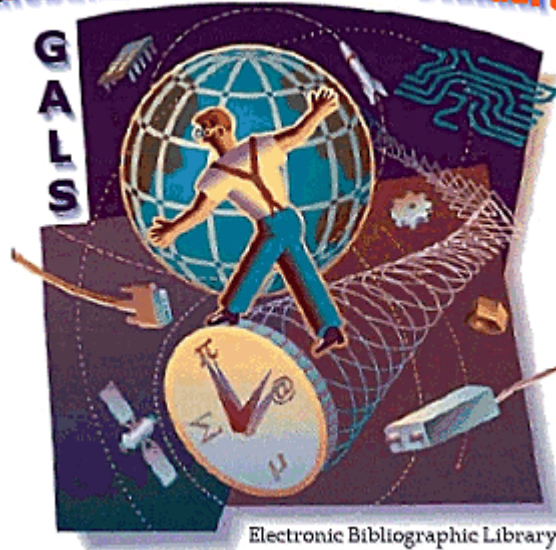


Globalization and Labor Standards



GALS Newsletter

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Katherine V.W. Stone – Editor and Project Director

Managing Editor:
Brendan Smith

Student Contributors:
Angela Jamison
Scott Miller

Tech Advisor:
Sasha Skenderija

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NEW The Globalization and Labor Standards Project has initiated a Working Papers Series. GALS Working Papers can be found at in PDF format at www.laborstandards.org. They are listed separately as well as cross-referenced and integrated into the GALS library. The library contains links to the full text of the Working Paper. GALS Working Papers are also listed in the newsletter.

Country-Specific Case Studies

Afzal, Asna, "Pakistan, the WTO, and Labor Reform", *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* v. 29 no. 107 (Winter 2006)

Abstract:

Although the WTO has no formal requirements for its members to adhere to labor standards, this article argues that Pakistan and other lesser-developed countries (LDCs) confront considerable pressure to abide by core labor standards in connection with their trade liberalization policies. It argues that developed nation trading partners, above all the United States, the European Union and Canada, seek assurances, upon threat of economic sanctions, that LDCs' export products are made in accordance with accepted labor standards both as a way to protect their own industries and to avoid scandals associated with child labor and sweatshop conditions. Because these demands from the countries of the global North do not acknowledge the economic realities of lesser developed nations, Pakistan's adherence to labor standards in such areas as health and safety, child labor and gender discrimination, are typically "superficial" and unenforced. The article proposes reforms in three areas if Pakistan is to benefit from economic growth and implement meaningful labor standards: (1) civil service reform to promote efficiency and accountability in monitoring labor standards; (2) full employment and anti-poverty measures that would sufficiently raise living standards so that parents would voluntarily remove children from the labor market; and, (3) increased representation for Pakistan and other LDCs in the WTO decision-making process.

Subjects: [Child Labor](#), [Country-Specific Case Studies](#), [Health and Safety](#), [Labor Rights in General \(Misc.\)](#), [Workplace Discrimination](#), [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#)

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Corporate Accountability

Macdonald, Terry & Macdonald, Kate, "Non-electoral Accountability in Global Politics: Strengthening Democratic Control Within the Global Garment Industry", *European Journal of International Law* v. 17 (February 2006)

Abstract:

This article argues that legitimate forms of governance are possible on a global scale even though global elections -- the traditional mechanism for instituting democracies -- are pragmatically impossible. The authors cite the case of transnational NGO and union solidarity actions on behalf of Nicaraguan garment workers to illustrate the potential for non-electoral forms of accountability in global industry. Specifically, they argue that mechanisms disclosing the identity of corporate executives and sanctioning them for violating "stakeholder" preferences constitute "embryonic attempts to construct new institutional mechanisms" to hold corporations accountable. Whereas global elections would be impossible to institute, these innovations point to alternative routes to the normative goal of legitimate, global democracy.

Subjects: [Corporate Accountability](#), [Corporate Governance](#), [Industry-Specific Case Studies](#)

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Labor Rights in General

Stone, Katherine V.W., "Flexibilization, Globalization, and Privatization: Three Challenges to Labor Rights in Our Time", v. 44 no77 (2006)

Abstract:

Three dynamics are coalescing to reshape labor relations in the 21st century in the United States: They are flexibilization, globalization and privatization. Flexibilization refers to the changing work practices by which firms no longer use internal labor markets or implicitly promise employees lifetime job security, but rather seek flexible employment relations that permit them to increase or diminish their workforce, and reassign and redeploy employees with ease. Globalization refers to the increase in cross-border transactions in the production and marketing of goods and services that facilitates firm relocation to low labor cost countries. And privatization refers to the rise of neo-liberal ideology, the attack on big government and the dismantling of the social safety net that have dominated public policy in the U.S. in recent years. All three of these dynamics have been detrimental to U.S. employment standards and union strength. This paper describes how each of these dynamics has undermined labor rights and then asks, what prospects are there, in light of this environment, for protecting employment rights, re-invigorating unions, and security a social safety net? It concludes that the response to the global threat to labor standards lies in a revival of collective action at the local level. It further concludes that the combined forces of flexibilization, globalization, and privatization make collective action at the local level not only necessary, but also possible.

