

A series of black paper cutouts of human figures holding hands, arranged in a line that curves upwards from the bottom left towards the top left. Their shadows are cast onto the background, creating a sense of depth and movement.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

REVITALIZING INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS AS AN
ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE

Edited by **Charles J. Whalen**

F249.712.6
N 532

New Directions in the Study of Work and Employment

Revitalizing Industrial Relations as an
Academic Enterprise

Edited by



Charles J. Whalen

Utica College and Cornell University, USA



E2009002635

Edward Elgar

Cheltenham, UK • Northampton, MA, USA

© Charles J. Whalen 2008

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by
Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
The Lypiatts
15 Lansdown Road
Cheltenham
Glos GL50 2JA
UK

Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
William Pratt House
9 Dewey Court
Northampton
Massachusetts 01060
USA

A catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

New directions in the study of work and employment : revitalizing industrial relations as an academic enterprise / edited by Charles J. Whalen.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Industrial relations—Study and teaching (Higher)—United States. I.

Whalen, Charles J., 1960–

HD6960.5.U5N49 2008

331.071'173—dc22

2008001733

ISBN 978 1 84720 452 3

Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall

Contributors

John W. Budd is Industrial Relations Landgrant Professor at Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld is professor and dean of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

John Godard is professor of business administration at I.H. Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba.

William B. Gould IV is Charles A. Beardsley Professor of Law, Emeritus at Stanford Law School. He was chairman of the National Labor Relations Board from 1994 to 1998.

Bruce E. Kaufman is professor of economics at Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and senior associate at W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations, Georgia State University.

Jim Kitay is honorary associate professor of work and organizational studies at University of Sydney.

Thomas A. Kochan is George Maverick Bunker Professor of Management and co-director of the Institute for Work and Employment Research, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Russell D. Lansbury is professor of work and organizational studies at University of Sydney.

David B. Lipsky is Anne Evans Estabrook Professor of Dispute Resolution and director of the Martin and Laura Scheinman Institute on Conflict Resolution, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University.

Immanuel Ness is professor of political science at Brooklyn College and teaches in the Graduate Center for Worker Education, City University of New York.

Bruce Nissen is director of research at the Center for Labor Research and Studies, Florida International University.

Michael J. Piore is David W. Skinner Professor of Political Economy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Katie Quan is associate chair of the Center for Labor Research and Education, University of California, Berkeley.

Ronald L. Seeber is vice provost for land grant affairs and professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University.

Janna Shaddock-Hernández is project director at the Downtown Labor Center of University of California, Los Angeles.

Daphne Taras is area chair and professor of industrial relations in the Department of Human Resources and Organizational Dynamics at Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary.

Nick Wailes is associate professor of work and organizational studies at University of Sydney.

Charles J. Whalen is professor of economics and director of business and economics at Utica College and visiting fellow at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University.

Kent Wong is director of the Center for Labor Research and Education, University of California, Los Angeles.

Preface

This book stems from my involvement in the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA). Although my affiliation with the organization began in the early 1980s, I became editor of its journal, *Perspectives on Work*, in late 2001, a position that provides a superb vantage point from which to view work and employment relations. Established as the Industrial Relations Research Association in the United States during the 1940s, LERA is currently reexamining all aspects of its mission, activities and plans in the wake of decreasing academic and practitioner membership that is part of an overall decline affecting the intellectual community associated with ‘industrial relations,’ especially in the United States and Canada. That ongoing reexamination, and the erosion that sparked it, prompted me to organize and prepare this volume.

While I am one who believes strongly that the academic enterprise of industrial relations needs to survive (indeed, even flourish), I believe just as fervently in the need for the field to change. New directions in the study of work and employment are warranted, and charting and pursuing them requires – as this book shows – a rethinking of institutions, practices and concepts; it may even be necessary to rename the field (‘employment relations’ is currently the top contender). At the same time, this collection of essays demonstrates that moving forward does not mean turning our backs on the past. In fact, key insights from the early days of industrial relations may now be more important than ever.

This book focuses primarily on industrial relations as it is practiced in the United States, but not all of its contributors are based in that country. Indeed, the project is collectively informed by training, teaching and scholarship that are global in scope. Due to unanticipated developments, plans to cast an even wider net in the current volume did not work out, but this collection is not intended to be the final word on the subject. Moreover, the book that came together provides a solid foundation for wider collaboration in the future.

