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# The transmission of ideas in employment relations: Dunlop and Oxford in the development of Australian industrial relations thought, 1960-1985

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## **The transfer of ideas in industrial relations: Dunlop and Oxford in the development of Australian industrial relations thought. 1960 - 1985**

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The primary objective of this paper is to understand the extent to which Australian industrial relations academics took up the different heuristic frameworks from USA and UK from the 1960s to the 1980s. A second objective is to begin to understand why, and in what ways ideas are transmitted in academic disciplines drawing on a “market model” for ideas. It is shown that in the years between 1960s and 1980s a modified US (Dunlopian) model of interpreting industrial relations became more influential in Australia than that of UK scholarship, as exemplified by the British Oxford School. In part this reflects the breadth, flexibility and absence of an overt normative tenor in Dunlop's model which thus offered lower transaction costs for scholars in an emergent discipline seeking recognition and approval from academia, practitioners and policy-makers. Despite frequent and wide-ranging criticism of Dunlop's model, it proved a far more enduring transfer to Australian academic industrial relations than the British model, albeit in a distorted form. The market model for the diffusion of ideas illuminates the ways in which a variety of local contextual factors influenced the choices taken by Australian industrial relations academics.

## **The transfer of ideas in industrial relations: Dunlop and Oxford in the development of Australian industrial relations thought. 1960 - 1985\***

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### **Introduction**

Even before the age of cyber-communication, the demands of business *inter alia* have ensured that ideas have transcended cultural or national boundaries with notable speed.<sup>1</sup> Despite the evident importance of understanding the diffusion of ideas, the processes of diffusion and transfer have only rarely been studied systematically outside of the rarefied world of the sociology of knowledge. The difficulties of a systematic study of the transfer of ideas are especially apparent, all the more important in an academic discipline such as industrial relations. This is because industrial relations is closely linked to other social sciences, humanities, behavioural sciences and the law. Moreover it is fraught with self-doubt and an apparent need to incorporate the immediacy, volatility and the inherent ideological traps of public phenomena and perceptions into its scholarship. Nevertheless, it is essential to come to an understanding of how ideas are transferred within the discipline, and also between industrial relations and other disciplines.<sup>2</sup> This paper takes just one aspect of industrial relations thought - the influence on Australian industrial relations thought of two influential English language mainstream heuristic frameworks. The paper examines how the ideas of these were transferred to Australia. It raises general questions of how ideas are taken up, and what is taken up, and why certain ideas are accepted almost wholly, what ideas are transferred but are modified in the transfer, and what ideas are rejected. These issues raise further questions about why particular ideas or analytical concepts are accepted, modified or rejected. On one level, then this paper is about a particular epoch in Australian industrial relations thought - the 1970s and 1980s - but on another level it raises questions about the movement of ideas, an area of analysis which is important in industrial relations for a number of reasons. To explore these issues the paper draws on a simple market model of the diffusion of ideas in tracing the uptake of some international ideas in Australian industrial relations thought.

### **The transmission of ideas**

An early notable systematic analysis of the transmission of ideas is the conference held in 1966 (Goodwin and Holley, 1968) at Duke University. In the resultant publication some emphasis was given to the model of vector analysis, in which the mathematical and physical concept of vectors offers the opportunity to examine the magnitude and direction of the transmission of ideas. This also fits with the disease model of the transmission of ideas postulated in 1989 by Colander, in which he proposes that one way in which ideas are spread is akin to a contagious disease. In this model vector analysis offers the opportunity, just as it does for epidemiologists to, monitor and therefore evaluate, the processes by which ideas spread. (Colander, 1989). The difficulty with these kinds of models is that the recipient or consumer of ideas is passive, and the ideas spread without any respondent actions. In turn this does not illuminate why a theory, method or heuristic framework is taken up wholly or in a different form from that which was originally devised.

By contrast a “market model” for the transmission of ideas posited by Colander (1989, pp.12-14) considers the transmission of ideas, by which is meant not only concepts, but also theories, heuristic frameworks and methods, in terms of suppliers and consumers. The consumers respond actively to the available set of ideas in the market place and choose ideas or elements of ideas according to their preferences and perceived needs. These will reflect their perceptions of output requirements and the optimal inputs to achieve them. Even in an emerging discipline the scholars are subject to the same sorts of reputational systems as those existing in mature disciplines.<sup>3</sup> What will motivate scholars in taking up a theory or heuristic framework will reflect their perception of what meets the requirements of good scholarship. Moreover, as with any factor inputs, scholars can choose to use them in a variety of ways, so they may re-bundle or reshape ideas to meet their perceived needs. As Colander (1989, pp.12) has noted

The diffusion process is inevitably selective, highlighting certain ideas or aspects ... while obscuring or fragmenting others. Which ideas work their way through the system and how the ideas are changed as they proceed depends on the incentives of the individuals the particular institutions and how those incentives and institutions interact.

In the marketplace for ideas then, the tastes and preferences of the consumers will reflect the local ‘market’, and the ways in which ideas meet their needs. “Consumers” will not only take account of input factors which meet their perceived needs, but they will also consider the costs to them in taking up one idea, framework or theory over another. In this paper, a market model is utilised to illuminate salient elements in an examination of some developments in the nature and direction of Australian industrial relations scholarship from the formative years of the 1960s, when IR emerged as a field of study, until the mid 1980s after which other factors in business and social sciences began to influence research methodology in the field.

The paper takes as its starting point the assertion that despite a tendency to avoid theory, (Bray and Taylor, 1986; Woods, 1978), Australian industrial relations has been most influenced by British and American IR heuristic processes and modes of thought.<sup>4</sup> In the paper, the pattern of influence of the predominant postwar 'paradigms' from these two countries on industrial relations thought in Australia is examined. The process by which Australian scholars chose and modified a particular US analytical framework over that developed by British scholars is then explored. Both frameworks were widely recognised in their host countries, and there is clear evidence that Australian scholars were familiar with each framework. In questioning why one was eventually preferred by mainstream scholars in Australia, the market model for ideas is used to explore the responses to the US and UK heuristic frameworks.

### **Methods and methodology in an emergent social science <sup>5</sup>**

For at least fifty years there has been a definable international community of scholars who have perceived themselves as expounding ideas of a discrete discipline, separate from the allied disciplines of law, economics, politics, sociology, psychology and personnel management. It has been a discipline characterised by a degree of uncertainty about its place.<sup>6</sup> Industrial relations or employment relations (the terms are here used interchangeably) in Australia has been just as uncertain of its place, as in those Anglophone countries where it has developed as a separate academic discipline. As an open-bordered multi-method discipline, Australian academic industrial relations scholars are thus part of a borrower discipline in a nation with a long tradition as a borrower of

intellectual ideas. After briefly considering definitional issues, this section discusses the heuristic frameworks offered by the two countries which most influenced Australian scholarly priorities, as well as the nature of influence on Australia scholarship in more general terms.

