

TOWARDS SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP – OR CO-OPERATIVE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS?

Pat McCartan^{*}

Defining Labour-Management Partnerships

Recent developments in the field of industrial relations have focused a great deal of attention on the advent of partnership agreements between trade unions and employing organisations. Opinions differ as to the cause of such agreements, some arguing that they are born of the unions' latest strategy for survival and need for relevance, whilst others see them as a genuine social advance for working people and a vital contribution to the competitiveness of business organisations. Also, at the macro-level, it is possible to see partnership agreements as making a significant contribution to the economic performance of a country or region, or to view them as an alternative to legislative reform, substituting voluntarism for statutory rights of consultation and company regulation.

At the level of the enterprise, a partnership agreement can be described as one in which management and trade union(s) agree to work together for mutual gain, and to create a climate of co-operative relations. They are characterised by management being expected to enhance job security and/or employability in return for employees accepting flexible work practices and increasing productivity. In some cases, there has been a joint union/management approach, involving the re-writing or extension of existing written recognition and procedural agreements, and changing important aspects of collective bargaining and/or terms and conditions of employment. These would usually include the move to single-table bargaining and the introduction of single status for all employees, with harmonisation of rewards schemes, and equality policies. Oft-quoted examples in the United Kingdom (UK) include Rover, Blue Circle, Hyder Services,

^{*} Chairman Labour Relations Agency

and in the United States (US), Saturn, and NUMMI (see IDS, 1998 and IRS, 1998).

However, there is no set pattern, and where such written agreements have emerged the importance of context is acknowledged, in that they are based specifically on a problem-solving approach within a plant or organisation.

Neither is there agreement that trade union presence or recognition is necessary, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) maintains that "partnership has more to do with an approach to the relationship between employers and employees, individually and in groups, than it has to do with trade unions as such" (IPD, 1998). The Institute of Directors (IOD) has taken a strongly unitarist stance towards partnerships, and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has warned of a "possibly damaging build-up of trade union influence, hidden behind the new buzzword partnership" (CBI 1999). Nonetheless, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) view is that "partnerships between employers and trade unions can make a real contribution to company success" (Monks, 1998), and the Involvement and Participation Association (IPA) has produced evidence from case studies and surveys to show a direct link between partnership approaches and enhanced organisational performance (IPA 1997, 1998). The "New Realism", identified by David Guest as one of four possible policy options for organisations on human resource management (HRM) and industrial relations (IR) matters, seeks to integrate them with high priority being given by organisations to both, and cites the examples of Rover and Nissan in the UK (Guest, 1995).

But some scepticism also exists on the ideological left about the reasons for labour-management partnerships, it being argued that that they have their origins in the extension of HRM practices, and are inherently unitarist. In this respect, some would say that union weakness is the reason behind unions seeking partnership agreements – as, as it were, a self-preservation measure. Kelly draws attention to this: "Since it is difficult, if not impossible to achieve a partnership with a party that would prefer that you didn't exist, the growth of employer hostility is a major objection" (Kelly, 1996). He also refers to a significant number of writers in Europe and the USA who "came to the conclusion that union survival and recovery turned on the willingness of unions and their members to behave 'moderately' and to offer concessions to the employer as part of a new social partnership between labour and capital". He goes on to point out that "there is a striking parallel between the social partnership

and human resource management literatures, evident most clearly in the way that employers' priorities have come to dominate the intellectual agenda of researchers" (Kelly, 1998). Others have pointed to the two clear schools of thought emerging in academic circles, with some addressing the dynamics of labour-management partnerships only, and others taking a broad philosophical approach, examining employer, union and worker motives or responses. The former position is adopted by Kochan *et al.*, (1994), the IPA (1996), Coupar and Stevens (1996) and (1998), and by Kochan and Osterman (1994). The latter position is adopted by writers such as Kelly (1996) and (1998), Claydon (1998), Nissen (1997), and Parker and Slaughter (1997). This could be summarised as the "incorporatist" approach, as in Allen and Haynes (1999), and Cressey and MacInnes (1980); this relies on the old socialist conventional wisdom that trade unions – and especially their paid officials or bureaucrats – can easily sell-out and become incorporated in management's exploitative apparatus.

