

REVIEWS

Campbell, Rob and Alf Kirk *After the freeze : New Zealand unions in the economy* Wellington, The Port Nicholson Press, 1983, 111p. Price \$9.95.

When the present wage freeze ends, a coherent and acceptable system of wage determination is required. The new system must be free of arbitrary interference, take account of the underlying economic conditions, be flexible and yet fair and equitable. Rob Campbell and Alf Kirk are well placed to confront these issues: both are trained economists; Campbell, for many years, has been negotiating the trend-setting drivers' award; whilst Kirk is the inspiration behind the Federation of Labour's alternative economic strategy. Generally the book is a successful blend of wages policy and economic strategy, avoiding the conditional phrases and rhetoric of academic economists, written in a chatty style, interspaced with pertinent cartoons — a credit to both the editor and the publishing house.

Whilst the perspective taken is that of trade unionists, the book is not a radical alternative, but a well-argued and consistent discussion, recognising the legitimacy of the employer and governmental perspective, as well as the economic constraints. The authors demolish the myth that New Zealand has had free wage bargaining in the post-war period and are forced to reject this option. Not only would the Government be continuously forced to intervene on economic grounds, but free wage bargaining would tend to leave the poorly-organised, low-paid workers further behind in times of economic recession. They wryly perceive the logic that abhorrence to free price-setting must also apply on the wages front.

The major conclusion is the desire for a national incomes policy, with the annual level of wage settlement determined by tripartite discussions between employers, unions and the Government. There is a wistful look across the Tasman to the ACTU/ALP accord, and in common with that accord, the level of wage settlement is to take cognizance of economic circumstances, including inflation rates, balance of payments, employment and investment levels. The authors were even willing to accept a cut in real wages in times of economic hardship, but they sidestep this issue in relation to the current recession. In return for explicit government involvement in wage determination, trade unions (and presumably the employers) must be participants in national economic planning, including determination of the social wage.

Supplementing the national incomes policy would be a system of industry agreements, ostensibly to provide some degree of flexibility in the existing rigid system of wage determination by making allowances for changes in job content or ability of industry to pay. Industry bargaining, however sensible from the microeconomic perspective, seems more designed to pacify the union movement and to provide a rationale for union organisation as elsewhere the authors show how industry agreements flow through to other sectors.

The conclusions are contentious, deliberately so, in order to provoke discussion and argument. Yet they have provided a reasoned argument for their case, listing the disadvantages as well as advantages. Academics may well quibble with many of their economic arguments, the Government with union involvement in economic planning, the employers with national awards. But rather than just refute, these groups need to provide their own arguments. Let the debate commence!

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Craig, R., and R. Hussey *Keeping employees informed* Sydney, Butterworths, 1983, 166p. Price: \$32.50.

While the title of this book suggests a broad discussion about all aspects of employee communication, it is really only directed towards the disclosure of financial information to employees – in particular employee reports.

Employee reports, often simplified versions of annual reports sent to shareholders, became very popular in the mid 1970s, in many cases being touted as a “cure all” for all types of industrial relations problems. Roger Hussey spent several years at the Industrial Relations Annexe, St Edmund Hall, Oxford, researching into employee reporting in the United Kingdom, under the sponsorship of chartered accountants Touche Ross and Company. In this book, Hussey has combined with Australian accountancy lecturer, Russell Craig, to review employee reporting in Australia. Their work leans heavily on Hussey’s United Kingdom research for Touche Ross, but combines some fresh research, surveys and case studies carried out in Australia. For New Zealand readers, the emphasis on Australian practice is very relevant given a greater similarity of conditions between New Zealand and Australia than the United Kingdom, and their work is timely as most of the research has been carried out in the 1980s.

Turning to the book’s content, Craig and Hussey initially review the impetus for disclosure to employees with reference to legal requirements, motivations of companies to report, and negative aspects of issuing employee reports. The results of an Australian survey of companies issuing employee reports is given, detailing the characteristics of the reports and the presentation and content of the employee reports. In contrast, results of companies using audio-visual means to communicate to employees are given in anecdotal form, although it is encouraging to see mention of several New Zealand companies’ efforts in this area. The remainder of the book is in 2 parts. One deals with the results of surveys of employee and union reaction to employee reports and audio-visual communications, the other part gives recommendations for construction of an employee reporting policy.