My job as the volume’s editor has been made easier due to the talent and collegiality of the contributors, and I thank each of them for cheerfully participating in this project. I received much valuable assistance – especially in the project’s early stages, when it was needed most – from Bruce Kaufman and John Budd, and I wish to acknowledge their help. Similarly, I want to

recognize the help and guidance provided by Alan Sturmer and Bob Pickens at Edward Elgar Publishing. Finally, on behalf of the contributors, I wish to thank the members of LERA who shared their ideas on how to revitalize the field during a 2007 symposium that addressed this topic at the organization's annual meeting. This book is dedicated to all those in LERA now engaged in efforts to revitalize the association and the field. Let the dialogue continue.

Contents

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	vii
<i>List of contributors</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi

Introduction: new directions in the study of work and employment <i>Charles J. Whalen</i>	1
--	---

PART 1 RETHINKING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

1. Reconceptualizing industrial relations in a global, knowledge-driven economy <i>Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld</i>	15
2. The original industrial relations paradigm: foundation for revitalizing the field <i>Bruce E. Kaufman</i>	31
3. A meta-paradigm for revitalizing industrial relations <i>John W. Budd</i>	48
4. An institutional environments approach to industrial relations <i>John Godard</i>	68

PART 2 RECONSTRUCTING INSTITUTIONS

5. Social capital and the labor movement <i>David B. Lipsky and Ronald L. Seeber</i>	89
6. Industrial relations and the law <i>William B. Gould IV</i>	110
7. How industrial relations is marginalized in business schools: using institutional theory to examine our home base <i>Daphne Taras</i>	123
8. Let a thousand journals bloom: the precarious landscape of labor and employment publishing <i>Immanuel Ness, Bruce Nissen and Charles J. Whalen</i>	142

PART 3 REENERGIZING PRACTICE

9.	Revitalizing industrial relations	163
	<i>Michael J. Piore</i>	
10.	Varieties of capitalism and employment relations under globalization: evidence from the auto industry	173
	<i>Nick Wailes, Russell D. Lansbury and Jim Kitay</i>	
11.	Evolving labor relations in the women's apparel industry	194
	<i>Katie Quan</i>	
12.	Immigrant workers and the new American labor movement	211
	<i>Kent Wong and Janna Shaddock-Hernández</i>	
	Conclusion: the future of industrial relations, a.k.a. work and employment relations	225
	<i>Thomas A. Kochan</i>	
	<i>Index</i>	237

Figures and tables

FIGURES

2.1	Wage/employment determination in a competitive labor market	38
3.1	Analyzing comparative industrial relations systems	58
5.1	Federal mediation and conciliation service total revenue in nominal and real terms, 1949–2003	97
5.2	The American Arbitration Association: revenue from labor relations activities as a proportion of total revenue, 1971–2000	99
5.3	Labor relations degrees as a proportion of degrees granted in labor relations, human resource management and organizational behavior, 1970–2001	105
7A.1	Journal citation scores for selected journals ranked by the <i>Financial Times</i>	138
7A.2	Journal citation scores for selected industrial relations journals	140

TABLES

1.1	Year of establishment for US and Canadian schools, institutes, centers and departments specializing in industrial relations or human resources management	23
5.1	Types and names of organizations in the study	95
7.1	The <i>Financial Times</i> 40 top journals, 2007	130
10.1	The GERAB framework	182

Introduction: new directions in the study of work and employment

Charles J. Whalen

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN CRISIS

Work and employment have been subjects of academic research and teaching for over a century. Their study emerged out of the examination of social problems and evolved into a field called industrial relations (IR), which was born in the United States around 1920. Since its inception, IR has generally been considered interdisciplinary terrain devoted to both science building and real-world problem solving (Kaufman, 2004).

In the current era, IR should be flourishing. Across the academy, one can find a growing recognition of the value of crossing traditional boundaries and engaging in interdisciplinary scientific research. Problems regarding jobs and employment relations, meanwhile, are a major concern for workers, managers and government representatives across the globe. As Bruce E. Kaufman writes at the conclusion of his sweeping history of the global evolution of IR, 'Who today would say that the subject of employment and contemporary developments in the world of work is less important today than two or three decades ago? Few, I wager, and most would probably say the opposite – that the world of work is more important than ever for peoples and nations across the globe' (Kaufman, 2004: 621).

