The failure of labor-management cooperation at two Maine paper mills: A case study

The Failure of Labor-Management Cooperation at Two Maine Paper Mills: A Case Study

Michael G. Hillard
Advances in Industrial & Labor Relations
ISSN: 0742-6186
Publication date: 22 December 2005

Abstract
Labor management cooperation, and the adoption of high-performance work systems (HPWS), are central topics in recent industrial relations research, with much emphasis given to “best-practice” success stories. This paper uses a case study analysis, relying on conventional, and oral history interviews, to explore why managers, union leaders, and workers in two Maine paper mills rejected the cooperation and the HPWS model. It explores how local history and culture, regional factors like the dramatic International Paper (IP) strike in Jay, Maine, instability in industry labor relations, management turnover, and instability in corporate governance contributed to these two mills rejection of Scott Paper Corporation's "Jointness" initiative during the period from 1988 to 1995. The study argues that intra-management divisions blocked cooperation on the management side, and that the Jay strike created a "movement culture" among Maine's paper workers, who developed a class-conscious critique of HPWS as a tactic in class warfare being perpetrated by paper corporations.

Citation

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Copyright © 2005, Emerald Group Publishing Limited

To read the full version of this content please select one of the options below

You may be able to access this content by logging in via Shibboleth, Open Athens or with your Emerald Account.

If you think you should have access to this content, click the button to contact our support team.