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Working Paper

Out of the public eye: The International Labour Organisation in the media

ZeS-Arbeitspapier, No. 01/2014

Provided in Cooperation with:

University of Bremen, Centre for Social Policy Research (ZeS)

Suggested Citation: Nullmeier, Frank (2014) : Out of the public eye: The International Labour Organisation in the media, ZeS-Arbeitspapier, No. 01/2014, Universität Bremen, Zentrum für Sozialpolitik (ZeS), Bremen

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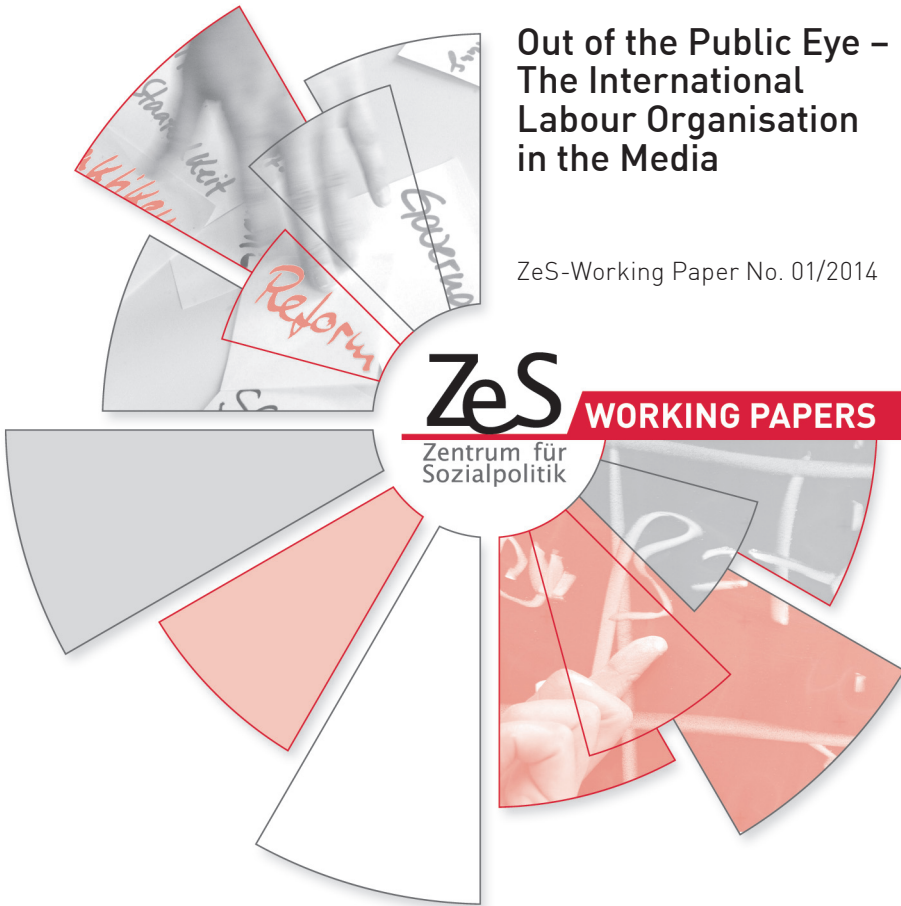
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Frank Nullmeier

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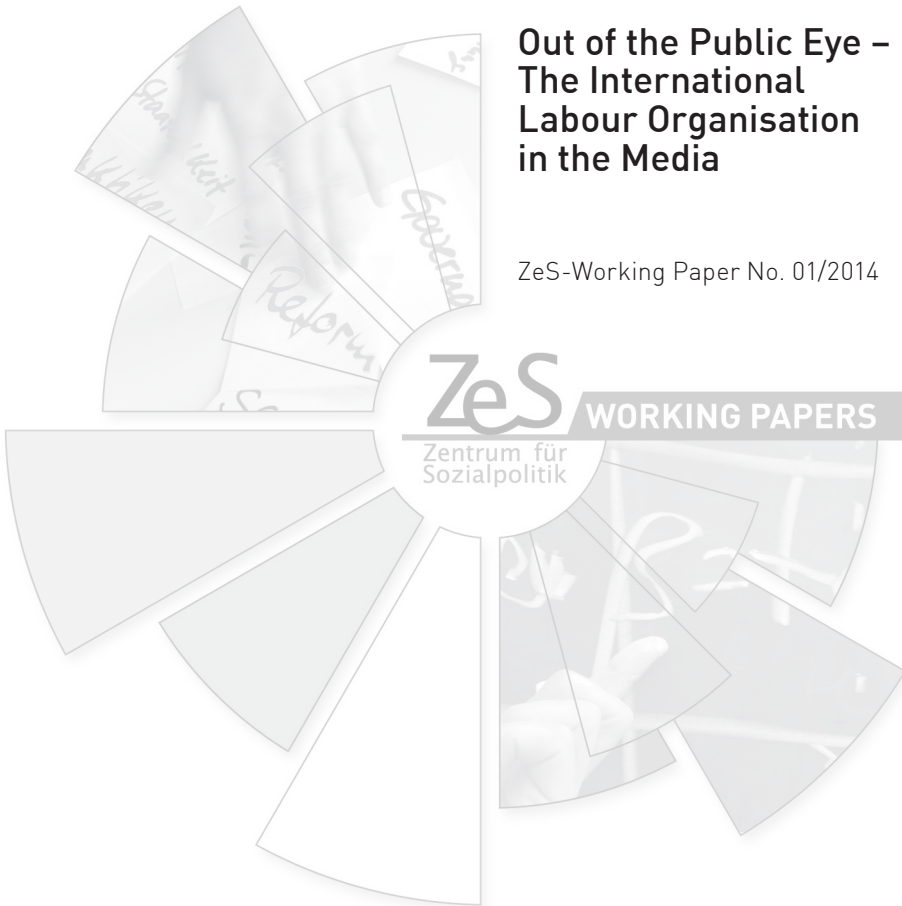
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Editor: Kristin Bothur

<http://www.zes.uni-bremen.de>
Design: cappovision, Frau Wild
ZeS-Arbeitspapiere
ISSN 1436-7203

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Politics takes place in public communication and is part of public communication. Today, public communication is substantially determined by the media. This is also the case for the field of global social policy. The following study addresses the question of how global social policy and, in particular, the International Labour Organization (ILO) as the key player in global social policy, is discussed in the media. Are global social policy and the ILO visible at all in the media? To what extent is the organisation visible? How do the media report about the ILO and on what exactly does media coverage of the ILO focus?

