



Hochschule für
Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin
Berlin School of Economics and Law



U N I K A S S E L
V E R S I T Ä T

Call for Papers

9th Global Labour University Conference

“Inequality within and among Nations: Causes, Effects, and Responses”

15-17 May 2014

Berlin School of Economics and Law, Germany

The Global Labour University is pleased to announce a call for papers for its ninth annual conference, which will be held in Berlin in May 2014.

Increasing economic inequality is one of the key features of the radical globalisation project that emerged in the 1970s, generating levels of inequality incompatible with social inclusion, equal opportunities and fairness. In a situation characterised by a severe financial and economic crisis, rising unemployment and reduced social expenditure are deepening the social divide in many societies. The Great Recession across the global north in 2009, followed by a very weak recovery (and in some cases a double dip), has hit the most disadvantaged social groups affect hardest. At the global level, GDP growth has also slowed down.

Under these circumstances, opportunities for individual and social development are under threat, social cohesion is eroding, and the quality of democracy is deteriorating. Under the pressure of international institutions and national elites, governments are executing austerity policies despite public protest and growing disillusionment of the populations with their political representatives and democracy.

Against this backdrop, the 2014 conference of the GLU focuses on the causes and effects of increases in economic inequality – and what can be done to prevent or reverse them. We encourage the submission of papers mapping the extent and dynamics of inequality, analysing its causes and effects, conceptualising countermeasures, outlining implementation strategies, and identifying the stakeholders to be involved. We are keen to hear about both inequalities within and among national states, and are especially interested in papers using an interdisciplinary approach. In line with the international character of the GLU, we aim to collect ideas and perspectives from countries across the globe.

In particular, we would like to see papers covering at least one of these eight research areas:

1. **LABOUR MARKETS**

How do different labour market regimes impact on inequality? Which labour market institutions have been successful in reducing wage dispersion, low pay, precarious employment, informality, gender differences and qualification mismatch? Can labour market institutions challenge the de-linkage of wages and productivity growth? Concerning the international level, we encourage the submission of papers that compare labour market institutions across different countries or analyse the effects on labour markets of international labour standards, the international trade regime and unregulated international capital flows (including foreign direct investment).

2. **FINANCIAL MARKETS**

What are the effects of financialisation, and how has it changed the functional income distribution and wage dispersion in different countries, for example by shareholder-oriented corporate governance? What is the role of high bonus payments, the competitive pressures created by outsourcing, and the increasing pressure on agents in the financial system to increase returns? Can public banks, capital controls and reforms of the domestic financial system contribute to stabilising economic development and changing income distribution?

3. **MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS**

Are multinational corporations drivers of economic inequality? How is outsourcing and the emergence of transnational chains of production linked to the rise in precarious work? How do the purchasing and subcontracting practices of multinationals impact on wages? In how far does their lobbying of governments contribute to repressing wage growth and restricting rights to collective bargaining? What are the effects of existence of multinational corporations on regimes of corporate taxation? What are policy options and successful campaigns improving working conditions in multinational companies and their supply chains?

4. **GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTION POLICY**

How can governments reduce inequality through tax policies, social transfers, and the provision of public goods and services? Papers should discuss policies aimed at implementing progressive taxation, broadening the tax base, tackling tax avoidance and limiting tax competition. Moreover, they should comment on the impact of different education and healthcare systems on inequality and assess policies designed to build and maintain an equitable social transfer system.

5. **MACROECONOMIC GOVERNANCE**

Some of the relevant topics in this field are: demand management and economic growth; increasing consumption demand through a more equal income distribution; functional macroeconomic wage development; and economic policy coordination (in particular macroeconomic coordination with the aim of stabilizing growth, increasing employment and creating 'good' jobs).

6. PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

What is the link between inequality and ecological problems? How do potential limits of growth impact on attempts to reduce inequality? How can public investment contribute to a more equitable and sustainable development path? Is a 'Green New Deal' a viable strategy in terms of addressing the problem of inequality?

7. COUNTERMEASURES

Papers in this area should discuss in how far countermeasures are based on an adequate grasp of the problem of inequality, and which type of policy sequencing and policy mix is required for reducing inequality. Moreover, they should examine what the obstacles to the implementation of such policies are. All this can be done by looking at political opportunity structures and identifying sources of power for both trade unions and civil society at large.

8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

We are interested in papers analyzing political strategies, particularly from trade unions and civil society organizations, that aim at reducing inequality.

The GLU Conference invites contributions from trade unionists, academics and experts from other civil society organisations. We would like to see both papers focussing on political and economic analysis and on trade union strategy. Of course, we will consider abstracts that are not located in one of the eight research areas but address the conference topic.

Please send an abstract of 300-500 words including some reflections on your methods by 31 October 2013 to agallas@hwr-berlin.de. If you can, please indicate the research area in which your paper is located. You will be notified whether your abstract has been accepted by 30 November 2013. Please note that participants are expected to submit their papers by 28 February 2014, and that there is going to be a conference fee of €100. Unfortunately, the GLU is not able to cover expenses for travel and accommodation.