

Introduction to “Worker Appropriation as Responsibility and Right”

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With the increasing globalization of labor markets in the early 21st century, more employment relations scholars have addressed the issue of whether workers rights are human rights. The current, widely-accepted definition of workers rights is rooted in the International Labor Organization’s “Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work” (1998) which includes the following four rights—the eradication of discrimination in employment, the effective elimination of child labor, the abolition of all types of forced labor and the right of employees to freely associate and to engage in collective bargaining with their employers. In this well-written, provocative and timely essay, Dr. Richard McIntyre, the Honors Program Director and Professor of Economics at the Schmidt Labor Research Center at the University of Rhode Island, expands on the ideas presented in his excellent book, *Are Worker Rights Human Rights?*, published by the University of Michigan Press in 2008. In this essay, Professor McIntyre argues that in order to achieve “an ethically acceptable workplace in globalized capitalism,” employees having the rights to freely associate and to engage in collective bargaining might be inadequate for obtaining this objective. As an alternative, Professor McIntyre contends that in order to attain such a desirable goal, “the traditional wage-labor relationship” needs to be transcended through worker ownership/appropriation. Drawing on experiments in various forms of worker ownership from throughout the world, Professor McIntyre articulates how such a system might be successfully crafted and implemented in the United States in the near future.

I welcome employment relations scholars from all nations throughout the world to contribute future essays on employment relations topics from any one of a variety of theoretical perspectives. Moreover, if any of the journal’s readers would like to respond to

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particular essays published in the “Perspectives” Section, please do not hesitate to contact me with your proposal. I welcome both practitioner-based and scholarly-based articles. I hope that you enjoy this essay and find it most illuminating.

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