Labour-Management Partnerships in Ireland

But, what of the Irish experience? It would be difficult to argue that Irish Congress of Trade Unions' (ICTU) participation in macro-agreements on partnership at national level had its origins in union weakness, or low trade union density – although this may not always have been the case as regards enterprise level agreements. What is certain is that partnership agreements, and the related development of co-operative industrial relations in Ireland at both macro and micro level, are robust and have enthusiastic supporters among trade unions, employers and government. They merit critical observation, particularly if it "... should be undertaken not simply because it will increase the stock of knowledge about a given phenomenon but because it is relevant to the development and testing of theory" (Bain and Clegg, 1974).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, great interest and heightened awareness of new forms of work organisation developed in Ireland. This interest was stimulated to begin with by economic adversity in the early to mid-1980s. However, there followed a period of increasing economic success, from the late 1980s onwards, which relied in significant part on the attraction of international investment. This led in turn to the growth of foreign-owned businesses, many of which brought with them new work methods, such as total quality management, world-class manufacturing and HRM. In addition, many indigenous businesses were changing their working methods, with

significant changes in the labour market taking place to reflect the growth in the economy.

ICTU adopted a special report at its 1993 conference entitled *New Forms of Work Organisation: Options for Unions* (ICTU, 1993), in which it broke new ground by studying the changing role of unions in a sample of 12 manufacturing businesses in the Republic. It produced a series of recommendations as regards unions' roles and behaviour in what was clearly a new and rapidly changing industrial relations scene in manufacturing and tradable services.

Social Partnership

In addition to this, by the late 1990s, ICTU had already become a major influence in creating a new consensus for social partnership, the Partnership 2000 Agreement (Government Publications Office 1996), and the Programme for Peace, Prosperity and Fairness (Government Publications Office, 2000) being the fourth and fifth of such agreements arrived at between Government, employers and unions since 1987. Representing the most comprehensive socio-economic consensus ever achieved in Ireland, the agreements planned both income growth and investment in public and private industries and services. They also made provision for, and encouraged to develop, micro-partnerships at the plant or organisation level between the employees, their representative organisations, and employers.

A typical labour-management partnership is spelled out in the 1997 Agreement at Harris Ireland Ltd, Dundalk, (since re-named Littelfuse Ltd) between the company and the Transport and General Worker's Union, in which labour co-operation on productivity, quality and flexibility was to be matched by income growth within the national framework and job security for employees. The partnership agreement in Harris was the culmination of a transition: from adversarial labour-management relations in the 1980s, through changes in ownership, changes in the products and processes, and huge reductions in the labour force (from 2,000 in 1983 to 400 by 1990, and 300 today), to more co-operative industrial relationships (McCartan, 1994). The role of the union had been crucial, and it often took the initiative in proposing changes in flexibility and training, in return for pay structure alterations. Also significant was the influence of local culture, and a determination not to face again the trauma of the redundancies of the 1980s. In classic terms, the leadership of a local union official and local management was influential in producing

the appropriate climate for a transformational labour-management partnership (McKersie, 1996).

In Northern Ireland, by contrast, there has been an absence of social partnership in any formal sense. But, perhaps with its roots in socio-economic adversity, there has existed for many years a broad consensus in favour of less adversarial industrial relations; evidence of this is that Northern Ireland has a higher trade union (TU) density than in Great Britain. In 2000, TU density in United Kingdom as a whole was 31.7%, but in Northern Ireland it was over 40% (see Sparrow and Marchington, 1998, and DED/LFS, June 2001). Co-operation between the trade unions and employer organisations on matters of mutual concern has been a regular feature, and it occurs at different levels, from province-wide to the individual workplace. There is also a keen awareness of socio-economic developments in the Republic of Ireland, and movement on the political front has sharpened this interest. An increasing amount of cross-border business is being done, and many businesses have pursued an active policy of having locations in both jurisdictions – often achieved through acquisitions – to maximise tax efficiency, and minimise costs.

In the Republic of Ireland, part of the agreement between the social partners at macro-level has been the creation of the National Centre for Partnership, aimed at stimulating partnership agreements and co-operative relationships at the micro-level. In Northern Ireland, the formation of the Forum for Industrial Relations (NIFIR) in 1994 was widely welcomed and, since 1995, the related Partnership in Change Group has organised a series of events and interventions that have to date involved over 1,000 trade union, management and professional participants. In both jurisdictions, study tours, conferences/seminars, and production of training materials have been organised for joint management and union groups, including the provision of facilitation when requested.

