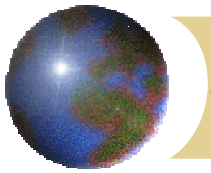


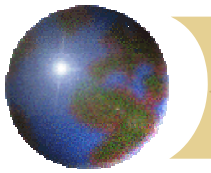
Chp. 1: Introduction

- Overview
 - Why is employment relations (ER) an interesting & ever-changing topic?
 - Concept/definition of ER
 - Encompassing, wide-ranging & multi-disciplinary: a difficult & growing field
 - Language & concepts are important
 - Media treatment of ER & academic detachment: both fall short of ideals



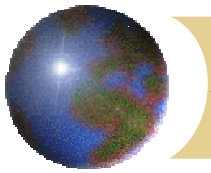
Introduction to ER

- Employment relations is a 'hot' topic
 - Many changes recently
 - Diverse position of the key actors
 - Unstable environment & public policy
-But there are no clear answers
 - 'there are few certainties in employment relations, no easy answers, and many ambiguities and unresolved issues (D&R 2001: 5)



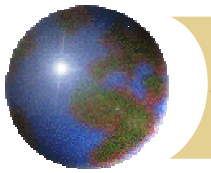
Employment relations is ?

- The concept/term E.R. is contested
 - Shift from industrial/labour to E.R.
 - Why has there been this shift?
 - New research & theory fields
 - There were always 'boundary' problems
 - Relatively new 'discipline'
 - Multi-disciplinary foundation which has subsequently been enlarged
 - Fashion & academic 'turf war'



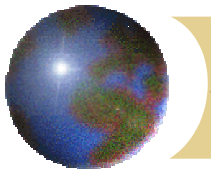
Employment relations could be?

- See definition – R&L 2001: 5
- D&R: 8: power & interests, strategies, rules & processes, contexts (see also p. 6)
- Encompassing: diverse disciplines
 - Disciplines ask different questions and are interested in different issues (see D&R: 7)
 - Different angles lead to new ideas: contest between disciplines; creation of new sub-disciplines (eg. psychological contracts)
 - Biases, information search & analytical methods



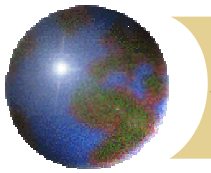
Employment relations could be (II)?

- Encompassing: macro & micro levels
 - NZ: balance between efficiency & equity?
 - A way to understand the difference between ECA & ERA in terms of philosophy
 - Public policy dilemma: macro outcomes & fair processes v/s flexibility for both parties
- Complexity & 'knowledge explosion'
 - Growth in all disciplines & sub-disciplines



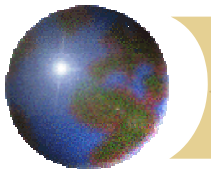
Multi-disciplinary problems

- Tendency to become specialised
 - Eg. lawyers, labour market analysts
 - Transmission of ideas becomes both easier & more difficult (eg. internet/on-line stats but also information 'overload')
 - Impact of contexts is often overlooked
- Topic is becoming more 'global'
 - Concepts are culturally biased



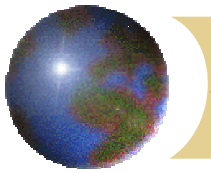
Concepts & language

- Language is important – creates images
 - Images => influence on actual behaviour
 - Eg. state intervention in NZ prior & after 1984
- Contest of ideas through images
- Ideal of academic attachment
 - Wide perspective
 - Establishing theories & principles
 - Analysing long-term issues & trends



Media treatment of ER

- We are biased and so is the media
 - We seek 'information' to be confirmed
- Media focus: 'dramatic events'
- Media coverage has changed
 - Commercial & entertainment values
 - Shorter, sharper but less political
 - Monopolies dominate: narrow coverage
- Shift in the 1990s – after the ECA?



Media treatment of ER - II

- Media coverage post 1991
 - Less focus re: collective bargaining & union activity – diffusion & less important
 - Lack of ER concensus: ER was a key policy issue in 1993, 1996 and 1999 elections
- What were the ER topics in the media in
 - the last week, the last 3 months, last year?