



Working Order

Eric Batstone

Workplace industrial relations in Britain have been the focus of extensive public debate and academic analysis over the last twenty years. Yet there is no systematic up-to-date account of the subject. *Working Order* sets out to fill the gap.

Drawing upon a wide range of empirical data, the book charts changes in workplace industrial relations, assesses various attempts at reform and evaluates the analytical approaches which have prevailed since the 1960s. Part I looks at reform in the decade following the proposals of the Donovan Commission. It considers to what extent, in what ways and for what reasons management tried to 'reform' industrial relations; investigates how union organization changed in this period; and examines changes in productivity, conflict and relative gain between 1968 and 1978. The aim throughout is to weigh the different theories against the available evidence.

Part II turns to the period of dramatic shifts in the economic and political environment since 1978. Pursuing the same themes as Part I, it compares the results of a new survey of large private manufacturing plants. One of the conclusions is that shop steward organization has been more influential than much current discussion suggests.

The final chapter offers a general assessment of the different approaches to labour relations. At the same time it extends the discussion to analyses of inflation and to international variations in industrial conflict, drawing in particular upon the author's recent research on Japan. Overall, the book lays the foundations for a new and more fruitful approach to labour relations analysis.

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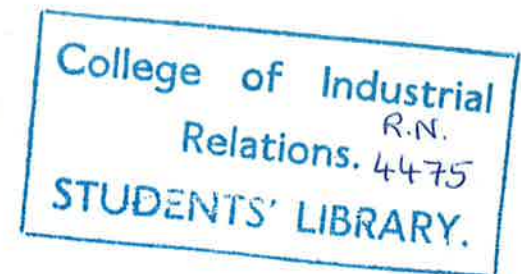
Working Order

Workplace Industrial Relations
over Two Decades

Eric Batstone

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