Nevertheless, academic units devoted to IR are facing tough times – especially in the English-speaking world – and the number of scholars associated with the field is shrinking.¹ Many observers say the problem is that IR researchers became too focused on issues involving organized labor, especially collective bargaining, and thus the fortunes of the field faded over time with the erosion of union membership and power. Others tell a more complicated story that involves a number of decisions made by IR scholars (about the field's conceptual makeup, relationship to other fields, and research methods, for example) and the impact upon the field of a variety of social and institutional developments that have taken place outside IR academic units (see, for instance, Kaufman, 2004). There may be disagreements about the exact source of the problem, but what is clear

is that the word ‘crisis’ is increasingly being used, and there has even been recent talk about the possibility of the field’s extinction.

Letting IR wither and fade away is not a sensible option. No other field of academic inquiry is devoted exclusively to studying the world of work. Other fields often examine elements found in the IR realm, but the practical results are largely disappointing. As Michael J. Piore writes in chapter 9 of this volume, scholars in mainstream disciplines break up IR’s ‘key methodological and empirical issues into a series of separate components and parcel them out to different social sciences – disciplines that speak to each other in very limited and stylized ways or not at all. . . . This leaves space in the intellectual landscape for a more integrated, interdisciplinary approach.’ Indeed, the present era cries out for the insights of such an approach. It is for this reason that IR should be revitalized; society deserves a scholarly community devoted to the world of work.

To revitalize IR as an academic enterprise, new directions in the study of work and employment are needed. The scope and intellectual content of the field must be reconsidered; its institutions must be reinforced or reshaped; and cutting-edge conceptual and practical issues must receive attention in the course of revitalizing its practice. This volume, which developed out of a symposium held at the annual meeting of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) in 2007, identifies such new directions by assembling some of the field’s most creative and insightful scholars.

Rethinking IR means reconnecting with its origin as a field grounded in an understanding of institutional and historical reality, concerned with all aspects of work, and populated by scholars committed to the resolution of pressing labor problems. IR can no longer be synonymous with the study of just unions and collective bargaining, which became the view of many in recent decades. It must be a broad expanse – conducive to theory development, open to a multiplicity of paradigms, and accommodative of the fact that employment relationships come in many varieties and can be structured to seek any of a diverse set of objectives. Chapters in Part 1 examine how this can be accomplished.

Rebuilding IR institutions must begin in the academy, as it exists today; IR scholars cannot sit tight and wait for social changes to occur first. Such rebuilding requires a hard look at the status of IR within centers of higher learning and construction of an aggressive plan for resurgence. In addition, there must be both introspection regarding the way the field judges its own scholarship and a reconsideration of the social impact of IR research. The rebuilding must also involve an effort to breathe new life into the legal framework and social institutions that structure employment relations for society at large. Chapters in Part 2 address these matters.

Reenergizing IR practice involves recognizing that the performance and management of work now occurs in a dynamic, global economy that is different in many ways from the economy that existed immediately following World War II. This environment demands refashioned IR curricula. It also requires close scholarly attention to the interplay between worldwide trends (especially those involving or influencing international job and labor mobility), national economic systems, business and labor strategies, and employment-relations practices. Not all researchers must turn their attention from investigations of union-management relations in manufacturing to scholarship on service employment or emerging industries, but even the study of longstanding industries such as apparel must recognize the transnational realities faced by today's workers and employers. Chapters in Part 3 flesh out the issues at stake and examine specific developments and sectoral examples capable of moving the field forward. A concluding chapter by Thomas A. Kochan offers further thoughts on the future of the field in light of all the chapters that precede it.

THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Although the field of IR may not have emerged until the twentieth century, it bears a name that reveals deep roots traceable to the Industrial Revolution. In Chapter 1, Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld reflects on the separate and joint use of the terms 'industrial' and 'relations,' and explains how they take on new and broader meaning in today's knowledge-driven economy. Cutcher-Gershenfeld admits he is not sure whether the IR label can adapt well to the new era and acknowledges that 'employment relations' is an alternative that more fully reflects the spectrum of contemporary workplace relationships. Nevertheless, a field's guiding principles are even more important than its name, and Chapter 1 demonstrates the enduring applicability of the principles adopted by IR scholars and academic units decades ago – namely, the need for blending theory, practice and policy; valuing balance between labor and management (now expanded to include other stakeholders as well); and assembling cross-disciplinary faculties.