Politik vollzieht sich in öffentlicher Kommunikation. Und diese wird wesentlich durch mediale Angebote bestimmt. Das trifft auch auf die globale Sozialpolitik zu. Die vorliegende Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Frage, wie globale Sozialpolitik — und insbesondere die Internationale Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) als deren zentraler Akteur — in den Medien dargestellt werden. Wie hoch ist die mediale Aufmerksamkeit für das Thema globale Sozialpolitik? Zu welchen Anlässen wird die Presse auf die ILO aufmerksam? Wie sichtbar ist die ILO als Organisation, als politischer Akteur und als Informationsgeber? Wie berichten die Medien über die ILO und welches Bild dieser internationalen Organisation entsteht dadurch?

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1. Global Social Policy and the Media

Politics is not only played out in committees, at international conferences, and in negotiations between parties, diplomats, heads of state and government. Civic protests and social movement campaigns also do not complete the picture. Politics is inconceivable without the public sphere. Politics takes place in public communication and is part of public communication. Today, public communication is substantially determined by the media. This is also the case for the field of 'global social policy'. The following study addresses the question of how global social policy and, in particular, the International Labour Organization (ILO) as the key player in global social policy (Deacon 2007; Hughes/Haworth 2011; Kott/Droux 2013), is discussed in the media. Are global social policy and the ILO visible at all in the media? To what extent is the organisation visible? How do the media report about the ILO and on what exactly does media coverage of the ILO focus?

A first preliminary response to the questions is negative. Global social policy has not yet become a political issue that manages to arouse broader public attention beyond the expert field of international organisations (IOs). The financial market crisis and the subsequent Great Recession have not changed matters. The issue of social regulation, worldwide trade, global poverty, child and forced labour, the suppression of trade unions, the non-compliance with health and safety at work standards, and the development of youth unemployment and salaries in dif-

ferent world regions occasionally reaches the public on a global, national, and local level. However, only very rarely are these acts of selective attention accompanied by a debate that succeeds in putting the issue on the political agenda for a longer time or for that matter succeeds in shaping the options of core political institutions relevant in the field. What is more, the term global social policy is not present in the media, global social policy is not perceived and labelled as a policy field, and it only arouses public attention in the form of single manifestations. There is a lack of an independent and delineable policy field that connects national social policy, development policy, and the worldwide fight against poverty.

That global policies can have a completely different media effect can be illustrated by considering the example of climate policy. This policy field significantly arouses media attention; international conferences are intensively observed events worldwide (Couldry et al. 2010). This is especially true for the UN Climate Change Conference that took place in Copenhagen in 2009. The outstanding public perception of this policy field is connected to a framing that presents the latter as a compellingly global political issue. According to this framing, climate problems are only to be solved through international cooperation or transnational interactions of citizens all over the world. Social policy, on the other hand, is predominantly identified to be a national issue. The notion that solutions can only be

found globally or internationally does not exist. Questions related to social security are perceived to be dependent on national economic performance and the international competitiveness of national economies. The global financial crisis and the eurozone crisis have, indeed, deepened the understanding of the functioning of global economies. Yet, the task to cope with the social consequences of global economic crises is attributed to national policies, even if there has been an inter-

governmental agreement on the baseline of these policies – as is the case in the eurozone. Thus, the difference between climate policy and global social policy could hardly be greater. While there is a high level of public attention for climate policy framed as a problem that can only be solved globally, global social policy is lacking both media reception and a framing that constructs social problems as a predominantly global issue.

2. The ILO in the Media

This first summary approach towards the role of global social policy in the media will be further examined by conducting a detailed empirical investigation of the media presence of the ILO, which is rich in tradition and politically still the most significant organisation of global social policy (Rodgers et al. 2009; Hughes/Haworth 2011; Maul 2012; Kott/Droux 2013). As a global actor, the ILO acts on a worldwide scale as far as its self-presentation and its press policy is concerned. The following study takes national public spheres as a starting point (Esser/Pfetsch 2004; Hallin/Mancini 2004; Hardy 2008; de Vreese 2013). This approach makes it possible to examine to what extent global social policy and the ILO are present in the media on a national level – this is exactly the level on which social policy has hitherto been dealt with. Thus, the extent to which the

national is shaped by the global or how the national political agenda opens itself to issues dealing with global policies, here being social policy, can be scrutinized. Accordingly, even if national public spheres are taken as a starting point, the study will have to focus on particular types of media, putting up with a certain degree of selectivity. In international communication studies and in political sociology, it has become common to select at least two quality newspapers of diverging political orientation for the study of national public spheres. Following this general standard, the present study analyses how often and in the context of which issues the ILO is mentioned in national public spheres (two quality newspapers were chosen for each country). The study conducts an analysis of all articles that mention the ILO for a time span of seven years (2006 to 2012).

It comprises articles dealing with the ILO before and after the world financial crisis. Thus, possible effects of the changed economic situation can be captured. It was necessary and feasible to include all articles mentioning the ILO into the analysis, given that the total number is rather low. If the study chose to introduce a further restriction with respect to the period of analysis – on the basis of so-called 'constructed weeks' or by focusing on certain recurring events – the number of retrieved articles would not have been high enough. Given that the period of analysis comprising seven years is rather long, it was necessary to limit the number of analysed national public spheres. Three countries (Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland) were chosen to study the media presence of the ILO: With the exception of the country in which the ILO is located (Switzerland), two further European countries that represent diverging social-political traditions were chosen (according to the differentiation between 'Beveridge' and 'Bismarck' which is commonly applied to social security systems).