As social science scholars, industrial relations researchers focus on all matters of work and employment. While the social sciences are more inexact than natural and physical sciences, all sciences nevertheless share a complexity which arises from multiple analytical frameworks. Such analytical frameworks may take the form of fundamental assumptions which determine epistemology, theoretical development and methodology. This is the case for example, considering the theoretical assumptions at the basis of debates over institutional v. monetarist economics, or the impact of plate tectonics on geology. (Laudan, 1983, pp.79-104) By contrast, heuristic frameworks are rather less fundamental than theories. This is notably the case in new areas of intellectual activity and emergent disciplines where the area of study is sparsely populated and scholars are still identifying the nature of the terrain. (Becher, 1989) Certainly this has been evident in academic industrial relations where strong theoretical developments are yet to influence analysis and research. Rather than develop theory, scholars have borrowed piecemeal from other disciplines or worked from heuristic frameworks which direct research questions, methodology and methods in particular directions.

Following from British scholars Bain and Clegg, (1974, 92) it can be argued that a heuristic framework can be defined as a construct for organising ideas, so that unlike a theory, it “must not be misunderstood as having predictive value in itself”. Despite the lack of predictive value, an heuristic framework provides a useful device for researching and communicating highly complex social phenomena such as industrial relations. For the purposes of comparison in this paper, three salient attributes of an heuristic framework can be identified. The first attribute is the substance of what is to be studied, the extent to which different facets are emphasised and the role ascribed to the context of the objects of study. As Hyman (1994, 167) has noted, “Any account of the ‘facts’ of industrial relations rests on the principles of exclusion and inclusion linked to (explicit or implicit) criteria of significance”. For example, scholars in the fields of labour economics, organisational behaviour, industrial psychology, human resource and critical management all take work and employment as their focus but they will include, exclude or emphasise different aspects. The second attribute of an heuristic framework can lead the first, for it is the assumptions and ideals which are the drivers for the researcher. This then can include ideological issues as well as the objectives of the researcher. Scholars who are investigating in order to generate particular kinds of reform will hold ideals and assumptions which will direct the focus of their research. In Australia in the 1980s numerous analysts sought to promote what was seen as American-style enterprise bargaining processes instead of the long-held commitment to state arbitration systems. (see Niland, 1986). The assumptions apparent in their anathema to state arbitration thus directed their research. Similarly, Kaufman has demonstrated that the science-building goals of some industrial relations analysts led to different approaches to research than problem-solving imperatives of reformist scholars. (see e.g. Kaufman, 1993, 125-8) The third attribute of an heuristic framework flows from and feeds back into the other two attributes, and that is the research methods which are apt to the conceptualisation of the study and the objectives and ideals of the researcher. Many modern economists eschew qualitative research methods such as ethnography which they see as lacking in rigour, while critical management analysts in the UK see statistical analysis as arid and without

insight. Heuristic frameworks then, can be considered in light of these three attributes - the objects of study, the imperatives of the research, and the research methods.

Perhaps the most well known heuristic framework in Anglophone academic industrial relations is the 'systems' approach. John Dunlop developed his systems framework in the 1940s and 1950s as a purposive response to his view that there was a lack of systematic investigation in IR analysis beyond collecting 'mountains of facts' in all aspects of employment relations. In so doing he drew on his scholarly training as an economist. Less purposive but equally distinctive was the British heuristic framework, the "Oxford framework, which derived from and extended the foundation scholarship of the Webbs. These noted early sociologists were indefatigable inductivist researchers who investigated trade unions, cooperative societies and the Poor Laws from the turn of the century. (Webb and Webb 1898, 1902, 1975) As is explained below the Dunlop and Oxford heuristic frameworks are quite different in the assumptions and methods employed which in turn generated different kinds of research development. These two Anglophone frameworks appeared most apt as Australian academic industrial relations emerged and expanded in the 1960s and 1970s.

While it is arguable that more than in most social science disciplines, scholars in employment relations / industrial relations operate within a real world context, the objective of scholarship is not simply to mirror or to reform current practices. This highlights the fact that industrial relations as a study or academic discipline is different from a national industrial relations system. Just as political science covers aspects of politics far deeper and broader than a national political system, so industrial relations scholarship is a field of study far deeper and broader than a national industrial relations system. Nevertheless, it is axiomatic that a significant influence on scholarship will be the current and historical context in which scholars are operating. The evident contextuality of industrial relations has implications in the market for ideas for how and which ideas are taken up by the scholarly community as factor inputs.

At the level of practice, an industrial relations system can be described as the organisational, legal and economic framework which determines the coherent set of norms and processes evident in the formal institutions of industrial relations in a particular enterprise, region or nation-state. From around the turn of the century until recently, the conciliation and arbitration systems in Australia and New Zealand have meant that industrial relations processes have long been subject to government policy. This has contrasted with both the USA and UK for example where the control and administration of the employment relationship has been characterised by an enterprise focus and voluntarism. Thus in Australia and New Zealand with systems traditionally more in the 'public' sphere than in the 'private' sphere,<sup>7</sup> the practice and analysis of industrial relations in Australia have perhaps been subjected to greater political and ideological considerations than overseas. The centrality of the 'public' processes of the administration of the employment relationship has also been the focus of scholars from overseas, many of whom found the level of government involvement curious. (see e.g. de Vyver, 1956; Perlman, 1954)

Certainly, the 'public' nature of industrial relations was more emphatic than elsewhere because national wage determination through the tribunal system gave governments in Australia greater access to this facet of economic policy making than in other countries.<sup>8</sup> These national phenomena have led to the perception of the Australian system as unique. How unusual it has been is a moot point, but there is no doubt that the structure of the system has reinforced the conviction held by many practitioners and scholars that the

control and administration of the employment relationship has been significantly different from that elsewhere. One effect of the perceived differences may have been to mediate or alter the ways in which international intellectual developments have influenced Australian industrial relations scholarship. The next section surveys the nature of influence on Australian scholarship, and then describes the two heuristic frameworks which have influenced academic industrial relations.

### **International influences on Australian academic industrial relations**

Influences on Australian scholarship were traditionally derived from the nation's historico-political links to Great Britain. White settlement by British government soldiers and convicts began at the end of the eighteenth century. As a colony of, and then a nation state within the British Empire and Commonwealth, Australian legal and political institutions have their source in Britain. Until the 1960s these were underpinned by dependence important market links. Major firms in Australia were outposts of British firms, with particular similarities in management styles and employment relations. Until the middle of the twentieth century the majority of immigrants came from Britain, so that it is not surprising that trade union structure also bore close similarities with that in Britain. Like Britain too, the industrial wing of the labour movement was complemented by a political party, with a concomitant broad set of principles beyond the economism which has tended to dominate labour in the USA. The surface features of the business, social, legal and political heritage have been replicated in academia. Australian universities were moulded on British lines, and Australian scholars aspired to British models of scholarship. For those reasons, until the 1960s, academics mainly took sabbaticals in the UK rather than elsewhere and used British texts in their teaching. One of Australia's most influential and venerable scholars, J. E. Isaac took his PhD in economics at London University, as did John Child. Their scholarly training and concomitant prestige influenced those whom they later taught or supervised, and in so doing affected the preferences of the incoming generation of scholars and practitioners. Yet despite the historical links Australian academic industrial relations was not only influenced by the 'mother country'.

