

## Contemporary Industrial Relations Ideologies: A Study of Canadian Academics

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### Article abstract

This study begins by identifying five competing ideologies characteristic of industrial relations in the postwar era. It then draws upon a survey data to explore the content, structure, and covariates of the industrial relations ideologies of Canadian academics. The findings are threefold. First, it would appear that there is substantial support for reforms to the Canadian System which strengthen the rights of workers and their unions. Yet there is also support for more cooperative labour-management relations in the workplace. This suggests an ideological shift to both the left and the 'right' of orthodox pluralism, embodied in a 'neo-institutionalist' ideology. Second, factor analysis of 65 items strongly suggests that ideology varies along a single dimension, from 'right' to 'left'. Third, scholars specializing in IR or affiliated with an IR school tend to be slightly more 'leftwing' than their counterparts in economics and management. The implications of these findings for the field are briefly discussed.

# **Contemporary Industrial Relations Ideologies**

## **A Study of Canadian Academics**

John Godard

*This study begins by identifying five competing ideologies characteristic of industrial relations in the postwar era. It then draws upon a survey data to explore the content, structure, and covariates of the industrial relations ideologies of Canadian academics. The findings are threefold. First, it would appear that there is substantial support for reforms to the Canadian system which strengthen the rights of workers and their unions. Yet there is also support for more cooperative labour-management relations in the workplace. This suggests an ideological shift to both the left and the 'right' of orthodox pluralism, embodied in a 'neo-institutionalist' ideology. Second, factor analysis of 65 items strongly suggests that ideology varies along a single dimension, from 'right' to 'left'. Third, scholars specializing in IR or affiliated with an IR school tend to be slightly more 'leftwing' than their counterparts in economics and management. The implications of these findings for the field are briefly discussed.*

Ideologies provide frameworks of interconnected values, beliefs, and assumptions upon which individuals and collectives draw in order to assess the functioning and legitimacy of established institutional arrangements and the desirability of institutional reforms.<sup>1</sup> In the practice of industrial relations (IR), ideologies can have important implications for

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<sup>1</sup> There have been a number of attempts to define ideology, most of which are extremely broad and vague (e.g. Dunlop 1958). The definition advanced here is intended to be more specific. Under this definition, ideologies can be considered to be much like paradigms, both in content and in the way they develop and change over time (cf. Liao 1990). The critical distinction, however, is that ideologies reflect values and are decidedly

how labour and management interact, and hence for the relationship patterns which develop over time (Fox 1974). They can also play an important role in the development and application of public policy and labour law (Stone 1981). In the study of industrial relations, they can underlie the choice of research topics, the analysis of policy issues, and the presentation of subject matter, thereby having implications for the values, beliefs, and assumptions which are in turn conveyed to students, practitioners and policy makers.

To argue for the importance of ideology is of course not new. In addition to forming a core concept of Dunlop's systems theory (1958), ideology has traditionally been accorded a central place in studies of both labour (Perlman 1928) and management (Bendix 1956; Fox 1966). It has also been an important distinguishing characteristic of competing schools or perspectives in the study of IR (cf. Fox 1974; Kochan 1980; Crouch 1982; Palmer 1983; Godard 1984, 1993; Adams 1983; Dabscheck 1989; Anderson et al. 1989) — each of which typically proceeds from different values and beliefs and implies a different evaluation of established institutional arrangements. Yet ideology has also over the past few decades received surprisingly little attention in the mainstream of the field. A cursory survey of industrial relations texts reveals that the topic of ideology seldom receives more than a short paragraph, typically in reference to Dunlop's theory (e.g. Craig 1988; Kochan and Katz 1988; Anderson, Gunderson and Ponak 1989). Moreover, there would appear to have been only one published article in mainstream IR journals on the subject of ideology over the past decade (Dimmock and Sethi 1986), and this article focused upon the role of ideology in IR theory rather than its empirical structure and content.<sup>2</sup>

This neglect is unfortunate, for academics do not just study and transmit ideologies, they also help to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct them over time, typically in response to historical circumstances (Bendix 1956; DeBrizzi 1983). This would appear to be very much the case at present, as scholars attempt to come-to-terms with the developments of the past decade (cf. Reshef and Murray 1988). Not only does there appear to have been a growing antithesis towards the institutions of collective bargaining (especially in the U.S.), there has been a concomitant increase in the popularity of 'cooperativist' approaches associated with the human resources management (HRM) 'paradigm'. These approaches are generally borne of the human relations tradition in organizational behavior, often criticized as proceeding from an

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normative in their implications. In contrast, paradigms — at least in theory — are value neutral and do not have intendedly normative implications.

2 There have been a number of studies on attitudes towards unions (for a review of and contribution to this literature, see McShane 1986), but though union attitudes may be associated with ideologies, they do not constitute ideologies in the sense intended here.

anti-union, managerial bias (Bendix 1956; Baritz 1960; Fantasia, Clawson, and Graham 1988) and a 'unitary' ideology (Fox 1974). How well such criticisms apply to the 'new cooperativism' is not at all certain, but there can be little question that current developments have posed a major challenge to the traditional assumptions and orientations of the 'mainstream' of the field (Dimmock and Sethi 1986: 741-42).

Largely in response to these developments, this paper seeks to bring the topic of ideology 'back in' to the study of industrial relations, first by distinguishing between competing ideologies prominent throughout the postwar era, then by drawing upon these distinctions to analyze the data from a recent survey of Canadian industrial relations scholars. In doing so, the paper addresses four questions. First, and most important, it seeks to establish what the beliefs and assumptions of respondents are (i.e. the *content* of their ideologies) in view of recent developments. Second, it analyzes the structure of these beliefs and assumptions, attempting to determine whether the ideologies of IR scholars conform to a single 'right-left' dimension (as is typically assumed) and whether beliefs about the new cooperativism conform to this dimension. Third, it explores whether ideology covaries with disciplinary specialization and faculty affiliation, attempting to determine if the relative inattention to ideology in the IR literature over the past few decades can in part be attributed to an ideological 'partitioning' of the field (broadly defined) along disciplinary lines (Kumar 1990: 207). Finally, it considers the relationships between the ideologies and the pedagogies of industrial relations scholars, focusing upon whether ideology is likely to have consequences for the orientations conveyed to students. In short, the analysis addresses the content, the structure, the disciplinary covariates, and the pedagogical consequences of contemporary IR ideologies.

The intended contributions are threefold. First, the paper should substantially contribute to our a priori knowledge and understanding of industrial relations ideologies. Second, as a survey of contemporary IR scholars, it should provide a much-needed sense of how scholars are responding to current developments and hence of the direction of the field (cf. Giles 1990). Third, the findings will also have broader implications for public policy: to the extent that there is a consensus among 'experts' on specific policy-related issues, a basis for future policy initiatives can be established.