In contrast to studies that deal with other international organisations (UN), supranational organisations (EU), and club governance regimes (G8) with a similar data basis and methodology (Nullmeier et al. 2010), this study will not only concentrate on legitimisation statements in order to analyse the media presence of the ILO. Legitimation statements are statements that positively or negatively evaluate an organisation as a whole (as a political regime). Thus, legitimisation statements only constitute a small part of all statements dealing with an IO in the media. Given

the task of examining the media presence of the ILO, this study will conduct a more encompassing analysis of newspaper articles. Such an approach was facilitated practically and methodologically by the low level of public attention for the ILO and its policies. For the present study, all forms of evaluative statements are coded following the approach of valuation analysis (Schmidtke/Nullmeier 2011). Additionally, descriptive, explanatory and prescriptive statements are also analysed in the retrieved newspaper articles.

The abundance of different methods of analysis, however, makes it necessary to stick to a theoretical concept in order to choose an analytical focus. In International Relations (Zürn/Ecker-Ehrhardt 2013) and European Integration Studies (Koopmans/Statham 2010; Statham/Trenz 2013) the term 'politicisation' has gained ground in order to describe the turn from an 'international' world of states and diplomats to a transnational world of non-governmental organisations, international organisations, transnational corporations, states, and a range of further actors who populate the world of global governance. The transnational world of politics is, however, exposed to mechanisms that are also valid on the national political level. The objective of the term 'politicisation' is to illustrate these processes. Researchers draw on media communication and the resonance of international politics in public spheres relying on text analysis of quality newspapers. Especially for the EU there are detailed empirical results (Statham/Trenz 2013; Wessler et al. 2008; Risse 2010). The EU gains a considerable amount of attention in national public

spheres, which is a vital precondition for dealing with the question of politicisation.

The number of retrieved articles dealing with the ILO in quality newspapers is considerably lower than the number of articles retrieved for the EU in a random statistical sample. This does not only entail a practical research problem. The low num-

ber of articles mentioning the ILO in national public spheres indicates that there exists a type of problem that is situated 'below the level' of what is commonly described as politicisation. The ILO is hardly visible in the mass media; it is far away from being politicised according to the standards employed in the EU context.

Table 1: Number of articles mentioning the ILO in six quality newspapers (own data)

Newspaper	Year							Number of articles per newspaper
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
FAZ	12	13	11	17	16	14	15	98
SZ	15	25	18	16	11	6	27	118
TA	9	13	12	16	7	3	11	71
NZZ	33	21	15	21	22	33	26	171
Times	10	6	13	25	14	8	12	88
Guardian	20	13	13	19	18	30	19	132
Number of articles per year	99	91	82	114	88	94	110	678

Given the low degree of political attention and contestation for the ILO, it is necessary to develop an alternative terminological construction on which the analysis can rely and which defines a kind of basic threshold of being politically noticed in the media. The level of attention that is necessary for communicative politicisation does not exist in certain low-level forms of public attention. A mere differentiation between politicisation and non-politicisation or a uniform scale of measuring politicisation would be inadequate as it would not sufficiently take into account significant processes which take place in the lower part of the measurement scale and are therefore quantitatively of little

significance. What we need are categories which focus on these low-level forms of political attention because different forms of media attention can also be distinguished for actors and organisations, which are rarely mentioned in the newspapers.

Due to the non-applicability or the difficulties in using the concept of politicisation for the ILO, the two interrelated terms 'public political presence' and 'media profile' are introduced in this study. A political actor can acquire different degrees of 'public political presence'. The concept of public political presence is supposed to offer a more differentiated picture of political actors' media reality than merely

counting the number of articles in which the ILO is mentioned. In the following, criteria for the analysis of public political presence or non-presence will be established. Without being able to apply or even to develop an elaborate conceptual measurement framework, the study aims at giving some initial indicators in order to distinguish lower or higher levels of political presence, making it thereby possible to differentiate different 'media profiles' of political actors:

- Number of articles mentioning the political actor
- Usage of standards and terms that are linked to the political actor
- Reports on dates, articles, information, communications that are made available by the political actor
- Reports on events that are of relevance for inner organisational circles (meetings, conferences, committees, decisions, elections)
- Naming of organisational elites and leading staff (authorities)
- Reports on important inner organisational programmatic developments (mission, programme, manifestos)
- Reports on recurring political issues
- Non-evaluative descriptions vs. evaluative comments
- Divergent evaluations and contestation over events and policies that are linked to the political actor.

The higher the number of articles mentioning the actor, the higher the number of cases in which actor-related standards and terms are used, the higher the number of reports dealing with articles and data that is made available by the political actor, the more newspapers report on

significant events for the organisation, on the leading staff of the organisation and programmatic developments, the more reports tend to focus on certain recurrent issues and the more evaluative comments are used (in contrast to merely descriptive statements) the higher the degree of public political presence.

Depending on the focus that prevails in the media with respect to points two to seven different media profiles can be identified. An organisational media profile exists if the media on inner organisational events, programmes and leading staff. If leading staff play a dominant role in media coverage, neglecting reports on committees and conferences of the organisation as well as on programmatic questions, the media profile may be described as personalised. If programmatic questions are primarily dealt with in the media which are evaluated in a divergent manner, one can speak of an ideological profile. However, this is not the place to present all possible types of media profiles. The following chapters will discuss in greater detail what media profile and what degree of presence the ILO has in the three analysed national public spheres.

3. The ILO as Data Supplier and Norm Setter

International organisations can initiate public reporting if they manage to come up with new information and data. This is where the ILO has, indeed, succeeded. The ILO has a near monopoly position with respect to data on the global labour market and information on worldwide wage developments, which is acknowledged by the media and is not questioned or criticised. Yet, the scope of the analyses conducted by the ILO greatly varies. Some reports that deal with the global labour situation only include data from approximately fifty countries while other reports rely on information or estimates for over 190 countries. Sometimes the media recognise the diverging database. However, even if reports are only based on a small number of countries, the analysed media do not question the label 'global'. On the other hand, the press does not challenge the quality of data on reports dealing with a large number of countries. This is rather remarkable given the large number of failed states where registration and statistics offices as well as opinion research institutes – if there are any at all – hardly produce data of comparable quality. The method of data collection and prediction is neither reported on nor called into question, even if the ILO itself stresses the problematic database and the rather rough estimates.

