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HUMAN RESOURCES ON THE WATERFRONT: MANAGING HISTORY

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**HUMAN RESOURCES ON THE WATERFRONT:
MANAGING HISTORY**

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Abstract

The paper reports on a three year study into change as it was occurring at the Conaust Ltd Terminal at the Port of Fremantle. The research began after the first Conaust Ltd Enterprise Based Agreement and continued through the period of negotiations and implementation of the second Enterprise Based Agreement. In depth interviews held with members of the workforce generated spontaneous constructs about life on the waterfront. The paper examines employee and management perceptions on the history of the Port of Fremantle life. These perceptions are supported by interviews with key stakeholders and relevant literature. The findings are reviewed in the context of the pre 1960's workplace culture, the 1960's - 1991 environment, and the post 1991 Enterprise Based Agreement workplace. In response to the debate surrounding the question "has there been real change on the waterfront?" the findings support the claim that there has indeed been change on the waterfront. It is demonstrated that the change which was implemented in November 1991 with the first Enterprise Based Agreement has been true to the nature of change. It has been ongoing change which has acquired a flow on effect with one change precipitating another. The paper concludes with a discussion on the importance of history in establishing a platform for change.

This research was made possible by funding assistance from Curtin Business Foundation, the Australian Research Council administered by DEET and the industry partner in this collaborative project, Conaust Ltd of the P&O Group. We acknowledge the significant contribution made by all those who have participated in the research.

Human Resources on the Waterfront: Managing History

This paper reports on research into the introduction of the Conaust (Fremantle) 1991 Enterprise Based Agreement, (EBA). The paper describes the nature of waterfront workers' (wharfie) work, the employee relations context within which the waterfront culture developed and the history of Conaust in Fremantle. The research design shows the need for a qualitative investigation that required long-term collection of high quality data. A central focus of the paper is the effect the strong waterfront history and culture had on opportunities for deep changes of attitude.

Research Design

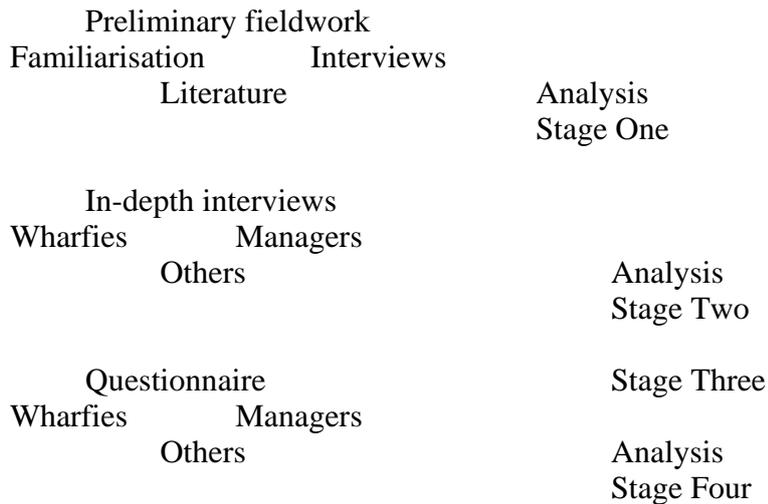
The research was designed to be qualitative because a 'factual' descriptive study would show more of the 'what' without ignoring the 'how and why'. The theoretical principles, followed were Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and Constructivism, Constructivists are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind. They emphasize the pluralistic and plastic character of reality - pluralistic in the sense that reality is expressible in a variety of symbol and language systems; plastic in the sense that reality is stretched and shaped to fit purposeful acts of intentional human agents. (Schwandt 1994:125).

The principles of Grounded Theory are based on the idea of generation rather than verification of data. By applying the generative core principle, within the constructivist (as opposed to positivist) paradigm, there would be a greater chance of capturing wharfies', managers' and others' constructs. Self-reporting and the gathering of perceptions were intended to present an inside view of change as it was happening. There were three major segments to the overall design: exploratory and preliminary activities; in-depth interviews and survey through structured questionnaires. A fourth set of activities, currently in train, evolved from the findings. These were action research activities planned and executed by the research team. The focus of these activities emerged from the findings of trust and communication.