## POSTWAR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IDEOLOGIES

Though most scholars (and practitioners) can be expected to adhere to a particular set of values, beliefs, and assumptions about institutional arrangements, and though these values, beliefs and

assumptions can be expected to influence their work, ideologies are often not clearly formulated, instead consisting of what Alan Fox once referred to as 'ragbags of assorted notions' (Fox 1971: 125). Nonetheless, the identification of distinctive ideologies can provide a useful point of departure for 'mapping' the values and beliefs of IR scholars. Most notorious in this respect is Fox's own distinction between the 'unitary', the 'pluralist', and the 'radical' perspective (Fox 1974). However, Fox's conception of pluralist is vague, and he conflates the radical with the reformist tradition in IR (Wood and Elliot 1977; Crouch 1982: 24-38). Moreover, his conception of unitary fails to differentiate between the neoclassical or 'laissez faire' school in economics and the managerial or 'human relations' school in organizational behavior, both of which arguably embody distinctive ideologies. Accordingly, the present analysis distinguishes between five perspectives: (1) the 'neoclassical' perspective, (2) the 'managerial' perspective, (3) the 'orthodox pluralist' perspective, (4) the 'liberal-reformist' perspective, and (5) the 'radical' perspective.<sup>3</sup> Generally, these perspectives embody taken-for-granted values and beliefs about the functioning and legitimacy of institutional arrangements and can be arrayed along an ideological continuum ranging from 'right-wing' to 'left-wing'. There is by no means total consensus within each perspective, and the boundary conditions distinguishing them often become blurred, with authors drawing upon arguments associated with more than one perspective. As such, any attempt to characterize each necessarily requires an ideal typification with which some of its proponents may not fully agree. Nonetheless, each tends to be associated with a competing 'school' of theory and research, and the values and beliefs which underlie each generally inform work within the school with which it is associated — even though individual scholars may not always be aware of this.<sup>4</sup>

Below, I identify the school with which each perspective is associated and the values, beliefs, and assumptions most characteristic of it. The purpose in doing so is not to provide a full exposition of either the logic or the content of each perspective, but rather to establish a basis for the discussion of the data in the following section. Consistent

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3 Excluded from this categorization are three 'paradigms' or approaches often identified in the literature: systems theory (Dunlop 1958), the regulation school (Dabscheck 1989) and corporatism (Palmer 1983; Dabscheck 1989). None of these engenders a specific ideology in the sense intended here; indeed, each can be incorporated within different ideologies. For, example, though systems theory is often associated with orthodox pluralism, others have argued that it bears no necessary connection with pluralism, simply providing a framework for analysis (cf. Adams 1983). Similarly, a number of forms of corporatism can be identified, even though corporatism would appear to be most consistent with a 'reformist' perspective (cf. Palmer 1983: 17-20).

4 One is reminded of Keynes' famous comment: "practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually slaves of some defunct economist" (1936: 383).

with this purpose, it should be stressed that the characterizations which follow are ideal typifications of *postwar* ideologies. In view of recent developments, it may well be that these typifications and, indeed, the ideologies themselves, are becoming outdated. Part of the task of the next section will be to establish whether this appears to be the case.

The *neoclassical perspective*, also variously referred to as the 'liberal individualist' or 'neo-laisser-faire' perspective (Palmer 1983), has been most predominant within mainstream labour economics and the 'labour market school' in industrial relations (Adams 1983). It reflects underlying values of competitive individualism, and advocates free markets with a minimum of government intervention (Palmer 1983: 20-21). Where these conditions are realized, issues of power and conflict become irrelevant, rendered unimportant by the operation of market forces which enable individuals to "pursue their own best interests by freely entering into contracts with others" (Palmer 1983: 21). Unions are viewed negatively, as 'monopoly' institutions which stifle individual rights, interfere with the operation of markets, and harm productivity (Reynolds 1984). Accordingly, neoclassicists have traditionally advocated reforms which minimize the presence of both unions and government, and have traditionally opposed increased worker rights in either the management of the firm or in the operation of the economy.

The *managerialist perspective*, also referred to as the 'human relations/human resource management perspective' (Anderson, Gunderson, and Ponak 1989: 6), is dominant within the 'management school' (Adams 1983). Though proponents of this perspective often accept the existence and legitimacy of interest groups (and hence unions), they also tend to advocate cooperation of these groups with managerial goals of 'efficiency and effectiveness', espousing a functionalist or 'positive sum' concept of the firm, under which conflicts can be reconciled to the mutual benefit of all parties (Anderson, Gunderson, and Ponak 1989: 6). Managerialists typically attribute adversarial labour relations to inappropriate managerial practices, arguing that the adoption of progressive HRM practices will result in a consensual, cooperative relationship. Unions are considered to be legitimate but unnecessary and to be avoided if possible (cf. Bendix 1956).

The *orthodox pluralist perspective*, also variously referred to as the 'institutional pluralist' (Crouch 1982: 19), the 'institutionalist' (Anderson, Gunderson, and Ponak 1989: 4-5), and the 'liberal collectivist' (Palmer 1983: 12-13) perspective, is most closely associated with the 'institutional' school (Adams 1983: 516-517) and behavioral analysis (Kochan 1980: 9) in the U.S., and with the Oxford school in Britain (Crouch 1982). Orthodox pluralists place greater emphasis upon conflict than do managerialists, arguing that there is a "clash of economic interests between workers seeking job and income security and

employers looking to promote efficiency and organizational effectiveness" (Kochan and Katz 1988: 6-7), and that workers as individuals often find themselves at a power disadvantage in this conflict. At the same time, they also assume that conflict is limited to a "subset of issues" and is readily resolvable, with both parties "sharing a number of goals" and having "a common overarching interest in successfully resolving issues arising from their conflicting interests" (Kochan and Katz 1988: 7). In this respect, collective bargaining as established in postwar years plays a critical role, enabling workers to confront their employers as equals and creating a form of 'industrial democracy' (Lieserson 1973). As such, labour unions and collective bargaining not only ensure an approximate balance of power (Fox 1974; Ross 1958; Barbash 1991: 95) and "create a stable means for resolving industrial conflict" (Dubin 1954), they also have a number of positive economic effects, serving as institutions of collective voice (Freeman and Medoff 1984).

