

Transnational Social Policies. Reformist networks and the International Labour Organization (1900-2000)

Veranstalter: Sandrine Kott, University of Geneva; Isabelle Lespinet-Moret, University of Paris X

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The International Labour Organization (ILO) celebrates in 2009 the ninetieth year of its foundation. The international conference organized by SANDRINE KOTT (Geneva) and ISABELLE LESPINET-MORET (Paris) fully participated in the wide range of initiatives set up for this event. Proof of a fruitful dialogue between historians and the international organization, the conference involved about fifty European and American researchers. EMMANUEL REYNAUD, director of the „ILO century project“ as well as REMO BECCI, head of the archives, participated in the debates. In their introductory remarks they both underlined the importance of intensifying the collaboration between the ILO and academic institutions for the ILO history project. Sandrine Kott opened the conference by underlining the „transnational turn“ of the historical research in the last twenty years. Far from representing an exclusive place of diplomatic relations between states, the international organizations constitute a particularly privileged place allowing seizure of the transnationalisation processes. However, the national framework must not be neglected. Indeed, it is nationally produced knowledge, expertise and politics that build transnationalism as a bridge between international organizations and national frameworks. Sandrine Kott also underlined an important number of conferences and scientific publications showing increased interest for studies of transnationality. However, most of the studies concentrate on the interwar period and the League of Nations. Moreover, they are characterized by the over-representation of works concerning the European continent. Aware of these limits, the organizers of the conference selected a range of papers in a wide chronological and geographical context, going from the end of the

XIXth century to modern times further considering both Latin America and in a lesser measure the Asian continent.

The first panel focused on the actors and the networks involved in the transnationalization of social policies. PIERRE-YVES SAUNIER (Lyon) stressed that all the presentations debated the importance of the individual trajectories and the interaction between transnational networks and international organizations. CHRIS LEONARDS (Maastricht) and NICO RANDERAAD (Maastricht) proposed a striking analysis of the progressive construction of a transnational network of social reform in the XIXth century. JASON GUTHRIE (College Park) studied the development of an international technocratic class after the Second World War. In his presentation he showed how this group of persons facilitated the expansion of programs of technical support within the ILO, in particular in Latin America. FRANCOISE THEBAUD (Avignon) presented her work on Marguerite Thibert's individual trajectory within the ILO. The transnational is grasped here through the prosopographical method by following the course of life of this French feminist activist. By approaching the articulations between familialist transnational networks and the ILO, CHRISTOPHE CAPUANO (Paris) estimated their role in the implementation of family policies in Western Europe during the interwar period. Finally, JAMES P. DAUGHTON (Stanford) studied the strategies of the civil servants of the ILO in the regulation of colonial violence during the interwar period. The collective discussion concerned the importance to register the social phenomena in the long term as well as on the necessity to take into account the political context of each period.

By bending over the question of models construction, the second panel focused on the mechanisms of production and transposition of social policies at the transnational level. BRIGITTE STUDER (Bern) illustrated the important part played by the ILO in shaping models. She specified the difference between the notion of «model», which is an ideal toward which a community wishes to move, and the notion of «standards», that represent what is legally acceptable and socially desired. OLGA HIDALGO-WEBER (Geneva) outlined the ro-

le of Great Britain in the implementation of an international social policy and its influence in the creation of the ILO, during the Conference of Peace in Paris in 1919. PAULI KETTUNEN (Helsinki) and KLAUS PETERSEN (Helsinki) proposed a transnational analysis of the Welfare States of the Scandinavian countries. They stressed the importance of the international dimension and of the resort to comparative methods in the construction of the Scandinavian providential model. STEFANO GALLO (Pisa) found links between the Italian fascist regime and the ILO between 1923 and 1935. ISABELLE LESPINET-MORET (Paris) approached the elaboration of international standards in the fields of industrial hygiene and labour health during the interwar period. The debate highlighted the sometimes contradictory relationship between the national and international level in the standards development process.

