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Typologies of Workplace Industrial Relations: Review, Critique and Reformulation

Jim Kitay and Mick Marchington

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Notes

1. Clearly it is not possible within the confines of a short article to deal with all of the typologies which have been constructed, so we will deal only with some of the better known or more useful typologies here. Our discussion will be restricted mostly to the mainstream of industrial relations, with only brief excursions into the labour process and human resource management literature.

2. A full analysis of all the different approaches to typification is beyond the scope of this paper. See Hempel (1965) and Martindale (1959) for detailed discussions.

3. It is important to note that typologies are not the same as explanations, although some authors appear to wish to treat them as such. Rather, the proper role for typologies is as an integral part of theory. Thus a type is no more than a meaningful and distinct category - which is, of course, a crucial element in any theory. Stinchcombe's assertion is therefore slightly misleading, although the spirit of his argument is well taken.

4. We are excluding the typologies that have been developed relating specifically to shop stewards, such as those by Batstone et al (1977), Marchington and Armstrong (1983), and Benson (1991).

5. See Marginson et al. (1988) for a detailed discussion.

6. A notable exception is Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1988), who reject some of the more deterministic assumptions in the strategic HRM literature.

7. See, for example, Clegg, 1976; Brown et al, 1981; Kochan et al, 1986.

8. As well as concerns about components, readers will already be aware that we have more significant doubts about this dimension, in particular whether or not management organisation is more important than management attitudes, strategy, or autonomy. We also have more theoretical objections to the choice of bargaining as the distinguishing factor for the interactions dimension. We are rather more comfortable with the employee organisation dimension and believe that given the data which was available from the survey, this represents a clear source of differentiation which is highly appropriate to an Australian context.

9. We would suggest that this problem arises because Callus et al developed their typology empirically, using workplaces in the AWIRS database with twenty or more employees. Larger workplaces are only more interesting in terms of the questions likely to be posed within a bargaining model of industrial relations, thus the framework theoretically relegates the majority of Australian workplaces to the margins of any analysis likely to be conducted with their model.

10. We do not wish to appear overly critical of Purcell, since we consider his contribution to the debate on management style to be an important initiative which has heavily influenced our own work.