Estimates and predictions are not treated differently from stocktaking reports. Amongst all ILO reports those dealing with worldwide unemployment rates and their assumed development receive

special attention. At the beginning of the financial crisis, the ILO produced estimates on the number of jobs that will probably be lost as a result of the crisis. Depending on further economic developments, thirty to fifty million job losses were estimated. The actual number of job losses is often spread in the press in the following years. The number reaches forty million. Thus, the ILO estimates can be assessed as realistic. The analysis of Swiss newspapers shows that the number of references to reports published by the ILO is very high: In the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ) more than one third of all articles dealing with the ILO refer to the organisation's reports, in the *Tagesanzeiger* (TA), these kind of articles amount to sixty per cent (see *Table 2*).

Thus, the analysis indicates that the ILO is considered to be an important supplier of data. But in contrast to data supplied by statistics offices, the media coverage on ILO reports also adopts the organisation's interpretation on unemployment, child and forced labour, wage developments, and gender equality. Even if some articles limit themselves to describing the data, the evaluation proposed by the ILO (improvement or deterioration, threats, positive or negative impressions of certain countries) and the benchmarks on which these evaluations are based are also often adopted. The ILO seems to have standardised its reports increasingly and attempts to make clear (by introducing a sequential numbering) that these reports are published on a recurrent basis, which

Table 2: Number of articles referring to ILO reports or ILO standards and conventions

	Reference to ILO reports	References to ILO definitions and data on unemployment	References to other terms in accordance with ILO definitions	References to ILO conventions
Tagesanzeiger (N=71)	43 (= 61.4 %)	5 (= 7.0 %)	1 (= 1.4 %)	15 (= 21.1 %)
NZZ (N=170)	60 (= 35.3 %)	28 (= 16.5 %)	4 (= 2.4 %)	38 (= 22.4 %)

is only partly recognised by the media. The press occasionally points to the periodic character of certain publications (for instance: Global Employment Trends, annual; Global Wage Report, biennial, third report 12/13; World of Work Report, annual by International Institute for Labour Studies). Social policy issues in a narrow sense are rather rare among ILO reports. The first World Social Security Report was published in 2010 (ILO 2010). As a consequence, articles dealing with the diffusion and reform of social security systems are rather marginalised and can only be found in the context of reports that refer to predictions and data calculations. Accordingly, the low number of countries (only 72 of 198) that have unemployment insurances is only mentioned briefly (FAZ 15.11.2012).

In contrast to reports written in the field of climate policy, ILO analyses dealing with the world job market do not refer to the scientific community. The data compiled by the ILO are neither presented in a manner that clearly shows that their analyses are coordinated with leading research institutes nor do scientists refer to ILO data in public announcements. Obviously, there is no pressure on the part of the scientific community to coordinate

with the ILO as an institute of analysis of the global labour market, developments in labour law and social security.

A large number of articles that mention the ILO only note unemployment rates and distinguish between the national statistics provided by unemployment insurances and the ILO calculation, which is based on surveys – largely without explaining the difference. Without the systematic collection of statistics related to unemployment, media attention for the ILO would be clearly lower. In British newspapers, the number of articles mentioning the ILO rises during the financial crisis when unemployment rates increase. The Times almost exclusively reports on the ILO in the context of unemployment and youth unemployment. Because of the fact that unemployment rates become increasingly relevant for domestic politics, the number of articles mentioning the ILO standards increases. For instance, the British press discusses the question of how the unemployment rate in Scotland relates to Great Britain's rate as a whole – depending on different calculations. In 2012, when the rate starts to decrease in national statistics but remains high in those calculations proposed by the ILO, the standard is increasingly contested in Great Britain and

in the French presidential election, which is reported on in great detail in the media. Occasionally, other definitions of the ILO (of child and forced labour) or of ILO conventions are cited. Thus, the organisation appears as an authority that shapes the understanding of the world of work. However, the public profile of the ILO can primarily be characterised as an authority supplying reports, data, estimates and predictions. In this function the ILO is an uncontested authority; criticism dealing with the organisation's methods of data collection and presentation is only rarely voiced.

But the ILO is also mentioned with respect to a further function: norm setting. The International Labour Standards of the ILO member states receive considerable attention. This is especially the case for the conventions which are internationally ratified and binding but it is also true for single recommendations which are non-binding. New conventions receive special attention in the media when being approved (by a two-thirds majority on the In-

ternational Labour Conference). This was the case for the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 and the Domestic Workers Convention 2011, which were both approved in the analysed time span. The long-lasting ratification process – which partly resulted in non-ratification – is only rarely subject to public scrutiny. This is also the case for the own national ratification process. In contrast to this, conventions play a crucial role as a normative reference point in country reports on employment conditions in certain sectors. Moreover, in the context of public procurement decisions on communal level, in particular in Switzerland and Germany, it is often discussed whether the fundamental employment rules of the ILO should be part of the public invitation to tender. In their sections on regional issues the analysed newspapers (SZ on Bavaria; NZZ on the Canton of Zurich) often report on contentious decisions made by local parliaments on the adoption of ILO conventions in local authorities' procurement practices.

4. Organisational Events, Political Programmes, and Leadership

Independently of their positions and reports, organisations are visible and arouse public's attention through events that are initiated by them, through programmatic initiatives and discussions as well as through their leading staff. This addresses criteria numbers four to six is the organisation visible as an organisation in the media?

The International Labour Conference is the most important recurring organisational 'event' of the ILO and is at the same time the decision-making body of the organisation. It takes place annually for two to three weeks in Geneva in June. Around 5,000 delegates from 185 countries participated at the 101st session of the International Labour Conference. Each national delegation consists of two government representatives as well as an employee's and employer's representative each with a large number of advisers. Since these conferences always take place in Switzerland, it was assumed that Swiss media would pay more attention to this event. Yet, in the analysed time span the *Tagesanzeiger* only reports once on the Conference, which is less than in foreign newspapers. In contrast to this, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the second Swiss newspaper in the corpus, publishes regular and detailed reports on this event – something which is not the case for German and British newspapers. Conflicts such as the invitation of the Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi as keynote speaker

of the conference in 2012, Nobel Peace Price laureate of 1981, who was released from house arrest by the military government in 2010, led to increased public interest. Speeches held by Swiss politicians prior to the Conference, are also subject to media coverage.

