

## *ILR Review*: CALL FOR PAPERS

*Conference and Special Issue on*

### **Toward New Theories in Employment Relations**

The *ILR Review* (<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ilr>) invites submissions for a conference and subsequent special issue devoted to new theories in employment relations. Matthew Bidwell (University of Pennsylvania: [mbidwell@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:mbidwell@wharton.upenn.edu)), Alexander Colvin (Cornell University: [ajc22@cornell.edu](mailto:ajc22@cornell.edu)), and Virginia Doellgast (Cornell University: [vld7@cornell.edu](mailto:vld7@cornell.edu)) will serve as editors of this special issue.

Scholars interested in participating in this conference and special issue should submit an extended abstract (4–5 pages) by **January 31, 2018**. Authors will be notified by February 28, 2018, if their paper has been accepted for presentation at the conference, which will be held in **May 2018** at MIT in Boston, Massachusetts. A subset of authors will be asked to submit their papers to the *ILR Review* with the expectation that their papers will be published in a special issue if they pass the external review process. Papers that are deemed of good quality but not selected for the special issue may be considered for publication in a regular issue of the journal.

Prospective contributors are urged to consult any of the guest editors regarding preliminary proposals or ideas for papers.

#### ***Overview and Submission Procedures***

The expansion of institutionalized collective bargaining in the post–World War II period inspired the development of classic theories in the field of industrial relations, such as the work of Dunlop (1958), Walton and McKersie (1965), Flanders (1970), and Hyman (1975). Disruptions to this industrial relations system in the 1970s produced a further renaissance of theory development, aided by growing interest in cross-national diversity in institutions and organizational practice. This shift was epitomized by work such as Piore and Sabel (1984), Kochan, Katz, and McKersie (1986), and Sorge and Streeck (1987). The subsequent decades have seen further transformations in work and employment. Across the global North, union representation and collective bargaining coverage have declined, individual employment rights have increased, workplaces and occupations have become more diverse, and employment is increasingly short-term and precarious. National employment relations policies are becoming more difficult to enforce or extend because of globalization of firms, production, and economies; increased international migration; and development of new technologies associated with, for example, the platform economy and advanced robotics. Labor unions and other worker and social movement organizations have responded to these trends with a variety of approaches to organize and represent workers under increasingly challenging conditions.

Much employment relations research has analyzed these developments and labor responses, with particular interest in their implications for patterns of inequality and job quality. Theoretical perspectives from neighboring fields such as organization studies, political economy, economic sociology, law, and economics have proved valuable in analyzing the evolution of employment

and the changing institutional landscape of employment relations. Employment relations researchers have produced many valuable modifications of or caveats to these disciplinary frameworks, following from their distinctive attention both to the political and social dynamics of workplaces and to the broader social and economic context within which workplaces are embedded. This new research, however, has not yet yielded the kinds of mid-range, widely referenced theoretical frameworks that were so valuable in earlier decades.

The call for this conference and special issue is therefore inspired by the idea that the time has come for developing and debating new theories in employment relations. We seek to encourage scholars in our field to engage with existing disciplinary theories and frameworks, but also to build new theoretical frameworks that can be used to analyze the profound changes that are occurring in the world of work and employment. We are especially interested in submissions that provide original insights and perspectives. Rather than critiques of existing theories, we seek contributions that will advance new lenses for understanding the current dynamics of contemporary workplaces.

In keeping with the employment relations tradition of inductive theory building, we encourage work that is grounded in a body of empirical research. Such grounding can take a variety of forms. We anticipate that some contributions may draw theoretical insights through the presentation of novel empirical work. Other contributions, by contrast, may draw on the existing body of research about workplaces to advance original theoretical arguments, models, and insights.

To submit an abstract for consideration for the conference, please attach your abstract to an e-mail and send it to the *ILR Review* office at [ilrr@cornell.edu](mailto:ilrr@cornell.edu). In the subject line of the e-mail, please write Special Issue: Toward New Theories in Employment Relations.

### References

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- Kochan, Thomas A., Harry C. Katz, and Robert B. McKersie. 1986. *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
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- Sorge, Arndt M., and Wolfgang Streeck. 1987. Industrial relations and technical change: The case for an extended perspective. Discussion Papers, Vol. 81. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin.
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