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„Ideology in Industrial / Employment Relations“

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(Guest editors of the Special Issue: Berndt Keller, Wenzel Matiaske,
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“Ideology, like halitosis, is ... what the other person has”

(Eagleton, T. 1991: Ideology. An Introduction. London: Verso: p. 2)

Critical perspectives on ideological thinking were an important line in the study of industrial and employment relations (IR/ER) from the very start. While in the 1960s and 1970s critical analyses of ideological reasoning on labor relations, institutions and systems were of great importance this changed from the 1980s onward. Only recently the topic of ideological thinking on labor and employment relations has reemerged. The planned special issue addresses the significance, developments and contents of critical ideological perspectives in the field of industrial, labor and employment relations.

Starting from this guiding question, we want to invite proposals dealing with the following topics. Industrial relations and employment relations - the objects in these social fields and some of the sciences dealing with them are subject to conflicts. In such contested terrains justifying, interest-laden narratives emerge. Descriptions of the reality in these fields, lay statements or scientific theories, frames of reference, hypotheses about causes and effects and, above all, design concepts are often normatively loaded. At the very least, all these statements take a stand. Taken together this suggests analyzing the field of IR/ER – its narratives and conflicts, theories and concepts – from an ideology-theoretical or ideology-critical perspective. In doing so, it is not necessary to commit to a particular concept of ideology. In terms of a working definition, one could call such statements ideological that (i) suggest truth while at the same time being difficult to falsify or even immunize themselves against falsification, (ii) create an image of reality that is at least partly wrong, and in addition (iii) have the function of obscuring or affirming certain interests of identifiable social (especially powerful) groups.

The guiding question of the focus issue is: What about ideology in the field of IR/ER? The subjects of such analyses can be theories or empirical analyses, but also design concepts etc.

Starting from this guiding question, we think of topics of the following kind, which are to be understood as suggestions:

- Framing/frames of reference: Forms of ER (among others: unitarist, pluralist, critical) and , consequences for any following analysis
- Meaning and importance of ideas, values, interests and power in different ER concepts
- History, recent development and present state of research in Germany (disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary orientation)
- IR/ER and forms as well as concepts of capitalist development (among others: varieties of capitalism and growth models in comparative political economy)
- The case of Germany: Application/adaption/development of analytical or theoretical concepts and implicit framing of analysis
- ER and their impact on the wider economy and society
- Old and new corporate actors and their analysis at macro, meso, and micro level (such as platforms, professional unions)
- Concepts of the state as corporate actor (e.g., pluralism, neo-corporatism, neo-liberalism, crisis corporatism)
- Concepts of social partnership
- Minimum wage: former positions and recent disputes, changing concepts, and empirical results
- The impact of official commissions and research institutes on outcomes/ political consequences
- Ideology of employment relations in the context of digitalization, gig economy, or platform work
- Theoretical and empirical analysis of frequently selected versus neglected topics, such as employee participation, co-determination, strikes and lock-outs, employers' organizations.

Of course, any list of such questions cannot be exhaustive. Suggestions for papers on other subjects related to ideology and IR/ER are highly welcome.

Submission information

Abstracts of not more than 500 words in English may be submitted through the journal's online submission and peer review system ([Industrielle Beziehungen \(nomos-journals.de\)](https://nomos-journals.de)) not later than June 1, 2023. Decisions on the acceptance of proposals will be made until July 15, 2023. Publication of manuscripts prepared on the basis of the selected abstracts requires that the complete article will be submitted until December 15, 2023. The manuscripts will undergo a double-blind review process. Publication is planned for issue 3, September 2024.

Questions can be directed to the Special Issue editors

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