In 2009, a three-day ILO summit on the Global Jobs Crisis was held during the International Labour Conference, which played a significant role in the media because of the speeches made by the heads of government of France, Argentina, and Brazil. Other committees such as the Governing Body composed of 56 regular and 66 deputy members is, despite its far-reaching competences, only mentioned very rarely. This is also the case when the Director-General is elected. Apart from that, special conferences are mentioned occasionally. Decisions, recommendations and communications made by the ILO are only referred to in the context of reports on the countries concerned and as part of the media coverage dealing with the conference. In sum, the organisational life of the ILO does not practically offer the media any reference point for reporting on the organisation except for the International Labour Conference.

The 'programmatic' shift of the ILO in the field of social security from social policy that relates to residents instead of workers, as laid down in the so-called Bachelet report "Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalisation"

(ILO 2011, Report of the Advisory Group chaired by Michelle Bachelet – convened by the ILO with the collaboration of the WHO) has practically not attracted any attention. The detailed reconstruction of the history of this reorientation of the social political program of an international organisation provided by Bob Deacon (Deacon 2013) has no resonance in the media neither in the residing country nor in the country in which social policy geared towards the worker and his protection through social security systems originates. While this change is followed closely in the scientific community (Davy/Davy/Leisering 2013, research project “FLOOR” Bielefeld University), there is a complete lack of reports on this development in national quality newspapers. One could argue that this is not actually surprising because a programmatic change is not particularly suitable for public presentations. However, this argument could be countered by referring to programmes of parties and associations which are often subject to extensive media coverage in the national quality press; if conflicts within these organisations become visible, if different groups opposing each other are formed and if particular persons manage to appear as exponents of a certain program. Actually, in the case of the Bachelet report, there was a favourable factor for media resonance: the opportunity for personalisation. The report was written by an advisory group, chaired by the worldwide known then former Chilean president (from 2006 to 2010, prior to this position she was Secretary of Health and Secretary of Defence) Michelle Bachelet. Mrs Bachelet lived in the GDR after her

flight from Pinochet in Chile, was educated as a paediatrician at the Humboldt University at Berlin, where she also obtained an honorary doctorate. So beside her position as first female president of Chile, there were enough reference points for media resonance in German-speaking countries. A connection between the ILO programmatic shift and Michelle Bachelet was not established in either Germany or Switzerland. A personalisation strategy that would offer the opportunity to arouse a higher level of attention for the programmatic shift, has either not been developed or has failed completely.

Events and information that relate to particular persons or can be tightly linked to a 'leader' of the organisation increase the news value of a report. That is why personalisation strategies (linking an event or a report with a political representative), personnel issues, and disputes among members of an organisation are particularly suitable for increasing media attention. An international organisation such as the ILO has only a few positions that offer the opportunity of becoming visible in the public and that can become the object of disputes amongst the staff. Above all, this is the case for the Director-General as head of the ILO. The other positions are rather comparable to heads of departments in ministries. The appointment of the latter also only rarely attracts media attention. Since 1999, the position of the Director-General was held by the Chilean Juan Somavia (the first representative of the Global South). He was re-elected twice. In May 2012, the British Guy Ryder was elected to become Mr Somavia's successor starting from 1 October

2012. The analysed quality newspapers report on these elections also mentioned the other eight candidates, supplied the public with Ryder's curriculum vitae and informed the public on interconnections that exist with personnel issues in other international organisations. In order to achieve a certain representativeness of all relevant interests in the leadership of important international organisations in formally independent elections an increase of diplomatic activities can be observed prior to these elections. On the day of the election of the new Director-General, The Times writes that the British government will not support the British candidate. The article continues by mentioning that the vote of the British government was assigned to the former Dutch Secretary of Social Services Ad Melkert, the former party leader and leading candidate of the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) during the 2002 election. Melkert resigned after a massive election defeat, for which he was made responsible by his party due to his technocratic leadership. Instead of the national candidate, the liberal conservative government in Great Britain supported a Dutch social democratic candidate belonging to the right wing of the party spectrum because it disliked Ryder's close association with trade unions (from 2006 to 2010 he was General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation). Despite his work experience as former Director of the Office of the ILO Director-General the British government did not want to support an employee's representative, although the ILO is organised on a tripartite basis. While The Times adds that the decision by the British gov-

ernment "has led to raised eyebrows in diplomatic circles" (Times 5/29/2012), the newspaper neither comments on nor evaluates this decision. The following day, Ryder's election is only acknowledged in a short note, while The Guardian does not report on the issue prior to the election nor does the newspaper announce the election. During the inauguration in October 2012, The Guardian also does not comment on the new General-Director. By contrast, The Times publish a detailed article that presents Guy Ryder's positions and his life paths. Not even the fact that Guy Ryder heads a UN agency as a British-born official leads to increased national public attention for the ILO. The lack of support of a British official by the British government could at least raise the question whether the anti-union campaign is overdrawn, but the government does not have to deal publicly with critical questions. On the other hand, it might have been expected that the election of a British official for such a high position in international diplomacy would lead to an increased interest in the person. However, personality reports are completely missing in the analysed media. The resonance in the UK is not higher than in Germany or Switzerland. A contentious personnel issue with reference to the national political arena does not contribute to increased media coverage.

If personnel issues and elections cannot be publicly exploited, the public relations strategy of active personalisation, i.e. to link all news of an organisation with one person, preferably always the same, may be a further way. However this strategy has not been adopted by the ILO.

Reports are presented by those members of staff or scientists who have the responsibility of writing these reports, i.e. by the author or lead author respectively. What is more, the World of Work Report is published by an ILO institute, the International Institute for Labour Studies. The director, Raymond Torres, presents these reports, and has not always been politically close to the former Director-General. This fact alone leads to a high degree of fragmentation of political elites' naming. Moreover, in country reports dealing, for instance, with child and forced labour the regional representatives of the ILO are often presented as responsible. In British newspapers, reports on career paths

of political elites often deal with persons who temporarily worked for the ILO, but who currently do not have a position in this organisation. A more detailed analysis of Swiss newspapers illustrates that the share of articles mentioning ILO staff is overall rather small (11.6 %) while the Director-General is only mentioned in half of these articles. Occasionally, ILO representatives appear as authors in newspapers (for instance an article by Somavia was published in the SZ on 29/04/12). By reporting on the ILO, the press does not attempt to concentrate on one particular person; nor does the ILO try to adopt a consistent personalisation strategy in public relations.