In many aspects, Craig and Hussey have written a handbook for personnel managers rather than an academic treatise on employee communications. The text is written in an easy style, the use of statistics is minimal, and when used are very simple. The results of the surveys of current practice and employee–union attitudes to employee reporting are presented in a way to illustrate to managers the pitfalls and advantages of an employee communications policy. The latter part of the book is essentially comprised of practical tips such as video cassette recorders versus movie projectors, slide projectors versus blackboards, printing and layout techniques of employee reports and so on which are likely to be of greater interest to personnel managers than to academics.

If any major criticisms can be directed at Craig and Hussey it is the remarkably little space given to the questions of what information should be given to employees or what are the employees’ information needs? It is all very well to debate whether video recorders or movie projectors give a better presentation, or whether a glossy paper is better than A3 newsprint for employee reports, but if the content is irrelevant, uninteresting or trite, the end result will be virtually indistinguishable. It is all too easy to get on the bandwagon to be seen as a progressive employer by issuing employee reports, and merely restate the annual accounts prepared for shareholders. What is more appropriate is to define some objectives for employee reporting, particularly the objectives of providing information for employee decision making, or information employees would like to know. These issues need to be settled long before decisions are made as to the type or method of presentation.

Craig and Hussey are also silent on the issue of disclosure of information to unions for collective bargaining. While the title of the book suggests only *employee* communication is being considered, it is not easy to demarcate completely between employees and their unions. Given the importance of “ability to pay” issues in redundancy negotiations and

their relevancy in future wage negotiations after the wage freeze, disclosure of financial information to trade unions is likely to become an issue too important to be ignored.

Finally, Craig and Hussey fail to address the issue of whether employee reporting is a worthwhile exercise. They simply assume that it is, and base their whole book on this premise. This omission detracts from the credibility of their work. If they had considered this issue before detailing employees' or employers' attitudes, and the various methods of employee reporting, a more balanced and useful volume would have resulted.

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Wilkes, J. (Ed.) *The future of work* Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1981, 164 p.
Price: \$8.95

Perhaps it is an indication that the Puritan work-ethic is alive and flourishing that it is the future of work, not a future where there is more leisure time, which epitomises the problem. Even today, before we have experienced the promised labour saving from micro-chip technology, many able-bodied persons are denied the opportunity to work. A chief consideration of these people is not the lack of motivation to use their increased leisure time. The problem is that by being denied work, their *raison d'être* is brought into question. Not only are they denied the opportunity to earn, but they are also denied the status and the social relationships that come with working.

It is concerns like these which prompt a book on the future of work. The usual approach is to ignore the anthropological, religious and sociological questions (perhaps because they are too hard?) and get straight into the pragmatic considerations such as how many jobs there are and how best to share them around? This is very much the case with *The future of work*, a collection of papers by Australian writers, edited by John Wilkes — a book which has more resonance when it moves beyond pragmatic considerations.

Introducing the collection is Fred Gruen's contribution, "The Economic Perspective", which attempts to give some dimensions to the future of work. Noting that present unemployment in Australia is a function of a decline in real aggregate demand and the halving of the economy's growth rate, Gruen argues that "it is a mistake to think that there is a fixed stock of work which is in some sense technologically determined". He promotes the traditional Keynesian view that as people receive income which they spend on consumption goods, they create demands for employment and for more work.

Gruen sees new technology as beneficial. Rather than displacing labour, it provides labour with the capacity to meet demand more efficiently. He provides the reader with the skeleton hope of a Keynesian solution to reducing unemployment; more income for those with jobs in the technology sector creates more demand which creates more jobs. Reduced to its barest bones, we are provided with very little more than faith to back up this hope, since broadly, Keynesian policies have not been noticeably successful in creating sufficient work during recent years.

Further, even if there are enough jobs in the future, the issue is whether we can avoid

a set of conditions or structures which significantly constrain and limit both the range of choices available to different groups and the resources which they can command in their pursuit of those choices.

In her article, "The Social Impact : Changes in Paid and Unpaid Work", Bettina Cass explores the neo-classical economists' assumption that the essential choice is between work and leisure. She analyses the common misapprehension that women, of all classes, have

access to the life-style of the leisure-class. The reality, as women have always known, is that the choice confronting them is that between market (paid) employment, which is given the status of work, and non-market (unpaid) work in the household, which is not.