The third panel attempted to understand the circulatory regimes involved in the construction of social politics. JOELLE DROUX (Geneva) highlighted the interest of studies that question and go beyond the strictly European framework. The transatlantic perspective compares viewpoints at play in the circulation of standards between the ILO and South America. CORINNE PERNET (Zurich) analyzed the circulation of ideas and debates relative to the problem of worker food supply in Latin America from the 1920s to the 1940s. FABIAN LEON HERRERA (Mexico City) and YANNICK WEHRLI (Geneva) deepened these questions by underlining the universality of the principles of social justices lauded by the ILO in the case of the Latin American countries, during the interwar period. The panel ended with a very interesting discussion on the way ideologies can be elaborated outside catholic countries. The question raised was if the positivism can also structure a social policy and a common language with the ILO.

The fourth panel, entitled „Between National and International: A Transnational History of the ILO“ raised the question of the interaction between the national and the international frameworks. Sandrine Kott was able to demonstrate through excellent archival work the interactions between these two

dimensions. She noted the importance of individuals and their personal contacts to explain the policy of international organizations. VINCENT VIET (Paris) analyzed the role of Justin Godart as a mediator between the ILO and France in the interwar period. He specifically emphasized the centrality of the Paris-Geneva axe in the development of the organization. JASMIEN VAN DAELE (Ghent) approached the role and influence of ILO in the transnational social policies regulation. By studying the case of labour policy in Belgium, she highlighted the networks of actors mobilized by the ILO and the changing strategies based on political and economic realities. By comparing the Swiss and German cases, MARTIN LENGWILER (Basel) offered an analysis of the role of international organizations in the history of the welfare state. By focusing efforts on the recognition of silicosis as an occupational disease, he noted that this process did not take place within a nationally defined framework but was the result of an interaction between a national and international network, including the ILO. JIL JENSEN (Santa Barbara) explored the efforts of U.S. activists of the ILO to broaden and strengthen Social Security between 1947 and 1954. The discussion raised the issue of continuity and the *longue durée* of the phenomena studied and the role of small nations like Switzerland and Belgium in the creation of international networks.

The fifth panel examined the role of the ILO as an international actor and more specifically its regulatory activities in the economic field. As an introduction, DANIEL MAUL (Gießen) outlined the action of ILO in the promotion of economic policies in the context of the 1930s' crisis. By showing the intensity of transatlantic connections, THOMAS CAYET (Paris) emphasized how the development of economic studies at the ILO is influenced by the idea of a „Social Economic Planning,“ sponsored by the American foundations. INGRID LIEBESKIND (Geneva) rebuilt in a remarkable way the ILO's contribution to the renewal of economic thinking on the issue of unemployment in the 1930s. The contribution of PATRICIA CALVIN (Oxford) dealt with the evolution of relations between the ILO and the Economic and Financial Organization of the League of Nations in the years between 1930 and 1940.

HAGEN HENRY (ILO) reflected on the legal foundations at the origin of cooperative international law. This panel ultimately represented a significant contribution to the study of policy and international economic standards creation during a crucial period of the European economic history.

The sixth panel focused on the groups targeted by social policies implemented by the ILO during the interwar period. NOEL WHITESIDE (Warwick) remarked how, after the First World War, ILO's policies began to target particular groups of workers, which was an extension of the management of the *question sociale* of the nineteenth century. AMALIA RIBI (Heidelberg) analyzed the steps taken by the ILO to settle the social issue of agricultural workers in the interwar period. GERALDINE RIEUCAU (Paris) explored the work of the ILO's expertise on the issue of international migration after the First World War. The ILO developed the idea that the placement of migrants and the unemployed must be done by public employment agencies. Through an analysis of the gender management of employment during the interwar period, NORA NATCHKOVA (Paris) and CELINE SCHOEINI (Lausanne) attempted to define the female employment and the willingness to provide women workers a specific protection. PATRIZIA DOGLIANI (Bologna) analyzed the categorization of youth through surveys conducted by the ILO in the 1920s and 1930s. The identified and discussed target groups during this panel ultimately represented relatively marginal groups that were constructed through a work of conceptualization, categorization and rationalization of work.