Subjects: [Contingent Work](#), [Flexibilization](#), [Labor Rights in General \(Misc.\)](#), [Privatization](#)

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Women's Rights

Antwi, E. Abena, "Women in the World of Work: After Eighty-Six Years, Has the International Labour Organization Done Enough to Promote Equality?", *North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation* no31 (Spring 2006) p. 793-821

Abstract:

This article begins with a survey of the history, goals and procedures of the International Labour Organization (ILO) with respect to women's equality in the workplace and then provides three brief case studies of working conditions for women employed in the maquilas and domestic service in Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala. Although the ILO has various reporting and complaint procedures for enforcement of its various conventions calling for gender equality in the workplace, all of them are voluntary. Despite laws banning workplace discrimination in each of the three countries examined, the author claims there is widespread abuse and discrimination, including employer-mandated pregnancy screening, sexual harassment, hiring discrimination, substandard pay and denial by employers of legally mandated healthcare to female workers. The author concludes that the ILO has largely failed to protect women against workplace discrimination in these countries and that unless it can devise more effective enforcement mechanisms, "its reputation will continue to decline in the world community."

Subjects: [Country-Specific Case Studies](#), [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#), [Women's Rights](#), [Workplace Discrimination](#)

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Links to Related Projects

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Informal Economy Resource Database:
<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/infoecon/iebrowse.home>

The Informal Economy Resource Database contains a myriad of ILO activities, research or tools directly or indirectly related to the informal economy and decent work. This source is a "living" and dynamic inventory of information on labour issues relating to the informal economy, such as access to finance, data and statistics, employment, gender equality, policy, rights, social protection and working conditions. It is a valuable tool for anyone undertaking research or working on labour issues and the informal economy.

Asian Law Center: <http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/alc/bibliography/browse.asp?s=45>

The Asian Law Centre, an initiative of the University of Melbourne Law School, devoted to the development of understanding of Asian law, offers an extensive bibliography of Asian labor law articles and reports.

Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law: <http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/celrl/>

Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law is a research and teaching center devoted to the development of an understanding of labor law at the University of Melbourne. The Center's website describes the activities of the Center and contains links to several databases that are of interest to labor law scholars and practitioners. For example, the Center's Work Relations Law Project contains extensive information about Australian labor law that can be accessed directly at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/industrial/>.

ETUI Labourline: <http://www.labourline.org/Etui>

ETUI Labourline is a database of European labor information resources covering European, international and comparative aspects of industrial relations and health and safety issues, developed by the Documentation Centres of the European Trade Union Institute and the European Trade Union Institute for Health and Safety (Brussels). The consolidated bibliographic database contains more than 20,000 references to documents focusing on industrial relations, and more than 15,000 references to documents on health and safety issues.

Globalization Bulletin: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~dbensman/bulletin.html>

The Globalization Bulletin is a weekly e-newsletter providing linked access to the latest articles, research, and web resources on a range of global labor issues—ranging from union organizing and labor markets to immigrations and trade agreements. The Bulletin is produced by the Globalization Task Force of the New Jersey Division of the United Nations Association-USA and the Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations School of Management

and Labor Relations, Rutgers University. To subscribe, email David Bensman at dbensman@smlr.rutgers.edu.

Labor and Global Change Database: <http://www.ilir.umich.edu/lagn/>

The Labor and Global Change Database provides bibliographies, citation information and (where available) web links to the full text of research exploring connections between labor and globalization. The database aims to provide researchers with an easy means to make the results of their work widely available to other scholars and the interested public. The database is run by and continually updated by the Labor and Global Change Program of the University of Michigan.

LabourWeb: <http://www.lex.unict.it/eurolabor/en/>

The Labour Web is a comprehensive documentation center for information about European labor law, social law, industrial relations and the welfare state. It contains up-to-date versions of European Union law, directives, pending directives, EU news, press releases, economic statistics and decisions of the European Court of Justice. It also contains a Working Papers series and subject matter reports (dossiers) on issues concerning European integration. The site also provides links to other websites that contain working papers, statistical reports, and other information about social, economic and industrial relations affairs in the European context. It is run by the Massimo D'Antona Centre for the Study of European Labour Law, at the Faculty of Law of the University of Catania.

The Marco Biagi Centre for International and Comparative Studies:
<http://www.csmb.unimo.it>

The Marco Biagi Centre for International and Comparative Studies at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy, functions as policy resource center on comparative labor issues. Besides publishing books and law journals, the Center provides a clearinghouse of international law journals, including the International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations (<http://www.csmb.unimo.it/journal.html>). Currently only in Italian, the Center's website will soon offer an English version.

Trade Unions and Labor Relations Database: <http://www.polwiss.fu-berlin.de/tu/english/>

The database, produced by the Institute of Labor Relations of the Otto-Suhr-Institute of the Freie University of Berlin, contains almost 7,000 citations of books, articles, working papers, brochures, proceedings etc. The bulk of the citations address aspects of labor relations in Germany, but there is a substantial body of literature in the database covering the EU and Eastern Europe.

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Project Director:

[Katherine V.W. Stone](#)
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