

## Call for Papers: Special Issue on Gender and Industrial Relations

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*Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society* invites submissions for a special issue on Gender and Industrial Relations. This special issue aims to explore the intersections of gender with industrial relations and to highlight both established and underexplored areas of research that connect these two critical dimensions of work and employment.

### Background and justification

Industrial relations (IR) as a field has long been critiqued for lacking gender sensitive analysis, having traditionally overlooked how gender interacts with industrial relations processes, the strategies of IR actors, and how gendered dynamics shape outcomes in workplaces, the labour market and policy (Healy et al., 2006; Pocock, 1997; Lotte Hansen, 2002; Rubery & Fagan, 1995). Building on these feminist perspectives of traditional approaches, the special issue editors see merit in foregrounding gender analysis in IR scholarship to expand the analytical tools for understanding industrial relations and to reveal important experiences, phenomena and dimensions in the world of work.

During the past 20 years there have been significant transformations in work and workplaces including profound workforce demographic changes, such as large increases in women's labour force participation (Fluchtmann & Patrini, 2023; Maraziotis, 2024); significant technological change, such as the emergence of AI/algorithmic management (Aloisi & De Stefano, 2022; Doellgast & Wagner, 2022); shifts in the organisation of work, including flexibilization and fissuring of work (Rubery, 2015; Weil, 2017); and regulatory change including the influence of neoliberalism (Baccaro & Howell, 2011) and changes in the form and scope of regulation to promote or assess gender equality, alongside backsliding on – and even a backlash against – some gender equality policies (Dickens, 2006; Jacquot, 2017; Rubery & Grimshaw, 2015; Walby, 2015). These changes have had profound implications for IR and associated labour force gender dynamics.

At the same time, gender-based inequality in the workplace and labour market has proved remarkably resilient. Wage gaps, occupational segregation, gendered stratification, gendered inequality in paid and unpaid work, poor quality work in highly feminised sectors and gendered experiences of harassment and discrimination persist globally (see Foley & Cooper, 2021, Giron & Correa, 2016; Peetz & Murray, 2017). Gender equality has emerged as a global priority, with national governments and multilateral organisations such as the ILO, OECD and UN consistently emphasising it as a core concern for economies and societies worldwide (ILO, 2024; OECD, 2023; UN, 2023).

Given this backdrop, it is crucial to examine the role of gender in shaping labour market dynamics and how IR practices and policies intersect with gender issues, including poor job quality in feminised sectors, gender-based harassment and the role of IR actors in promoting gender equality, as well as how IR theory can help us understand these changes and continuities. This special issue seeks to contribute to the growing scholarship that addresses the gendered dimensions of industrial relations. We invite submissions that engage with these issues, highlighting theoretical, empirical and comparative work that deepens our understanding of how gender intersects with IR across sectors, occupations and national contexts.

## Topics of interest

Submissions may focus on, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- **IR theory and gender:** Understanding how gender is embedded in IR theories including gender blindness in classical IR frameworks. Have the challenges and shortcomings identified by feminist scholars been answered in more recent scholarship? Proposing ways in which IR theories can help us understand empirical data on gendered workplace dynamics and how including gender dynamics can sharpen IR theory.
- **Comparative studies:** Cross-national or cross-sectoral analyses of how gender intersects with IR processes and outcomes in different global settings. What does this mean for our understandings of IR and gender equality and inequality at work?
- **Gender and industries/sectors/occupations/work types:** The role of IR institutions, processes and policies in shaping gender relations across different sectors and occupations, particularly those that are heavily gendered. How does gender interact with industrial relations in varied work environments, such as frontline versus office-based work? This may extend, for example, to examining gendered power dynamics in essential services like healthcare or retail compared to other contexts.
- **Gender and job quality:** Exploring how industrial relations institutions and actors as well as processes and policies impact job quality and pay/low pay in feminised, mixed gender and male concentrated sectors and workforce groups with outcomes that shape gender equality and inequality.
- **Gender and the transition to a sustainable economy:** Investigating how gender influences IR as economies shift towards sustainability. This could include the gendered impact of job creation in green industries, the role of women in sustainable energy sectors, or how the green transition affects traditionally male-dominated versus female-dominated industries and occupations.
- **Using an IR lens to explore under-researched themes:** Addressing critical issues like sexism, gender harassment and gendered violence at work through an IR prism. How do IR actors shape, respond to or mitigate these experiences? What does an IR lens add for building understanding of these issues and experiences.
- **Actors in IR and gender equality:** Examining the roles of trade unions, employer associations, governments and other actors in promoting or obstructing gender equality in the workplace. How does the work of these actors seek to address gender-based inequality at work and to what effect?

These topics are indicative rather than exhaustive, and we encourage innovative contributions that explore new questions, concepts or methodologies related to gender and IR.

## Submission guidelines and processes

We invite authors to submit extended abstracts of no more than 1,000 words (references excluded). Extended abstracts should outline the following:

- **Research question(s):** The central question(s) driving the research with a robust explanation of why these are significant questions worthy of attention and worthy of publication in the special issue.
- **Literature:** An indication of what theories and bodies of literature the research is situated in and an explanation of how the proposed paper advances IR theory and scholarship.
- **Methodology:** A description and justification of the research design and methods used.
- **Key findings:** An overview of the main findings and argument of the proposed article.

- **Significance:** The contribution to IR theory, scholarship and practice and gender equality at work.

Please send your extended abstracts to the guest editors at the email addresses above by **Monday 14 April 2025**. The editors will review abstracts and communicate decisions to authors by late April / early May 2025.

Authors whose extended abstracts are accepted will be invited to submit to the guest editors an 8,000-10,000 quality draft paper by **28 July 2025** for presentation at one of two paper development workshops: one of which will be held at the ILERA European Congress in Durham, UK, 10–12 September 2025 where papers will be presented and discussed in preparation for the special issue, and another to be held online for those unable to attend the ILERA European Congress.

Please note that participation in a paper development workshop will not guarantee acceptance of the paper for the special issue. While paper development workshop participation is not a requirement for consideration of a paper for the special issue, authors are strongly encouraged to participate.

### **Key dates**

Extended abstract submission deadline: **Monday 14 April 2025**

Full paper deadline for paper development workshop (for authors whose extended abstracts are accepted): **Monday 28 July 2025**

Paper development workshop dates:

1. ILERA European Congress, 10–12 September 2025, Durham University, UK
2. Online workshop (date to be confirmed but likely late August/early September 2025)

Deadline for manuscripts submitted to *Industrial Relations* special issue: **Monday 12 December 2025**

Publication date: The *Industrial Relations* special issue is anticipated to be published in **2027**.

### **Manuscript review process and inquiries**

All manuscripts submitted to *Industrial Relations* special issue will undergo a double-blind review process, with at least two reviewers per paper, and will be subject to the journal's normal editorial processes and publication standards.

For inquiries and questions related to the special issue, please contact the guest editors via the email addresses above.

We look forward to receiving your contributions and to advancing the scholarly conversation on the critical link between gender and industrial relations.

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