The seventh panel, devoted to social problems and the issue of gender mainstreaming, focused instead on the institution itself, its experts and links with institutions outside the ILO. CATHERINE OMNES (Versailles) noted these common points of the papers and emphasized the multiplicity of European and extra-European viewpoints on the institution. MADELEINE HERREN (Heidelberg) approached the history of the ILO between 1919 and 1945 in epistemological terms of „global corporatism“. By studying the case of India, the paper pointed out how the intellectual elites used the ILO as an instrument of decoloniza-

tion. The intervention of SAMUEL FERNANDO DE SOUZA (Campinas) focused on the uses of tripartism in the regulation of social relations in Brazil during the 1920s. SEBASTIAN FARRE (Geneva) reflected on the issues relating to the development of an expert report of the ILO on the issue of trade unionism in Franco Spain. Finally, BERNARD DELPAL (Lyon) explores the period of exile of the ILO in Canada during the Second World War. The panel discussion focuses on the actors who, depending on their ideological or social position, use the ILO as a forum to disseminate their ideas or as an instance of legitimization.

The conference concluded with a discussion of current issues. The final session focused on effect of the crisis of state regulations in the context of economic globalization. PATRICK FRIDENSON (Paris) introduced the interdisciplinary panel that brought together two political scientists and two historians. Focusing on the „Cambodian model“, QUENTIN DELPECH (Paris) analyzed the conditions for the emergence of transnational frameworks of practices and expertise around the labour inspection. By calling to expand the studies to other international organizations, MATTHIEU LEIMGRUBER (Geneva) explored the conflicting answers of the ILO and the OECD in response to the crisis of the welfare state in the late 1970s and early 1980s. CHLOE MAUREL (Saint-Quentin) presented her work on the emergence of the desire to control the policies of transnational corporations since the 1970s. In posing the problem of competition between international organizations, MITCHELL ORENSTEIN (Baltimore) analyzed the development and diffusion of new reforms on pensions and in particular the aspect of privatization with the 1990s program of neoliberal reforms. Finally, the panel found the grounds to discuss the topical problems on the establishment of standards which seek to structure the globalization process.

This conference testified to the dynamism of historical research focused on the phenomena of the circulation of ideas, policies and actors exceeding the framework of the nation-state. Configuring itself as a workshop, the conference granted an important place to the discussion of methodological problems,

which thus helped to pave the way for new promising research projects. In this regard, the ILO constitutes an interesting case of study because it has produced precious archives to seize the circulatory regimes in the field of social policies.

Conference Overview:

Introduction

Sandrine Kott (Geneva)
Emmanuel Reynaud (ILO Century Project)
Remo Becci (ILO)

Réseaux réformateurs, experts et fonctionnaires internationaux / Reformist networks, experts and international officials

Chair: Matthias Schulz (Geneva)

Comments: Pierre Yves Saunier (Lyon)

Chris Leonards (Maastricht), Nico Randeraad (Maastricht), Pays Bas: « Building a transnational network in the 19th century : Work and Social Reform in a European Perspective ».

Jason Guthrie (University of Maryland): «The International Labor Organization (ILO), Community Development, and the Roots of the International Technocratic Class, 1944-1966».

Françoise Thébaud (Avignon): « Réseaux réformateurs et politiques du travail féminin. L'OIT au prisme de la carrière et des engagements de Marguerite Thibert »

Christophe Capuano (EHESS, Paris): « Réseaux familialistes transnationaux et construction des politiques familiales de la fin des années 1920 au début des années 1950 »

J.P. Daughton (Stanford University): «ILO Expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years».

Introductory remarks from Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO

Fabrication des modèles et des normes / Construction of models and norms

Chair: Pat Thane (UCL, London)

Comments : Brigitte Studer (Bern)

Olga Hidalgo-Weber (Geneva): « Le rôle de la Grande-Bretagne dans la mise en œuvre d'une politique sociale internationale ».

Pauli Kettunen (Helsinki), Klaus Petersen (Odense): «Bringing Comparison Back in - Transnational Perspectives on the Rise and Fall of the Nordic Welfare State Model».

Stefano Gallo (Pisa): «Dictatorship and international institutions : ILO as a testing ground for Fascism».

Isabelle Lespinet-Moret (Paris, IDHE): « Hygiène industrielle, santé au travail : l'OIT producteur de normes (1919-1939) ».

Circulation des modèles / Circulation of models

Chair : Gopalan Balachandran (HEID, Geneva)

Comments : Joëlle Droux (FNS, Geneva)

Corinne Pernet (Zurich): « Nourishing the Working Class: ILO, the Question of Adequate Food and the Expansion of Latin American Welfare States 1920-1930».