In an overtly monolingual country such as Australia, only other Anglophone scholarship was ever under consideration as alternative exemplars to British research. Moreover, it is a paradox that while erstwhile colonial nations may replicate the home country mores and structures, they will simultaneously try to break from the tether of the imperial power. For that reason it is unremarkable that Australia has long looked to the largest of the 'new world' countries, the USA, for leadership and ideas. After World War II this process gained pace as the USA gained international economic leadership. Not surprisingly American academic industrial relations was seen as the other significant supplier of ideas and models.

In industrial relations, the pattern of following American ideas was bolstered by the fact that scholars from the USA had also had a long fascination with Australia. The scholar - judge who was the architect of much of the conciliation and arbitration machinery, Henry Bournes Higgins, lectured and published in the USA in the 1920s and there is evidence even earlier of American interest. (Goodwin, 1965; Groenewegen and MacFarlane, 1990). Moreover from early this century US scholars have visited Australia. The title of one of the first major publications on Australian industrial relations, *Judges in Industry* by Mark Perlman<sup>9</sup> reflected precisely the nature of the American fascination with the

institutional system, while visitors such as F. de Vyver also sought to analyse and understand the Australian system in the 1950s, and the lessons it might provide for the US patterns of labour relations.<sup>10</sup> Following similar patterns of research interest to Mark Perlman, other American writers such as Milton Derber, focussed on the processes of rulemaking in industrial relations in Australia. Their contributions were to be augmented and advanced in the 1970s with work of John Niland (PhD Illinois) and Bill Howard (Cornell). In this respect Niland's role in Australian academic industrial relations may be seen as crucial for the direction of Australian academic industrial relations since he was editor of the *Journal of Industrial Relations* for fifteen years from the mid-1970s.

While the influence of the USA scholarship was to be greater than that of British scholarship, the close cultural and economic links between Australia and UK, on the one hand, and the parallel structures of universities and of trade unions, on the other, meant that before the 1980s British influences on Australian intellectual life were very significant. To understand better the transmission of industrial relations research ideas from the UK and USA to Australia requires first a brief discussion of the notable heuristic frameworks from those two countries.

### **Dunlop and systems**

The widely used industrial relations systems framework was developed by the labour economist John Dunlop through the 1950s (see Dunlop 1948, 1950, 1958). It was devised as an analytical framework with the specific intent of integrating the study of industrial relations. Dunlop argued persuasively that industrial relations had been investigated simply as a subset of or several fields of study, notably labour relations, ('the labour problem') varieties of management, (personnel management, scientific management, human relations), labour law, industrial psychology, public policy and labour economics. From Dunlop's perspective, the outcome of study from all these perspectives had led to 'mountains of facts' which needed an integrating analytical framework. He saw the industrial relations as a separate system, wherein the actors and institutions could for purposes of research and policy making be studied within the separate entity of the industrial relations system, just as economists separate out the economic system from the rest of human activity. In this respect, Dunlop was adding the structural functional Parsonian model to the fundamental ideas derived from his economics training.<sup>11</sup> Thus the archetypal industrial relations system was embedded with notions of equilibrium such that at any moment in time, where "an internal balance is likely to be restored if the system is displaced".

Dunlop's industrial relations system comprises actors (employers (including managers), employees and government (including agencies) and the collective institutions, all bound together by a shared ideology to make the system work, and a shared set of contexts, (market, technological, social, economic, political). (Olson, 1969) It is worth noting that in laying out his model Dunlop ascribes equal importance to each of the actors. However, in applying his model in his chapter on Bituminous Coal for example (Dunlop 1993 pp.131-78) there is virtually no reference to the roles, styles or functions of management.

Nevertheless, in delineating his model Dunlop emphasises that the parties interact to produce, and then operate within, a 'web of rules' which is the outcome of negotiation and bargaining. For Dunlop "the establishment of these procedures and rules – the procedures are themselves rules - is the center of attention in the industrial relations

system.” (Dunlop 1993, p.53) What Dunlop neglects, despite his assertions to the contrary (Dunlop, 1993, 51-3) is the ways in which ‘rules’ can be developed. For Dunlop the mechanisms for rule making are narrowly defined and occur only within the system. He later notes (Dunlop, 1993, 109-10) that “Differences in form, private or public, may be of concern to students of law but they cannot be primary interest of attempts to treat industrial relations more analytically.” Dunlop (1993, p.8) also specifically rejects the notion that industrial relations is simply about relations between employers and employees.<sup>12</sup> Since the industrial relations system is indeed a systemic structure, attainment and maintenance of equilibrium is the appropriate outcome. Such assumptions of equilibrium are perhaps idealistic, but for Dunlop they were the logical outcome of the function of the systems approach which underpinned his framework. In this respect it is noteworthy that for Dunlop power was not a feature of the industrial relations system, but an external ‘context’ like the technological or budgetary context. (See Dunlop, 1993, 107-30)

In some countries Dunlop's system was taken as a template for public policy, but more often his framework provided the basis for describing and evaluating the control and administration of the employment relationship, with analysts augmenting their analysis with their own personal and ideological perspectives. Overall though, it is worthwhile noting that Dunlop’s highly prescriptive approach to what were the accepted objects of study highlight his methodological singularity, While a pluralist from a political science perspective, insofar as the notions of different and competing interests at the enterprise or in the national industrial systems, Dunlop prescribed not only what were apt objects of study, but also how these should be researched. For Dunlop, the basis for investigation was agreements and laws which comprised the rules of the system, and statistical information which provided evidence of the working of the system. Notions of ethnography or other sociological methods were spurned in favour of “...deductive propositions, checked by empirical testing, relating specified changes in the system to specific changes in the rules.” (Dunlop, 1993, 286)

For Dunlop then

1. Industrial relations system the system is a complete and separate system which is influenced by other socio-economic systems or contexts
2. There are three sets of actors employees, employers, and the State who each have different goals but are bound by shared perspectives of the system, and their shared occupation within the system.<sup>13</sup>
3. The establishment of rules is the primary objective of the actors in the industrial relations system
4. The objective of the researcher is value-free analysis of primary documents, notably policies, formal agreements and statistics.

