Industrial Relations Research Centre (IRRC)
Monograph Abstracts

Studies in Organisational Analysis and Innovation

Monograph No. 15: Corporate Women, Children, Careers and Workplace Culture: The Integration of Flexible Work Practices into the Legal and Finance Professions

Juliet Bourke
Equality continues to elude women in professional occupations. Why is this still so after years of attention to 'women's rights'? Drawing on legal cases, historical and demographic information, as well as personal accounts, this study argues that the reasons are hidden within the very fabric of our workplace culture. Applying theory to practice, the study exposes latent assumptions about the implicit separation of work and family commitments, the natural association of men with paid work and women with the family, and the privileging of work over family: all of which impact upon women's workforce participation, particularly after child-birth. Of particular importance is the conflation of long work hours with commitment and professionalism. These are critical issues for women, and an emerging group of men, who seek to balance their career and family responsibilities. Using the legal and finance sector as examples of traditionally male dominated professions, the study proposes new directions for greater equity through the integration of flexible practices into core positions, and at senior levels.


Christie Breakspear
The extensive growth in women's workforce participation, coupled with the aging population, have both intensified the need to juggle the competing demands of work and family. These demographic changes have prompted governments, employers and labour organisations to address the challenges of accommodating employees' multiple and often competing commitments.

Against the backdrop of parallel developments in Sweden and the USA, this study examines the way that work and family policies were developed and implemented in three very different Australian organisations.

Monograph No. 13: Transforming Organisations Through Total Quality Management: A study of leadership and learning in three manufacturing organisations

Tracy Wilcox
IRRC Monograph Abstracts

Across the board, Australian organisations face increasing pressure to bring about widespread changes to the way they operate. Total Quality Management (TQM), has been promoted as a vehicle for achieving such transformation.

This study examines the often contentious issues surrounding the implementation of TQM, paying particular attention to aspects of leadership, and the role of management in creating the kind of 'learning culture' seen as necessary for TQM to be successful. Change efforts in three organisations were studied, including the extent to which workplace practices reflected the espoused management philosophies. An examination of the change process in these workplaces yielded some interesting insights into organisational change efforts in general.

Studies in Australian Industrial Relations

Monograph No. 42: Small - Healthy and Safe? The implications of changing work organisation and reward systems for the health and safety of women workers in small to medium enterprises

Verna Blewett and Andrea Shaw

Why do some small enterprises address health and safety while others ignore it? What features of small enterprises are linked to superior OHS outcomes? How have small and medium enterprises dealt with the OHS consequences of change?

This book identifies and examines the strategies for successfully managing the OHS consequences of workplace change in SMEs. Drawing on comparative, qualitative case-study research in 13 Australian SMEs over a three-year period, the book focuses on three industries where women predominate: hospitality, textiles clothing and footwear, and child care. Women's participation in the workforce is increasing but so is the level of casualisation, and the number of contingent workers in industries where women predominate. Women may be most at risk of adverse OHS consequences of organisational change because, while women's participation in the workforce is increasing, so is the level of casualisation and the proportion of contingent workers in these industries.

Thus, the strategic choices made by SMEs in response to change can be critical to the OHS outcomes for their female employees. The authors detail recommendations to strengthen the capacities of small and medium enterprises to choose to provide healthy, safe and productive working environments.

Monograph No. 41: Occupational Health and Safety in Australian Small Business

Felicity Lamm

The study investigated 80 small businesses to ascertain those factors that influence small business compliance and practice of OH&S. To this end, the study identifies the following key influential factors: access to resources, training and industry experience, influence of large
businesses, influence of quality management systems, the relationship with the OH&S regulatory agency and small business advisors. In addition, the unique employment arrangements found in the small business sector and the cultural and social norms of the individual were found to be significant determinants in the way OH&S is viewed and practised. Finally, it was found that when trying to implement OH&S enforcement or prevention strategies in the small business sector, it is more useful to adopt a non-traditionalist approach, for example, involving women and family members, or external advisors such as accountants, to achieve the desired outcome.

**Monograph No. 40: Outsourcing and Occupational Health and Safety: A Comparative Study of Factory-based and Outworkers in the Australian TCF Industry**

**Claire Mayhew and Michael Quinlan**

This new monograph examines OHS in the Textile, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) industry. The study involved an assessment of the incidence and patterns of work-related injury and illness amongst 100 factory-based TCF workers, which was compared with the injury patterns identified amongst 100 outworkers.

It was found that overuse injury was the most common condition in both groups, although the factory-based workers had a far lower incidence than did outworkers. However bonus and piecework payment systems significantly increased the probability of an overuse injury amongst factory-based TCF workers. Factory-based TCF workers were heavily reliant on their supervisors and union officials for any OHS preventive information. Outworkers had no readily available access to OHS supports, and were vulnerable to the "middlemen" who provided them with work.

**Monograph No. 39: Making the NSW Union Movement? A Study of the Organising and Recruitment Activities of the NSW Labor Council 1900-1910**

**Rachel Cooper**

The research presented in this monograph examines the growth in New South Wales unions in the period from 1900 to 1910 and the relationship between that growth and strategies pursued by the labour movement. The research suggests that Labor Council, through its Organising Committee, contributed in a significant way to the growth of unions in the state. The study details the workers and workplaces organised by the Labor Council, the methods utilised in organising, the motivations of the Labor Council in pursuing the organising strategy and the impact of the Council's organising agenda. The study challenges the conventional academic approach which associates union growth with contextual factors and instead suggests that unions themselves play a crucial role in their own growth through exercising agency to organise the unorganised.
Monograph No. 38: The Effects of Subcontracting/Outsourcing on Occupational Health and Safety

Claire Mayhew, Michael Quinlan and Laura Bennett

A research study was designed to shed light on the impact of the outsourcing of labour on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) indices. Over 250 workers in Child Care, Hospitality, Transport and Building were interviewed and completed a questionnaire. After collation of the data, direct comparisons between the self-employed/subcontract and employee workers were made. It was found that in situations where the outsourcing of labour has become common, working conditions generally - as well as OHS - deteriorated for both the subcontract and the employee workers. At the same time, the OHS of self-employed workers was placed even more at risk. A number of recommendations have been made which could control the negative OHS consequences from the outsourcing of labour.

Studies in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations in Asia

Monograph No 4: Labour Rights and Border Protection: Attempts at a Viable Life on the Temporary Protection Visa

Nigel Hoffmann

The aim of this study is to explain the political space of exclusion that the Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) produces, and the ways that asylum seekers negotiate their social conditions after being released from immigration detention. It is an ethnographic exploration of the marginalisation caused by the TPV policy, and the surprising methods through which social exclusion is imposed and reinforced.

Hoffmann's study is framed within a perspective which sees border protection as a symbolic political assertion of national sovereignty, in the face of economic globalisation. A characteristic of globalisation is an asymmetry between pressures for enhanced trade and capital mobility on the one hand, and pressures for restricted labour mobility on the other. An alternative to ever-increasing border protection, however, is a pursuit of the global enhancement of labour rights. This study documents the effects of creating a class of workers with reduced rights.