

XII. LERA Poster Session

The Role of Work Design in the Strategic Human Resource Management—Performance Relationship: Aligning Work and People Systems for Better Firm Performance

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The HR-performance relationship has been of great interest to employers and scholars alike. Our model builds on previous research linking business strategy with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and firm performance (Miles and Snow 1994; Wright and Snell 1991), but we introduce work design as an important variable influencing strategic HR practices. We conceptualize work design as a typology examining the interplay of high/low task interdependence and autonomy of a firm's core jobs. We also embrace the perspective that autonomy and task interdependence are structural features of work, but jobs can be designed at varying levels on these dimensions. We show how strategic HR practices can be aligned to job structures and combined with "best practices" in order to increase firm performance.

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Employee Awareness and Perceptions Surrounding Workplace Violence Policies

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Organizations can take a variety of approaches to address workplace violence (WPV). Employees, however, might have very different ideas on how to address WPV. It is imperative that organizations communicate what their policies, so that employees understand what the policy addresses and how incidents of WPV will be handled when they occur. The primary purpose of the present study is to determine employees' awareness of their organization's WPV policy, as well as their perceptions of the different perpetrators, their actions, and the actions the organization should take toward perpetrators.

Raid Elections Revisited

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This study reviews earlier raid election analyses and compares election outcomes between NLRB fiscal years 1983–1987 and 2003–2007. The conclusions for 2003–2007 are preliminary at this time. The victory rates for incumbents dropped from 55.6 percent during 1983–1987 to only 27.0 percent during 2003–2007, while challenger victory rates improved from 34.7 percent to 68.1 percent. The no-union outcome fell from 9.4 percent during 1983–1987 to only 4.9 percent during 2003–2007. The total number of raid elections declined from 331 in 1983–1987 to 226 during 2003–2007.

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Perceptions Regarding Alternative Forms of Variable Pay

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This study investigates the relationship between employment and personality characteristics and preferences regarding selected variable pay plans (profit sharing, performance bonuses, and commission-based pay) among a nationwide sample of MBA students employed full-time. Performance bonuses are preferred to profit sharing, and profit sharing is preferred to commission-based pay. A negative relationship between job support and preferences regarding profit sharing is observed. Positive outlook, risk orientation, and work autonomy are positively related to preferences regarding performance bonus plans. Work autonomy is also positively related to preferences regarding profit-sharing plans.

Theorizing Labor Rights Compliance: A Comparative Case Study in Central America and the Dominican Republic

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In many countries today, there is a startling contrast between the rules defining labor rights and the reality of labor practices: a rule-reality gap. To understand this gap, this paper examines labor institutions—the so-called rules

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of the game comprised of rules, norms, and actual behaviors—and argues that these institutions reinforce and contribute to labor rights violations. The paper then presents an approach, based on compliance theory in international law, to close the rule-reality gap. Compliance theory is well suited to the institutional framework because it, like institutions theory, treats rules, norms, and behaviors as critical components in achieving change and compliance.

Sixty Years of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service: 1947 to 2007

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This paper, on the history of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) and its predecessor, the United States Conciliation Service (USCS), is based on an archive under the auspices of the Friends of FMCS History Foundation. The archive contains 175 oral histories, annual reports, photos, documents, speeches, papers, and videos. In 2007 FMCS became sixty years old in a world much changed from the immediate post–World War II period. Charged with aiding collective bargaining, FMCS fortune's fluctuated with the role of collective bargaining: 1947 to 1975 were collective bargaining's golden years; its robustness began to be limited during 1976 to 1983; and 1984 to 2007 saw the decline of unions and collective bargaining.

The “Lumpiness” of Grievance Arbitration Decision Making

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This paper examines arbitrators’ decisions in employee discipline cases involving alleged workplace violence. Our basic premise is that arbitrators consider factors in combination rather than in isolation from one another. A sample of content-coded arbitration decisions is analyzed using Qualitative Comparative Analysis to identify the combinatorial nature of the decision-making process. The results suggest that decisions favorable to unions are based on arguments built around the incident that gave rise to the discipline or arguments based on equal protection claims. Using traditional logistic regression analysis, we demonstrate that these particular argument combinations are significantly associated with union success at arbitration.