The *liberal-reformist perspective* is probably the most difficult to categorize, for it has traditionally encompassed a rather loose congeries of academics and activists. However, it is probably best represented in the work of heterodox economists (e.g. Averitt 1968; Galbraith 1967) and critical institutional and industrial sociologists writing within the 'Weberian' tradition (cf. Mills 1948, 1956; Hill 1981; Form 1985). These writers have generally favoured a pluralist economic (and political) system, but have advocated one which is far more egalitarian in opportunities and outcomes and which provides workers with far greater rights and protections than has been characteristic of the postwar status quo. According to reformists, not only do "labour markets, employment relations and hierarchy... contain elements of compulsion which reflect an asymmetrical distribution of economic power" (Hill 1981: 13), there are also substantial 'structural inequalities' in the terms of employment and treatment afforded workers, with employer size, technology, and market power playing a far greater role than 'human capital' (cf. Bibb and Form 1977). Unions have only limited power: while they have helped to improve wages and working conditions where established, they have done so largely with management's cooperation and have often served the interests of management as much as or more so than those of workers, 'managing discontent' (Mills 1948) and ensuring stability and certainty in management's environment (Galbraith 1967). They have been least effective where most needed: in low paying, oppressive jobs in the economic periphery (Beatty 1983).

The *radical perspective*, also referred to as the 'political economy perspective' (Giles and Murray 1989: 5-10), is closely associated with 'labour process theory' and both 'political' (Adams 1983) and 'Marxist' analyses of industrial relations (cf. Hyman 1975; 1988). Though not all proponents of the radical perspective adhere to a Marxist class

perspective (Giles and Murray 1989: 53-54), most believe that relations of domination and inequality are inherent to capitalism and that there is hence need of radical institutional change (cf. Bowles, Gordon and Weisskopf 1984: 379-90). For these scholars, conflict is central to the employment relation, reflecting broader labour-capital conflicts and 'structural antagonisms' (Edwards 1986: 5) which come to be embodied in the very design of the labour process (Braverman 1974; Edwards 1979; Bowles 1985). Though they support the labour movement and advocate increased rights and protections for workers, they also believe that unions are of only limited effectiveness in challenging the interests of capital, and that most 'liberal' reforms, while laudable, are inadequate (cf. Wood and Elliot 1977; Bowles and Gintis 1986: 147).

In identifying and attempting to typify these five perspectives, care has been taken to stress that they represent *ideal* typifications of *postwar* ideologies. In the remainder of this paper these typifications will be drawn upon to analyse data from a survey of Canadian academics. However, it should first be emphasized that, in attempting to typify distinctive perspectives, the intention has not been to establish a rigid system within which specific responses must necessarily be categorized, but rather to generate a flexible frame of reference within which general patterns in the data can be interpreted. Indeed, because of the ambiguous nature of ideologies and the exploratory nature of this study, *the connection between the ideological categories and individual survey items is in many cases unavoidably ambiguous and conjectural.*

## THE IR SURVEY

The data are from a survey of Canadian academics teaching IR-related courses, conducted in the first three months of 1990 and based upon a mailing list provided by the School of Industrial Relations at Queen's. Of 350 included in the original mailing, 110 were either reported as retired, not teaching in the area, or no longer at the mailing address provided. Of the remaining 242, 22 responded that they did not wish to participate, while 68 did not respond at all (despite three mailings with enclosed, pre-addressed postcards upon which they were asked to simply mark an 'x' if they were not participating), thereby generating a sample size of 152 and a participation rate of 62 percent. Notably, the response rate was about the same for French speaking universities (45 of 71 = 63%) as for their English speaking counterparts (104 of 171 = 61%), even though the survey instrument was in English only. Of those responding, 45% were from business schools, 20% from industrial relations schools, 15% from economics departments, 7% from law schools, and 13% from 'others'.



The questionnaire consisted of eight pages,<sup>5</sup> containing questions about the respondent's background and career activities, the respondent's ideology (values and beliefs about IR and various developments therein), and the respondent's pedagogy (beliefs about teaching in business schools in general and IR in particular). However, concern here is primarily with the ideologies of respondents. Following from the questions posed in the introduction, the analysis begins with a discussion of descriptive results pertaining to the content of ideologies. It then addresses the structure, the disciplinary covariates, and the pedagogical consequences of these ideologies.

### **The Content of Ideologies: What Do IR Scholars Think?**

The descriptive results appear in tables 1 through 7. They address, respectively: (1) underlying beliefs about power and conflict; (2) beliefs about unions and collective bargaining; (3) broader evaluations of the industrial relations system and developments therein; (4) beliefs about the new cooperativism/HRM practices; (5) beliefs about worker participatory rights; (6) beliefs about worker ownership, and, (7) desired institutional reforms. In discussing these results, the working assumption will be that ideology is one dimensional and that all of the items covary along this dimension. With the exception of beliefs about worker ownership, this assumption is generally borne out by multivariate analysis of the data (reported in a later section).

#### ***Beliefs About Power and Conflict***

Beliefs about power and conflict are at the heart of industrial relations ideologies and hence lend themselves most readily to categorization. As noted above, neoclassicists are at one extreme, generally denying the existence of power imbalances and underlying conflicts under free market conditions, and hence considering unions as unnecessary, interfering with otherwise harmonious relations and placing management at a power disadvantage. At the other extreme, radicals consider power imbalances and conflict as fundamental to capitalist economies, and unions as at an inherent disadvantage. In between are managerialists, orthodox pluralists, and liberal reformists. Managerialists generally deny the existence of underlying conflicts and are somewhat ambivalent about unions, believing that they should be avoided but are

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5 Most of the items were developed specifically for this study and pretested on 100 undergraduate students. However, eight questions addressing union attitudes are drawn from McShane, 1986.

legitimate and can have positive effects if they cooperate with management. Orthodox pluralists are far more supportive of unions and collective bargaining, viewing them as important mechanisms for resolving interest conflicts, redressing power imbalances, and introducing democracy to the workplace, but have traditionally been somewhat ambivalent about the pervasiveness of underlying conflicts and do not see a 'need' for unions when management treats workers properly (cf. Kochan 1980: 11). Finally, reformists not only ascribe a greater role to underlying conflicts and view unions as necessary regardless of managerial policies, they also consider unions as at a general disadvantage under contemporary arrangements.

Based upon the data in table 1, it would appear that those adhering to a neoclassical or managerial perspective are very much in a minority: contrary to these two perspectives, 72 percent of the respondents agree that fundamental conflicts exist, while only 19 percent disagree; 65 percent agree that unions are at a power disadvantage vis-a-vis management, while only 24 percent disagree; 74 percent agree that corporations have too much political power, while only 9 percent disagree; and 74 percent disagree with the statement that business leaders should be left alone to manage their business as they see fit, while only 17 percent agree. In contrast, only 2 percent agree that management is at a power disadvantage (83 percent disagree), only 13 percent think unions interfere with otherwise good relations between unions and management (72 percent disagree), and only 7 percent believe unions have too much political power (77 percent disagree). Somewhat less dramatic is the finding that 31 percent believe unions to be unnecessary if management treats its workers properly. But only 5 percent are indifferent about this, leaving 64 percent who disagree. Overall, therefore, it would appear that 65 to 70 percent of participants can be characterized as reformist or radical, believing that unions are at a power disadvantage and that unions are necessary regardless of management practices. If beliefs about underlying conflict and management rights are a primary indication, roughly 15 to 20 percent can be classified as either neoclassical or managerial, leaving roughly 15 to 20 percent that might be considered orthodox pluralist, believing that conflict is fundamental but not that unions are at a power disadvantage or that they are necessary regardless of management practices.