The first stage in the research (see Figure 1) was the exploratory work needed to build a foundation for question design. Ultimately questions would be centred around the Fremantle Enterprise Based Agreement (EBA). However the waterfront was not a setting where high quality data could be gathered easily. As the union has been the quasi employer of wharfies for many years, it has not been possible to study the employer/employee relationship without the union as a mediator. There was over a century of industrial strife underpinning the reform process. Wharfies were not used to having their tea room or work areas invaded by researchers nor were they used to having their opinions and thoughts canvassed about work design and relationships. The first stages, which proved to be lengthy, were designed as much to build up trust and confidence in the researchers and the process as they were to collect base data. This aspect of the research can not be overemphasised and it is the view of the research team that it would not have been possible to conduct a survey without this period of relationship building. This observation placed the research firmly in the constructivist paradigm Denzin and Lincoln cite.

The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. Findings are usually presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory (1994: 14)..

Figure 1: Research Design



Data Collection

Data was collected across two broad levels of the organisation. These were management, differentiated for their responsibility for decision making and planning, and workers who handled the movement of cargo. Sixty-seven in depth interviews provided the raw data. Thirteen were with managers, forty-seven with workers and seven with significant others. These significant others included, Chief Executive Officer for Conaust, Captain Richard Setchell; former Federal Secretary for the Waterside Workers’ Federation, Mr Tas Bull; the Chief Executive Officer for the Association of Employers of Waterfront Labour, Mr Colin Coventry; Conaust’s chief industrial relations negotiator, Mr Ray Russell and a manager from among Conaust’s clients in Fremantle as well as former employees in Fremantle (old timers who had left the industry at the time of the implementation of the first EBA).

The preliminary fieldwork consisting primarily of focus interviews, was conducted between August 1992 and October 1993. These interviews included a group of managers, a group of workers, former Prime Minister Mr Bob Hawke and a state government representative. Building on the knowledge gained and analysis of these, questions for the in-depth interviews were constructed as below:

What is your background on the waterfront. When did you start and what roles have you filled?

How do you remember things as they were before there was any talk of change or EBAs (prior to 1983)?

What was it like prior to the EBA being implemented in November 1991 (1983 - 1991)?

Since November 1991: What have we learnt from this period of change? - About workers?

Since November 1991: What have we learnt from this period of change? - About management?

Since November 1991: What have we learnt from this period of change? - About the union?

Since November 1991 What have been the biggest challenges or major problems during this process?

Since November 1991: What advice would you give others about to embark on an EBA?

What are the best things that have come out of the changes?

What is the worst thing to come out of the changes?

One story which you have of life on the Waterfront?

Is there anything I haven't asked on which you would like to comment?

Data Analysis

Interview data was analysed using conventional content analysis methods (Carley, 1990) where categories of meaning grew as the data revealed themselves. Three additional electronic aids were used. These were NUD.IST™*, MORE™ and COPE™. NUD.IST (Richards, 1987) provided indexing and taxonomy functions (see Figure 2).

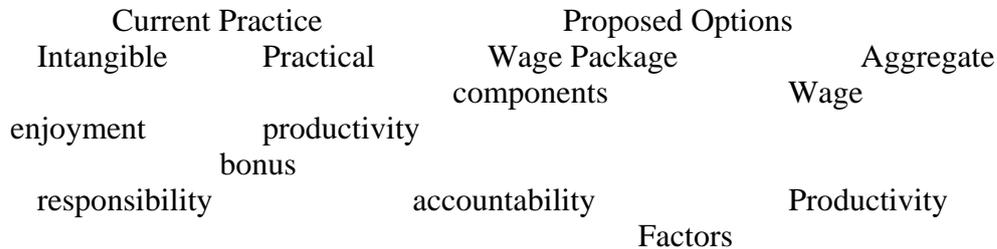
Figure 2: Tangible categories, an example of NUD.IST indexing

*non numerical data indexing synthesising and theorising

MORE (Baron et al 1990) helped with graphical presentation and COPE (Jones, 1993-95) provided a way of handling the data in cognitive map format (see Figure 3) which was very useful in the formative stage of categorising.