Table 3: Number of articles mentioning representatives of the ILO in both of the analysed Swiss newspapers (own data 2006-2012)

	References to representatives by articles				
	No representatives mentioned	Director-General (Somavia, Ryder)	Other ILO staff	Director-General and other ILO staff	Other persons with ILO affiliation
Tagesanzeiger (N=71)	61	2	7	-	1
Neue Zürcher Zeitung (N=170)	152	9	8	-	1

5. Issues

An international organisation's media profile is also shaped by the issues to which an organisation is usually connected. According to its constitution, the ILO is committed to securing world peace by facilitating social justice and by contributing to the improvement of people's working conditions. It is an international organisation that is genuinely concerned with issues of labour law, working relations, and social policy. The ILO's thematic focus on social questions is also reflected in the three analysed national public spheres. The ILO is not mentioned in contexts other than labour market, working relations, and social policy. It is not mentioned in the context of issues dealing with fundamental changes of the world order, nor is it visible in reports dealing with other policy fields than social and labour market policy. The ILO is not even mentioned in the context of issues dealing with global health policy, not even next to the WHO. In the analysed publics, the ILO continues to be primarily concerned with its traditional issues, i.e. social standards and working conditions – despite the serious consequences of globalisation and the financial market crisis. The ILO is perceived as a specialised organisation. The developments in the labour market and concrete working condition in certain countries are discussed far more extensively than social policy instruments to combat unemployment, poverty, and repression. There are rarely articles dealing explicitly with questions of social security, social insurances or alternative security systems. In contrast to this, there

are a variety of reports on labour law and its development, often in the context of child and forced labour, repressions of trade unions, and extreme working conditions in single sectors or countries. The special analysis conducted for Switzerland underlines the dominance of the labour market issue, which is also the result of the fact that many articles refer to the ILO measurement of unemployment. Next to analyses dealing with developments in the labour market or general working conditions, newspaper reports focus on child and forced labour. In these two fields the ILO constitutes a significant authority and functions as a norm setter, while other issues related to the labour market or to labour law, such as the discrimination against women, equality between women and men and gender pay gap do not constitute major issues that are commonly discussed in the context of the ILO. The high number of articles dealing with trade union rights is the result of an action brought to the ILO by the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions. Thus, it can be attributed to a contentious national issue with no equivalent in the other analysed national public spheres.

Table 4: Key issues associated with media coverage on ILO in both of the analysed Swiss quality newspapers; number of articles per issue (own data 2006-2012)

	NZZ	TA
Labour market developments, unemployment	50	15
Working conditions, labour law (generally)	19	7
Child labour	10	13
Trade union rights	10	5
Social consequences of globalisation	12	3
Slave labour and forced labour	6	5
Youth unemployment	8	3
Wage development	4	7

In spite of the grave consequences of the financial market crisis and the eurozone crisis for the labour market, the number of articles dealing with the ILO does not increase after the crisis. Yet, thematic shifts can still be observed since the media coverage on the ILO starts to focus more closely on the high level of unemployment in Europe. At the beginning of the analysed time span, reports written by the ILO were cited particularly often if they dealt with appalling working conditions in the countries of the Global South. Reports by the ILO were, thus, mainly published in the context of development policy and the globalisation of international production. This corresponds to a proposition made in the scientific literature claiming that the ILO has developed itself from an organisation setting social standards to a “developmental agency” (Maier-Rigaud 2009: 141). This focus on working conditions in the context of development policy no longer exists since 2008. Since then, the unemployment situation in Europe has taken centre stage in the media reception of the ILO. The statements dealing with

worldwide unemployment are interpreted twice. On the one hand, a global perspective that stresses the remarkable figure of forty million unemployed people worldwide is taken. On the other hand, emphasis is put on the unemployment situation of young people in southern Europe. The worldwide increase of unemployment finds an equivalent in Europe. The European development runs parallel to the international development and is not contrasted with it (as was the case with child and forced labour). Europe still occupies a special position because most unemployed people have access to unemployment insurance and other social security measures, which is not the case for other people in the rest of the world. Due to the parallel development of global and European unemployment the ILO manages to contribute more extensively to the European debate. It no longer solely criticises the lack of social standards, child and forced labour, and the repression of trade unions. During 2009 and 2012, the ILO focused more on Europe and its social problems; newspapers not only refer to

the organisation's estimates and reports, they also cite its warnings against social upheavals in highly industrialised states and its rejection of pure austerity poli-

cies. The ILO takes a clear position and fights for an international economic policy which takes into consideration both budgetary stabilisation and debt reduction.

6. The ILO – A Legitimate International Organisation

A central element of the visibility and media relevance of an organisation is its positive and negative evaluation (criteria 8 to 9). An organisation that only functions as an informant or a data supplier does not play an important role in political conflicts. Only if the organisation, i.e. its actions, its reports or its leading staff, are positively or negatively evaluated can it be considered to be of any significance at all in political conflicts. If it merely fulfils the role of a neutral reporter, who is not evaluated, the organisation might at best perform a consulting or a supporting task for politics. The ILO cannot become politically relevant as long as mass media only report on the dates, estimates, thoughts, and conventions of the ILO which do not become the object of commentaries and yes/no expressions. As soon as evaluations start to appear in the media, which present the ILO's policy either as worth supporting or which criticise the organisation; as soon as several actors are cited of which some take a positive stance on the ILO while others reject it, the media profile of the ILO gains a political dimension.

The detailed analysis of Swiss newspapers shows that only 18.3 per cent of all articles contain an evaluative statement on ILO policies. An evaluative statement might be either voiced by the journalist/author himself or the journalist/author might refer to an evaluative statement of another actor. One third of all articles containing an evaluation relate to controversial statements made by a person other than the journalist/author. The ILO is only very rarely depicted as a controversial institution. By contrast, 81.6 per cent of all articles are purely descriptive. Although comparative data is missing such a degree of neutralisation of an international organisation can be described as quite high. Only rarely does the ILO play a significant role in evaluative contexts. It is, thus, not really part of the political game.