Researching Partnerships at Enterprise level

So, to what extent is there a new form of industrial relations, or partnership, emerging in Ireland, North and South, between unions and employers? It was decided to seek the co-operation of a range of medium to large private sector businesses represented at the “Partnership in Change” conference at the University of Ulster, Magee College, Derry/Londonderry in Sept 1996 – since by the presence of representatives of their management and employees, they had indicated some degree of interest, if not involvement. The

present study draws on data obtained from eight medium to large private sector businesses in the North West of Ireland during 1998, two of which were privately-owned utilities and six of which were manufacturers. The organisations are named in the **Appendix**, and profiled in **Table 1**.

Before attempting to assess the extent to which these businesses are using a partnership approach, let us consider some views and experiences from the United States. In addressing the issue of labour-management partnerships and the implications for Ireland, McKersie has drawn attention to the possibility of transforming existing workplaces into modern, high-performance systems – as against the trend in the US towards closing plants with traditionally strong adversarial cultures, and starting afresh with modern work practices and non-union labour on greenfield sites. He acknowledges that businesses and trade unions in Ireland, both North and South, may be better able to manage change, and to “transform their industrial relationships for mutual gains” (McKersie, 1996), in order to be able to compete at a world class level. Indeed, he is in no doubt that the UK and Irish experience of partnership will be different from that in the US; Milsome (1998) has provided a valuable summary of the US experience, including a detailed description of one of the most celebrated successes of partnership: the General Motors (GM) Saturn Car project in Tennessee. The joint involvement of the United Auto Workers and GM from the initial planning stage, to full facilitation of the new plant on a joint basis on a greenfield site, is in stark contrast to the evolutionary approach to partnership emerging in these islands.

The purpose of the present study is to assess to what extent partnerships in industrial relations were and are happening in Irish industry, and to discover what impediments there were to the transformation of employment relationships. Whilst there is some evidence that establishments arising from recent inward investment from the US tend to a unitarist approach from the beginning (Gunnigle *et al.*, 1995), indigenous industry could not easily do what McKersie cites as common in the US – moving to a greenfield site in order to provide a more co-operative set of employment relationships. It was therefore important to analyse the nature of any changes to industrial relations within Irish industry, and to what extent relations were changing to facilitate competitiveness and job security.

TABLE 1. PROFILES OF THE BUSINESSES

Company	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Industry	Food Processing	Power Generation	Manufacturing - Synthetic Fibres	Utility Supplier	Heavy Engineering	Manufacturing - Packaging	Manufacturing - Textured Yarns	Manufacturing - Clothing
Location	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	ROI	ROI	ROI
Ownership	NI	NI	Multinational	NI	Multinational	Multinational	Multinational	Multinational
Number of Employees	380	170	900	2,100	6,500	280	750	2,950
Male/Female Breakdown	80% male	94% male	85% male	70% male	70% male	45% male	55% male	30% male
Number of Unions Recognised	1	2	4	4	6	3	3	1
Formal Partnership Agreement	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Informal Partnership evident	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Degree of Union Involvement	Minimal	Moderate	Minimal	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Minimal	Minimal

Key Values for Successful Partnership.

In a study of five cases of joint union-management co-operation in the US in 1995, fully published in 1998, Roscow and Casner-Lotto identified the following key values as essential to successful union-management partnerships (Roscow and Casner-Lotto, 1998):

- Mutual trust and respect
- A joint vision for the future and the means to achieve it
- Continuous exchange of information
- Recognition of job security and its link to productivity
- Recognition of the central role of collective bargaining
- Devolved decision-making.

This work indicated that, if all these matters were addressed successfully on a joint basis by management and unions, then companies could expect productivity gains, quality improvements, a better motivated and more flexible workforce, and a decline in absenteeism and labour turnover rates. Unions and their members could expect to gain improved job security, closer involvement in running the company, and ultimately a better rewards package. Whilst to some this may seem to be a wish list, and almost impossible to achieve all of the time, Roscow and Casner-Lotto insist that a win-win situation could be achieved, and that companies and unions really were managing to develop a “successful partnership approach around these values” (1998).