Figure 3: Cognitive Mapping of Ideas Held Within the Workforce on Remuneration

Ideas Held Within the Workforce on Remuneration



Findings

The secondary data findings that were of particular interest to this paper concerned the Conaust Fremantle enterprise based agreement in its historical context.

History of the Conaust (Fremantle) EBA

The Conaust Ltd Fremantle Enterprise Based Agreement which was signed and implemented on November 25th, 1991 signalled the beginning of a new era in the history of the Fremantle waterfront. The need for change was increasingly chronicled in the many reports commissioned by various groups (see Figure 4).

As Prime Minister, Hawke chose the waterfront as a flagship industry for reform. On December 23 1986 the Federal Minister for Transport gave a directive to the Inter-State Commission "to review arrangements for the handling and movement of cargoes through Australian ports" (Inter-State Commission 1989:3). The reason for this was evidenced in the many milestone reports over the years. It is best captured by comments from businesses around Australia who were hurting because of waterfront deficiencies. "Shake-up on the Waterfront. Badly needed reforms on the way ..." (Hooper, 1988). "The Waterfront - Can Australia Survive?" (Knapp, 1989). "Why the Waterfront Doesn't Work" (Warneminde, 1989). "Dock Reform on the Way. Fears held that it will be too little too late" (Burchill, 1990)

Figure 4: Milestones in the evolution of enterprise workplace relations

- 1948 Tydeman Report (Tydeman, 1948-49)
- 1965 National Stevedoring Industry Conference (Bureau of Industry Economics, 1995/16:17)
- 1983 Hawke's Speech (Hawke, 1983)
- 1981 Study of Western Australian Ports (Director General of Transport, 1981)
- 1982 Study of Western Australian Ports: An Alternative View (Engineering Division Public Works Department, 1982)
- 1984 Royal Commission on the Activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union (Costigan, 1984)
- 1986 Webber Industry Task Force Shore-Based Shipping (Bureau of Industry Economics 1995/16:17)

- 1986 Inter State Commission (report published 1989) (Inter State Commission, 1989a)
- 1987 Towards An Enterprise Based Industrial Relations System (Business Council of Australia) (Industrial Relations Study Commission 1989)
- 1988 Waterfront Industry Reform Authority (WIRA) (final Report 1992) (BIE 95/16:181)
- 1989 Waterfront Industry Reform Authority In-Principle Agreement (WIRA 1989)

Mechanisation and then containerisation meant that by about the 1960's there would be a recognition that less manpower would forthwith be needed. However this was not so, largely because of the peculiar way the waterfront and stevedoring industry was organised. The waterfront as an industry was managed by the Waterfront Workers Federation, WWF who directed managerial prerogatives such as hiring, allocation, training, discipline and safety. The union and industry-control characteristics and arrangements precluded wharfies and managers from interacting to build working relationships. The special role held by "the union" was partly made possible through the employer's strategy of casualism (Turnbull 1992).

The casualism strategy and its surrounding trade and employment conditions were a key issue in understanding the lore inherited over the decades by wharfies. Casual work was full of paradoxes. Being desperately needed by employers, and valued for both strength and skill was contrasted with being considered non-existent as soon as the ship departed. Commanding a high wage was contrasted with commanding none at all. The fulcrum of influence, control and contact was the union, yet the employer provided the wages. Being a casual worker meant both being employed, that is high status, and unemployed that is low status. The wharfie lived a life shared between the dock, the dole and the pubs, where information (or disinformation) about shipping movements and other port matters was imparted. The "job for life" concept had become institutionalised and practices such as hiring sons and other family members meant that cultural values could be easily transmitted to sustain the core of a closed community.