### **Flanders, Clegg and the Oxford School**

The term Oxford School reflects the reformist pragmatism of British industrial relations scholars of the 1960s and beyond. Although it was more informally developed than Dunlop’s framework, the patterns of assumptions in the epistemology and methodology of the Oxford School provide the basis for an heuristic framework, with identifiable

regularities and differences from other frameworks. The Oxford School had its antecedents in Sidney and Beatrice Webb's particular approaches to inductive case study research, and as is evident in the breadth and consistency with which the Webbs are cited in Oxford school publications, had a fundamental impact on their approaches to research. The most notable exponents were Flanders (1965, 1970), Clegg (1954) and Fox (1966, 1973). (see also e.g. Boraston, Clegg, and Rimmer, 1975) It was perhaps most well-known in the research for the Donovan Commission which some see as the grand exposition of the Oxford school in the 1960s. Of interest here however, is not the findings or report, but rather the research and assumptions which informed investigation. The major recommendations of the Donovan Commission (1966) aimed not only to maintain the degree of participation that had developed in the informal shop steward movement, but also to contain it within new formality. These recommendations were thus the policy outcomes of a deep commitment to pluralism, which, by the 1960s was a descriptor given to an industrial relations ideology.<sup>14</sup> Pluralism, a concept borrowed from political philosophy, rested on questions about the nature of power in society. For industrial relations scholars, pluralism drew on normative assumptions of the ideal society as one in which collectivities of interest should be sufficiently strong and diverse as to ensure that no single interest group could predominate. (Fox 1966; Clegg, 1972, 1990; for an outstanding scholarly critique, see Hyman and Brough, 1975<sup>15</sup>)

In their analysis, the pluralist industrial relations scholars began with the assumption that there existed a system of industrial relations which focussed on the making of substantive and procedural employment rules by managers, employers, and workers as represented by their collectivities. In the British system of industrial relations "Each employee is likely to be affected by a considerable number of rules and the complex of rules within a particular plant can be regarded as a system", (Clegg and Flanders 1961). Thus in Britain in the 1960s, the system of what was called job regulation in each plant was portrayed as a sub-system of the complex of rules in each industry.<sup>16</sup> In this respect it seemed only a little different from the Dunlopian framework, except that British pluralists in the 1960s and 1970s focused close attention on the British system, and their research drew deeply on the British historical context. Apart from slightly different terminology and emphases, it appeared as if the objects of study of both the Dunlopian and Oxford frameworks were internal and external job regulation.

The primary difference in their approach to job regulation reflected the Oxford School interpretation of the business enterprise as rather more complicated than had Dunlop. Drawing on management analyst Peter Drucker, Flanders (1975, 89) asserted that internal job regulation reflected the 'triple personality' of the business enterprise which is "at once an economic, a political and a social institution". It was the same at the level of the state – economic, political and social factors were all important. To investigate job regulation, therefore required recognition of all three of these 'personalities, not as external and discrete contexts but as part of a whole, integrated by normative notions of what is a good industrial relations system.<sup>17</sup> And whatever was the ideal of good industrial relations, this complexity of personalities, levels of study, and sense of integration were important.

This leads to the second set of shared attributes of the Oxford School framework, however, is of much more interest to the disciplinary historian. These relate to the assumptions and research methods of the Oxford School framework.

They are:-

1. the centrality of power relations in employment – equity and fairness
2. close integration of macro (social, economic, and institutional contexts) and micro (workplace)
3. the inclusion of employers and managerial employees as well as non-managerial employees
4. inductive approaches to research and reliance on the case study as central method

Of central importance to the framework was the notion of employment relationships as power relations. By inserting the concept of power into their analysis, these scholars were not only acknowledging the allied normative concepts of social responsibility, equity and fairness, but also promoting ideals of ‘industrial democracy’. The goal of industrial democracy, the sharing of power, was a key theme through much research of Oxford scholars, with others’ studies highlighting the forms of power and its misuse. (see e.g. Beynon, 1973). In discussing power at the workplace meant that the Oxford researchers also gave attention to management roles.

It is not surprising for example that Flanders’ 1966 analysis of the “The Internal Social Responsibilities of Industry” (Flanders 1975) discusses the power of management at length, because not only was the employment relationship a power relation, but also it was fundamental for Flanders that “responsibility is a function of power”. Thus reflecting on his well-known ethnographic study, of the Fawley productivity agreements (Flanders 1964, 1975) “uncovering the facts and trying to make sense of them forced me to realise how crucial was the notion of managerial responsibility, especially the responsibility towards the managed ...” (Flanders 1975, 64). (see also Fox 1973; 1985; Clegg, 1960).

Immediately these issues become embedded into the research framework, other attributes follow. From the acknowledgement of power as a central variable, flowed a recognition that all parties to the analysis of work and employment regulation are the subjects of analysis. Thus integrated into analysis of the public and institutional aspects of industrial relations analysis were aspects of management, the law, enterprise and workplace culture as well as political economy and economic policy. Moreover, as a normative, complex, and particularistic framework, the research was overtly and necessarily multidisciplinary. Finally claim Brown and Wight (1994) in their analysis of the Oxford framework, all of these conceptual and theoretical assumptions required particular research techniques, most notably the case study involving observation and interview. Even Ackers and Wilkinson (2003), who somewhat scathingly identify the Oxford School research as close to “casual journalism”, acknowledge the School’s emphasis on ethnography for capturing the complexity of organisations. What they perhaps omit from their analysis is that scholars such as Clegg and Flanders it was important not to over-simplify such complexity. Thus while Clegg was assiduous in seeking theoretical approaches, he sought to uphold the traditions of rigour and thoroughness, It is not surprising then that Clegg asserted in evaluating theories of collective bargaining “Justice is done to the subject’s complexity by not trying to force it into a single theoretical mould.” (Clegg, 1968, 19)

At the same time, as Ackers and Wilkinson adduce, the Oxford School analysts were notable in endorsing the need for industrial relations research, as well as policies and processes to uphold need for equal access to the political and economic gains of British capitalism. The egalitarian pluralism of the British school gave their analysis and studies

a clearly normative element, with their writings providing clear evidence of their objective

to see a shift in the distribution of wealth towards those with lower incomes, and a shift of power over the conduct of their working lives and environment towards working men and women, and ... emphasising the importance of trade unions in industry, in the economy and in society. (Clegg, 1990)

Much of their analysis therefore was on the rules and rulemaking in employment but always utilising an institutional perspective, rather than an individualist focus. For these scholars the processes of understanding the practice and operation of rulemaking, had the purpose of finding ways of empowering workers, so that consideration of ideas of fairness underpin much of their analysis. (see e.g. Kahn Freund, 1969; Clegg, 1972; Hyman and Brough, 1975 Chapter 4)

This is not to say that they sought radical economic reform. Neither did their analysis elide management. While Flanders was a practitioner claiming socialist ideals who moved back and forth between academia and union or activist roles, he saw management as having an essential role in making things better (Flanders, 1964, 1965, 1970). He was not alone in this view; British scholars usually investigated the role of management in their industrial relations analyses.

Another British scholar, Hyman (Hyman and Brough, 1975 pp.157-83) took the pluralists to task for taking the economic system as a given. In doing so it was argued they were upholding an economic system in which unfairness was unavoidable, indeed essential. Hyman argued that the contradictions inherent in such approaches diminished the work of these scholars. Nevertheless, rather more than in the USA, the objective of the British pluralists was to work towards a fairer society. To this end they gave considerable weight to achieving order through increasing effective participation, as is apparent in their emphasis on joint regulation. Thus, while the contradictions highlighted by Hyman hold true, the underlying, and sometimes overt, objectives of the Oxford analysts was a free society which would give weight to egalitarian values. By contrast the American scholarship tended toward logical positivism, given the deductivist approach to research and the emphatic insistence that value-free research was essential..