It is interesting to compare the key values for labour-management partnerships identified in the US with the behavioural aspects identified by Coupar and Stevens as distinguishing partnerships in the UK:

... a commitment to working together to make the business more successful, understanding the employee security conundrum and trying to do something about it, building relationships at the workplace which maximise employee influence through total communication and a robust and effective employee voice.”

They also identified some common elements in partnership agreements as:

... a vision of the goal, a cultural change programme which began with managers, a systematic revision of reward, status and conditions, the

development of new business-focused consultative arrangements from the workplace to the boardroom, a carefully thought out and agreed policy to manage employment security, and a major commitment to employee development and training. (1998).

Monks has also sought to identify the underlying values of a partnership agreement in practice as: "employee security, employee voice, fair financial rewards, and investment in training." (1998).

In the Republic of Ireland, the underpinning emphasis in the Partnership 2000 agreement of 1996 and the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness of 2000 is on building competitiveness through improved employee involvement at enterprise level. The National Centre for Partnership and a number of other support initiatives have been created to stimulate the roles of all stakeholders at enterprise level.

In the UK, most employer organisations, professional management associations and trade union interests have subscribed to the Department of Trade & Industry(DTI)/Department for Enterprise & Employment (DFEE) initiative entitled *Competitiveness through Partnerships with People* (DTI/DFEE, 1999). This was launched as part of the programme for implementing the Employment Relations Act, 1999. It is built around the key values of:

- Shared goals – understanding the business we are in
- Shared culture – agreed values binding us together
- Shared learning – continuously improving ourselves
- Shared effort – one business driven by flexible teams
- Shared information – effective communication throughout the enterprise (DTI/DFEE, 1999.)

Some modest financial incentives are provided by the DTI to assist implementation and improvement programmes (see www.gov.dti.uk/partnershipfund/).

Finally, there is wide agreement, firstly, that a direct trade-off exists between the important issues of security of employment and flexible working and, secondly, that all the employees in an enterprise are stakeholders, with a direct interest in enhancing its competitiveness.

Methods, Profiles and Initial Findings

We should now examine some of the findings that emerged from the eight businesses surveyed. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with senior managers responsible for employee relations, and workplace representatives of trade unions; these were followed by interviews with trade union officials and employers associations. All were asked to identify which new forms of work organisation had been introduced, what their effects had been, to what degree union/s were involved, and what evidence there was of a new form of industrial relations, or partnership, between unions and employers. Only private sector workplaces with recognised trade unions were examined. As already noted, the organisations concerned had been represented at the 1996 *Partnership in Change Conference*, at which discussion seemed to reflect that many organisations were already practicing a form of partnership – or at least what has come to be called “co-operative” industrial relations. In addition to that, by early 1997, specific encouragement was being given to businesses and unions in ROI to arrive at enterprise level partnership agreements under the new Partnership 2000 agreement.

In determining the methods for measuring the extent to which partnership values were present and being put into practice, particular attention was given to the position in the US (see Kochan *et al.*, 1994; McKersie, 1996; and Roscow, and Casner-Lotto, 1998). Also important was emerging experience in the UK, particularly as reported by the IPA in 1996; reference was also made to the views of John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC (see Coupar & Stevens, 1998; and Monks, 1998).

The eight organisations chosen had between 170 and 260 or so employees. They all recognise trade unions, and are engaged in manufacturing (6) or are private sector utility companies (2). Five are located in Northern Ireland, and three in the Republic of Ireland. Multi-unionism predominates, yet all practice single-table bargaining.

Recent Changes in Work Organisation

All the organisations had experience of recent changes in work organisation, with the introduction and development of new forms of flexible working. Further co-operation on developments was expected to take place (see **Table 2**).