### ***Beliefs About Unions***

How do these underlying beliefs translate into specific beliefs about the role and effectiveness of unions? The answer to this question is not as straightforward as one might initially expect, for those on the 'left' (i.e. reformists and radicals) as well as on the 'right' (especially neoclassicists)

have often been critical of labour unions. The main difference is that those on the 'right' have traditionally opposed unions in principle, arguing that they act as monopoly institutions with inherently negative economic and social consequences (cf. Freeman and Medoff 1984, chapter 1). Reformists and radicals support unions in principle, but are critical of their imperfections, either accusing them of adopting a narrow economic orientation or of being insufficiently democratic.

TABLE 1  
Beliefs About Union-Management Relations

		<i>% who agree</i>	<i>% indifferent</i>	<i>% who disagree</i>
1.	Fundamental conflicts underlie relations between workers and management.	72	9	19
2.	On the whole, unions are at a power disadvantage, vis-à-vis management.	65	11	24
3.	On the whole, management is at a power disadvantage vis-à-vis unions.	6	11	83
4.	Unions are unnecessary if management treats its workers properly.	31	5	65
5.	Unions interfere with otherwise good relations between workers and management.	13	15	72
6.	Unions in Canada have too much political power.	7	16	77
7.	Corporations in Canada have too much political power.	74	17	9
8.	Business leaders should be left alone to manage their business the way they see fit.	17	10	74

\* Respondents were presented with a seven point Likert type scale, where 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree. A response of less than 4 indicates agreement, which a response of more than 4 indicates disagreement.

The results in table 2 appear to reflect this. On one hand, 90 percent believe that unions can have a positive effect on performance if management 'plays its cards right' (2 percent disagree), and 83 percent believe that unions help make sure workers are treated fairly (7 percent disagree). In addition, only 9 percent believe that keeping unions out is a highly worthwhile means of improving a firm's performance (80 percent believe it is not worthwhile), only 15 percent agree that management should do everything possible to keep unions out as long as the law is

TABLE 2  
**Beliefs About Union Impact and Effectiveness**

		<i>% who agree</i>	<i>% indifferent</i>	<i>% who disagree</i>
1.	Union negotiated wages and benefits are often too high.	15	23	62
2.	Unions too often place unnecessary restrictions on management.	42	17	41
3.	If management plays its cards right, unions can have a positive effect on performance (e.g. product quality, absenteeism, turnover).	90	8	2
4.	Keeping unions out is a highly worthwhile means of improving a firm's long run economic performance.*	8	12	80
5.	Management should do everything possible to keep workers from unionizing, as long as the law is not violated.	15	11	74
6.	Unions are not democratic enough.	42	20	38
7.	Unions help make sure that workers are treated fairly.	83	10	7
8.	If I were a blue collar worker and had to choose, I would probably be a member of a union.	91	6	3
9.	The labour movement in this country stands up for the rights of average working Canadians.	59	16	25
10.	Union leaders and workers often do not seem to understand the realities of our economic system.	36	18	46
11.	When workers decide to strike, it is usually for a good reason.	64	20	17
12.	Canadians would be just as well off if there were no unions in this country.	6	4	90

See Table 1 for notes.

\* This item has been reformatted somewhat for reporting purpose: an indifferent response indicates that performance is improved 'somewhat'.

not violated (74 percent disagree), only 15 percent agree that union negotiated wages and benefits are often too high (62 percent disagree) and only 17 percent disagree with the statement that, when workers decide to strike, it is usually for a good reason (63 percent agree). These

findings by-and-large conform to the findings from table 1. Yet, at the same time, fully 42 percent agree that unions are not democratic enough (38 percent disagree), and 42 percent believe that unions too often place unnecessary restrictions on management (41 percent disagree). It would generally appear, therefore, that while only a small minority (roughly 15 percent) of respondents in this study might be characterized as 'anti-union' and hence as adhering to beliefs typically associated with a neoclassical or (to a lesser extent) managerial ideology, roughly 40 percent are less than enamoured with the performance of labour unions in Canada, believing that unions are not democratic enough and that they place unnecessary restrictions on management.

### ***Broader Evaluations and Beliefs***

The ambivalence of many IR scholars towards labour unions as organizations apparently extends to their broader evaluations of the Canadian IR system, as indicated by the findings in table 3. Again largely consistent with the findings in table 1, 77 percent agree that the well-being of workers is all-too-often sacrificed in management's pursuit of profit (16 percent disagree), 81 percent agree that there are still too many workers in Canada who earn barely enough to get by (only 7 percent disagree), and 82 percent agree that women in non-managerial jobs are on the whole under-paid (7 percent disagree). Generally, these responses are most consistent with a reformist or a radical ideology. Yet 40 percent think that free trade is 'a good thing' for the average Canadian worker, and only 37 percent think that it is not (23 percent are indifferent), even though free trade is often considered 'anti-labour' and inconsistent with these ideologies. Paralleling this, 49 percent believe that unions will need to be more cooperative if they wish to survive, while only 33 percent disagree with this statement. Moreover, 57 percent believe participative management practices represent the 'wave of the future', while only 21 percent disagree. In view of the findings so far, this suggests that a number of scholars on the 'left' (as well as the 'right') both support and anticipate more cooperation and participation in the workplace. However, whether this constitutes a 'transformation' (Kochan, Katz, and McKersie 1986) is another matter: there is an almost perfect split over whether the Canadian IR system is in a state of transformation: only 39 percent agree, while 35 percent disagree, and 26 percent are indifferent.

TABLE 3  
**Broader Evaluations of IR System and Current Developments**

		% who agree	% indifferent	% who disagree
1.	All too often, the well-being of workers is sacrificed in management's pursuit of profit.	77	7(7)	16
2.	In Canada today, there are still too many workers who earn barely enough to get by.	81	12	7
3.	Women in nonmanagerial jobs are (on the whole) underpaid.	82	11	7
4.	Government interferes too much in affairs of business firms.	29	20	52
5.	Free trade with the United States is a good thing for the average Canadian worker.	40	23	37
6.	Participative management practices (quality circles, QWL, etc.) represent the wave of the future.	57	22	21
7.	The Canadian industrial relations system is currently in a state of transformation, away from the model of postwar years, to a more flexible, cooperative model.	39	26	35
8.	If unions wish to survive, they will need to be more cooperative with management.	49	18	33
9.	A major problem with the Canadian economy is that too many workers have the wrong attitude towards their work.	30	18	52

\* See Table 1 for notes.

