

## Marieke Louis, Sciences Po PhD

Currently a lecturer in political science at Sciences Po Grenoble and a researcher at PACTE, [Marieke Louis](#) wrote her thesis on representativeness at the International Labour Organization. A recipient of the Georges Selle thesis merit award and a honourable mention from the Francis Blanchard award jury, this work was also granted the 2015 doctoral thesis award in political science by Éditions Dalloz, which is publishing the thesis.

transcript

Marieke Louis, Sciences Po PhD, lecturer at Sciences Po Grenoble, pacte Sciences Po.

For my thesis I worked on the issue of representativeness at the International Labour Organization – an international organization that was created in 1919 in the aftermath of World War I to establish universal norms for social justice.

Display ILO logo and office pictures

I showed how government representatives, as well as employer and worker organizations, defined a good representation of the working world.

Picture of the International Labour Office building in Geneva.

Methodology

I have a socio-historical approach that draws on fieldwork and stakeholders to study international relations like one would any social reality. Specifically, I went through the archives of the International Labour Office, which is the secretariat of the International Labour Organization and is located in Geneva. I also observed several general assemblies, including the International Labour Conference, which takes place once a year in Geneva. And finally, I conducted interviews with ILO members, diplomats, senior officials and union and employer organization representatives from around thirty states. At Sciences Po I was able to incorporate my research into a multidisciplinary seminar organized in partnership with Sciences Po's Doctoral School and Centre for International Studies, and especially the French Political Science Association's multilateral action research group, which includes historians, political scientists and sociologists.

Findings

The main finding of my research was that even for a tripartite organization like the ILO, representativeness was regularly if not constantly challenged by parties who believed they were not well represented in the institution, be it developing countries, informal workers... And that these challenges then forced the institution to periodically redefine the criteria for representativeness, for instance by enlarging its board to include countries from the South, or by inviting NGOs to participate in the International Labour Conference.

Reception

At the ILO, the thesis was awarded a honourable mention by the jury of the Francis Blanchard award, named after a former ILO general director. In the academic field, the thesis received the Georges Scelle award in law and political science from the Chancellery of Parisian Universities, and the Éditions Dalloz thesis award in political science, which will result in the publication of the thesis next spring in the Dalloz “new library of theses” series.

Picture of the book cover of “What is good representation? The International Labour Organization from 1919 to today”, by Marieke Louis.

Plans

In my current research, I am seeking to go beyond international organizations to more broadly study the role of social actors in international economic policies.

<https://vimeo.com/156534571>