Bruce Kaufman also finds that the history of the IR field contains a set of ideas with enduring value. In Chapter 2, he introduces those ideas as the 'original' IR paradigm, which emerged in the United States in the 1920s, and offers it as an alternative to the paradigm that treats IR as involving only the study of unions and union-management relations, a view holding a prominent place in the field since at least the 1970s. Since Kaufman sees no major resurgence of unions on the horizon, he argues that restructuring and repositioning IR according to its original paradigm is the best way to

prevent the field from suffering further decline, especially in the United States.

The original IR paradigm has what Kaufman calls ‘three faces’ – a commitment to science building; a focus on practical problem solving; and a belief in the values of economic efficiency, social fairness, and human self-actualization. The core principle uniting these faces is that ‘labor is not a commodity,’ which can be stated alternatively as ‘rejection of the orthodox competitive demand/supply labor market model as the appropriate framework’ for analyzing the real world. The result is an expansive field, covering all aspects of the employment relationship and capable of including a wide range of scholars and practitioners, regardless of whether they specialize in labor-oriented, management-oriented, or policy-oriented solutions to employment problems.

While Kaufman’s chapter calls for choosing between two paradigms, the present’s narrow one and the past’s more inclusive one, John W. Budd’s recent scholarship has focused on finding a way to bridge IR’s four ‘schools of thought’ (Budd, 2004). In Chapter 3, Budd presents those schools as each generating a distinctive model of the employment relationship. (He calls them the egoist, unitarist, pluralist, and critical employment-relations models; and they are associated with neoclassical economics, personnel or human resource management, institutional economics, and Marxism, respectively.) Budd’s approach to the revitalization of IR involves not only spelling out and calling for widespread recognition of a meta-paradigm capable of encompassing the field’s various models (paradigms), but also promoting dialogue among scholars with differing perspectives. The centerpiece of his approach is an emphasis on making IR objectives, assumptions and predictions explicit.

The views of Budd and Kaufman overlap in a number of important respects. For example, both place the whole employment relationship – rather than just the study of unions – at the heart of IR. In addition, Budd’s list of possible objectives of the employment relationship (which are what he deems the ‘starting point’ for IR scholarship) consists of efficiency, equity and voice, which closely parallel the elements Kaufman identifies as characteristic of the ethical/ideological face of the original IR paradigm. The authors also have a common aim: to recast IR as a broad field, open to diverse voices, and committed to science building and problem solving.

Chapter 4, by John Godard, extends the reconsideration of IR by emphasizing the need for a systematic study of the institutions of labor and employment. The central message of Godard’s chapter is that an ‘institutional environments’ approach to IR research can help the field ‘regain its intellectual bearings.’ His chapter explains the tenets of such an approach and illustrates its usefulness by exploring two research examples:

a comparative examination of the role of unions in Canada and England, and an inquiry into the exceptional decline of the US labor movement.

THE INSTITUTIONS OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Revitalizing IR requires reforming and reconstructing institutions as well as studying them. Chapter 5 sets the stage for a discussion of the latter by cataloging how the weakening of the US labor movement ‘caused collateral damage to organizations and institutions that have a close relationship to unions.’ In particular, co-authors David B. Lipsky and Ronald L. Seeber examine the ‘social capital’ implications of labor’s decline upon federal agencies, neutral and professional associations (such as the LERA and the American Arbitration Association), university IR programs, and other organizations with a mission relating in some way to organized labor.

Now that the social network that helped to support the labor movement ‘has substantially withered,’ can a revitalization of unions occur? Lipsky and Seeber offer a nuanced answer. On the one hand, initiating and sustaining a union resurgence might be easier in the presence of institutions designed to support and foster labor’s growth. On the other hand, US labor history indicates that successful union organizing and expansion do not require the existence of a large stock of social capital.

Of course, one institution that has played a major role in the growth of US unions is labor law. Private-sector union membership surged dramatically in the decade following passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, and public-sector membership grew rapidly a few decades later in response to state and federal legislation that gave government workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. Similarly, subsequent legal changes (in the form of amendments and administrative rulings) have contributed to the erosion of the US labor movement. In light of the important connection between IR and the law, William B. Gould surveys key aspects of this topic, including the future of labor law reform, in Chapter 6.