The communicative role of an international organisation becomes evident by measuring whether and to what extent the legitimacy of the organisation is granted or denied in the media. Legitimacy denotes the acceptability of a political order (Forst/Schmalz-Bruns 2011). Legitima-

tion refers to a communicative process, i.e. to the positive or negative evaluation of political orders as (il)legitimate in the public. By drawing on David Easton's work, empirical legitimacy research differentiates between the legitimacy and evaluation of political orders (differentiating between the political regime and the political community in the context of nation states) and the evaluation of political elites (authorities) and single policies. While Easton only refers to the evaluation of political orders as instances of legitimization, a tendency to employ the concept in broader contexts, including policies and authorities, can be observed in current research (Geis/Nullmeier/Daase 2012). In this article, however, a narrow definition of the term is suggested: legitimization and delegitimation only denote a process in which an international organisation as a whole is evaluated, including its objective, its structure and organisation, its position in the concert of other international organisations, its meaningfulness or its inclusion of members etc. Legitimation statements are superfluous statements that refer to the international political regime. For the EU, the G8, and the UN corresponding data already exist. An analysis of quality newspapers in the UK, Switzerland, and Germany – the three countries that were also selected for the present study – as well as the US has been conducted (Nullmeier et al. 2010). The public attention for these global and regional governance organisations was so high that instead of a complete analysis selected time spans comprising twelve days surrounding annually recurrent events (in particular summits and the

UN General Assembly etc.) were analysed (Schneider 2010). Thus the two data sets cannot be directly compared because this study is based on a complete analysis of all published articles dealing with the ILO. In addition to this, the analysis of data is not based on the level of constructed sentences, but on the level of articles. So it is not the total number of legitimization statements that is of interest here, but rather the number of articles with (de-)legitimation statements. Yet, despite these varying approaches, tentative propositions can be made. The number of articles comprising evaluative passages with respect to the ILO is extremely small. In the analysed time span, which comprises seven years, only up to three articles per newspaper can be found that critically or positively evaluate the basic institutional structure and function of the ILO. The term 'a-legitimacy' is employed to denote such a limited interest for the legitimacy of a political organisation. The only article with massive criticism that can be found for all six newspapers in the chosen time span of seven years, is an article written by the former German secretary for employment and social affairs in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on July 7th, 2006, with the title: "Child protectors in cloud cuckoo land. The International Labour Organisation produces papers but hardly manages to combat misery". This article was written in the context of the policy of the ILO in the field of child labour, but it only takes this issue as an opportunity to resort to fundamental polemics. Blüm attacks the ILO as an organisation that ratifies international treaties, such as the convention on the abolition of child labour, which was

signed by 168 states (Nesi et al. 2008), but does not care about the implementation as it does not put any pressure on those countries that do not comply and even announces a worldwide end of child labour in its reports. "The help of the ILO will be useless as long as the organisation does not attach greater importance to its convention against child labour. The ILO ban against child labour is worth as much as the paper on which the 'convention 182' is written, which prohibits the worst forms of child labour. It is not acceptable that states solemnly sign ILO documents but do not care about the implementation apart from that. And the ILO in its cloud cuckoo land does not even urge these countries to comply. In its reports, the ILO falsely represents itself as an active organisation. It lacks teeth to implement its norms." (SZ 7/7/2006, own translation) At the end of the article this sharp criticism is linked to a similarly clear support for the ILO as a global organisation: "In the age of globalisation the ILO is needed more than ever. The competences that the nation state has lost must be regained on a global level. The market economy needs rules that are valid worldwide if it does not want to destroy itself. The ILO could perform this task together with others. It is best equipped to fulfil this task as it is the only UN organisation in which states, employers, and trade unions work together. It might even be considered as a model for a new, global cooperation of states and civil societies" (SZ 7/7/2006, own translation). Thus, Blüm's criticism of the non-binding nature of the organisation actually aims to strengthen the ILO, to extend the instruments the ILO has

at its disposal and to increase its steering capacity. Blüm's political model is an extension and strengthening of a global corporatism. He wants the tripartism of states, trade unions, and employers, institutionalised in the ILO, to become more effective, just like in some nation states.

An ironic and scathing article that is complementary to the criticism in Germany can be found in *The Times* (4/27/2012). Here it is also the political irrelevancy of the ILO that is attacked. The *Times* reports that during the annual "Day for Safety and Health at Work", the ILO suggested developing the economy into a green economy and integrating health policies into 'green job policies'. The commentary underlines that these suggestions are too far away from the current problems of unemployment and austerity politics. These proclamations could only be interpreted as 'adding a green tint' – they are out of touch with reality and ineffective. In sum, the analysis of media coverage demonstrates that if the ILO as a political order is debated at all, it is the vagueness of the signed norms and the ineffective sanction mechanisms that take centre stage.

But it is also noted, often in the style of a report, that the ILO has gained international significance in recent years. The invitation to G20 summits, a breakthrough that was achieved in 2009, is considered to be important in this context. The fact that the ILO now belongs to the club of those international organisations, next to the IMF, the WTO, and the OECD, and that it is heard regarding important questions concerning the world economy also becomes evident in new forms of national coordination of international organisa-

tions which are reported on in national media. The German chancellor Angela Merkel, for instance, invited leading representatives of economy-related international organisations to meetings that take place annually (Dec 2007; 05/02/2009, 28/04/2010, 6/10/2011, 30/10/2012). The IMF's, the OECD's, the WTO's, the ILO's, and the World Bank's representatives, i.e. general directors, presidents and general secretaries, were invited for and participated in these meetings. The round started in 2007 at the end of the German G8 presidency with an invitation to the five global economy organisations. The aim was to initiate and support constructive cooperation between the IOs accompanying the policies of the nation states and the club regime (in 2007 this was primarily the G8). For the most part, the press did not report on the results in greater detail, instead newspapers merely pointed out that a closer cooperation between the IOs was agreed on. Therefore, the character of these high ranking meetings mainly remains secret. It was only in 2009 that public attention for this informal meeting increased since it was linked with a plan proposed by German chancellor Angela Merkel for a "Charta for long-term sensible economics" and the suggestion to propagate the idea of a global economy council in the UN.