The casualism battle was fought and won by the union and permanency replaced casualism. At this time, employers did not and could not take over the managerial prerogatives that would naturally accompany permanent responsibility for the workforce. Permanency was not introduced alongside radical reform of the waterfront.

In March 1989 the Inter-State Commission's Waterfront Investigation Conclusions and Recommendations (Inter-State Commission, 1989b) was published. The commission had set as its primary objective "to eliminate waterfront-related transport impediments to Australia's trade and to achieve reliable, cost effective transport for exporters and importers." (p. 141). The Waterfront Industry Plan which the Inter-State Commission proposed, addressed several key areas of change. These were perceived to be crucial to putting in place any strategy which would secure the successful pursuit of the ISC objective. The commission's proposed strategy was to be known as the Waterfront Industry Plan. This plan had seven essential elements:

- to achieve effective management and a well motivated workforce;
- to strengthen the influence of exporters and importers;
- to increase industry transparency and accountability;
- to improve industrial relations and dispute settlement procedures;
- to ensure market-oriented provision of infrastructure and services;
- generally, to remove anti-competitive practices;

to establish a body to coordinate and manage the strategy. (Inter-State Commission, 1989:141)

Such a plan called for widesweeping changes. The first strategy proposed in the Waterfront Industry Plan was called the In-Principle Agreement, (IPA) agreeing in principle to a plan of change even if details could not be agreed.

In-Principle Agreement:

The Government and the parties to the Stevedoring Industry Review Committee should agree in principle to implement those parts of the Commission's plan to restructure the waterfront industry that relate to operations in stevedoring companies and international container depots. (Inter-State Commission, 1989b:143-144)

The IPA strategy required a significant change in communication patterns and presumed that the parties involved would be able to operate from a position of mutual trust.
Fremantle EBA

The Fremantle Agreement was reached and implemented on the 25th November 1991, realising a central WIRA objective. Conaust was, for the first time, able to articulate its own vision and strategic objectives. Conaust's objectives demonstrated that the reins were to become firmly taken by management.

EBA Objectives

1. To ensure Conaust Ltd/FTL Fremantle operations are managed efficiently and effectively in the best interests of its employees and shareholders, port authority and the community it services.
2. Satisfy the requirements of customers through the provision of reliable, efficient and competitive service levels.
3. To facilitate the fundamental structural and attitudinal changes required to modernise the stevedoring operation of Conaust Ltd/FTL Fremantle.
4. To achieve the real productivity improvements required by the Government and the users, and to satisfy the Waterfront Industry Reform Authority that these improvements have been achieved.
5. To ensure employees have the opportunity to work in a safe and healthy working environment.
6. To provide employees with the opportunity to make contributions to decisions affecting themselves and their working environment.
7. To improve employee relations and avoid industrial disputation through increased communication, information sharing and consultation.
8. To assist all employees to accept the responsibility and accountability appropriate to their role in Conaust Ltd/FTL Fremantle.
9. To provide career paths for employees through the acquisition of skills and more flexible work practices in keeping with the operational requirements of Conaust Ltd/FTL Fremantle.
10. To ensure container and cargo handling equipment is available as required.

The EBA included the following salient features:

The introduction of Enterprise employment;

A reduction of the workforce from 346 to around 189 or 45%;

Recruitment, promotion and selection for training to be carried out by management;

Management prerogative to determine methods of work and manning within safety standards;
Productivity increases of at least 40%
New consultative arrangements to enable information sharing and communication across the enterprise;
New standards of training.

Findings from the qualitative data were formed into three major categories. These were, background, tangibles and intangibles. The category being reported here is background. The sub categories shown were analysed thematically. They depicted coming in to stevedoring, the waterfront tradition, comments on the “good old days” post mechanisation and containerisation and change around the EBA.

