

PAT JESS

What caused the branch plant of a large multinational to close down in an area where industrial jobs are scarce?

Maynooth College Geography Department published a study about the area. One of its authors explains some of the background to the closure of the multinational, Colm Reagan.

COLM REAGAN

Well when we, we did the study here in 1980. We did our fieldwork here in 1980 and we subsequently came back to area about six or seven times up to 1982. And we interviewed the management before the plant closed down, and they mentioned particular items that seemed to them to cause a problem in terms of investment in this area. Specifically they mentioned the lack of an industrial consciousness among the workers, then the manager particularly singled out absenteeism, laziness and a general unwillingness to fit in with what he described as proper industrial relations.

Subsequently, we interviewed the workers and we got a different story from them, they referred to the domineering attitude of the management. They referred to the fact that the management seemed to be inflexible in that many of the workers were also involved in part time farming and that there wasn't any flexibility worked into the plant and relations in the plant to allow them do part time farming for harvesting for taking in hay and things like that. They also referred to the fact that the plant itself physically was a problem in that they didn't like the interior with no windows.

Many of the workers told us that they were, much prefer, they would have much preferred to work down the road in the Údarás plant in Kilcar. They felt that the climate in the plant in Kilcar was better, that management appreciated a little bit more closely the problems and their traditions and the culture of the area, and that there was the possibility of introducing flexibility into working relations so that people could do part time farming and at the same time hold down an industrial job. And also they felt that the management were much in tune with what was going on locally and had much more appreciation of local culture.

[End of recording]