



**Alternative routes to good jobs in the service economy:  
Employment restructuring and HRM in telecommunications firms**

**Final Project Conference: ESRC Grant RES-061-25-0444**

**London School of Economics and Political Science**

**23 May 2013**

**Thai Theatre, lower ground (LG03)  
New Academic Building  
54 Lincolns Inn Fields  
London WC2A 3LJ**

**10.00-10.30: Welcome and Introduction**

**10.30-12.00: Restructuring employment after market liberalization: Alternative approaches to downsizing and organizational change**

Presentation of research findings (Katja Sarmiento-Mirwaldt and Chiara Benassi)

**Panel:** Antonio Rossa (SLC-CGIL, Italy), Lutz Paege (Deutsche Telekom Technischer Service, Germany), Gregory Jackson (FU-Berlin, Germany)

**12.00-1.00: Lunch**

**1:00-3:00: Comparing work organization and HRM models**

Presentation of research findings (Virginia Doellgast)

**Panel 1: *Technicians – Alternative approaches to work organization and skills***

Maxime Bellego (France Telecom/Univ Marseilles, France), John Schwartzbach and Tomas Wellejus (TDC/Dansk Metal, Denmark), Tristan Smart (BT, UK)

**Panel 2: *Call centres – Alternative approaches to performance management***

David Marsden (LSE), Ctirad Nedbálek (O2 Telefónica, Czech Republic), Ralf Meger (Deutsche Telekom Kunden Service, Germany)

**3:00-3:30: Break**

**3:30-4:30: Policy implications: The role of public policy in creating and sustaining high quality jobs in the telecommunications industry**

**Panel:** Virginia Doellgast, Jonathan Liebenau (LSE), Marcus Courtney (UNI ICTS), Fernando Fasquez (European Commission)

## **Project description: Employment restructuring and HRM in US and European telecommunications firms**

In recent decades, governments across the global North have liberalized their service markets and privatized major service providers with the aim of reducing prices, improving service quality, and enhancing competitiveness and innovation. Incumbent firms have responded by restructuring employment within and across organizational boundaries, as well as experimenting with new approaches to work organization and human resource management (HRM). This research project compared approaches to employment restructuring and HRM in ten major incumbent telecommunications firms in Europe and the US, with the aim of evaluating the reasons for variation in strategies over time and across countries; as well as outcomes from these strategies for different stakeholder groups. Case study companies included TDC (Denmark), TeliaSonera (Sweden), Telekom Austria (Austria), Deutsche Telekom (Germany), France Telecom (France), Telecom Italia (Italy), BT (UK), AT&T (USA), Český Telecom/ O2 Telefónica Czech Republic (Czech Republic), and Telekomunikacja Polska/ Orange Polska (Poland).

The data collection and analysis focused on three main questions:

- 1) How have incumbent telecommunications firms restructured employment in the period following market liberalization, and what explains differences in approaches to restructuring – both between countries and over time?
- 2) How (and why) do work organization and HRM practices in call centre and technician workplaces differ across incumbent telecommunications firms – for example, in the areas of performance management, skills and training, and working time policies?
- 3) How do these alternative restructuring and HRM policies perform across different outcome measures – including employee outcomes (such as pay, job security, and job quality) and organizational outcomes (such as efficiency, productivity, and service quality)?

To answer these questions, the research team gathered extensive archival data on restructuring measures and salary structures at case study firms, conducted over 150 interviews with management and employee representatives, and carried out site visits in call centre and technician workplaces. Findings contribute to debates on the advantages and costs of different approaches to regulating service markets and organizing service work.

### **Research Team:**

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