### ***Beliefs About HRM Practices***

Perhaps the most striking findings appear in table 4. 'Progressive' human resource management practices have often been criticized by both reformists and radicals as by-and-large manipulative and anti-union, associated with a managerial perspective (Baritz 1960; Fantasia, Clawson, and Graham 1988). Orthodox pluralists have been less antagonistic, but have traditionally maintained a healthy skepticism about their overall effectiveness. Over the past decade, however, these practices have become increasingly popular — both within the business community and within university (especially business school) curricula. The dilemma this has confronted the labour movement with is well-known, but there can be little doubt that IR scholars have confronted a similar dilemma. Specifically, does acceptance of these practices *necessarily* entail a right-of-centre, 'pro-management' ideology, or can these practices be reconciled with a more 'pro-union' ideology? When considered in

conjunction with the findings so far, the data in table 4 suggest that most scholars are taking the latter position. On all but one of the items (employee stock ownership), over 80 percent of participants believe that the practice identified is at least somewhat effective as means of improving a firm's long run economic performance. Moreover, 54 percent believe that all or most of these items combined improves performance considerably, and 60 percent or more believe this to be the case for semi-autonomous work teams, job redesign, and human skills-training for supervisors.

TABLE 4  
Beliefs About the Effectiveness of HRM  
Practices for Improving Long-Run Economic Performance

	<i>Not at all or marginally (1 or 2)</i>	<i>Somewhat (3)</i>	<i>Considerably (4 or 5)</i>
1. Profit-sharing or gainsharing.	12	37	50
2. Employee stock ownership plans.	27	36	42
3. Semi-autonomous work teams.	4	36	60
4. Job redesign/enrichment.	9	25	67
5. Pay-for-knowledge systems.	13	44	43
6. Production quality meetings/circles.	11	32	58
7. Labour-management committees.	15	30	56
8. Human skills training for supervisors.	7	21	72
9. Employee assistance/counselling programs	17	31	52
10. All or most of the above combined.	9	37	54

\* The question asked respondents to "circle the appropriate number to indicate the extent to which each is worthwhile as a means of improving a firm's long-run economic performance (e.g. lower costs, higher quality, higher productivity)." The response format has been altered somewhat for reporting purposes: in the original question, a 5 point scale was provided, where 1 = 'not at all', 3 = 'somewhat', and 5 = 'very much'. A response option for 'don't know' was also provided: this response has been treated as a missing value.

Agreeing that HRM practices improve long-run economic performance does not of course signify unqualified support for them, for many scholars may believe they improve performance by enhancing management's 'indirect control' in the workplace (Friedman 1977), and hence by manipulating workers. But scholars critical of these practices

have traditionally also argued that they are rendered ineffective over the long run by underlying conflicts and power imbalances (e.g. Godard 1991). Moreover, the findings in Table 3 — especially the finding that 49 percent agree that unions need to be more cooperative and only 33 percent disagree — do suggest normative support. It would thus appear that, in the 1980s at least, many scholars may have come to accept the growing popularity of these practices, but at the same time continue to adhere to a 'pro-union' (i.e. pluralist, reformist, and radical) ideology, believing that conflict is fundamental to labour-management relations.

### **Beliefs About Participatory Rights**

One criticism of HRM practices — especially by reformists and radicals — is that they operate more through symbolism than through substance, providing workers with no *real* rights or control in the workplace (Fantasia, Clawson, and Graham 1988; Wells 1987). The question which arises, therefore, is whether IR scholars generally believe in such rights. Table 5 indicates that a great many do, but with some qualifications. When asked if workers (or other representatives) should be allowed much greater say in strategic managerial decisions which can affect their well being, 80 percent of respondents agreed that they should (10 percent disagreed). But only 44 percent agreed that workers should be allowed to participate as equals in the workplace regardless of whether this improves performance (31 percent disagreed). When asked about specific issues, over 70 percent agreed that workers should have at least equal say to management on workplace design and layout, on the pace of work, and on the way work is done, while over 60 percent believed they should have at least equal say on technological change. Fully 95 percent agreed that this should be the case on workplace safety issues, with 56 percent actually believing that workers should have *more* say than management. On issues less immediately associated with the performance of work but with direct implications for workers (layoffs, plant closings, hiring coworkers, workplace promotions), roughly 50 percent agreed workers should have either equal or greater say. Yet on issues with only indirect implications for workers (new investments, product design, appointments of senior managers), only 40 percent or fewer agreed that workers should have equal or greater say. All-in-all, however, if the responses to these questions can be interpreted as support for infringements upon managerial authority, then it would once again appear that a large majority of respondents occupy a position to the 'left' of the managerial perspective, and, perhaps, of the postwar orthodox pluralist perspective — at least as typified in this paper.



TABLE 5  
**Beliefs About Worker Rights to Participate in Management**

	<i>% who agree</i>	<i>% indifferent</i>	<i>% who disagree</i>
1. Workers should be allowed to participate as equals in the workplace, regardless of whether this improves performance.	44	25	31
2. As a matter of principle, workers (or their representatives) should be allowed much greater say in strategic managerial decisions which can affect their well-being.	80	11	10

N.B. See table 1 for notes.

<i>Worker participatory rights re:</i>	<i>less than equal say* (1 or 2)</i>	<i>equal say (3)</i>	<i>more than equal say (4 or 5)</i>
3. layoffs	49	38	13
4. plant closings	49	34	18
5. workplace safety	5	39	56
6. technological change	38	40	22
7. new investments in equipment	60	27	13
8. workplace design and layout	28	44	29
9. appointments of senior managers	76	15	10
10. product design	64	23	13
11. the pace of work	26	50	25
12. how work is done	22	52	26
13. the hiring of coworkers	53	35	12
14. who gets promoted in workplace	53	31	17

\* The question asked respondents to indicate how much say workers or worker representatives should have on each issue (relative to management). The response format was a five point scale, where 1 = 'no say', 3 = 'equal say', and 5 = 'total say'.