Coming in to stevedoring

Coming in meant coming in through the door of waterfront culture. There would be nothing unusual about being a fourth generation lumper’s son. “I joined the wharf in 1964 over (east) - my father was a wharfie and I’m fourth generation. My grandfather and great grandfather were wharfies”

The findings were supportive of the strong historical lore and practices at the waterfront even after the era of jobs for sons ended. “Knowing what you were getting into” meant that there was little about the mechanics of waterside life that was left to the imagination. This included social behaviours expected from various groups, knowing whose side you were on (your fellow wharfies and the union “When I first joined the industry your allegiance was to the union and so you stayed with the union”) and knowing the informal rules, rewards and sanctions.

If you played up in this company you got your hands slapped and they said right-o you're finished. And your union went over to the next company and knocked on their door and said now we've got a good bloke here, he has fallen out with the management over there do you think you can hide him here and we'll look after him and we'll look after you.

I mean a lot of the conditions that were down here were you know a bit ridiculous I must admit myself. I mean when I first got here I couldn't believe some of the things that went on but it's amazing how quick you sort of adapt you know. I mean you take the biggest right winger and put him in an industry like this and within months he would have adapted, he'd probably be to the left.

My father was down here, to get in in those days you had to be voted in, it was a closed shop. You had to be proposed and seconded and people voted ... you had to get virtually 70 - 90% of the vote to get in.

Nature of work before mechanisation and containerisation

Sheridan (1994) and Griffiths (1989) paint a picture of hard physical work on the waterfront before the advent of mechanisation and containerisation. So too do the interviewees.

Well I'd say that the wool jobs were the hardest, and the freezers. You know, carcasses, going down in the cold, terribly cold and you know filling up the ships with carcasses, that was the hardest.

Comments on "the good old days"

The good old days are well documented and described by Sheridan (1994). It is easy when looking at any closed society to measure the people in it by exaggerated and publicly visible behaviours such as strikes and disputes. Were the stories accurate? The data suggests that, to a large degree they were. There is, at least amongst the residual workforce, evidence that this was not always considered as acceptable. Still, it is evident that there is a sense of loss of openness and trust. This theme was elaborated in other areas of the study and pointed to emerging employee and management needs.

I don't think there was any good old days. I think it was absolutely terrible. I mean, you would have thought that with the conditions and with the almost slackness that everybody would have been happy, but they were not. You know it was just a matter of getting or taking more, and hence all the industrial unrest and so on because you couldn't do a thing "Oh, we are just laying down tools." ... No, I certainly don't look back on them as the good old days.

Well they were good - in those days, people were more honest with each other, you had more mates. They used to help each other. Today I think it's a little bit different that what it used to be then, but it's still pretty good.

Post mechanisation and containerisation

There is an understandable ambivalence in observations about the change to containerisation. Responses indicate that from the work point of view, wharfies and managers feel a sense of relief to see the days of horrendous work and almost as horrendous injury "people don't appreciate that there is a fine line between life and death, the size of the ships, the equipment you are using and the weight of the materials", ended. On the social side there are three distinct views, one where there is a mourned loss of the famed camaraderie, another where there was a disapproval of some of the excesses of the old days and there is the grudging realisation that being drunk and sometimes incapable was not as good as having a clear head. Oh, you'd get down below and the blokes would be joking and laughing and you'd be talking, the work would be still going on but now, you're in trucks by yourself.

The old days have gone we've seen the old days, there (was) drink on the job, a lot of people like that. A lot of people didn't drink. It was a playground - the party's over. I told the blokes the party's over. It's all business now. None of this rolling in late and drunk. You're out of chocolates, if you're caught, you're finished. That's the policy of the company, it's everywhere you look And they see that as the worst thing that's happened, but in their own mind they can drive home with a clear head some of the times.

The latter is by far the strongest view, praising the more businesslike approach with associations between this and the benefits of multiskilling, better productivity and more

personal satisfaction, and there are signs that within this the spirit of comradeship is still there.