The mainstream approaches developed in the US and the UK were thus similar in that they were based on strong empirically bound frameworks. However, they differed in their methodologies. Where the British framework was particularistic, inductive, and had strong normative overtones, Dunlop's framework, based as it was on a model industrial relations system, was deductive, broad and positivist.<sup>18</sup> Both were in a position to influence Australian industrial relations thought.

### **Australian Industrial Relations thought 1960 - 1985**

In the market for ideas the contexts in which scholars work will be central to the ideas or theories which they choose. For example, in an area such as academic industrial relations the contexts for the academics include the nature of the university system, the scholarly imperatives and traditions of neighbouring (and 'senior') disciplines, the norms and values extant and the public institutions and structures which affect or determine the objects of research. In choosing a theory or analytical framework as a factor input, scholars will, perhaps not purposively, consider the transaction costs of each framework against their assessment of the significance of these central facets of their environment.

This section will briefly examine the contextual factors and then delineate and analyse the development of ideas in Australian academic industrial relations.

In the postwar decades the publicly acknowledged industrial relations system in Australia continued to be collective and institutional. These were decades of relatively high profits, solid levels of growth and high union density. The high level of union consciousness meant continuing attention was paid to 'the labour problem' which was accentuated by a relatively large number of strikes, albeit of much briefer duration than elsewhere. In the main management tended to be ad hoc (with low levels of management training) and production-focussed, accepting unions, but generally ensuring their roles remained limited to those issues acceptable by the tribunal system. (See e.g. de Vyver, 1956; Hall, 1965; Byrt and Masters, 1974; Tsokhas, 1981) The media, together with Coalition Liberal (conservative) governments (until 1972) and activist conservative political pressure identified the high numbers of strikes as being linked to leftist normative values, and sometimes to the spectre of communism. Differing perspectives on Communism had split the Australian labour movement in the 1950s, a split which business lobbies used to good effect.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, employment relations processes in these decades were characterised by optimism about economic growth offsetting concerns of managers and workers, interspersed with short periods of numerous industrial disputes and considerable recourse to tribunals. Throughout these years notions of collectivism were widely accepted in Australia. Not only was union density over 60 per cent but the unions intersected and sometimes led movements for equal rights for women, and against war, racism and unfettered building construction.

During the 1950s industrial relations analysis in Australia had been the province of the practitioners - the industrial psychologists at workplace level, and the lawyers and economists, as well as trade union officials, employer advocates and industrial tribunal practitioners at industry and national level. Initially Australian scholars were slow to adopt any analytical framework, perhaps because there were almost no academics trained in industrial relations. With a few relatively isolated exceptions, analysis of Australian industrial relations was the province of the practitioner, not the academic. (Niland, 1978b) Thus despite the publication of Dunlop's *Industrial Relations System* in 1958, and those by Flanders and Clegg from the mid-1950s (Flanders and Clegg, 1954; Clegg, 1970; Flanders 1970; Fox, 1966), there was only occasional utilisation of an identifiable analytical framework in industrial relations studies in Australia until the 1970s. (*Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1959-1975; Child 1963; Child 1964) This is perhaps because institutional industrial relations operated within the public sphere in Australia, together with the fact that the academic community did not develop until the 1970s. The proto-community of industrial relations analysts in the 1960s grew out of the Industrial Relations Society which formed in 1959 and which was

not an academic society, but one in which the discussions and differences of practical men can take place under circumstances where the disciplines of the academician, the administrator, and the lawyer may all help to control and direct the course of the debate to the mutual benefit of all concerned (Kerr, 1961)<sup>20</sup>

One of the initial outcomes of the IRS was the *Journal of Industrial Relations*, (*JIR*) the first issue of which was published in 1959. In its first decade or so the *JIR* articles reflected both the nature of the public aspects of the industrial relations system in Australia and the intellectual training of the authors. The majority of articles in the journal dealt with the aspects of the employment relationship from a managerial, legal or economic perspective, or with collective bargaining or strikes as economic or legal processes. There were also articles on industrial psychology and personnel management in *JIR* articles in the 1960s, unlike in later years when the focus narrowed to institutional parties and processes. Nevertheless, the method was essentially pragmatic and oriented toward dealing with the labour problem.<sup>21</sup>

By the 1970s however, there was clear evidence that scholars were using and evaluating both the British and American models, and considering the costs and benefits of each.<sup>22</sup> The economist turned industrial relations scholar, Kingsley Laffer, took the opportunity in 1972 to evaluate Dunlop's framework in his review of Kenneth Walker's new book *The Industrial Relations System*, which was published at the same time as a reprint of Dunlop's *Industrial Relations System*.<sup>23</sup> At the Industrial Relations section of ANZAAS in 1973, Laffer compared and analysed the definitions of industrial relations of both Dunlop and the British scholars, and found them both wanting, preferring his own definition which focussed on "bargaining relations" at the workplace (the individual effort bargain) and at national level (incomes policy). (Laffer, 1974)<sup>24</sup>

Scholars claimed to prefer the British model, (Howard 1978) but there was plenty of evidence of the American model, particularly by Dufty (1972, 1975; 1979) and Walker. (1956, 1970), who even in the 1950s used Dunlop's earlier models as the basis for his analysis. Walker's 1956 book was published by Harvard University, and included a foreword by Dunlop. It did not seek to replicate Dunlop's model however, but rather altered Dunlop's notion of the parties, shifting emphasis towards the processes in the formal system. As with later Australian writers and unlike the British writers such as Clegg, Walker's analysis paid little attention to managers and much more to the State and to government than Dunlop had indicated. Once again these modifications reflect the view held by many that the tribunal system was a central dependent variable in Australian industrial relations analysis. Given their primacy, the value to the Australian academics of the Dunlopian framework, in whatever form, was that the tribunals could be readily incorporated into their research. (See e.g. Moth, 1972)

While Howard was perhaps exaggerating when he talked of "Dunlopian v Flandersites small scale warfare" (Howard, 1978 p.34), there is no doubt that those scholars who were concerned with methodology (and they were very few) were ambivalent about the British and American models. For some (W. A. Howard, G. W. Ford, K. W. Hince, Interviews 1998) it appears that Dunlop's system was a useful teaching tool, but that for analytical or ideological reasons the British model was preferable because it seemed to allow for closer attention to social and political factors.

