
BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Albrow, *Do Organizations Have Feelings?* London: Routledge, 1997, £45.00, paper £14.95, xiii + 184 pp.

It has been a remarkably refreshing experience to read this collection of Martin Albrow's reflections on and reconstructions of the sociology of organisations. For one thing, I was reminded of reading some of the early essays, such as 'The study of organizations – objectivity or bias?', as an undergraduate student and again as a Ph.D. student in the early 1970s. Hence, my memory and pleasure in reading them initially was refreshed. For another thing, I was reminded of several discussions that David Dunkerley and I had when we were writing a book together in the later 1970s. David had been one of Martin's students and evidently he had made a substantial impact on his thinking. My experience, unfortunately, was more textually and discursively mediated, but it was no less evident I recall, especially, the Macmillan publication of the book-length essay on *Bureaucracy* in 1970. To re-read some of these essays is to be transported back to a time when the sociology of organisations in Britain showed a genuine promise, in the wake of Silverman's 1970 *The Theory of Organizations*, and the Open University course on *People in Organizations*, which included Salaman and Thompson's book of the same title. It was an exciting and formative time, intellectually, for many people working in the field. (What happened to that promise is another story about the institutional rise and rise of the Business School and a new type of student body, and their effects on how knowledge is produced, defined and consumed.)

What comes through every essay in the book is a lifelong debate with Max Weber. The debate is one that is conducted from a position that mixes great respect for, scholarly indebtedness to, and exegetic authority on, the great man. However, authority that he is, Albrow never merely 'reads' Weber but always uses him as a resource. In the last essays, written after or at about the same time as publication of his award-winning *The Global Age* (1996) there is some distancing from Weber. Not, one should hasten to add from an approach that is still recognisably Weberian, as from any notion that organisations in the global age are a seamless recreation of essential features first laid down as contingent features in an earlier age. Weber conceived of only as a theorist of bureaucracy, and bureaucracy as the template for a timeless structural contingency theory of organizations, is anathema to Albrow's scholarly disposition. We live in post-modern times, he says, and cannot simply keep on doing business as usual when our organisations have been transformed by technologies, practices, and effects that no pioneer could have envisaged.

These essays are well worth reading one more time for those who have read them before, such as myself. (For instance, I found myself finding material to use in a paper that I was writing at the same time as I read the book.) For readers who have never had the pleasure of reading Martin Albrow previously – and it is a pleasure as his prose is crystal clear in its lucidity – the book cannot be recommended sufficiently. For any harried instructor, faced with the task of seeking to define for undergraduate students the singularity of a sociological approach to organisations (rather than, say, an organisation theory approach), I think that there is no better current guide.

The essays have many hallmarks of a classic statement: the older essays continue to be relevant, while the newer essays have something that builds upon, but never

merely repeats, the early work. And running through the whole text is an engagement with the finest mind that sociology every produced – Max Weber. If one were to identify Albrow with any of the fashionable schools of organisation theory it would be with sociological institutionalism, but in a far more Weberian way than is the wont for the majority of U.S. practitioners of this school. Yet, while Albrow is clearly one of the preeminent scholars of organisation sociology in the English language, it is an English sociology that seems not to be addressed on the other side of the Atlantic, despite its affinities. Albrow, to the best of my knowledge, is rarely if ever indexed by U.S. scholars in the leading research journals. In one respect, this is hardly surprising; neither is Max Weber, except in an honorific, passing and usually mistaken way as a founder of the rational school of classical management – along with F. W. Taylor, with whom he is so often associated. Weber was never a sociologist of efficiency; nor was he a dry and desiccated structural rationalist, immune to the role of feelings, emotions and culture in organisation life. Martin Albrow rescues Weber from the asides and references of so many who have patently never read him with the care, dedication and effort that it takes to try and read him properly – in the appropriate framework of intellectual ideas. Albrow, in his development of Weber's ethics, as well as of his account of the overall rise of western rationalism, provides that framework for those unwilling to construct it for themselves. These essays constitute an impressive defence for the continuing usefulness of the sociological imagination.