Employee Voice and Organizational Performance

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Using data from the International Motor Vehicle Program surveys, this paper examines the effects of direct participation and representative participation on labor productivity, as well as their interaction effect on productivity. While many prior studies measured teams as the presence of self-autonomous teams or the percentage of employees in teams, this paper focuses on the amount of teams' influence on a variety of work-related issues. Similarly, while most previous studies measured worker representation as the presence of unions or work councils, this paper measures representative participation as the degree of worker representation's influence on a variety of collective voice issues. We find that the plants with a higher degree of team influence have higher labor productivity. However, there is no synergistic interaction between teams and worker representation, and the positive effect of teams on labor productivity decreases when it is combined with a high degree of representative participation.

Statutory Union Recognition Provisions as Stimulants to Employer Anti-Unionism: The Cases of Britain and the United States

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In periods of union weakness, largely resultant from employer opposition, unions have campaigned for, and often achieved, the creation of legal provisions to facilitate the gaining of union recognition (UR). In this way unions have sought to short-circuit their industrial or economic weakness vis-à-vis employers by campaigning in the political arena to gain state-supported provisions to compel employers to negotiate with them. However, statutory provisions for gaining UR in Britain and the United States are argued to be a major factor in stimulating the transformation of latent employer opposition to labor unionism into active opposition and further deepening existing employer anti-unionism (EA-U) toward UR campaigns. So, for non-union employers, the creation of statutory or state-supported union recognition provisions (SURPs) represents a transmutation of hypothetical and potential union threat into actual union threat. Employers, then, feel compelled to take preventative, corrective, and retaliatory actions. Such actions have been broadly successful in pushing back and extinguishing UR campaigns. This phenomenon has two further important facets in the two countries. First, the extent of employer opposition and its effectiveness is argued to be largely attributable to both the weakly supportive nature of the UR laws and wider public policy vis-à-vis labor unionism. Second, the insertion of weak UR provisions into national systems characterized by minimal state intervention in industrial relations (compared to a number of continental European countries) further strengthens employers' ability to frustrate union attempts to gain UR using SURPs. Here lies the paradox. In periods of union weakness, unions are arguably in greater need of statutory and governmental support to help redress the accentuated power imbalance vis-à-vis employers, but this may stimulate further employer antipathetic action. Consequently, unions may then need even greater degrees of support (legislative, policy), but they are unable to compel this from governments/states because of their underlying weakness and the political insensitivity of political parties to labor unionism.

By contrast, in other, non-Anglo-Saxon countries such as those found in continental Europe or Scandinavia, anti-unionism among non-union employers exists, but its context is sufficiently different to render inclusion in a comparative analysis of Britain and the United States less than worthwhile. This difference concerns far greater pro-collectivist and pro-worker state intervention in employment relations (for example, forums for consultation and code-termination, a positive right to strike), far greater pro-worker public policy, and a political center of gravity that is closer to social democracy than anything that exists in Britain and the United States. Often there is no perceived need for SURPs applicable to individual employers and sectors, which are elsewhere believed to exhibit propensities toward non-unionism by dint of both employee and employer preference; sectors such as retail, leisure, and information technology are well unionized and covered by collective bargaining. Thus, the salience of comparing Britain and the United States rests on their voluntarist or collective *laissez faire* industrial relations systems. However, it also rests on the employment relationship in Britain being relatively more regulated than that in the United States, albeit within a common neo-liberal political and economic system. Consequently, the two countries provide a comparison involving similarity and variability.

“I’m Out of Here”: Factors Associated with Quit Behavior in the Canadian Trucking Industry

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This paper examines factors associated with quit behavior using data from a recent study of firms in the Canadian trucking industry. The average quit rate was just under 11 percent. A higher quit rate was associated with greater pressure to focus on short-term budget or profit goals and a higher discipline rate. A number of variables associated with workplace safety (such as safety commitment and safety climate) were related to a lower quit rate.