This ambivalence, allied with a trend towards the American approach, is apparent in the text *Australian Industrial Relations*, (Plowman, Deery and Fisher, 1981) which was to become the primary text for a decade or more.<sup>25</sup> Introductory texts, particularly those which are widely used, are an important measure of the direction of thought in a discipline, since they signify the foundational assumptions of the mainstream scholars, or those scholars who aim to capture the mainstream. Moreover, and this is particularly true of methodology, textbooks also direct the next generation of scholars, policy-makers and practitioners to particular interpretative approaches. In the first edition of their text,

David Plowman, Stephen Deery and Chris Fisher deal with the competing demands of the British and American approaches in two ways. First they seek to conflate the two as pluralist 'systems' approaches, providing highly selective descriptions and discussions of both. Second while they claim that the text follows closely a Dunlopian framework, almost all of their suggestions for further reading derive from the British tradition. Nevertheless what the Australian students of industrial relations learned from the book was an approach to industrial relations analysis which used a modified systems framework and which omitted the important aspects of the Oxford model such as the role of power. It is also notable however, that the Dunlopian framework was modified particularly in terms of its actors - it was not until the third edition in the 1990s that Deery and Plowman dealt in any depth with managers. This reflected their perception, and one which is especially evident in much Australian industrial relations research from the latter 1960s, that the locus of industrial relations was the public sphere of rulemaking and necessarily incorporating the tribunal system. There were other notable differences, such as the weighting given to the environmental factors (particularly economic) which was also ascribed rather less importance by Deery and Plowman than Dunlop. In other words, a modified version of Dunlop's framework was chosen as a device for structuring investigation and teaching in Australian industrial relations. This framework, implicitly or explicitly underpinned much mainstream academic Australian industrial relations for the rest of the 1980s. (see e.g. Dufty 1980; Hill Howard and Lansbury, 1982)

### **Australian academic IR thought: costs and benefits of the two models**

Understanding why Dunlop's model transferred more readily to Australia requires attention away from the nature of the models, and towards the consumers, the Australian academic industrial relations community. This section examines the nature of the take-up of the Dunlopian framework and the rationales for the choices made by the scholarly community.

The reasons for making a choice within a discipline to take up one paradigm (interpretive framework) rather than another, is multifactorial. As Kindleberger (1989) has noted neither plausibility nor logical excellence is of itself sufficient. In the market for ideas, there are both supply side (the plausibility, explanatory value, generalisability) and demand side factors (state of the discipline, manifestations of the invisible college, and the nature of the predominant culture within the discipline). That the Australian industrial relations community took up a modified Dunlop system rather than the British framework reflects not only the differences in the two models of industrial relations, but also the nature of the small community of Australian industrial relations scholars. In analysing the transfer of ideas understanding the reasons for the consumers' choice is at least as important as the capacity, fitness and generalisability of the source ideas. Thus the features and self perceptions of the Australian IR community, the historical context and the politico-economic climate of the 1970s, all clarify why Dunlop became preferred choice of research base for those mainstream scholars seeking a "theoretical" stance.

In this respect there are three elements which deserve consideration. The first two are both to do with legitimacy - attaining legitimacy within the academic community and achieving legitimacy with the large and articulate practitioner base, while the third relates to the nature of public opinion during the Cold war years. The acceptance of external groups was important for the Australian academic industrial relations community in the small, elite and conservative world of Australian academia. Indeed, despite a relatively

high growth rate in terms of students and researchers, the academic industrial relations community before the mid-1980s was very small, and stood at the fringes of labour law, labour economics, industrial psychology and politics.<sup>26</sup> For many, including some of its leading exponents, industrial relations did not have disciplinary status, in fair part because of the absence of 'grand theory'. Industrial relations scholars saw themselves in need of a definable and ideally readily presentable 'grand theory', which would give them unquestioned standing as a 'real' discipline. (Howard, 1978, Turkington, 1978, Laffer, 1974). In this respect the influence of the nearby discipline of economics, which served as the early home of many academic industrial relations programmes was important. Unlike in the UK, industrial sociology was not well-developed in Australia, and industrial relations was generally linked to economics and law. From the perspectives of those in the mainstream, economics and law are both 'tight' disciplines which have highly defined theoretical and methodological bases and little room for heterodoxy.<sup>27</sup> Thus scholars were not necessarily responding to high ideals of scholarship but simply to a need to convince their economist colleagues of the fitness of their proto-discipline to take its place according to the imperatives of the economic discipline of the time. That Dunlop's analytical framework was developed by an American economist at a prestigious institution was an important aspect for academic economists in the 1970s and 1980s. Yet given the traditional, historical and Commonwealth links, transaction costs associated with take-up of ideas from UK would have been lower than those from the US. Despite this fact, those in the mainstream of academic industrial relations in Australia chose the Dunlop models reinforcing what seemed to them to be the greater benefits accruing to the to their choice of this framework .

Moreover, because of the significant role of public institutions in Australian industrial relations, there was, as in economics and law, a robust practitioner base. As a consequence, despite its small size, the Australian industrial relations academics also felt that they had to work to be relevant to current practitioner and policy concerns. As noted earlier, the *Journal of Industrial Relations*, the sole 'academic' journal until the latter 1980s, had a strong practitioner bias. It was, in effect, the practitioners who set the research agenda.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the reformist bent of the Oxford researchers which might have seemed useful was not compelling for the Australian practitioners. This was in part because the particularistic British system with its shop stewards and voluntarism was perhaps too different. Moreover, the marginal status of industrial relations as an academic discipline was exacerbated by the nature of research funding processes in Australia. In general, funding was more easily accessible for recognised disciplines or those with a professional basis. It seems likely that academic industrial relations was borderline and the directions of research needed to recognise what was most accepted by the funding agencies. (Niland, 1978b)

Thus from the 1960s until the 1980s (and beyond?) academic industrial relations was at the margin of the social sciences within universities, and yet also viewed with some misgivings by the industrial relations practitioners.<sup>29</sup> Some industrial relations academics believed that to gain legitimacy with those scholars in traditional disciplines, a clearly defined and tangible theoretical framework was essential. On the other hand, to convince the practitioners of the legitimacy of academic industrial relations analysis, two things were needed - relevance for contemporary imperatives and a surety that theories were 'practical', or to use the term of Kaufman (1993), problem-solving. Thus in evaluating the choice between the Oxford and Dunlop heuristic frameworks, the Australian scholars had to take account of the psychic costs and benefits of each model.

What exaggerated the marginality of academic industrial relations was the public fear of communism in Australia and the portrayal of trade unions as potential hotbeds of radicalism. While Australian trade unions had long achieved legal legitimacy, and trade union density was high by world standards in the postwar era, social legitimacy was less readily accorded. Since the 1950s media and government opinion alike had scorned any evident leftist views. Although government actions were never as overt nor as specific as that of the McCarthy era in the USA, the experiences of the Split (see footnote 16) and the strong overtones of anti-Communism had a clear effect on Australian universities. They also probably influenced the directions of Australian academic industrial relations, which sought to remove all apparent political signals. The preferences for the tentative, emerging discipline thus lay with the need to convince practitioners and policy-makers of detached analysis. This is evident for example in Dufty's (1975) claims that Australian industrial relations were 'non-ideological'. Unlike in the UK evidence of overt pro-trade union views, much less left-radical bias, was strongly resisted in mainstream academic industrial relations in Australia.

As a consequence, industrial relations researchers in the 1960s to 1980s were faced with the difficult task of investigating a field where the activities of one of the parties was viewed with scepticism, and yet where the effects of trade unions were perhaps greater than at any other time in Australian history.<sup>30</sup> Not surprisingly, many industrial relations scholars took up the issue of 'the labour problem', in their quest to be 'relevant'. This placed trade unions at the centre of their investigations throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As noted above the attention directed to researching the labour problem was partly related to the rising strike rates. Among the academics this turned the debates towards strike activity, and to relate strike activity to that old chestnut of arbitration v. collective bargaining. (Isaac, 1974; Niland, 1978a; 1986; Cupper, 1977) The vigour of this debate was a strong theme in industrial relations thought until the mid-1980s, narrowing the focus of scholars who also felt the need to deal with this complex topic as if it should be value free.