[a wharfie died and mates gave] productivity bonus which give [his wife] about \$12,500 ...That to me just typifies, we thought camaraderie had gone with the new EBA where you never worked side by side with 20 or 30 blokes just side by side with one, all of a sudden it comes back.

Several responses referred to improvements such as being able to plan. An interesting category that emerged strongly was that of lifestyle. The idea of planning, of the need to spend time with family and avoiding the marriage breakups that were frequently mentioned as a casualty of waterside working ran as a theme through the new arrangements since containerisation. This is only one instance of several signals that a sense of self-determination was beginning to be felt and appreciated.

I can plan say when I'm on day shift if I don't want to work back I don't work back. You can plan something and make arrangements for something whereas years ago you could never book tickets to a concert or anything like that, you didn't know if you were going to be off. You had to take the job otherwise you went to the back of the list. You didn't get a job if you refused one you just had to wait again.

Change around the EBA

The overall picture that emerges is that there has been deep change on the waterfront at Fremantle. When reading the findings the impression is given that change has been waiting in the wings. That is not to underestimate the lingering negative aspects of change as some respondents saw it. The following quotation is not indicative of the general mood of the wharfies or their managers but it serves to remind that not everyone can be assumed to see change as it is happening.

The company believes that the men have changed and it was purely due to the EBA and the marvellous way that that was structured and was set up and it was purely the EBA that produced it - increasing efficiency and productivity. What [has] happened,[is] the same people that were here ten years ago are still here, you know, minus fifty per cent of them that have taken early retirement. They are the same people. They haven't changed.

There is a wariness about the extent and viability of the change, usually related to the old days but carrying a warning that there is still some way to go in order to improve.

everyone gets the wrong perception about the industry and people in it and its not like that at all you know, if I could get up on a soap box that's one of the things I'd preach, but down here I think we do a good job with the equipment we've got, there is always room for improvement on the workers' side and the managements' side too, so I think (the) way its going we're on the right track down here. So its just a matter of working in together really.

Overwhelmingly though the findings support the need to "get on with" the change. In particular, there is no evidence that the extended range of duties that come with flexibility and multiskilling are rejected. Quite the reverse, they seem to bring a sense of personal satisfaction to those affected.

These days even though I'm in the office here five days a week, when I work double headers and things like that I can go out as a waterside worker in my boots and overalls. So that was a dramatic change. It had never been heard of if you'd spoken of that 10 years you'd have been laughed at. So it means a dramatic change. It has also given a lot of people a career path which was not on in the old days.

Discussion

The findings support the reports from the literature on stevedoring history. There was a strong culture that valued the wharfie society, the union and work practices designed more to sabotage than support the economy. Using the Whiteley (1994) PATOP critical thinking model (Philosophy, Assumptions, Theories of Organising and Practices), (see Figure 5) it is interesting to see the contrast between the two power broking groups during the formative stages of stevedoring industry development.

The declared philosophical or value base of the union was one of exploitation of employees by employers. The assumption was in keeping with the collective bargaining tradition. This was that strength of numbers were needed to equalise employer power and that frontiers of control would be defended in battle mode. The theory of organising was that of mass control through industry management with employees subjugating to the union decision making process. Practices reflected these arrangements. Unions placed people and even sent them as replacements for themselves when they were “sacked”. Unions dictated demarcations so that flexibility was strictly controlled and wharfies practiced to union dictates.

Employers operated from a twin philosophical or value base of employee dispensability and market forces. Assumptions were that employees were only needed when a ship was in. At other times they did not exist. Power was realised through the ‘casual’ strategy and this also dictated the theory of organising. With the union effectively organising labour arrangements, employers managed the “thinking” components of the work. Managers planned, coordinated, designed and communicated on a ‘need to know’ basis. Training was training in the true sense of the word. It was task specific, a “managers think and workers do as they are told” situation. Practices were aligned to this theory of organising “3 or 4 years ago if you could tell me you could give a bloke a sequence sheet, I used to read them before but we always had a foreman along side us”. One deep foundational issue bound the two opposing philosophies together. This was relative power.