The difference between media perception in quality newspapers and press releases of the involved political actors can be easily traced in this case. The common press releases on the meeting (Federal Government of Germany 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012) do not clarify the status of the meeting. Yet, they contain a range

of quite far-reaching details with respect to the substance of the meeting. For instance, the press release of the meeting in 2012 clearly shows that two issues were high on the agenda: on the one hand, the connection between financial consolidation and structural reforms and, on the other hand, measures to support jobs and growth. The formulations chosen for the press release rather harmoniously connect these two policy models. But there is also a passage that expresses the position of the ILO: "Sound macroeconomic policies have to go hand in hand with efforts to increase employment, drawing on the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and on its Global Jobs Pact approach adopted at the ILO International Labour Conference of 2009. In particular, strategies to reduce youth unemployment have to be implemented with high political priority" (Federal Government of Germany 2012). The results of the International Labour Conference of 2009 were also mentioned as a reference point of common objectives in the press release on the meeting in 2010. The first sentence of the common statement in 2012 was, almost identically, also part of the press release in 2011, only that the latter declared that, instead of combating youth unemployment, the stimulation of productive investment in job-generating enterprises of the real economy was a priority (Federal Government of Germany 2011). These small shifts are in stark contrast to grave differences between the common statements on the meetings in 2010 and 2012: In 2010 the press release emphasises that the efforts of the five IOs are coordinated by the G20. In the 2012 press release, however, the

G20 is not even mentioned any more. This (partial) recognition of the ILO policy by the German government and the G20's decreasing reputation are not noted in the

quality press. The changed international role of the ILO is therefore only partly acknowledged.

7. Summary

The results of the study can be summarised as follows: the ILO is not perceived as a political actor but is instead considered to be a statistics office that is scientifically competent, as well as a norm setter that has authority in all questions related to working conditions. In national public spheres, it is only rarely perceived as a player in international politics. The organisation fulfils the function of a specialist for global reports on employment and social standards. It thereby becomes a reference point of newspaper reports in a limited number of issues. Labour law, working conditions and unemployment play a more important role than social security institutions. As one of the leading actors of global social policy the ILO has a deficit in questions related to social security: It seems that the ILO cannot contribute much to this issue and the press does not focus on the ILO when problems and reforms of social security institutions are discussed. What is more, media attention concentrates on standard setting (measures of unemployment) and global reports. With a few minor exceptions, the ILO is not critically discussed or politicised in the media. Programmatic efforts

and radical shifts are not recognised. Recurrent events such as elections, general conferences, the adoption and ratification of conventions are only occasionally taken up by the media. The ILO as a whole is neither attacked nor legitimised. It is not evaluated fundamentally and it therefore remains a-legitimate. The degree of 'political presence' is, according to the above mentioned nine criteria, rather low. Reports and standards defined by the ILO are, indeed, mentioned. Yet there is no media coverage on the organisation itself, i.e. on inner organisational events, on leading staff, on programmatic developments or on possible internal conflicts. At the same time, there are hardly any evaluative statements in articles or commentaries. This is why the 'media profile' of the ILO is limited to a data supplier. A low presence and a scientific rather than political profile are responsible for the fact that the ILO is not recognised as an important political actor in the field of (international and national) social policy.

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Stefan Traub, Sebastian Finkler

Ein Grundsicherungsabstandsgebot für die Gesetzliche Rentenversicherung? Ergebnisse einer Mikrosimulation

ZeS-Arbeitspapier Nr. 01/2013

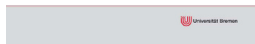
Aufgrund bestehender und sich weiter verstärkender Altersarmut steht der Reformbedarf der Leistungsseite der Gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung (GRV) im Zentrum der wissenschaftlichen und politischen Diskussion. Im Fokus stehen dabei Personen mit lückenhaften Erwerbsbiographien und niedrigem Einkommen, die besonders stark von Altersarmut betroffen sind und für die aufgrund der Grundsicherung im Alter nach §§ 41 ff. SGB XII Fehlanreize bestehen, einen Beitrag in das umlagefinanzierte System der GRV zu entrichten. In einem Mikrosimulationsmodell soll auf Basis des Scientific Use File (SUF) der Versicherungskontenstichprobe (VSKT) 2009 untersucht werden, welche Auswirkungen die Einführung eines Grundsicherungsabstandsgebotes in der GRV hat. Dabei werden drei mögliche Abstände zur Grundsicherung im Alter sowie drei verschiedene Anspruchskriterien mit unterschiedlich hohen Beitrags- bzw. Versicherungsjahren modelliert.

Karl Hinrichs, Magnus Brosig



Die Staatsschuldenkrise und die Reform von Alterssicherungssystemen in europäischen Ländern

ZeS-Arbeitspapier 02/2013



Die Finanzmarktkrise von 2008 und in deren Folge die „Große Rezession“ sowie Staatsschuldenkrisen in verschiedenen EU-Ländern haben einschneidende Reformen der Alterssicherungssysteme ausgelöst, die die Finanzierung der Renten kurz- und langfristig sicherstellen, fiskalischen Manövrierspielraum wieder erweitern bzw. den Zugang zu Kredithilfen ermöglichen oder Vorstellungen von Generationengerechtigkeit realisieren sollen. Fast ausschließlich handelt es sich um Einschränkungen mit teilweise drastischen und unmittelbaren Auswirkungen auf die Lebensbedingungen der jetzigen und künftigen Rentenbezieher. Betrachtet werden die Reformen in neun EU-Ländern: Griechenland, Großbritannien, Irland, Italien, Lettland, Portugal, Rumänien, Spanien und Ungarn. Dabei geht es um die Inhalte dieser Reformen und die Umstände, die jeweils zu diesen Veränderungen geführt bzw. sie ermöglicht haben. Gezeigt wird, dass die Herausforderungen, mit denen diese Länder konfrontiert waren (oder sind), einschneidende Veränderungen erlaubten bzw. erzwangen, die ansonsten kaum durchsetzbar gewesen oder in Anbetracht der politischen Konsequenzen von den jeweiligen Regierungen so nicht in Angriff genommen worden wären. Weiterhin werden im Ländervergleich die Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede beleuchtet sowie nach den bislang erkennbaren sozialen Konsequenzen gefragt.