The irony is that when a woman is employed in the paid workforce, her presumed status is as a secondary income earner, primarily dependent on a male income earner and this legitimates her relatively lower wage. Yet research shows that the number of Australian families in poverty would more than double if mothers were not employed. As Cass points out, the creation of long-term jobs in areas of the economy where they are actively required is the real need, but this must take account of workers' own interests. This requires a reassessment of the mix of non-market and market work shared between men and women.

The "tragedy" (or is it comedy?) of work is that the human species appears to be totally bound up with it. Paul Barton begins "A Perspective on Work" with the grim observation that many individuals "both work in order to live and live in order to work, often dying a few months after they are forced into a state of life called retirement".

Barton says it is difficult to get a focus on what work is because contradictions seem to abound.

There are people who experience mental illness as a result of work-associated anxieties, while other people are being advised by psychiatrists to go to work because of depressions caused by lack of purpose in non-work life. There are people unemployed who seek work with desperation, and there are people with work who opt for unemployment ...

Barton singles out the reason for examining the future of work.

Whatever else we can say about it, the system we have created does very little to consciously decide what kind of work we shall have in terms of what we *need* and want to do as individual workers. It is a fact of modern existence that we have delegated this right to choose to an impersonal system – and that we inevitably sense a powerlessness in our worklives over the choices this system provides in the varieties and amounts of work available for us to do. Have you ever heard of a particular product manufactured and advertised on the basis that making it offered satisfying, fulfilling work to individuals?

Hugh Pritchard predicts that we are faced with chronic unemployment for the foreseeable future. His article, "Coping With a Shortage of Work" asserts that the major proximate reason for growth in unemployment in recent years has been the sluggish growth in economic output. According to Okun's law, if the unemployment rate is to remain constant, then output must grow at a rate equal to the growth of the labour force plus the growth rate of productivity (ratio of output over input) per worker. In recent years, output growth has not been great enough to generate sufficient jobs even though productivity growth per worker has slowed or even declined in Australia.

The solution is to find a means of coping with the shortage of work. Pritchard notes that the Western economies most successful in maintaining "full employment" in the 1970s were those such as Austria, Norway and Sweden where the major participants – government, unions and employers – have achieved a broad accommodation to national goals "or what might be more generally referred to as a national incomes policy".

In "Chronic Unemployment: The Choice For the Disadvantaged" Concetta Benn points out that even in times of "full employment" there are those unable to find any form of satisfactory paid work. A policy aimed at sharing out limited jobs, rather than creating sufficient jobs, does little to help the problem of chronic unemployment and this can lead to permanent scars for unemployed workers.

Mary Beasley writes in "Permanent Part-Time Work" that part-time work has expanded dramatically in the last 10 years. She wants part-time work expanded beyond a veneer to fill gaps at the convenience of employers, to a scheme designed for the individual

workers which provides work of a continuous and regular nature and thus job security.

History provides some hope that things can get better for the disadvantaged. Russell Lansbury presents a view of history

in which the harshness of the industrial revolution, which shackled workers to their machines and ushered in a new era of exploitative management, has been gradually replaced by more enlightened forms of work organisation.

However, progress for reform in the workplace was slowed in the 1970s because of the poor economic performance of capitalist countries.

Lansbury outlines 3 work scenarios to stimulate further thought about the choices facing us. One choice, the "high technology alternative" is based on the assumption that employers will increasingly substitute capital for labour in the form of automated or computerised production processes. There will be economic growth but not enough jobs. The "low technology" alternative is brought about by modifying technological change through the introduction of government policy measures which ensure a high level of demand for labour. The "mixed technology" alternative would attempt to be selective in its acceptance of technological change but acknowledges that even a growing economy will not be able to provide paid jobs for everyone.

The consensus which emerges from the *Future of work* is that unemployment in Australia has grown at a startling rate in a very short time and there is unlikely to ever be a time when there is sufficient paid work to create full employment such as was taken for granted in the halcyon days of the 1950s and 1960s. Another underlying theme threading through many of the papers is that the solution to the problems associated with being unemployed lies in providing more paid jobs, in a larger variety of occupations with a greater flexibility of hours and better conditions for part-time work. This is the preferred way of easing the unequal impact of unemployment on young unskilled people, married women (especially migrants), and people over 45 who are increasingly forced into early retirement.