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Mats Alvesson and Yvonne Du Billing, *Understanding Gender and Organizations*, London: Sage, 1997, £40.00, paper £14.99, viii + 248 pp.

The first three chapters of *Understanding Gender and Organizations* establish the approach taken by the authors of this valuable addition to the field of gender and organisation studies. Alvesson and Billing argue that gender relations in organisations vary across as well as within time and place; that organisations are not only influenced by gender relations in the wider society, but also (re)produce such relations internally and externally; and that it is methodologically problematic to claim to present gender and organisations 'as they really are': the more appropriate way forward is reflexive, aiming to raise critical awareness of the gendered ways in which we organise. This text, then, is both like and unlike other texts on gender and organisations – like because it makes a case for the analysis of organisations using gender, but unlike in that it avoids the over-simplifications of many other texts. Alvesson and Billing see their own 'critical-interpretive' (44) position as somewhere in the middle of existing 'gender positions' (23).

Chapter 4 argues for a 'social constructivist' perspective on masculinities and femininities, suggesting that it allows us to link macro, meso and micro levels in an analysis of how we *live* our gender, and acknowledges historical/cultural variations in what is understood to be masculine or feminine. Alvesson and Billing also value the way social constructivism loosens the connections between gender and biology, and point out that this type of analysis may also render us more independent of the power of discursive gender categories. The above is part of what might be seen as the Foucauldian flavour of this text. Alvesson and Billing go on to provide a social constructivist understanding of the gendered division of labour, arguing that the gender symbolism of jobs speaks of a deeper cultural logic about what specific kinds of work involve and what 'men' and 'women' are.

Alvesson and Billing also identify problems with the social constructivist perspective, warning that using 'masculinity' and 'femininity' as tools in organisational analysis may serve to reproduce stereotypes about what men and women are. However, this difficulty is recognised by other writers in this area, who also address the problems inherent in using these labels to refer to arbitrary sets of characteristics, and who acknowledge that the labels themselves have considerable discursive power. Moreover, given Alvesson and Billing's emphasis on exceptions to the rule of predictably gendered subjects, they perhaps underestimate the degree to which many of us struggle to perform gender in *conventional* ways (Brewis, Hampton and Linstead, 1997).

In Chapter 5, Alvesson and Billing continue the themes developed in Chapter 4 by exploring the connections between culture and gender relations in organisations. Here they reiterate a general theme of their text: while cultures may be gendered in the sense that men and women have different types of orientation to work, other differences criss-cross these orientations and may weaken them. Culture also, for Alvesson and Billing, is simultaneously facilitating (in its production of meaning) and constraining – which again sounds Foucauldian in its emphasis. The authors go on to explore cultural rituals, artefacts and metaphors, providing instances of the ways in which these aspects of culture might be gendered. In general, however, Alvesson and Billing emphasise the danger of over-imposing gendered understandings on workplace ideas, symbols and behaviours. The chapter concludes with a discussion of sexuality in organisations, this being seen as '[a] crucial gender aspect of organizational culture . . .' (120). However, the authors are shy of the tendency to see sexuality everywhere in organisations, as they are of the tendency to see gender everywhere. None the less, they stress that sexuality is important in understanding sexual harassment, in providing a source of pleasure and identity at work, and also note the role of sexual attractiveness in jobs. Their emphasis on the last three aspects counteracts a reading of sexuality at work as characterised only by ' . . . power, seduction, sexism and oppression.' (123) However, it is surprising that discussion of non-heterosexual sexualities is missing, given that gender is at work in the derogation of homosexuality/bisexuality in society, and in the organisation more specifically (Brewis, Hampton and Linstead 1997).

