introduce a 2-day individual warning as well as minimum and maximum strike duration – the Bill has however no chance to be passed in the foreseeable future.

Italy

Italy's Constitution of 1948 copied the formulation of the French one (art. 40: 'the right of strike is exerted within the laws that regulate it'). Yet its voluntaristic approach to industrial relations means that since then there has been no legislative regulation of trade unions, collective bargaining or strikes. Case law has interpreted the right of strike extensively, leading to the most permissive regime in the industrialised world, including political, occupation, protest, solidarity, and rolling strikes. Pickets are allowed insofar as they are not violent, and there are no union monopoly or ballot requirements (although unions often organise ballots voluntarily). The use of strike-breakers (including agency workers) is not explicitly regulated but is generally punished as anti-union behaviour according to the Worker Statute of 1970. Peace clauses in collective agreements are also unfamiliar, and Fiat was the first major

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company to require one in its company agreement in 2010. As a result, Italy has long displayed even more strikes than France.

The lack of general regulations and the high number of strikes explain why Italy was the first major EU country to elaborate a specific regulation for public services. The demand emerged in response to the rise of strike-prone public sector autonomous unions in the 1980s, called Cobas, which are particularly active in the transport, education and postal services.

The resulting Law 156 of 1990 was drafted by a centrist government, but with the support of the Communist opposition and the consent of the large national unions. In 2000, a centre-left government further tightened it. The law covers the services involving constitutional rights, and in particular transport, health, education, communication and refuse collection. It requires a 10-day warning and guarantees of essential services. The essential services are defined through self-regulatory codes by the unions, and are monitored by a specially established tripartite Strike Guarantee Commission. In case of violation, the law foresees injunction to resume work and sanctions for the unions.

The 1990 regulations were instrumental in contributing to a fall in public sector strikes during the 1990s, although the level of conflict stabilised after 2000. Conforming to a learning process by all actors involved, the Strike Guarantee Commission intervenes less and less, but more and more effectively. In 2014, it was involved in 18% of strike calls, and prevented 88% of them. The law also seems to have also contributed to halting the growth of autonomous unions, but this happened in the broader context of increased tripartite social dialogue, including on collective bargaining and union representation, in the early 1990s.

Lessons for the UK?

Strikes are a socio-political phenomenon intimately related to each country’s political system, and regulations that work in one country may well be inadequate elsewhere; for instance, legal abstention led to opposite outcomes in Germany and Italy. Despite the differences, the fragmentation of strikes, their shift to the public sector, and the political and public pressure for their regulation are clearly general trends in all large western countries. In this sense, the Trade Union Bill responds to a broader trend.

The solutions that Italy (in 1990 and 2000), France (2007–08) and Germany (2014–15) adopted reflect institutional and political diversity but have some features in common. They did involve social dialogue and some degree of exchange with the trade unions; they tried to support centralisation and avoid fragmentation; in France and Italy, they focussed on ‘surgical’ regulation that minimised disruption for the public, rather than hampering industrial action in general. The government’s Trade Union Bill is atypical in these regards, as it does not include any exchange or compensation, it includes sweeping changes across the board, and, through its ballot threshold requirements, it may effectively lead to further decentralisation and radicalisation.

IRRU Appointments

11 April, The Shard: Annual Lowry ACAS-Warwick Lecture. Speaker: John Cridland, CBI

18 April, Warwick: International research workshop on *The representation of the losers of the crisis*

11 May, Warwick: Seminar on *Modern Slavery* (jointly with Connecting Research on Work and Employment and the Global Priority Network on Global Governance).

About IRRU

IRRU embraces the research activities of the industrial relations community in Warwick University's Business School (WBS). There are currently 19 academic and research staff in membership, plus a number of associate fellows.

Our work combines long-term fundamental research and short-term commissioned projects. In both instances, we maintain the independence and integrity which have been the hallmark of IRRU since its establishment in 1970. We aim thereby to improve the quality of data and analysis available to industrial relations policy-making by government, employers and trade unions.

IRRU's advisory committee includes senior representatives of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Confederation of British Industry, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Trades Union Congress.

IRRU's research projects are clustered around four main themes:

- Internationalisation of employment relations, including employment practice in multinational companies;
- equality, inequality and diversity in employment;
- evolving forms of employee representation and voice;
- legal regulation of the employment relationship.

Textbooks by IRRU staff on industrial relations and human resource management include:

Trevor Colling and Michael Terry (eds) *Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice* (3rd edn), Wiley, 2010

IRRU also publishes its own series of research papers – the *Warwick Papers in Industrial Relations*. The most recent are:

No 103 (2016) Paul Marginson: *Trade Unions and Multinational Companies: A multi-level challenge*

No 102 (2015) Mark Hall, John Purcell and Duncan Adam: *Reforming the ICE regulations – what chance now?*

No 101 (2015) Kim Hoque and Nick Bacon: *Workplace union representation in the British public sector: Evidence from the 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Survey*

No 100 (2015) Bernadette Ségol: *Social Europe: Yesterday, today and tomorrow*

These are available on-line at: www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/research/irru/wpir/

IRRU, together with the Institute for Employment Research, is the UK national centre for the network of EU-wide 'Observatories' operated by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, EurWork, which is accessible on-line at:

www.eurofound.europa.eu/default/observatories/eurwork

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