In summing up the papers, Ronald Sackville, found several areas of agreement but these only enabled him to identify important questions about work, not answers. The reality is that the technical analyses adopted in most of the papers has only a limited ability to suggest answers to problems like how do we cope with an unequal distribution of work. In the end, action to determine the future must come back to the achievement of nationally determined goals. This will rely on existing political mechanisms and requires reference to sociological, religious and anthropological perspectives.

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Jarden and Company

Plowman, David H., *Wage indexation – a study of Australian wage issues 1975 - 1980* Australian studies in industrial relations, Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1981, xi and 193 p. Price : \$9.95.

The purpose of this book is to add some light to the heat generated by the indexation debate. It examines the implementation, operation and tribulations of wage indexation from its tentative introduction in April 1975 to the abandonment of the wage indexation principles in January 1981, and the calling of a public inquiry to determine the future role, if any, of a centralised system of wage fixation. The examination takes account of both the economic and industrial relations requirements of wage determination. (Introduction, p.1).

Given New Zealand's current problem of establishing a new system of wage determination, any study of a recently tested system in a kindred economy might be seen as making a contribution to our own policy formation, one way or other.

It would be better still for us if this Australian adventure had been cross referenced in its international comparisons to New Zealand's similar addiction to tying together increases in consumer prices and reputedly justifiable wage increases as cause and effect. Alas, wide-ranging though some international comparisons appear, New Zealand too often is conspicuously missing. Some of it, however, is not totally lacking in point.

'Tax bribery' has been used in many countries, buying wage restraint in return for either indirect tax reductions (for example, Ireland and Denmark), direct tax reductions (Finland and Austria) or public sector price reductions (France and the United Kingdom). Profit freezes have been implemented in the Netherlands and dividend controls in Norway (p. 53).

For the intended large scope of the work, compressing it all into a couple of hundred pages might seem to be a considerable achievement; even so, the opening chapters are devoted to bringing the general reader some knowledge of matters economic and industrial and to plead for incomes policies as a working tool of economic and industrial management.

Unhappily, some of this is superficial.

A classic example is to be found in "The market paradigm" (pp. 32 ff), which contains a lavish subscription to the theory that commercial competition is dependant upon and synonymous with fragmentation, which is itself to be defined by loose and freely interchangeable criteria relating to the size of major firms or groups thereof in various markets. This acts as a substitute for knowledge of actual market behaviour, and allows mere speculation about what firms reputedly "can do" to become a rather lazy substitute for reporting what they "do do". Worse it reaches its feeble point by saying that the "imperfections" of commercial markets are "compounded by an equally imperfect and institutionalised labour market" (p.36). In an essay dealing with an evidently non-rational universe for the employed, assertions that the employing universe is similarly (even "equally") non-rational may amount to a fine display of sympathy, or may simply be evidence of ham-handed methods.

Another shot that is plainly ridiculous in an essay which expounds the intractable problems of ironclad wage relativities is:

One reason for believing that indexation generates a perpetual wage/price spiral is the misconception that all wage increases automatically result in corresponding price increases and vice-versa. This is not the case. A 10 percent wage increase does not result in a 10 percent price increase. Neither may a 10 percent price rise result in a 10 percent wage increase. The reason for the first observation is that wages, though an important part of production and service costs, are not the only costs. Raw materials, fuel, transport, capital costs, insurance, rent, telephone, postage, advertising and other charges are also considered when commodity prices are fixed. Since wage increases may not alter these other costs directly, prices will not rise by the same proportion as wage increases (p. 61).

First, general indexation obviously will affect the other costs, in a way not to be discounted by the final sentence, or by considering a single award. Second, even if the words "may not" and "directly" are meant to be a saving grace, the awful fact is that the unshakeable relativities will spread the one wage increase right through "Raw materials . . . and other charges" at speed, as recounted in the historical sections, "directly" (!) in response to the initial change. All the costs and hence all the prices, will rise in response, and the only question is one of the speed of transmission, unless or until the relativities are broken, for example, by some force external to the system such as the partial and plateau indexation in Australia aimed at breaking the price/wage relativity: it is a theme of the essay.