### ***Beliefs About Worker Ownership***

A further criticism of progressive HRM practices (especially among radicals), is that they do not adequately address underlying sources of conflict (Godard 1991) and, more generally, that they do not introduce democracy — in the true sense of the term — into the workplace (Hyman

1983). By implication, both of these problems can be solved by a system of worker owned and controlled enterprises, an alternative which has traditionally been popular among the 'liberal left' (e.g. Bowles and Gintis 1986: 205-213). As indicated in table 6, support for such a system is in principle widespread, with 72 percent of respondents agreeing that it is a desirable alternative and only 12 percent disagreeing. In turn, 60 percent believe it is a practical alternative, with only 23 percent disagreeing. Notably, however, such a system is not viewed as an economic panacea: only 19 percent responded that it would be more than somewhat worthwhile as a means of improving a firm's performance, and 49 percent said that it would be less than somewhat worthwhile. As shall become apparent in a later section, however, these results deny categorization, for multivariate analysis indicates that they bear little relationship to ideology. This undoubtedly reflects a growing interest among more 'right wing' scholars (especially neoclassical economists) in the potential that worker ownership holds for overcoming the problem of 'agency' in the firm (Cornforth et al. 1988: 1).

TABLE 6  
Beliefs About Worker Ownership

		<i>% who agree</i>	<i>% indifferent</i>	<i>% who disagree</i>
1.	Worker ownership of the enterprise in which they work would be a desirable alternative if it was practical.	72	17	12
2.	Worker ownership and control of the enterprise in which they work is not a practical alternative.	23	18	60
3.	Total worker ownership is highly worthwhile as a means of improving economic performance.*	25	29	46

\* This item has been reformatted for reporting purposes: an indifferent response indicates that performance is improved 'somewhat'.

### ***Desired Legal Reforms***

To this point, it would appear that there is considerable support for 'cooperativist' reforms, especially those intended to enhance cooperation and participation in the workplace. The question which arises, however, is whether support for workplace level reforms extends to broader institutional/legal reforms traditionally advocated by reformists and radicals. Table 7 indicates that there is indeed considerable support for a number of such reforms. Again largely consistent with the findings

TABLE 7  
Desired Legal Reforms

	<i>% who agree</i>	<i>% indifferent</i>	<i>% who disagree</i>
1. Workers should be allowed to form their own union, even where a majority of their co-workers choose to remain nonunion.	45	12	43
2. Management should be legally able to continue operations during a strike, even if this requires hiring temporary replacements.	30	11	59
3. Laws restricting union strike activity in the government sector should be strengthened.	27	16	57
4. Laws restricting union strike activity in the business sector should be strengthened.	7	9	83
5. All workers, both union and nonunion, should have some legal right to file grievances and, if necessary, go to arbitration if treated unfairly by their employer.	83	5	11
6. There should be extensive legal restrictions upon managerial decisions to close a plant.	60	12	28
7. There is need for stronger governmental action to protect workers from layoffs and plant closings.	70	8	22
8. There is need for stronger governmental action on 'women's issues' (e.g. pay equity, maternity leave, day care).	72	11	17
9. Business leaders should be left alone to manage their business the way they see fit.	17	10	74

See Table 1 for notes.

from table 1, 60 percent of respondents agree that there should be extensive legal restrictions on managerial decisions to close a plant (28 percent disagree), 70 percent agree that there is need for stronger governmental action to protect workers from layoffs and plant closings (22 percent disagree), and 72 percent agree that there is need for stronger governmental action on women's issues (17 percent disagree). However, participants are pretty evenly split when it comes to the idea of minority unionism (cf. Adell 1986), with 45 percent agreeing that it should

be legal and 43 percent disagreeing. There is considerably greater support for anti-scab legislation, with only 30 percent agreeing that management should be able to continue operations during a strike and 60 percent disagreeing. As for the right of workers to strike, 83 percent disagreed with the statement that laws restricting private sector strikes should be strengthened (7 percent agreed), while a considerably lower number, 57 percent, disagreed with laws restricting public sector strikes (27 percent agreed). But perhaps most notably, fully 83 percent agreed that there should be a universal right to grieve and go to arbitration over 'unfair' employer treatment, while only 11 percent disagreed.

### ***General Findings***

All-in-all, a fairly strong pattern emerges from the data. Most notable is the 60 to 70 percent of responses that are regularly consistent with either a reformist or a radical perspective. For example, 65 percent believe unions are at a power disadvantage, 74 percent believe corporations have too much political power, 65 percent believe that unions are necessary regardless of management practices, 64 percent believe that most strikes are for a good reason, 62 percent disagree with the statement that union wages and benefits are too high, 56 percent believe that workers should have *more* than equal say on workplace safety issues, and 60 percent think there should be extensive restrictions on management decisions to close a plant.

In contrast, 15 to 20 percent of the responses are regularly consistent with either a neoclassical or a managerial perspective. For example, 19 percent disagree with the statement that conflict underlies the relations between labour and management, 17 percent believe that business leaders should be allowed to run their business as they see fit, 20 percent view keeping unions out as at least somewhat worthwhile for improving a firm's performance, 15 percent believe union negotiated wages and benefits are too high, 16 percent disagree with the statement that the well-being of workers is too often sacrificed in the pursuit of profit, and 22 percent disagree with the need for extensive restrictions on plant closings.

At first blush, therefore, it would appear that 60 to 70 percent of IR scholars can be labelled radical or reformist, that 15 to 20 percent can be labelled neoclassical or managerial, and that, by default, only 15 to 20 percent can be labelled orthodox pluralist — even though this perspective is commonly assumed to have been predominant in the mainstream of the field in the postwar era. Counterbalancing these findings, however, is the widespread belief that progressive HRM practices are economically effective, that participative practices represent the 'wave of the future', and that unions need to be more cooperative: 50

to 60 percent of respondents commonly agree with statements along these lines, thereby indicating that a sizable portion (at least 30 or 40 percent) of those adhering to an orthodox pluralist, a reformist, or a radical perspective at minimum concede that a fairly high degree of labour-management cooperation is both possible and necessary. Moreover, a sizeable portion of these scholars would also appear to be either neutral about or supportive of statements concerning the favourability of free trade, the tendency of unions to place unnecessary restrictions on management, and the lack of democracy in unions.

At the risk of oversimplification, it would thus appear that contemporary developments have led many scholars to go beyond the pluralist orthodoxy of postwar years. A sizeable minority (roughly 30 or 40 percent) continue to be sceptical about or opposed to the 'new cooperativism' and appear to adhere more to a reformist or even a radical perspective, yet an equally sizable minority appears to have shifted simultaneously to both the 'left' and the 'right', on the one hand accepting reformist arguments about the inadequacies of the postwar status quo and the need for reforms which strengthen worker rights and protections, and on the other hand accepting managerialist arguments about the need for greater labour-management cooperation and the effectiveness of progressive HRM practices. This shift is largely consistent with what Reshef and Murray (1988) have referred to as 'neo-institutionalism', and suggests the emergence of a new ideology in the mainstream of the field — one which incorporates both managerialist and reformist arguments, but without necessarily rejecting the traditional pluralist belief in unions and collective bargaining as the cornerstone of the IR system.