Chapters 6 and 7 review research around gender, leadership and management, siting this within a general recognition of the drift towards a 'feminizing' of managerial literature and practice. Alvesson and Billing identify four positions on women's movement into management positions in organisations: the equal opportunities position (self-evident); the meritocratic position (sex discrimination equals inefficient utilisation of human resources); the special contribution position (men and women are different, and make complementary contributions to organisations); and the alternative values position (men and women are different, and women should seek to organise separately from men to avoid their 'corrupting' influence). The authors suggest that a review of these positions leads us to question the significance of an increase in the numbers of female managers. Indeed, they close with the suggestion that increases in the numbers of women in junior and middle management, as compared to greater numbers in senior management may have more impact on the experience of the majority of workers.

In the last two chapters of this text, Alvesson and Billing discuss how the field of gender and organisation might be developed. Here as elsewhere they take a Foucauldian line which is sensitive to the truth effects of academic work, and argue that intellectual analysis ought to be disruptive rather than confirmatory. Alvesson and Billing also argue that thought needs to be given to ways in which

gender can be used as part of a 'repertoire' of organisational 'interpretation', alongside other aspects of social life such as class, age, race, etc., so that gender moves in and out of centre stage in analysis. The authors go on to suggest that we should not neglect the role of women's subjectivities in organisational processes, including ways in which women understand themselves in potentially reactionary ways. Furthermore, they suggest that gender relations might be changing at the micro level '... through development of new ideas and orientations among women as well as men ...', rather than through policy imposition 'from above' (205). These are both arguments which I have pursued myself and which demonstrate, again, the Foucauldian tone of many of Alvesson and Billing's arguments. They seem to me to be paramount in pushing forward our understanding of how gender works and how gender relations might be changed.

In Chapter 9, Alvesson and Billing offer what I see as their most innovative arguments. They begin with the point that the distinction man/woman often homogenises, and therefore imposes gender on accounts of organisational life in which it is not, in fact, a 'fundamental organizing principle' (191). Moreover, since the terms 'man' and 'woman' often imply false unities, they suggest that social science should not reproduce the discourse of gender difference but, rather, aim to subvert it. For example, the authors propose that organisational analyses leave out gender signifiers (man/women, he/she) completely, and focus instead on masculinities and femininities in organisational action and talk (221). Such strategies are outlined in order to make the taken-for-granted seem arbitrary (219), and in general imply an understanding of subjects as made up of different discursive elements, as against seeing them as carriers of static, predictable gender characteristics.

I would however take issue with Alvesson and Billing's apparent assumption that gender difference is a bad thing, being far more constraining than it is productive. This seems out of kilter with the book's insistence that generalisations are problematic. These later sections also make the related point that gender studies ought to work towards the abolition of gender identities. What Alvesson and Billing appear to suggest is that men/women ought, in the future, to renounce understanding themselves as men/women. However, since women have historically not been permitted a fully validated subject position, to call for the dismantling of gendered subjectivity may be to make a virtue out of a necessity.

None the less, overall this is an excellent contribution to the field of gender and organisation studies. It is detailed and rigorous, providing a useful critique of existing material and suggestions for the future which progress some of the most significant recent developments in the area. I would thoroughly recommend the book to anyone who is interested in organisation studies – whether they think gender is significant or not.

References

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- Brewis, J., Hampton, M. P. and Linstead, S. (1997) 'Unpacking Priscilla: subjectivity and identity in the organization of gendered appearance', *Human Relations*, 50, 10, 1275–1304.

Barbara Bagihole *Equal Opportunities and Social Policy: Issues of Gender, Race and Disability*, London: Longman, 1997, paper £14.99, 221 pp.

This book, like others in the Longman Social Policy in Britain Series, is aimed chiefly at students and provides a comprehensive and readable guide to equal opportunities ideology, legislation, policy and practice in Britain. It focuses on three key equality dimensions: gender, 'race' (which appears in inverted commas throughout, denoting its contested use and its social construction) and disability. It explores these dimensions systematically in specific areas of concern to social policy: education, employment, income maintenance, social services, health and housing. The book gives a clear, statistically based picture of disadvantage on the three equality dimensions featured, reviews a wealth of material, and is well referenced. As such it should be a welcome boon for students of social policy, women's studies and equal opportunities. However, most unfortunately, as with all books that focus on policy issues, although most of the material presented remains highly pertinent, it already has an out of date feel to it. It was clearly written before the last general election, and while it may be argued that the change of government has not led to the policy shifts one might have expected (or hoped for), nevertheless there are differences in discourse, prioritising and focus. Reading the book serves to point up exactly how the agenda has changed.