Since labour market institutions have been brought into being because of perceived weaknesses in the 'haggling of the market', and since they will not disappear merely to accommodate economic theory, controlling the institutions of wage determination through some form of incomes policy would appear to make economic sense. This control becomes an imperative when it is recognised that the wage transmission process described operates, not only between like occupations, but also across occupations, unions, awards, industrial jurisdictions and regions. This means that a wage increase to one group of truck drivers will result, not only in coercive comparison pressures from truck drivers in other areas, but also in comparative wage justice flow-on pressures from other occupations having some wage relativity with truck drivers – for example, tally clerks, fork lift drivers, storemen and packers. Wage increases to these other groups will spark off further rounds of catch-up claims on the grounds of some occupational, regional or historic wage relativity nexus. Thus, a wage increase to one pace-setting group can become the cause for generalised wage increases (p. 41).

Failures of this magnitude are hardly redeemed by evident diligence elsewhere or by some piquant writing. "The ritualistic combats between labour and management become largely illusory with the institutional antagonists entering into compacts at the expense of the consumers". (p. 39) – which also writes off the assertion quoted from p. 61!

The bulk of the essay deals with the actual history of indexation in Australia from its inflationary beginnings as a tool of the Arbitration Commission in April 1975, with rafts of claims all aiming to lift the bases upon which indexation would be mounted, through the three subsequent changes in regime, as it moved from introduction under the rule of the (by then) somewhat less than open-handed Whitlam Government, to its eventual demise under the anti-inflationary policy of the Fraser Government, amid campaigns by trade unions to by-pass it.

To the outsider, the account appears to be adequate, and the evaluations interesting, but in view of the lemons so readily detectable in the earlier text, it is difficult to gain a satisfying sense of its quality.

One of the more fascinating evaluations, because it is nowhere plainly disclosed is that through all the continued pleading for an effective incomes policy, – as illustrated by the quotation from p. 41 – the case is made and clearly made only for a wages policy; the congruence by default of wages policy with incomes policy is quite startling.

Even then, there is a case to say that wages were only the symptom of a deeper malaise: the mechanisms of wage determination, before, during and after were clearly non-rational. This is the major lesson for New Zealand. Possibly, we already know.

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Blandy, R. and S. Richardson (Eds) *How labour markets work, case studies in adjustment* Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1982, 283 p. Price: not stated.

The question of how labour markets work has been a central issue in economics for some time. If policy formulations are to be made with respect to the labour market then it is critical that there is an understanding of the structure and adjustment processes of that market. Blandy and Richardson in the introduction to their book however, note that "despite their central importance, labour markets are only imperfectly and controversially understood at either an empirical or theoretical level". Much of this failure to understand

derives from the size and complex nature of the task. An analysis of the labour market confronts many problems including: defining the market, the operation, the job, or the workers; the gathering and processing of relevant data to be used, and the analysis of that data.

To help overcome these problems studies have tended to concentrate on narrowly defined labour markets, about which information is more readily available, and in which the adjustment processes under study are more clear cut. Blandy and Richardson have achieved this concentration by defining the labour market on occupational lines. The advantage of such an approach is that it easily identifies the workers to be studied. Thomas and Deaton (1979, p. 7) note that: "It is conceptually and empirically convenient to study a well-defined group with a high degree of homogeneity". Further, the occupational basis for definition is more applicable for highly skilled groups of workers.

Blandy and Richardson's book concentrates on seven occupational labour markets; the police, skilled metal trades, the legal profession, professional engineers, senior executives, the clerical-administrative division of the Australian public service and academics. The authors note that these labour markets cover a wide range of different institutional circumstances, wage levels, and market conditions. However, one must make some initial reservations. All of the occupations studied can be found in what Doeringer and Piore (1971) call the primary market. This market is characterised by internal labour markets, monopoly or oligopolistic market structures, capital intensity, high training costs, high wages, and the presence of a strong trade union organisation. In such a market the adjustment processes to changes in supply and demand were largely determined by formal institutional procedures. To what extent these procedures are affected by competitive market forces will depend on the strength of the institutional forces, the position of the occupation in the internal labour market, the scope of the internal labour market and the general economic climate.

