



Call for Papers: IR Berkeley Special Issue on “Collective Bargaining: Its Causes and Consequences for Workers and Employers”

It was Adam Smith who first recognised the important role played by employer and worker collectives in the setting of wages and conditions. Today collective bargaining is the biggest departure from market wage setting around the world. But it takes many forms which, in theory, can have quite different consequences for workers and firms.

Despite large empirical literatures investigating effects of collective bargaining on issues as disparate as wages, productivity, firm performance and worker wellbeing, its effects remain hotly contested. But it is only recently that the credibility revolution in empirical research has turned its attention to the causal impact of collective bargaining on workers and employers.

This Special Issue focuses on both the origins of collective bargaining and its effects on workers and employers. We invite submissions to this Special Issue which consider the nature of the collective bargaining institutions – how they came into being and the theory informing expectations as to their impact – and present credible empirical evidence as to the causal links between collective bargaining and the outcomes of interest. If credible identification strategies are not available, we expect submissions to take account of this in their interpretation of findings.

We hope to receive submissions from around the world to expand knowledge about the implications of a range of collective bargaining institutions, and how these might differ across time and space.

Please submit an extended abstract to Alex Bryson (a.bryson@ucl.ac.uk) or Steve Raphael (stevenraphael@berkeley.edu) no later than 31st October 2024.

There will be a symposium linked to the Special Issue which will be face-to-face at UC Berkeley’s Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) on September 18th and 19th 2025. Three invited papers are scheduled:

- David Card on collective bargaining in North America
- Christian Dustmann, Bernd Fitzenberger and Lutz Bellmann on the Germany system
- and Erling Barth on collective bargaining in Europe

We will invite those submitting the best abstracts to present a full paper at a symposium.

Full papers must be submitted one month before the symposium so that discussants can prepare to provide feedback at the symposium. Authors will be able to revise their papers in response to feedback at the symposium before they are sent out for review by the journal’s editors.

IRLE will cover travel and accommodation for presenters and discussants.