TABLE 2. RECENT CHANGES IN WORK ORGANISATION

Work Organisation Initiatives	Company							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Just in Time	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Continuous Improvement	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total Preventative Maintenance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Self Inspection	-	-	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Team Working	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
World Class Manufacturing	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Total Quality Management	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Multi-skilling, Reduced Grades	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Other Initiatives	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes

Involvement of Employee Representatives in Work Organisation

In every case, new forms of work organisation had been introduced. Involvement of trade unions in these initiatives varied from none to a high degree of involvement – in decision-making, implementation and monitoring for continuous improvement. In every case, there was a defined objective to devolve decision-making to the lowest possible level, but in three cases this did not extend beyond operational matters at a relatively low level, whereas in three other cases, it was highly developed and had resulted in substantial de-layering of supervisory management. In two of the organisations, there had been no involvement of union representatives in the decision to introduce, implement, and share information. In only one of the organisations was it evident that union representatives had been involved from the planning stage (see **Table 3**).

Partnership Practices Evident

The data that emerged from the interviews conducted with the senior managers and the workplace representatives supports a range of conclusions. In only one case, (company A) it could be said that there was little evidence of partnership or co-operative industrial relations, and a traditional or adversarial style remained. In every case, job security was seen to be a top priority matter; and in 6 out of the 8 organisations, it was seen to be the single most important issue, and

the one that did most to reduce conflict and increase co-operation between unions and management (see **Table 4**).

TABLE 3. INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES IN WORK ORGANISATION INITIATIVES

Organisation Initiatives	Company							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Decision to Introduce -								
Formal Involvement	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Informal Involvement	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Implementation -								
Formal involvement	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Informal Involvement	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Information on Success -								
Formally	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Informally	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

TABLE 4. PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES EVIDENT

Partnership Values	Company							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Mutual trust and respect	No	Mod	Mod	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mod	Mod
A joint vision for the future and the means to achieve it	No	Yes	Mod	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Continuous exchange of information	No	Mod	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mod	No	Mod
Recognition of job security and its link to productivity	Mod	Mod	Mod	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Recognition of the central role of collective bargaining	Mod	Yes	Mod	Yes	Yes	Mod	Mod	Mod
Devolved decision-making	Yes	Mod	Mod	Yes	Mod	No	No	No

Key: Yes = value present. No = value not present. Mod = value present to a moderate degree.

The Central Role of Collective Bargaining

In every case, trade union density was very high (80 – 100%), and was expected to remain high. Single-table bargaining, or a single union agreement, was now a feature in each of the eight organisations, and consultation often took place as an extension of collective bargaining.

Continuous Exchange of Information

Three of the companies had well developed consultative and/or employee involvement systems, and employees and management appeared to be committed to making these work. This relied upon a recognition by management of the role of employees as stakeholders, and in these three cases, employees are, or may choose to be, equity partners through Employee Share Ownership Plans.

Joint Vision for the Future

In five of the organisations, it was recognised by management and employees that they had a joint vision for the future, and they saw the consultative and collective bargaining structures playing a significant role in their means to achieve it.

Mutual Trust

The amount of trust evident between unions and the businesses, particularly between employees, their representatives, and managers, varied greatly. It was clear that there was still an impediment to full mutual trust in a number of cases, and this had hampered the further development of partnership, or of more co-operative employee relations. The managers and union representatives concerned suggested that this “mistrust” was a consequence of the remoteness of overseas ownership, the divorce from corporate headquarters decision-making, and a lack of opportunity for profit-sharing or equity participation. Conversely, in the utilities where there was local ownership or management at a strategic level, as well as employee equity participation, there was a strong mutual trust.

Conclusions

Whilst the use of the Roscow & Casner-Lotto model is not cited as prescriptive, it does give us an indication of the extent of the development of co-operative forms of industrial relations in the businesses examined, and they can fairly be taken as a typical group

of medium to large private sector employments which recognise unions in the North West of the island of Ireland.