Such an analysis suggests that any results gained from the study of seven occupational groups must be seen in the context of the institutional setting and further one must be wary of using these results to generalise about the possible nature of adjustment processes in markets which do not have the same setting.

As with all markets, the adjustment processes in the labour market centre around wages (prices) and quantity. Traditionally conventional theory assumes that adjustments to supply and demand take place through the pricing mechanism. However, empirical evidence suggests that price adjustments are only part of the story and that in many circumstances non price adjustments predominate. Changes in relative and absolute pay levels, variations in the number and quality of workers employed, changes in promotion and overtime form possible adjustment mechanisms. Further, the issues of supply responses to changes in demand and skill acquisitions are raised.

The quality of the analysis in the articles varies significantly, the better articles being Richardson's skilled metal trades, Blandy's the senior executives, and Chapman's Australian public service. Richardson and Chapman's articles in particular, provide the most important insight into labour market adjustments. The skilled metal trade workers provide the best example of what can be termed a non-administered professional market. The existence of collective bargaining between unions and profit maximising employers means that this market most closely represents the market that exists for the majority of workers. Further such a framework means that the possible adjustment processes for workers and employers outlined earlier are more likely to be found. It is perhaps then not surprising that the results of Richardson's study conforms most closely with those of economic theory, and concludes that, "relative wages do respond to market forces in an equilibrating fashion, albeit not sufficiently so to remove all short run excess supply or demands".

It is also not surprising that the results of some of the other studies, for example, the legal profession, conclude that these markets bear little resemblance in structure and adjustment processes to those hypothesised in economic theory. The articles do, however, provide considerable support for Doeringer and Piore's concept of the primary market and role of the internal labour market, and further provide much needed data on the nature of

adjustments in the primary market over time.

Blandy and Richardson's concluding chapter gives the most interesting discussion of both the theoretical issues involved and the significance of the results of the seven studies. Indeed a reading of the conclusion alone is recommended for those not wishing to wade through the technical details of the various studies.

The results of the studies are perhaps predictable given the occupations studied and their format. While pay adjustments occur, non wage factors such as overtime and hiring quality provide the most prominent labour market adjustment mechanisms. Blandy and Richardson do, however, note that in the longer run these non wage factors will affect the expected lifetime earnings of workers and so in effect, become wage like adjustments.

The authors further conclude that cobweb-type responses are not a prominent feature of Australian labour markets. The generalisation to all labour markets must be questioned here. Further, one must conclude that these results are not unlikely given the occupations studied. Although pay is a powerful motivation in the labour market, the role of non wage incentives such as prestige, independence, power, and autonomy should not be underestimated for occupations like the police, academics, lawyers and executives.

When summarizing it must be stressed that the labour markets studied do not allow for generalization. The worth of studies must be in the insight they provide into the working of each specifically defined market and in the comparison this allows with other markets.

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References

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Williams, Claire *Open cut : the working class in an Australian mining town* Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1981, 222 p. Price : \$A18.95.

This book attempts to locate sources of domination and subordination in Australian society and to examine the social processes which maintain oppression and exploitation. The specific context in which these were investigated is the "company" town of Opencut in central Queensland where autocratic ownership and control by a US multinational has extended into the social life of its workers and deeply influences the lives of their wives and children. Williams's analysis uses both marxist and feminist concepts in its exploration of both industrial conflict and the ways in which husbands and wives organise their relationships within the framework of capitalism in a setting which clearly demonstrates the divisive aspects of both the economic system and patriarchy.

The thesis on which the book is based won the 1980 Jean Martin award for the best thesis in the field of sociology. The book is of particular importance for a number of reasons. As the author points out, there are few sociological studies of working class life in Australia, while research on the work place is "on the whole, confined to the legal and economic parameters implicit in 'industrial relations' " (p. 10). Furthermore, few writers have addressed themselves in a systematic way to the link between the family and the economy, while even fewer have attempted field research into the nature of these relationships.

In many ways this is a pioneering study. Lack of research into community life or the social relations of production in Australia necessitated an exploratory, open-ended approach. Williams' initial research design was based on hypotheses drawn from the debate between technological determinists such as Blauner and Woodward on the one hand, and explanations of industrial attitudes in terms of the prior orientations which individuals bring with them into the workplace, on the other. In a very useful methodological appendix, Williams describes how she set out on the first field trip with 4 sets of ideas.