### **The Structure, Covariates, and Consequences of Ideology**

Now that the content of contemporary ideologies has been explored, the structure, disciplinary covariates, and pedagogical consequences of ideology can be examined.

To examine the structure of ideology and hence whether a single 'right-left' dimension can be identified, all of the items from tables 1 through 7 were subjected to a unidimensional factor analysis. The results appear in table 8, which lists the factor loadings for each item, identified by the table in which it appears in the descriptive analysis, and the row in which it appears in that table. This table reveals that a strong single factor can be extracted: 51 of the 65 items included load at the .35 level or better, which is the generally accepted rule-of-thumb for determining whether an item contributes in a meaningful way to a factor. It would thus appear that ideologies are, by-and-large, unidimensional. At the same

time, eight out of ten of the HRM practices identified in table 4 loaded below the .35 level (the exceptions are profit sharing and quality circles), thereby suggesting that beliefs about the effectiveness of HRM practices do not in general bear a linear relationship to ideology. This is not altogether surprising, as we would expect support for the new cooperativism to be highest among managerialists, and perhaps, in view of the descriptive results, 'neo-institutionalists' as well. If so, we would expect to observe an inverse U relationship.

To explore if this is the case, two scales were created: COOPERATIVISM, which is a ten item additive scale created from the HRM items in table 4 ( $\alpha=.84$ ); and LEFTISM, which is a 22 item additive scale created on the basis of the factor analysis ( $\alpha=.91$ ; see table 8).<sup>6</sup> COOPERATIVISM was then regressed on the quadratic function of LEFTISM, as reported in equation one (standardized coefficients,  $t$  values in parentheses).

$$1) \quad \text{COOPERATIVISM} = .71 \text{ LEFTISM} - .0035 \text{ LEFTISM}^2; R^2 = .15 \\ (4.34) \qquad \qquad \qquad (4.57)$$

These results provide strong support for expectations. Not only are the coefficients highly significant and in the expected directions, the estimated bend point (i.e., where the slope of the curve changes direction) occurs at a value of 101.7 which is below the mean value of LEFTISM, occurring at approximately the fortieth percentile. In other words, for the forty percent of respondents with the lowest scores on the LEFTISM scale, there is a positive association between LEFTISM and COOPERATIVISM; for the remaining sixty percent, there is a negative association.

To explore for the disciplinary covariates of ideology, LEFTISM was regressed, first, on dummy variables representing the respondents' reported area of primary specialization, then, on dummy variables representing faculty affiliation. In the first regression, three dummy variables are included: MGMTSPEC, or whether the respondent's specialization is in management (including organizational behaviour or personnel), ECOSPEC, on whether the respondent's specialization is in economics, and OTHSPEC, or whether the respondent's specialization is in some field other than management, economics, or industrial relations. A fourth category encompasses respondents whose reported specialization is in industrial relations. However, it is the reference

6 The additive scale (rather than the factor scale) is employed to enhance comparability with subsequent research. Findings using a factor scale are generally the same.

7 The bend point is estimated by setting the partial derivative of the dependent variable with respect to the independent variable to zero. Given the equation  $Y = a+bx+cx^2+e$ , the derivative with respect to  $x$  is  $b+2cx$ . (See Berry and Feldman 1985: 57-60).

category and hence is excluded from the regression, serving as the default dummy.<sup>8</sup> In the second regression the same categories are employed, but the variables in the regression are labelled, respectively: MGMTFAC, ECOFAC, and OTHFAC. (Again, industrial relations is the default.) Both regressions control for the age of respondents. The standardized coefficients are reported in equations 2a and 2b (t values in parenthesis; p value of 1.65 or higher indicates statistical significance at the .10 level or higher).

TABLE 8  
Factor Loadings, Leftism Scale

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7
1 .42	1 <u>-.68</u>	1 .44	1 -.40	1 <u>.58</u>	1 -.02	1 .58
2 <u>.51</u>	2 <u>-.62</u>	2 .35	2 -.32	2 .59	2 -.12	2 <u>-.62</u>
3 <u>-.59</u>	3 .14	3 .52	3 -.16	3 <u>.75</u>	3 .43	3 <u>-.59</u>
4 <u>-.56</u>	4 <u>-.38</u>	4 <u>-.65</u>	4 <u>-.23</u>	4 <u>.74</u>		4 <u>-.38</u>
5 <u>-.50</u>	5 <u>-.59</u>	5 <u>-.61</u>	5 <u>-.27</u>	5 <u>.52</u>		5 .07
6 <u>-.64</u>	6 <u>-.09</u>	6 <u>-.37</u>	6 <u>-.40</u>	6 <u>.71</u>		6 <u>.64</u>
7 <u>.60</u>	7 .38	7 <u>-.28</u>	7 .00	7 <u>.66</u>		7 .63
8 <u>-.47</u>	8 .35	8 <u>-.49</u>	8 <u>-.25</u>	8 <u>.52</u>		8 <u>.59</u>
	9 .43	9 <u>-.58</u>	9 <u>-.06</u>	9 <u>.67</u>		9 <u>-.48</u>
	10 <u>-.49</u>		10 <u>-.26</u>	10 .51		
	11 <u>.61</u>			11 .54		
	12 <u>-.45</u>			12 .54		
				13 .50		
				14 <u>.58</u>		

\* Unidimensional Factor Analysis; Items are listed by table and row in which they appear in the descriptive analysis. Those which are underlined are included in the Leftism scale. They were chosen primarily on the basis of their factor loadings and their expected generalizability to other populations. The mean and standard deviation are, respectively, 106 and 15.9.

8 Inclusion of dummy variables for all categories introduces perfect multicollinearity, in which case the regression will not run. It is therefore necessary to leave one variable out, making it the 'default'. In doing so, the coefficients for each of the included variables reflect the implications of these variables relative to those of the default variable. Thus, for example, the coefficient for ECOSPEC will indicate the extent to which a specialization in economics makes a difference relative to a specialization in IR (see Maddala 1977: 134).





## CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed and analyzed the ideologies of Canadian industrial relations scholars. A number of findings are of note. At the descriptive level, it would appear that a considerable majority of these scholars (perhaps as high as seventy percent) adhere to beliefs consistent with either a liberal-reformist or a radical ideology, even though there is widespread support for many of the arguments associated with the 'new cooperativism'. These somewhat contradictory results indicate that many scholars may have responded to the developments of the past decade by shifting somewhat to the 'left' (away from orthodox pluralism) in their underlying beliefs about the postwar IR system, yet at the same time accepting arguments from the 'right' about the need for and effectiveness of greater labour-management cooperation. In doing so, scholars appear to have rejected orthodox pluralism, forging a 'neo-institutionalist' ideology to take its place.