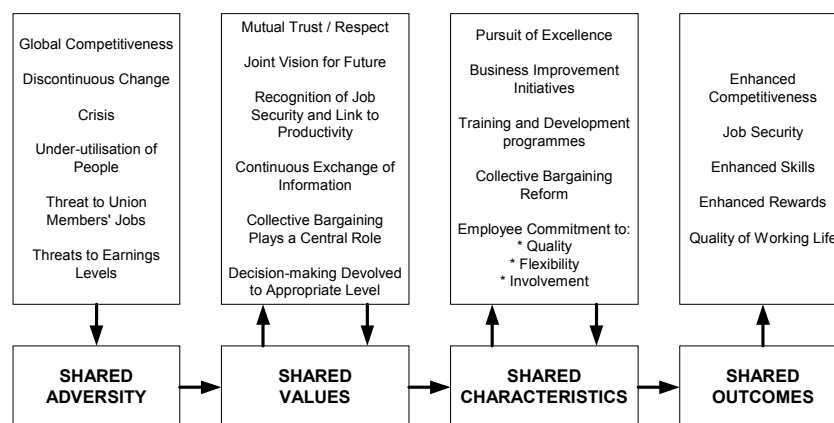
McKersie has drawn our attention to the partnership issues for indigenous industries: "The challenge ... is to transform existing workplaces where traditions run deep and collective bargaining is characterised by a strong culture" (1996). Whilst these eight businesses and the recognised trade unions concerned seem to have risen to that challenge, it is plainly too early to accept this study as evidence bearing out his proposition that "strategic partnerships, coupled with modern human resource systems, can be an unbeatable combination" (McKersie, 1996). More modestly, it provides some further evidence of an evolving model of industrial relations practice in Ireland – North and South – which is based upon the values identified as underpinning successful labour-management partnerships, as well as the partnership initiatives supported by both UK and Irish governments.

But is all this anything beyond a more co-operative form of industrial relations borne out of adversity – borne out of the growth of competitiveness and the need for businesses and unions to survive? Is it merely industrial relations changing with the economy – changing in inverse proportion to the shortage of key skills and a tightening labour market? The evidence presented here certainly could be seen as supportive of the "New Realism" analysis (Guest, 1995) – and supportive as well of the claim that HRM has had a real and tangible impact on industrial relations in the private sector. Certainly none of the management or union representatives interviewed envisaged a return to adversarial or traditional relationships, nor was there any support for a return to multi-table bargaining; and all accepted the necessity to build mutual trust as a key to competitiveness and job security. Despite the absence of formal enterprise level partnership agreements in the eight companies, it is fair to see at least three of them in the category of mutual gains enterprises (as defined by Kochan & Osterman 1994); but the scope for the other companies to develop further "mutual gains initiatives" is constrained by the source of strategic decision-making being overseas.

This study also provides evidence of an emerging model for the evolution of labour-management partnerships (see **Table 5**) – or what we can now also call "co-operative industrial relations for mutual gains". In Ireland, their roots lie in adversity – shared by both employees and the businesses in which they work. Job security threatened by heightened exposure to global competitiveness, as well as by increasing vulnerability to off-shore strategic decision

making, can breed a strong mutuality which is encouraged by macro level social partnership at national level and the initiatives it promotes. This shared adversity points up the necessity to build employee relations around a set of shared values held in common by management and workforce. These in turn build joint commitment to a series of interventions or actions to enhance enterprise competitiveness that have characterised co-operative industrial relations – and which would have been difficult, if not impossible, to implement under the more traditional adversarial system of industrial relations. Such actions generally have the expected outcomes of higher returns for all stakeholders, and enhanced job security for employees; but it is in the management of these expectations that future levels of trust and commitment depend. The proposed model can be used as a benchmark by which companies and trade unions can measure their own performance, identify areas of concern, and address these as priorities in the development of their relationships for mutual gains.

TABLE 5. A MODEL OF LABOUR-MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS



This study supports the conclusion that labour-management partnerships have a role to play in industrial relations in Ireland, and that relationships in practice are becoming more co-operative, or less adversarial, because the parties prefer it. It does not provide conclusive evidence that the “incorporatist” (Cressey and MacInnes, 1980) or “mutual gains” (Kochan and Osterman, 1994) analyses are right or wrong, or that the inherent conflict in the individual and collective employment relationship has diminished. It does give some

evidence towards how the relationships are now being managed at enterprise level, and supports the conclusion that there can be some short-term gains for employees and companies, whilst at the same time unions retain organisation, recognition and collective rights for their existing members.

This study also supports the conclusion that it is important not just to re-write union-management agreements as partnerships, but to build mutual trust and respect, and to seek to share a common set of values. Macro level social partnerships are important in providing a framework of support measures, and may increase adherence to the broad objectives for government – social inclusion and building acceptance of a stakeholder economic system. However, it is also possible that governments have a dual purpose, and are promoting partnership as a voluntarist alternative to company law reform and a co-determination approach. In any event, the transformation approach identified by McKersie, 1996) and modelled in **Table 5** may be the most appropriate form of labour-management partnership for Ireland, North and South, in the current economic and social context.

