

Introduction to invited response essays

To promote dialogue and analytical development, we sent the core essay of this special issue to three international researchers with a request for responses to the essay and to a set of questions about it that we formulated. These questions were set as prompts rather than as directives and the respondents were free to take up the issues and perspectives that struck them as most important.

- **If industrial democratic systems are not one-size-fits all, how can new efforts in this direction learn from the histories and structures of existing successful systems?**
- **It is clear in the cases that we presented that culture (ethos and worldviews) is an important resource and component in the success of such systems. How do new efforts build a culture that sustains an industrial democratic effort without hobbling its entrepreneurial capabilities and how does this cultural baseline evolve over time in response to changing circumstances?**
- **What do unionized environments and non-unionized cooperative systems have to learn from each other about the balancing of the interests of labor and capital in competitive enterprises?**
- **How are we to understand the complex and dynamic relationship between organizational cultures and socio-technical systems that such organizations are always trying to balance?**
- **Given the detailed agreements and complex structures to manage the relationships between labor and capital revealed in both cases, how can new startups or transformations of existing organizations learn from these structures of political and socio-technical participation and not have to repeat all the trial and error that led to the consolidation of the systems we have portrayed?**
- **Are there boundaries or scales beyond which industrial democratic systems cannot survive or to which neoliberal capitalist organizations are better suited or not?**

The three response essays that follow take up a variety of issues. Following them, in the spirit of dialogue, we lay out our understanding of what we have learned from the responses and the questions that remain to be worked on.