As exponents of a small and uncertain discipline, seeking legitimation from governments, from funding bodies and from the other social sciences, industrial relations academics took up an analytical framework which was seemingly without sympathy to any ideology. Evaluating the merits of such a (non?) position is not relevant here, although it has been noted that this characteristic was also apparent in the USA where ideological positions were rejected and the "field became both more unified in outlook and more neutrally professional in approach". (Kerr, 1978, 133)<sup>31</sup> In order to promote the relevance and apparent rigour of their field, the Australian industrial relations analysts thus sought to draw on a model which appeared to sustain their 'value free' stance, while offering a positivist, if not hypothetico-deductivist methodology.

That these scholars achieved their goals and met the challenges of the many and conflicting problems of marginality of their discipline in the two decades from 1960 was evident in the growth of academic industrial relations. By the mid-1980s there were half a dozen chairs and full degree programmes at most Australian universities where there had been virtually none in the 1960s. There were new journals, major increases in postgraduate courses, and a successful academic association, alongside the Industrial Relations Society. All of these attest to the growth of the discipline and the achievement of some measure of status as a 'discipline'.

What had assisted them was their preference for use of Dunlop's model which unlike the idealistic UK model provided an ideologically malleable analytical framework. It

provided a means to analyse which seemed to be able stand outside moral or ideological bounds, yet also sufficiently resembled a classical economic model as to convey to social scientists that empiricism and rigour were hallmarks of industrial relations. Such considerations were important to industrial relations scholars, who sought acknowledgment from those in economics and personnel management / industrial psychology which stood close to industrial relations. Coincidentally these latter disciplines were themselves influenced by American patterns of thought.

There is no doubt that the Dunlop model could easily incorporate the actual Australian industrial relations system, given proximity between Dunlop's specification of government agencies and the view of Australian scholars that tribunals were central actors. Thus while both the Dunlop and Oxford models focused on rulemaking and regulation of employment, Dunlop's model was more readily adapted to Australian concerns over strikes and the effectiveness of the tribunal system in preventing strikes. In this respect the underpinning assumptions of the Dunlopian model appeared to enable both policy problem-solving and demands for an intellectually acceptable analytical framework. This was because, deriving as it did from Parsons' social systems theory, the Dunlopian model was premised on the belief that such approaches should both analyse the 'real world' and identify ways to achieve order or equilibrium or harmony.

On the other hand it is important not to overstate the extent to which Dunlop's systems approach was taken up in mainstream academic industrial relations in Australia. First, much Australian industrial relations thought remained a-theoretical, and more closely aligned to history insofar as analysis was based on observation or investigation of events and processes, utilising small interpretative models, but without clear reference to any wider theory. Other scholars found Dunlop's framework was inadequate in some way, especially those scholars who had come from economics. (see e.g. Laffer, Dabscheck and Niland, Isaac) At the other end of the spectrum were those who claimed to use Dunlop's analytical model, but who omitted or greatly modified sections of it. Most notably, from earliest days, Australian scholars excluded managers and management approaches, and were content to examine use those elements of the industrial relations system which most suited the concerns extant, strikes and the validity of the tribunal system. It was the same with Dunlop's contexts - technological and budgetary which were excluded or viewed in ways somewhat different from that laid down originally. (Walker, 1956, 1970; Dufty, 1975; Plowman, Deery and Fisher, 1981; Moth, 1974). A purist may even argue that what was transferred to Australian industrial relations thought was not Dunlop's framework at all, since so many elements were removed or altered.

Nevertheless, the extent to which Dunlop's model has been conveyed to successive generations of students, many of whom become practitioners, is evident in the apparent high levels of borrowing of Dunlop's book at almost any Australian university library, the number of times it appears on reading lists and the frequency with which it is still cited. By early 1980s, before the situation for Australian industrial relations scholars became further complicated by new issues, the preference for Dunlop's model over the Oxford approach was clearly evident.

## **Conclusion**

A study of the transfer of the ideas from UK and USA to Australian industrial relations thought suggests that a modified US model was eventually more influential than that of UK. In part this reflects the lower transaction costs inherent in the breadth of Dunlop's model, its flexibility and its simplicity as a useful pedagogical device. However,

credence needs also be given to the absence of a normative element in the US-derived model, both in terms of the search for legitimacy and as a pedagogical tool. Students begin industrial relations with a great deal of ideological baggage and often very definite, if highly simplistic, perspectives on the surface aspects of industrial relations. In order to develop their capacity to examine the actors, processes and underlying motivations in industrial relations, academics, especially teachers, sought a framework which did not appear to advance an ideological perspective. Situated as they were in or near economics departments whose exponents eschewed any form of apparent ideology, the Australian industrial relations scholars selected a model they saw as having the most benefits in terms of legitimacy and acceptance from the other social scientists and practitioners. Dunlop's model proved to be a safe and simple method of research which incorporated all the objects of study and research imperatives evident to academics, policy-makers and practitioners of the time. The framework simplified and systematised the immense complexity of the elements of industrial relations to students - the macro as well as the micro elements of the control and administration of the employment relationship. In the same way, Australian industrial relations scholars and analysts have sought to make their studies appear as 'scientific' as other disciplines and ideologically amenable to governments and state agencies in order to be relevant for public policy. As a consequence, despite frequent and wide-ranging criticism of Dunlop's model, it proved, albeit with some twists, a far more enduring transfer for mainstream analysis, than the British model.

In terms of the transfer of ideas, it is worth noting firstly that because of the monolingual nature of Australian education, the choices for the industrial relations academics were first limited to Anglophone heuristic frameworks. Moreover, the tradition of looking to the example of US and UK scholarship was very strong in Australia. Given the choice of the two Anglophone frameworks, then, the Australian scholars chose not to take up the Oxford model in fair part because of its psychic costs. Despite the belief of some that the Oxford model engendered more thorough-going research, they rejected the model not only because of its more particularistic approach, but also because it was more normative, an attribute under increasing suspicion in the economics departments of the 1960s and 1970s. By contrast through ease of use, perceived positivism and appreciation by policy-makers and other, the Dunlop framework proved more desirable. There were compromises and offsets for the Australian scholars but the choice nevertheless was made for a modified Dunlopian framework. Clearly in considering the market for ideas consideration must be given for contextual determinants that may not seem immediately apparent. In the choice between Dunlop and Oxford these local factors proved important. In these times when ideologues are working to marginalise employment studies, reflective scholarship on the ways and modes in which ideas are transmitted within industrial relations seems a useful approach.

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. the growth of scientific management in Europe prior to World War II (Nyland 1997) or the modes in which some of the ideas from the Hawthorne experiments were accepted.. (Gillespie, 1993)

<sup>2</sup> See especially Chapters 5 and 6 of Kaufman (1993) for discussion on some these issues.