It would also appear that, whatever the *content* of ideology, its structure remains by-and-large one-dimensional. Factor analysis revealed a strong single factor, and though ten of twelve HRM practices did not load well on this factor, subsequent analysis indicated that they bear a reasonably strong nonlinear association with it.

The findings also suggest that scholars reporting that they specialize in IR or are affiliated primarily with an IR school tend to be more 'left-wing' than their counterparts in economics and management. This would appear to reflect an 'ideological partitioning' of the field among different schools, though the amount of variance explained by specialization and faculty affiliation is low.

In turn, ideology would appear to have important implications for the pedagogy of scholars and the orientation they are likely to convey to future decision makers: those with more 'left-wing' ideologies are more likely to adopt a critical, educative pedagogy and hence to convey a moral orientation; those with more 'right-wing' ideologies are more likely to adopt an applied, technical pedagogy and hence to convey an instrumental orientation.

Also of note, there is striking consensus about the need for a number of reforms to the postwar system: for example, 95 percent believe that workers should have at least equal say to management on workplace safety issues, while 83 percent believe that the legal right to grieve should be universal and 80 percent believe that workers (or their representatives) should as a matter of principle be allowed much greater say in strategic management decisions which can affect their well-being.

Of by far-and-away greatest importance, however, are the implications of the findings for the future of the field. The past decade has been a period of considerable ideological turbulence, not just in the practice, but also in the study of IR. Though the field could at one time be criticized as too 'status quo' oriented (cf. Hyman 1984), this criticism appears no longer to be valid — at least for the Canadian academics included in this study. Whether this will translate into increased activism, in the best tradition of Commons and the Webbs, remains to be seen. It also remains to be seen whether IR scholars are now in a position to mount a response to the conservatism which came to be increasingly prevalent in both management practices and public policy initiatives during the 1980's. But the findings of this study do suggest the emergence of a new ideology which can serve as the basis for such a response.

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### **Les idéologies contemporaines des universitaires canadiens en relations industrielles**

Les idéologies fournissent un ensemble de valeurs, de croyances et de doctrines auquel les individus et les collectivités font appel pour juger du fonctionnement et de la légitimité des arrangements institutionnels ainsi que de l'opportunité d'y apporter des réformes. Ces idéologies peuvent avoir des effets importants sur la pratique des relations industrielles et, traditionnellement, elles ont été au centre de notre champ d'études. Il est toutefois surprenant de constater qu'au cours des dernières décennies, ce sujet a fait l'objet de peu d'attention. Cette négligence est regrettable, particulièrement à la lumière des développements des dernières années qui suggèrent que les idéologies traditionnelles pourraient être dépassées et qu'un nouvel esprit de coopération soit en train de transformer les relations entre les salariés et la direction.

La recherche vise à ramener le thème de l'idéologie au sein de l'étude des relations industrielles. Les caractéristiques de cinq perspectives idéologiques influentes au cours de la période de l'après-guerre sont d'abord identifiées : ce sont les approches «néo-classique», «managériale», «pluraliste orthodoxe», «réformiste libérale» et «radicale». On utilise ensuite ces catégories pour analyser les données tirées d'une enquête récente menée auprès de 151 universitaires canadiens dans le domaine des relations industrielles. Quatre questions sont traitées. Premièrement, on tente d'identifier les croyances et les doctrines des répondants. Deuxièmement, on les analyse en essayant de déterminer si elles correspondent à la dimension unique du type «droite-gauche» (ainsi qu'on le suppose généralement) et si les croyances concernant le nouvel esprit de coopération s'alignent sur cette dimension. Troisièmement, l'étude explore la question suivante : est-ce que l'idéologie varie en fonction de la

spécialisation dans le domaine de la discipline et en fonction de l'appartenance à une faculté particulière. Enfin, l'étude examine les relations qui existent entre les idéologies et les enseignements des répondants; on cherche à vérifier s'il existe un lien entre leur idéologie et les orientations transmises aux étudiantes et aux étudiants.

Plusieurs des conclusions méritent d'être soulignées. Sur le plan descriptif, il semblerait qu'une majorité considérable des répondants (peut-être jusqu'à 70 %) ont des croyances qui se situent dans le sillon de l'idéologie soit libérale-réformiste, soit radicale, même s'il existe parmi ceux-ci un large accord à l'égard de nombre des postulats liés au nouvel esprit de coopération. Ces résultats contradictoires suggèrent que de nombreux répondants ont, face aux développements de la dernière décennie, quelque peu évolué vers la gauche, tout en acceptant certains arguments de la droite quant à la nécessité et à l'efficacité d'une meilleure coopération entre employeurs et syndicats. En agissant ainsi, les répondants semblent avoir rejeté le pluralisme orthodoxe et élaboré, à la place, une idéologie néo-institutionnaliste.

Les conclusions montrent également que les répondants spécialisés en relations industrielles ou affiliés à un département ou une école de relations industrielles ont tendance à être plus à gauche que leurs collègues en sciences économiques et en gestion. Cette constatation semble refléter une certaine division idéologique du champ des relations industrielles entre différentes écoles. À noter aussi le consensus marqué au sujet de la nécessité d'introduire de nombreuses réformes au système de relations industrielles d'après-guerre. Par exemple, 90 % des répondants sont d'avis que les travailleurs devraient avoir voix au chapitre au moins autant que la gestion concernant les questions de sécurité en milieu de travail; 83 % pensent que le droit légalement reconnu de soumettre un grief devrait être d'application universelle et 80 % sont d'avis que les travailleurs (ou leurs représentants) devraient avoir une influence beaucoup plus forte sur les décisions stratégiques qui peuvent affecter leur bien-être.

Mais c'est au sujet de l'avenir même des relations industrielles comme champ d'études que nos constatations sont les plus importantes. La décennie qui s'est achevée a été le théâtre d'une turbulence idéologique considérable, pas seulement sur le plan de la pratique des relations industrielles, mais aussi sur le plan de leur étude. Bien que naguère on ait critiqué le domaine des relations industrielles comme étant trop orienté vers le statu quo (voir Hyman 1984), cette critique ne semble plus être valide, en tout cas en ce qui concerne les universitaires canadiens visés par l'étude. Il reste à voir, évidemment, si leur façon de concevoir la réalité se traduira par plus d'activisme, dans la meilleure tradition de Commons et des Webbs. Il reste aussi à voir si les universitaires canadiens sont maintenant en mesure de réagir fermement face à la montée d'un conservatisme qui, durant la décennie 80, s'est de plus en plus affirmé tant au niveau des pratiques de la gestion qu'à celui des politiques publiques. Mais les résultats de cette enquête suggèrent fortement l'émergence d'une idéologie nouvelle qui pourrait servir de fondement à une telle réponse au conservatisme.