Attention to the challenges associated with shoring up IR institutions within the academy is the focus of Chapters 7 and 8. In Chapter 7, Daphne Taras documents how IR is marginalized in business schools, which is the institutional home for a substantial number of IR scholars. The causes Taras identifies are the pursuit of rankings according to benchmarking systems that exclude IR journals; reliance on scoring systems that give virtually no recognition for books or book chapters; and use of reward systems that overlook the ‘town–gown interactions’ that have long been a tradition in IR. Her conclusion is that an extensive and coordinated effort is required to reform the academic and scholarly institutions of the field (an

endeavor that would, for example, include collective action to establish IR professorships, obtain stable funding sources for research on work and employment matters, and better integrate IR into business-school offerings).

Chapter 8, by Immanuel Ness, Bruce Nissen and Charles Whalen, sketches a historical account of the evolution of labor and employment journals over the past century (with special attention to academically oriented publications produced in the United States). While many of the field's publications are currently reaching more readers and are resting on a more secure financial footing than in the past, the authors – all journal editors – find that the IR journal landscape is actually somewhat precarious due to trends that are fragmenting the study of work and employment and causing such scholarship to become increasingly the product of a subfield within traditional disciplines. They conclude that today's IR scholars must devote more attention to producing successful, interdisciplinary journals; and they recommend that members of the field explore recent, ongoing initiatives that use electronic technologies to create new forms of scholarly communication and enhance competition in scientific publishing.

THE PRACTICE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

There is no single path to reinvigorated IR teaching and research. Nevertheless, a number of IR scholars have found strategies and methods they find promising. Chapter 9, by Michael J. Piore, discusses the approach that he and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have adopted to keep their IR curriculum intellectually stimulating and professionally relevant in an economic, social and academic environment that is quite different from that of the period immediately following World War II, when IR flourished. At MIT, IR is conceived as an interdisciplinary field that includes all aspects of work and employment, but professors also stress that insights from IR can be applied more broadly and that work-related social relations do not need to be studied in isolation from other social movements, problems and institutions. In addition, MIT's IR graduate students are required to supplement IR course work by taking the core curriculum in one of the major social-science disciplines.

Chapter 10, by Nick Wailes, Russell D. Lansbury and Jim Kitay, complements Piore's chapter by illustrating a promising path to greater IR research vitality. Their approach is similar to that recommended by Godard; indeed, Chapters 4 and 10 both draw on and extend elements of scholarship falling under the 'new institutionalism' and 'varieties of capitalism' rubrics. In Chapter 10, however, the focus is on exploring the

relationship between economic globalization and employment relations by drawing on a research project that examines the automobile industry in seven countries.

The relationship between globalization and IR also figures prominently in Chapter 11, by Katie Quan. Her chapter, which considers the need to redesign labor relations in the global garment industry, shows the continued relevance of research that returns to the problem-solving focus that was once a core characteristic of IR scholarship. Quan also identifies innovative ways that IR scholars can use their expertise and skills to simultaneously enhance their understanding of work and employment relations and further advance real-world problem solving.

Chapter 12, by Kent Wong and Janna Shaddock-Hernández, closes Part 3 with an examination of immigrant workers and ‘the new American labor movement.’ By discussing the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, the authors explain how ‘university programs that focus on supporting and repositioning immigrant workers as central players in society and within contemporary social movements hold the potential of redefining labor and industrial relations programs nationally.’ While Kaufman’s chapter calls for restructuring IR according to the field’s original paradigm largely because he sees no resurgence of unions on the horizon, Chapter 12 points toward the revitalization of IR and the labor movement at the same time. ‘The linkages and prospects of coalition building among immigrant workers (both union and nonunion), their communities and labor organizations create important opportunities for labor educators, students and universities,’ write Wong and Shaddock-Hernández.

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

This book is designed to foster dialogue on the future of IR as an academic enterprise, not to be a comprehensive guide or to promote the ‘one best way’ forward.² Nevertheless, while the book’s contributors were invited to present a personal view of the challenges and opportunities ahead for IR, a common thread emerges just the same: the vision of IR as a broad, interdisciplinary field that strives for both science building and practical problem solving. These chapters also reinforce a view of my own. Like Kaufman, I contend that part of what is necessary to advance the field is for IR scholars to reconnect with their roots.

As the editor of a journal published by the LERA, I recently reviewed some of the earliest documents of that organization – originally called the Industrial Relations Research Association (IRRA) – while preparing for its sixtieth anniversary. In the process, I was reminded that in 1948 the group’s