<sup>3</sup> This raises the question of whether the 'invisible college' performs the same function as the 'invisible hand'.

<sup>4</sup> Since the 1980s the practice and ideas of other countries, particularly Sweden and Germany, have come to influence ideas about employment relations in Australia, but USA and UK were unquestionably predominant until recently.

<sup>5</sup> As I have noted elsewhere, (Kelly, 1997), the debate over whether IR (or indeed any other area of specialist study) is a discipline or a field of study or a 'specialism' is in most respects a fruitless exercise which does not advance or enhance our knowledge-getting processes. The terms 'field of study' and 'discipline' are used interchangeably in this paper.

<sup>6</sup> Much of this self-doubt is self-imposed, and not limited to industrial relations. However, IR is rarely found in European universities although academic analysis of the work, management and employment is widespread. Moreover, industrial relations / employment relations scholarship is rarely cited in other disciplines, despite the considerable analytical insights that industrial relations analysts have developed.

<sup>7</sup> These terms which have gained more common parlance in the feminist literature are clearly germane to the Australian situation - especially at present when governments and business are working to return the employment relationship to the private sphere.

<sup>8</sup> In recent years governments have radically reduced national wage determination. An examination of the March issue of the Journal of Industrial Relations in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrates the extent and effect of public sphere industrial relations.

<sup>9</sup> See also M. Perlman, An Industrial Problem: Australia's Longshoremen", *Labor Law Journal*, Vol 4 1953, pp.462-73, which more than his larger work focuses on management.

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<sup>10</sup> See especially, F. T. de Vyver, "The Weakening of Managerial Rights" *Business Horizons*, 2, 1, 1959, pp.38-48. What is notable about the work of both de Vyver and Perlman is that like Dunlop, they gave far greater credence to the role of management than Australian scholars.

<sup>11</sup> . Dunlop studied economics initially in California, gaining his doctorate in 1937. In 1937-8 he studied wage theories at Cambridge, before returning to take up his post at Harvard, with which he has remained associated continuously since. His orientation and epistemological norms are therefore those of an economist.

<sup>12</sup> As is widely recognised, Dunlop (1993) comprises Dunlop (1958) with an extensive commentary of responses to critics from the previous forty-five years.

<sup>13</sup> Some writers have argued that Dunlop's focus was only on unionised environments although in his 'Commentary' which prefaced the 1993 printing of *Industrial Relations Systems*, the latter strongly disagrees (Dunlop, 1993, pp.14-15)

<sup>14</sup> These days pluralism is an overused term, frequently utilised (not quite appropriately) as a catch-all term to indicate suggest acknowledgment of the conflictual aspects of the employment relationship. The term has caught the imagination of business liberals who seek to discredit ideas of competing interests in employment. It is also a preferred term for those analysts who seek to emphasise the antagonistic aspects of the employment relationship over the cooperative attributes.

<sup>15</sup> See also Hyman 1994. Hyman, a notable and insightful Marxist scholar was supervised by Clegg.

<sup>16</sup> The notion of job regulation is different from the Webbs' notion of the Device of the Common Rule which they saw as a core trade union strategy which contrasted with the less equal outcomes of individual bargaining.

<sup>17</sup> In this respect it is worth noting that while Flanders at one point specifically eschews "unstructured relationships" as being part of industrial relations (Flanders 1975, 86) much of the rest of his writing identifies the importance of all relationships in the workplace. (see e.g. his work on Fawley Productivity agreements, and 'The Internal Social Responsibilities of Industry')

<sup>18</sup> Dunlop is adamant that scholarly analysis must remain positivist and separate from 'values'. He retains his long-held view that it is the role of the academic practitioner, the problem-solver' first to analyse, then if they wish, to add recommendations (ideals) as addendum. In this way the normative may be inserted into the regulation, but only after, and separate from positivist analysis. Interview John T. Dunlop, 14 October, 1997.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Split' was a major rupture in Australian labour politics. Throughout the 1950s there was considerable rumour and turmoil over the extent to which communism had permeated the Australian labour movement. The large anti-communist faction, especially in Melbourne, split from the Australian Labor Party to form the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) in 1955. The DLP, which had considerable effect on Australian political events from the 1950s, enabled the Liberal Coalition to remain in government until

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1972 when the Whitlam Labor government was elected. The DLP ceased to have any parliamentary presence from that time, but the schismatic effects of the Split have had long term impacts on the Australian labour movement. (See Ellem, 1998)

<sup>20</sup> Kerr, a foundation member of the Industrial Relations Society was a widely respected lawyer, particularly in areas of labour and employment law. In 1975, as Governor General of Australia he oversaw the controversial dismissal of the Whitlam Labour Government.

<sup>21</sup> This is not uncommon in an emerging discipline. For example, Jensen, (1969) notes the same tensions between practitioner orientation and scholarship orientation in the emergence of political science. See also Ash (1983)

<sup>22</sup> Of course Dunlop's influence reached further back than the 1970s. For example, in his thesis submitted at London University in 1947, Isaac cited five of Dunlop's publications, albeit all focussing on the economics of wages. This raises the question, not dealt with in this paper, of how far US thought influenced UK thought. For excellent discussion the relationship between US economics and the British profession, see Coats, 1993, Chapters 8 and 21

<sup>23</sup> Laffer, 1972, p.68

<sup>24</sup> In the same *J. I. R.*, there were *inter alia* articles or research notes by Isaac, Niland, Groenewegen, Gordijew, and Beaumont, all economists, and similar numbers of articles by scholars from organisational behaviour / psychology and law. This disciplinary array highlights the influence of different disciplines on industrial relations, an influence which to some extent transects the cultural-geographical patterns of influence, even if at times one discipline appears predominate.

<sup>25</sup> This is not to reject the significance of the text by Dabscheck and Niland in the same year which gave immense emphasis to state agencies and processes but specifically rejected Dunlop, (pp.27-8). This text was undoubtedly quite important for some years, but there were no further editions. Also important as texts in this period several anthologies of *Labour Relations Readings* see e.g. Ford, Hearn and Lansbury,

<sup>26</sup> Beyond a few small programmes in Colleges of Advanced Education, business education in the broad sense, only began in Australian universities in the 1980s when the Australian Graduate School of Management was founded in 1984.

<sup>27</sup> In this respect, it is worth noting that major IR scholars of the time, - Niland, Isaac, Hancock, Laffer, and Howard, to name a few - for example all trained as economists, and exhibited economists' discomfort with intangible values and other loose ends. For discussion on loose and tight disciplines, see e.g. Becher, 1989, and Coats (1993).

<sup>28</sup> As Kaufman (1993) has clearly highlighted in his science-building v. problem-solving dichotomy, this was not a problem unique to Australia.

<sup>29</sup> Keenoy (1985, pp.255-57) describes industrial relations as the Cinderella of the social sciences.

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<sup>30</sup> The rapid decline of union density in fifteen years from 1980, from 55% to 30 % perhaps attests to the level of social legitimacy of unionism.

<sup>31</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence that explicit rejection of the left in the postwar years was rather more evident in the USA and Australia than in the UK.