

International Labour Review

SPECIAL ISSUE LABOUR REGULATIONS AND LABOUR STANDARDS IN CHINA

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- 513 [Changing labour regulations and labour standards in China: Retrospect and challenges](#) Chris King-Chi CHAN and Khalid NADVI

China's global economic strength is underpinned by its manufacturing prowess, predicated on a disciplined, skilled but relatively low-paid workforce. Hence the State's recent regulatory initiatives to improve employment conditions in response to growing labour unrest. In their introductory article, the coordinators of this Special Issue of the *International Labour Review* contextualize the contributions that follow by reviewing the broader debates on labour regulation in global production – particularly on “soft” vs “hard” regulation – and the changes that have occurred in China's labour markets, labour regulations, labour standards and labour relations over the past decade. They conclude with suggestions for further research.

KEYWORDS: WORKING CONDITIONS, LABOUR STANDARDS, CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY, LABOUR POLICY, CHINA.

- 535 [Labour relations, production regimes and labour conflicts in the Chinese automotive industry](#) Boy LÜTHJE

The auto workers' strikes that erupted in southern China in 2010 triggered significant labour relations reforms in Guangdong province. Against this background, the author draws on extensive empirical research in leading car assembly plants and their suppliers to construct a typology of their production regimes for analysing current changes in labour relations. While this framework is helpful in understanding the growing diversity of China's manufacturing industries generally, it is used here to conceptualize the fragmentation and segmentation of labour relations between

various firms, layers of suppliers and regional clusters in the automotive industry. The article concludes with a discussion of prospects for further reform.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR RELATIONS, LABOUR MOVEMENT, STRIKE, WORK ORGANIZATION, MOTOR VEHICLE INDUSTRY, CHINA.

- 561 [Labour inspection in contemporary China: Like the Anglo-Saxon model, but different](#)
Wenjia ZHUANG and Kinglun NGOK

The authors examine the lack of enforcement of China's increasing body of labour legislation, showing how, since the 1980s, the country's labour inspection system has evolved into a system resembling the Anglo-Saxon model – characterized by fragmentation and reactive regulatory practices – but with highly selective and non-coercive state enforcement. This “hybrid” labour inspection model stems from the combination of neoliberal reforms with the Leninist legacy of the authoritarian regime. More effective enforcement of labour law would, the authors suggest, require greater tripartite cooperation and social dialogue in the regulatory process, and the involvement of an independently organized industrial labour force.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR INSPECTION, INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, CHINA.

- 587 [The politics of labour legislation in southern China: How foreign chambers of commerce and government agencies influence collective bargaining laws](#)
Elaine Sio-ieng HUI and Chris King-Chi CHAN

In 2010, labour protests spread across China, sparked by the Honda workers' strike. Hoping to pacify the aggrieved workers, the Shenzhen and Guangdong governments resumed discussion of the suspended draft Shenzhen Collective Consultation Ordinance and the Guangdong Regulations on the Democratic Management of Enterprises. However, following strong opposition from foreign chambers of commerce, discussion was once again suspended. The authors show that two factors determine how foreign chambers of commerce and government agencies influence labour legislation in southern China: the position in global production chains of the firms they represent, and the relevant industrial relations model.

KEYWORDS: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, LABOUR LEGISLATION, COMMENT, FOREIGN CAPITAL, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TRADE, GLOBALIZATION, CHINA.

- 609 [Collective consultation under quota management: China's government-led model of labour relations regulation](#)
Qingjun WU and Zhaoyang SUN

China's system of labour relations regulation is based on a government-led model of collective consultation and contracts, driven by the central planning tradition of “quota management.” Government and trade unions thus cooperate to fulfil coverage quotas, especially at the local/enterprise level. Though their methods are highly successful at overcoming employers' reluctance, the absence of genuine collective bargaining leaves collective contracts largely devoid of substance. Under this system, the authors argue, the Government is institutionalizing a labour regulation framework aimed at containing the recent rise in labour unrest, while pragmatically postponing collective bargaining for the sake of stability and growth.

KEYWORDS: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, LABOUR RELATIONS, CONSULTATION, STATE INTERVENTION, CHINA.

Notes and debates

- 635 [Injured workers in China: Injustice, conflict and social unrest](#)
Ying ZHU, Peter Y. CHEN and Wei ZHAO

Compared to other, developed countries, there has been a disproportionately high level of work-related accidents and ill health in China over the past decade, resulting in increased conflict and unrest, thereby undermining social stability and social harmony. To investigate how key stakeholders address occupational safety and

health (OSH) challenges, the authors interview 25 injured workers from five Chinese provinces about: safety practices at work; potential causes of injury; how the workers were treated – or mistreated – when they were injured; and the compensation process, and present recommendations for addressing OSH problems in China, in order to ensure social justice and social harmony.

KEYWORDS: OCCUPATIONAL INJURY, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, LABOUR POLICY, CHINA.

649 **China's "labour shortage" and migrant workers' lack of social security**
Zhikai WANG

Since 2004, the massive flow of surplus rural labour in China has dried up; indeed, the country's eastern coastal region is currently experiencing a "labour shortage". This phenomenon, which is bound up with China's ongoing economic and social development, has arisen because migrant workers have little or no social security in China. Rather than a labour shortage, there is in fact still a huge rural labour surplus. If the system governing migrant workers' social security and labour rights were improved, this could ease the apparent labour shortage and solve firms' employment problems, thereby increasing productivity and supporting China's long-term economic growth.

KEYWORDS: LABOUR SHORTAGE, RURAL MIGRATION, SOCIAL SECURITY, WORKERS RIGHTS, PRODUCTIVITY, CHINA.

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