Fabián Herrera León (Mexico City), Yannick Wehrli (Geneva): «Le BIT et l'Amérique latine durant l'entre-deux-guerres: problèmes et enjeux».

Entre national et international : une histoire transnationale du BIT / Across nations: a transnational history of the ILO

Chair : ILO, Geneva

Comments : Sandrine Kott (Geneva)

Vincent Viet (MIRE, IDHE, Paris): « La médiation de Justin Godart entre la France et l'OIT dans l'entre-deux-guerres ».

Jasmien Van Daele (Ghent): « Industrial states, policy preferences and international networks. Belgium as a case study of a transnational history of the ILO ».

Martin Lengwiler (Basel / Zurich): «The role of the ILO in 20th century accident insurance : How international actors shaped the insurance of silicosis in Switzerland and Germany (1910-1970)».

Jill Jensen (Santa Barbara): « For the Social and Economic Security of all Peoples»: Developing a Postwar Social Program through the International Labour Organisation, 1947-1954 ».

L'OIT comme acteur économique international / ILO as an international economic actor

Chair : Michel Lescure (Paris, IDHE)

Comments : Daniel Maul (Gießen)

Ingrid Liebeskind-Sauthier (FNS, Geneva): « Le rôle de l'OIT dans l'évolution de la pensée économique de l'entre-deux guerres à travers l'étude de la question du chômage ».

Thomas Cayet (EHESS, Paris): « Le « Planning » comme organisation du travail ? Une interrogation internationale sur l'expertise économique du BIT dans les années 1930 ».

Patricia Clavin (Oxford): « What's in a Living Standard ? The ILO and the League of Nations' Depression Delegation, 1938-1946 ».

Hagen Henry (ILO): « The International Labour Organisation's Contribution to Shaping the Public International Cooperative Law ».

Groupes cibles des politiques sociales / Target groups of social policies

Chair : Marcel van den Linden (Amsterdam)

Comments : Noël Whiteside (Warwick)

Amalia Ribí (Heidelberg / Oxford): « The ILO and the International Standardisation of Agricultural Labour in the Interwar Years: A Cinderella Tale? ».

Géraldine Rieucan (Paris): « La mobilité internationale du travail : une mise en perspective historique ».

Nora Natchkova, Céline Schoeni, (EHESS / Lausanne): « Travail féminin et réseaux d'expertise internationaux durant l'entre-deux-guerres. L'OIT, les expertes et les féministes : les enjeux d'une politique protectionniste ».

Patrizia Dogliani (Bologna): « La condition de vie et de travail des jeunes. Engagement et grandes enquêtes de l'OIT d'un après-guerre à l'autre ».

Partenaires sociaux et paritarisme / Social partners and paritarism

Chair : Noel Whiteside (Warwick)

Comments : Catherine Omnes (Versailles- St Quentin / Paris, IDHE)

Madeleine Herren (Heidelberg): « Global corporatism after World War I – the Indian case ».

Samuel de Souza (Campinas): « Transnational social policies in face of domestic conflicts: The ILO and Brazilian Labour Legislation (1920-1943) ».

Sébastien Farré (Geneva): « Trois experts, une visite, un rapport. L'Organisation internationale du Travail (OIT) et la liberté syndicale en Espagne franquiste ».

Bernard Delpal (Lyon): « Le refuge américain de l'OIT (1940-1946) : de l'esprit de Genève à l'esprit de Philadelphie, place du syndicalisme dans la stratégie de reconstruction. »

Globalisation économique et crises des régulations étatiques / Globalization and the crisis of the welfare states

Chair : Isabelle Lespinet-Moret (MCF, Paris, IDHE)

Comments : Patrick Fridenson (EHESS, Paris)

Chloé Maurel (St Quentin): « OIT et responsabilité sociale des entreprises depuis les années 1970 ».

Matthieu Leimgruber (Geneva): « Facing the emergence of the « crisis of the welfare state » : The ILO and OECD in comparative perspective (1970s-early 1980s) ».

Quentin Delpach (Paris): « Le modèle Cambodgien. Genèse et circulation internationale d'une success story ».

Mitchell Orenstein (Baltimore): « Pension Privatization: The Transnational Campaign ».

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