. . . the sociological structural qualities characterising management/worker relations in traditional coal mining, the action approach (the importance of non-work factors emanating from the occupational community and the family), the characteristics of working-class marriage and the relationship of the family to the workplace.

These ideas were based on a review of overseas studies. However, observation and early interviews showed a situation of intense industrial conflict which led her to change her focus to an evaluation of deprivation of job control which, as she later realized, was one aspect of the profound discontent arising from the domination of the Utah Development Company.

Methodologically, Williams breaks with positivistic tradition choosing a flexible interplay of theory construction with the concrete observations of field research. While this approach has great advantages over rigidly imposed *a priori* hypotheses, it has disadvantages which are revealed when the researcher has limited time and financial resources. She confesses that "One of the most important pieces of information which I collected on discontented tradesmen, did not emerge from interviews until the last few interviews of husbands in the final weeks of the field work, after over a year's participation". Williams spent 5 months in all in field work, involving 6 trips to Opencut. This is a relatively short time even considering the scope of the research work which was narrowed to deal only with working class life. One suspects that the field work had to be fitted in with university terms and the exigencies of modest funding, further circumscribed by the time-bound university regulations for thesis production. Nevertheless, she used her time very productively, utilizing a wide range of research techniques.

The theoretical underpinnings of the book are concerned with the social relations of production as specified by Marx in *Capital* and Braverman's *Labor and monopoly capital*. Patriarchy, however, "underpins both capitalism itself and resistance to it, thus ultimately inhibiting a universally liberating counter-hegemony from emerging." (p. 36) Although she primarily employs marxist concepts to guide the research and interpret the findings related to industrial life, and feminist ones to inform the work on family life, she has tried to show how masculine identity is a salient feature in determining the nature of industrial relations. The one-industry, geographically isolated, tough, frontier conditions sets the scene for a "hard-nosed" approach in management, supervision and labour resulting in regular confrontation.

Chapters 3 - 5 deal with the nature and causes of industrial strife at the 2 mine sites, Goonyella and Peak Downs. Utah's operations in Queensland were the source of 70 percent of the company's overall profits for 1974-75 so that its control over the local labour force is of crucial importance. Much of the continuing industrial strife at Utah can be interpreted in terms of the attempted imposition on Australian workers and unions of what Williams calls the American style of domination; management's expectation that acceptable contracts made with appropriate unions for specific periods will result in an unqualified ban on strikes for the duration of the contract thereby ensuring industrial peace and effective disposition of the labour force. American capitalists, then, expect "autocratic domination, controlled trade unionists and no-strike pledges as of right." (p. 39) Their expectations in Queensland have been bitterly shattered leading to a situation of profound mutual hostility resulting in strike action and other manifestations of industrial unrest. Issues dealt with in detail by Williams include dissatisfaction with supervision, degradation of work skills, intensification of labour and particularly the vexed questions of lack of job control among

different types of workers, as well as aspirations for worker participation.

Given the degree of conflict at the 2 sites it is surprising the high proportion of men who expressed loyalty towards the company. Williams gives a figure of 32-36 percent of workers who expressed a moderate degree of integration and another 20-23 percent whose identification was stronger. Integration/anti-company solidarity was related to images of management-worker relations. Men who saw industry in power terms were much more likely to express anti-company feeling while those who saw industry in a cooperative light predictably also felt loyalty to the firm. The important groups in political terms, those likely to swell the ranks of the more militant, were those who saw industry cooperatively but also felt resentment at Utah's coercive policies and those who were particularly well-treated by the company in economic terms but who saw industry in power terms.

There are areas where a closer examination of unexpected findings would have left the reader in less doubt about the extent of worker antagonism. For instance, her discussion of company loyalty/antagonism was not compelling enough to quell my suspicions that identification with working class interest and *entr e* through the auspices of union officials might not have resulted in a rather one-sided account. Also, in view of the complexity of the industrial situation, it would have been helpful if the author had provided a summary at the end of each chapter. It may be that the original thesis did in fact cover these areas more fully. Despite these few qualifications the text is full of insights and should be of interest to a wide range of specialists in industrial matters.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book is in the extension of the company's influence to social life, especially in the many ways it affects conjugal and family relationships. Housing in Opencut reflects company practice of establishing and maintaining clear physical divisions between workers and management in the form of obvious residential segregation and quality, and size of houses, in the face of Australian values of egalitarian individualism. Despite early passivity of working-class women in the town to industrial conflict, there are signs that they are increasingly taking an active stance in supporting their men in ways more reminiscent of traditional mining communities.