References:

- Allen, M., Haynes, P., Partnership Unionism: A Viable Strategy? BUIRA, 1999.
- Bain, G.S., and Clegg, H.A., 'A Strategy for Industrial Relations Research in Great Britain', *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 12,1: 91-113, cited in Kelly, J., *Rethinking Industrial Relations*, Routledge 1998.
- Coupar, W., and Stevens, B., 'Towards a new model of industrial partnership: beyond the "HRM versus industrial relations" argument', in Sparrow, P., and Marchington, M., *Human Resource Management: The New Agenda*, FT Pitman, 1998.
- Cressey, P., and MacInnis, J., Voting for Ford: Industrial Democracy and the Control of Labour, *Capital and Class*, 11: 5-13, cited in Allen, M., and Haynes, P., in *Partnership Unionism: A Viable Strategy?* BUIRA, 1999.
- CBI, 'CBI President raises fears about trade union partnerships', Press Release June 1999, Confederation of British Industry: London 1999.
- DETI, NI Labour Force Survey, Historical Supplement, NI Statistics and Research Agency, Dept of Trade and Industry, 2001
- DTI/DFEE, *Competitiveness through Partnerships with People*, Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Education and Employment, HMSO, London 1998.

- Guest, D.E., 'Human Resource Management: trade unions and industrial relations', in *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*, Storey, J., (ed), Routledge 1995.
- Guest, D., and Peccei, R., *The Partnership Company; Benchmarks for the Future, The Report of the IPA Survey Principles, Practice and Performance*. London Involvement and Participation Association 1998.
- Gunnigle, P., Flood, P., Morley, M., Turner, T., *Continuity and Change in Irish Employee Relations*, Oak Tree Press, 1995.
- ICTU, *New Forms of Work Organisation: Options for Unions*, ICTU, 1993.
- IDS, 'Partnership Agreements', IDS Study 656, October 1998.
- IPA *Towards Industrial Partnership: A New Approach to Relationships at Work*, London, Involvement and Participation Association 1996.
- IPD *Employment Relations into the 21st Century*, An IPD position paper, 1998.
- IRS *Employment Trends* 652 -660, March-Sept. 1998.
- Kelly, J., 'Union militancy and social partnership', in Ackers, P., Smith, C., and Smith, P., (eds) *The New Workplace and Trade Unionism*, London: Routledge, 1996.
- Kelly, J., *Rethinking Industrial Relations*, Routledge 1998.
- Kochan, T., Katz, T., and McKersie, R.B., *The Transformation of American Industrial Relations*, 2nd ed. 1994.
- Kochan, T.A, and Osterman, P., *The Mutual Gains Enterprise: Forging a Winning Partnership among Labour, Management and Government*, Cambridge MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1994.
- Milsome, S., 'From Survival to Prosperity: Labour-Management Partnership in the United States', *IRS Employment Trends* 652, March 1998
- Monks, J., 'Trade Unions, Enterprise and the Future', in Sparrow, P., and Marchington, M., *Human Resource Management: The New Agenda*, FT Pitman, 1998.
- McKersie, R.B., 'Labour-Management Partnerships: US Evidence and Implications for Ireland', *IBAR - Irish Business and Administrative Research*, Vol. 17, 1996.
- Nissen. B., 'Unions and Workplace Reorganisation', in B. Nissen (ed)., *Unions and Workplace Reorganisation*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press 1997.
- Parker, M., and Slaughter, J., 'Advancing unionism on the new terrain', in Nissen, B., (ed), *Unions and Workplace Reorganisation*. Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press.

Partnership 2000 for Inclusion Employment and Competitiveness, Government of Ireland, 1996. Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, Government of Ireland, 2000.

Roscow, J., and Casner-Lotto, J., People Partnership and Profits: The New Labour-Management Agenda, Work in America Institute, New York, 1998.

Sparrow, P., and Marchington, M., Human Resource Management: The New Agenda, FT Pitman, 1998.

Copyright of Irish Journal of Management is the property of Irish Journal of Management and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.