Looking at the disputations over the years, the deeper philosophical and assumptions level of disagreements were rarely tackled. Most of the activity concerned the edifice of organising and practices. The very act of criticising and receiving criticism about the way things were organised or about waterfront practices served to validate each set of opposing foundations or philosophies as the schema below shows: Every time arrows of confrontation are pointed at the edifice they reinforce that the foundations are legitimate. What is evident in the history of waterfront disputation is an eagerness to enter arguments, almost in a circular fashion around edifice areas. There has been a corresponding reluctance to question deep assumptions on both sides in an atmosphere of dialectic and debate.

Figure 5
PATOP Critical Thinking Model (Whiteley, 1994)

There has been, and still is, much criticism regarding the time taken for reform in Australia. The New Zealand model, it is claimed, realised change more quickly and successfully than Australia "...the New Zealand government implemented their reforms at a faster rate and took their reforms further" (BIE 95/16:117). The New Zealand process did not begin with stevedoring and although reports show that wharfies are more productive and take a pride in the work, it is not known whether the foundations have been changed. Real reform, if it has taken place could be a temporary fall-out from Public Sector restructuring, and this would only be tested in a seller's labour market. Britain is an even more clear example where the problems of dockers and employer relationships were bypassed and current practices bought out. The platform of relative power still appears to exist and it is this aspect that is of current interest to UK researchers (Turnbull and Weston 1993).

Conclusion

The waterfront and stevedoring industrial reforms were part of a national strategy which had been running in parallel with the various waterfront investigations for over a decade. The strategy appeared to attack the legitimacy of relative power to be used by managers and, in this case, unions. As the In-Principle Agreement implied, there needed to be a new era of mutual trust. The unknown variables in the new situation were the wharfies and their managers, but particularly the wharfies as they were changing their point of reference from union to management. Has this point of reference really changed? The findings on unions suggest so.

"I mean, I think they [unions] must be feeling the pinch, they must be losing the respect of a lot of employees now because they [employees] feel as though they're working for the company ... I mean they haven't got the power they used to have. They couldn't sort of go and thump the table with management. Now it's an amicable sort of thing you know"

Reported elsewhere, (Whiteley et al 1996) the findings show that there is a role for unions although wharfies and managers do not know what this should or could be. The wharfies and managers are very comfortable working in a multiskilled, more enabling environment and they do not seem to miss the union's self-imposed role of monitoring demarcation.

Given the history of union hegemony, loyalty to the wharfie society, freedom to come and go and a reputation for roting, resting and other such activities, there was every likelihood that only superficial change would be reported. This was not the case. It seemed as though wharfies and managers were prepared to give things a go. Wharfies welcomed a freedom that came with removing demarcation.

“Well the best thing, I think, is that we have got a certain, or quite a large degree of flexibility now, from our point of view anyway that was the worst thing to deal with before” More importantly, there is a sense of “we”

“We've just bought another crane, a twin head crane. The amount of work that we could turn around here is almost unconceivable. We can take a ship that would have to be one of the worst ships on the line, starting out at 6 boxes an hour and turn it around to a 32.5 boxes an hour job after working on it for six months and learning the job, just goes to show what's possible”.

Waterfront reform is part of a fast changing industrial relations landscape. New challenges are ahead. Legislation planned for the future may put a pressure on the fragile new culture that appears to be developing on the waterfront at Fremantle. Will it survive? Possibly. Kelly and Kelly (1991) suggest that, for deep attitude change to happen, “the parties jointly choose to participate as equal status partners in a mutually rewarding high trust relationship underpinned by strong institutional support”. The evidence suggests that wharfies have demonstrated willingness to change and to take on new challenges. Their further development along the path of change will be enhanced by the climate of national industrial reform but it will ultimately depend on the mutual investment workers and management make in each other.