A major source of conflict within families is the attachment of husbands to the pub and their tendency to spend time away from wives who expect, and sometimes demand, companionship in marriage. Conjugal role segregation is rigid partly because of the reliance on shift work and overtime. However wives espoused a more egalitarian orientation to sex roles than their patriarchally-oriented men. Emphasis on masculinity norms, reinforced in generally sex-segregated leisure activities also inhibited good communication between husbands and wives with negative consequences for both.

In her conclusions, Williams attempts to draw out the wider implications of her findings. They include (1) the acceleration of de-skilling and other "concentrated forms of class practice brought to Australia by a US multinational" (p. 190) and (2) the male chauvinism which is a "vital cultural defence" against capitalist practice but which inhibits articulation of grass roots feminist consciousness through continuing total economic dependence of wives on husbands.

This is a original and stimulating book which should find a wide reading public among industrial sociologists, sociologists of the family, trade unionists, feminists and others in both Australia and New Zealand. It raises so many questions about working class life and work in capitalist society, in Australasia in particular, that it may well stimulate further research. However, there seems to be a gap between the high degree of conflict expressed consistently throughout the book and the findings set out in the authors' tables, possibly a reflection of bias in her theoretical framework and experience as a participant observer identified with the (more militant sections of?) the working class community and wider manual workforce and their families. It is for the reader to make a personal judgement.

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Book notes

Dwyer, T. *Industrial accidents and nightwork in the manufacturing sector* Research and Planning Division, Department of Labour, 1981, 117 p. Price : free of charge.

This report is based upon case study research, the principal aim of which was to determine whether or not nightwork contributes to higher accident rates than daywork. The research was carried out in a number of plants in both rural and urban centres throughout New Zealand, and involved the use of semi-structured interviews with staff, observation of work, and analysis of accident statistics and other data.

The report concludes that where higher rates of accidents are associated with nightwork, it is the result of different patterns of social relations in the workplace, and not nightwork *per se*, which is the key explanatory variable.

Social relations are conceptualised at 4 analytically distinct levels; reward, command, organisation, and individual member. Only the latter is not considered significant in explaining the investigated accidents. The reward level relates to the manner in which incentive systems result in the working of fatigue-inducing overtime, and frequently the taking of risks. The command level relates to both the degree of integration amongst workgroups, and thus amount of communication between workers, and also the extent of supervisory presence. High levels of communication between workers was shown to be related to lower accident rates in most of the plants studied, but contradictory findings were discovered with regard to supervisory presence. In some plants, notably those with bonus incentive schemes, the lack of supervisory pressure led to greater risk taking and higher accident rates, whilst in other plants fewer accidents resulted from a reduction in supervisory pressure to step up levels of productivity. The vast majority of accidents investigated were produced at the organisational level. The chief culprits at this level of social relations were seen to be lack of adequate training and various types of workplace disorder, including poor maintenance of plant, the lack of work involvement in the design of plant, and poor planning leading to overcrowding and the creation of hazardous working environments.

Thomson, Andrew and Malcolm Warner, *The behavioural sciences and industrial relations : some problems of integration* Aldershot, Gower, 1981, ix and 202 p. Price : \$A32.00.

In 1980, a conference with the title of this book was held at the Administrative Staff College, Henley in the UK. The book represents the proceedings of that conference. The conference, in the words of the introduction, originated out of the perception of an academic and practical gap between the behavioural sciences and industrial relations in Britain. The book contains an introduction and 9 papers, most of which are followed by a short written comment and a summary of the discussion. The papers consist of a diverse ragbag of topics in some way related to industrial relations matters, and usually written by behavioural scientists with an interest in the industrial relations field. An indication of the disparate nature of the contributions is the difficulty the editors have in drawing together any common threads in their introduction. Since the introduction concludes by commenting that the sense of confusion as to the relationship between the behavioural sciences and industrial relations was if anything heightened by the conference, readers looking for a clarification of the links between the 2 would probably do well to avoid reading the proceedings.