

XIII. LERA Poster Session

Discretion and Performance: A Cross-National Comparison of Public Governance

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In this paper we examine the political pressures placed on the U.S. National Labor Relations Board and German Federal Labor Court. Our principal hypothesis is that political pressures are stronger in the United States—since the NLRB is an administrative agency that must answer to Congress—than in Germany, where the labor court is an independent court staffed by judges with lifetime appointments. The statistical analysis of cases from both the United States and Germany reveal patterns in decision making consistent with our principal hypothesis. However, this research is in its early stages and results must be interpreted with caution.

Courts of Appeals and NLRB Orders: A Longitudinal Analysis

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From 1964 to 2003 the distribution of Courts of Appeals decisions regarding NLRB orders was 68 percent fully affirmed, 11.5 percent modified, 5.3 percent remanded in full, 2.5 percent affirmed in part/remanded in part, and 12.6 set aside. The average number of Courts of Appeals NLRB cases per year declined from 972 in 1979–83 to only 410 in 1999–2003. There was wide variation among the circuits in affirmation of NLRB orders over the past twenty years, and 50 percent of the cases occurred in three of the twelve circuits.

Portfolio Decisions of Older American Workers: The Role of Private Pensions

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Without differentiating pension types, previous literature has found pension ownership has positive effects on stock investments. However, individuals with defined contribution (DC) pensions are more exposed to financial market risks compared to those with defined benefit (DB) pensions. Using the data

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from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), I empirically test the effects of DC pension ownership on individual stock investment in non-pension wealth by performing a two-step procedure. Results show that holding DC pensions both decreases individual probability of participating in the stock market by 29 percent and reduces the size of stock investments (by 38 percent). These results are relevant to the current debate on Social Security privatization that recommends transferring the current pay-as-you-go system (a DB, essentially) to a personal retirement account (DC) system.

From Command to Involvement: The Transformation of Authority at Continental Airlines

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I analyze the improvement in employee relations at Continental Airlines, which experienced a turnaround from one of the worst-performing to one of the best-performing major U.S. airlines. Interviews suggest that Continental's improved employee relations stem from an "involvement-based" employment system fundamentally different from the "command-based" system at traditional airlines. Authority is exercised differently and management invests in treating employees as valued team members. Thus, focusing on formal programs, such as the on-time bonus, misses the essence of Continental's distinctiveness. I also describe factors that likely facilitated the adoption of this system, despite a history of adversarial employee relations.

International Evidence on the Convergence of Female and Male Unemployment Rates

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We examine the relationship between the female and male unemployment rates across eight Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, namely, Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States, over the period 1965–2002. We introduce the notion of convergence between the female and male unemployment rates based on two measures of the gender unemployment gap: (1) the difference between the female and male unemployment rates; and (2) the ratio of the female to male unemployment rate. Based on unit-root tests, we find evidence of convergence in Canada, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States.