

BOOK REVIEW

Russell D. Lansbury, *Crossing Boundaries: Work and Industrial Relations in Perspective*, London and New York, Routledge, 2022, xiii+190pp. \$140.

This book provides a detailed reflection on the academic and personal journey of one of Australia's most prominent industrial relations scholars, Russell Lansbury. The book documents the origins of Russell's interest in worker participation in decision-making and his extensive national and international research across numerous industrial sectors over almost five decades. In the early chapters of this book, Russell documents his early influences and mentors, his education experiences in Australia and internationally, and the evolution of his research interests from the late 1960s onwards. Russell was born in 1945 in Melbourne and was strongly influenced by his modest upbringing and the values instilled by his parents. Russell attended Melbourne Boys High School before receiving a teaching scholarship in 1963 from the Victorian Education Department to attend the University of Melbourne. Russell's interest in political sociology at the University of Melbourne was nurtured by early academic mentors such as Alan Davies, and his undergraduate studies coincided with rising opposition to the Vietnam War on Australian university campuses.

Russell received a scholarship to undertake postgraduate research in Sweden in the late 1960s at the University of Lund. His research topic reflects the optimism of the times towards the future of work and involved a comparative study of leisure patterns in Swedish and Australian suburban communities. Following a brief return to Australia, Russell received funding to undertake a Ph.D. thesis at the London School of Economics in 1970. His doctoral thesis focused on the careers of information technology managers at British European Airways. This research represented the beginning of a lifelong research interest into the impact of technological change on work and industrial relations. While in the United Kingdom, Russell and his partner Gwen became members of the British Fabian society, and in 1972 Russell published a Young Fabian pamphlet on Swedish social democracy.

Following his return to Australia in the early 1970s, Russell initially worked at Monash University. He published a number of books in the late 1970s with Peter Gilmour that focused on organisations and management and the changing role of supervisors in the workplace. From 1980, Russell published the first of several edited books on industrial democracy, a topic that experienced some enthusiasm from the Hawke Labor government but resistance from employer associations. Russell moved to Macquarie University in 1981 to teach postgraduate courses in the university's fledgling management school. He continued to publish books on organisational behaviour with Robert Spillane, on Australian industrial relations with Bill Howard, and on industrial democracy in the workplace with Ed Davis. In 1984, Russell published the first edition of *International and Comparative Industrial Relations*, with Greg Bamber, that by 2016 had extended to six editions and included Chris F. Wright and Nick Wailes as coeditors.

Russell's academic career took a new departure in 1987 when he accepted the Chair in Industrial Relations at the University of Sydney. Russell characterises this period as the 'golden age' of industrial relations teaching from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s at the University of Sydney, with rising numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students in industrial relations. Russell also assisted with the formation of the Australian Centre for

Industrial Relations Teaching and Research (ACIRRT) in 1989 and lobbied for the first Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey, in collaboration with Ron Callus.

A consistent pattern across Russell's career has been his enthusiasm for working on a range of international research projects with a variety of research collaborators. Many of these research projects have explored the impact of globalisation on work and industrial relations in manufacturing and service industries. One example involves a research project exploring the Hyundai Motor Company's efforts to establish automobile manufacturing facilities in India, with Chung-sok Suh and Seung-ho Kwon. Hyundai Motors India attempted to implement a hybrid approach to lean production that involved more hierarchical management structures, greater surveillance of shopfloor workers by line managers, and less focus on teamwork than was evident under the Toyota production system. Workforce resistance to this management system of workplace control ultimately led to a successful independent union organising campaign and the negotiation of a collective agreement with the workforce. Into the 2000s, Russell undertook further studies of the global automobile, airline, and retail banking industries.

Russell's theoretical frame of reference is pluralist, and he acknowledges the substantial decline in the bargaining power of workers and unions over his working life, the rise in job insecurity, and the concomitant increase in managerial prerogatives enhanced by legislation introduced by neoliberal governments. The decline in employee and union rights in Australia reinforced his perspective that there needs to be a more radical shift towards greater equality of rights between employees and employers and that '... the case for more radical reforms to restore the balance between the parties in industrial relations is compelling'. (162).

In the concluding chapter, Russell emphasises his long-standing interest in industrial democracy and worker participation in decision-making. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he advocates the negotiation of a social contract between government, employers, and the trade union movement to enable more effective responses to future crises. Drawing on his knowledge of several Nordic countries, Russell suggests that this social contract should involve Australian governments focussing on achieving full employment and investing in a comprehensive system of vocational training and education. The social contract would also seek to provide trade unions with a stronger institutional role in the Australian industrial relations system, enhance worker voice in decision-making, and support the expansion of industry-wide bargaining arrangements.

Overall, this is an important book that deserves to be widely read. It successfully combines personal history with developments in the discipline of industrial relations over the working life of the author. There are rich descriptions of numerous research projects and useful summaries of key findings that highlight the breadth of Russell's research interests over several decades. Much of the content will be of considerable interest to readers of this journal and to early career scholars contemplating a research and teaching future in industrial relations.

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