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Appendix

The following pages are copies of the slides prepared for presentation of this paper at ANZAM96, University of Wollongong, NSW, December 1996

Research Design

Theoretical Principles

- Constructivism
- Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss)
* Generation rather than Verification

Stage 1 Preliminary Fieldwork

Stage 2 In depth Interviews

Stage 3 Questionnaires

Stage 4 Action Research

Data Collection

Stage 1 Preliminary Fieldwork

*Interviews with

#Bob Hawke

#Workers who were members of the Site
Consultative Committee

#Managers who were members of the Site
Consultative Committee

#Western Australia State Government
negotiator in EBA discussions

#Attempts to include the Western
Australia Branch of the WWF

Stage 2 In Depth Interviews

Groups of people interviewed:

Workforce (a)

Those who implement the decisions handed down by management

Management (b)

Those who make decisions for the workplace

Others (c)

Anyone not included in (a) and (b)

Locations:

Fremantle

Permanents

(a) Workers

Casuals

(b) Management

(c) Clientelle

(d) Former Employees

Sydney

(c) Management

(c) Union

(c) Employers' Association

Stage 3 Questionnaire

All workers and managers in the workplace over a 3 day period.

- *Permanent workers

- *Casual workers

- *Management and Administration Staff

Intention has been:

- *to add robustness to the interview data

- *to illicit importance as well as performance

- *discriminate between workers and management on the same issues

Data Analysis

Content Analysis - Carley (1990)

*Type up and read all interview transcripts manually identifying categories.

*Electronic Aids

NUD.IST™ Process data in category units

Develop taxonomy

MORE™ Schematic presentation of taxonomy

COPE™ Cognitive maps showing conceptual links in the data

History of Conaust Fremantle EBA

*Milestones

*In-Principle Agreement

*Conaust EBA Objectives

Findings

- *Background
- *Tangibles
- *Intangibles

Background

- *Coming into Stevedoring
- *The Waterfront Tradition (“the good old days”)
- *Post mechanisation and containerisation
- *Change around the EBA

Coming into Stevedoring

- *Lumpers’ Sons
- *The role of the Union #Legitimising one’s place in the workforce
 - #Setting the rules
 - #Awarding pay and conditions (Superannuation, sick leave)
- *The role of the company #Provide the ship and the cargo.

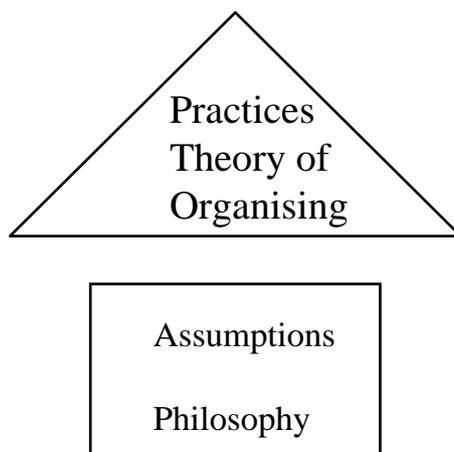
The Waterfront Tradition

- *The good Old Days (quotes)

Mechanisation and containerisation

- *Work conditions improve (necking and lumping ceased)
- *Drinking on the job.
- *Camaraderie
- *Lifestyle

PATP MODEL



Declared Philosophy: Exploitation of employees

Assumptions: Strength in numbers = employer power
(battle mode)

Theory of Organising: Mass control through industry
Management

Practices: Unions make management decisions for
the workforce

First EBA challenged the philosophy and assumptions of the Watrfront Industry foundations and allowed for real changes to the edifice in the form of theory of organising and practices.

Conclusion

- *Waterfront reform in the context of a national strategy
- *Strategy appeared to lack legitimacy
- *IPA heralded the entry of trust to the arena
- *Removal of much of the intrusive nature of the union role on the waterfront
- *Removal of demarcation - introduction of flexibility
- *Developing a sense of “we”

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