The strength of the book is undoubtedly its comprehensive cover of the three equality dimensions across a number of policy areas. A considerable volume of research findings are brought together and succinctly summarised. The political arithmetic of equality presented shows to good effect the impact of gender, race and disability on life chances and the allocation of resources. The legislative base is described in an accessible form: this will be extremely useful for students who up until now have had to consult a range of sources to find material which addresses gender, race and disability within such a range of policy arenas. The material on disability is particularly welcome given it has been less systematically addressed in general texts and in light of the new disability legislation.

The theoretical approaches to equality and equal opportunities policies are clearly set out, and the author clearly traces the shift from regulatory to redistributive approaches. Here, Bagihole illustrates the devastatingly inadequate conceptualisation of equal opportunities that underlies successive policy approaches. While much ground is covered, I was surprised that more attention was not paid to theoretical frameworks such as the gender contract (referred to twice in passing) and gendered welfare regimes. Some aspects of this could have been further developed.

An interpretation of the influence of the European Union (EU) on the development of equality legislation in Britain is another of the book's main features. User-friendly accounts of the various Directives and other European legislation will be welcomed by those who find original sources hard to find or fathom. Again, here the general health warning of all policy-related books applies: it is unfortunate that the book was already in press during the June 1997 Amsterdam Summit of the EU, when a commitment to a more comprehensive approach to equal opportunities was made. While this will have to be followed through by Directives to have any impact, nevertheless the Treaty provides a firmer legal base for positive action for women, as well as introducing equal treatment for all citizens on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

The EU's current policy of mainstreaming equality (integrating equality into all policies, programmes and actions) is given one brief mention but no explanation. Given that it represents a different conceptual base from that which informed

either the legally based equal treatment approach of the 1970s or the 'supplementary' positive action programmes to accommodate difference which followed in the 1980s and 1990s, and is now being actively developed in European and U.K. policies, mainstreaming might have warranted further discussion. It has been the British Equal Opportunities Commission's main strategic approach to delivering equal opportunities for women and men for some years and featured strongly in the Fourth United Nations conference on women in Beijing in 1996.

Despite these quibbles and differences in reading, this is certainly a book to recommend to students. It is commendably accessible and well structured (indeed, it is almost too well structured: introductions introduce and conclusions summarise in a highly predictable, formalised fashion). The book is a useful resource. It will be welcomed by students trying to get to grips with a deceptively complex concept and the unwieldy story of policy development, implementation and evaluation. There are few examples of good practice to excite 'policy-makers' and practitioners: rather the shortcomings of approaches are systematically laid bare in a relentless tale of failure, to a greater or lesser extent. Nevertheless, the book builds up a powerful case for a more sophisticated understanding of inequalities and the need for more appropriate policies to address them.

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Roy Church and Quentin Outram, *Strikes and Solidarity: Coalfield Conflict in Britain 1889–1966*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, £45.00, xx + 314 pp.

The militancy of the British miners is legendary. A former General Secretary of the Post Office workers' union once referred to them as the 'praetorian guard of the working class'. Until the late 1950s it was commonly held that mineworkers would strike 'at the drop of a hat'. As Vic Allen put it in *The Militancy of the British Miners*, 'Miners had a special place in the mythology of struggle which set them apart from others' (Moor Press, 1981). He pointed out that in 1956 78.4 per cent of all British strikes occurred in the mining industry. For a short while afterwards the miners' militant reputation wore thin as this annual percentage plummeted throughout the following decade, reaching a mere 4.1 per cent in 1970. Nevertheless, their combative image was fully restored by their epic confrontations with the Heath government in 1972 and 1974 and subsequently immortalised by their twelve-month do-or-die struggle against the Thatcher administration in the mid-1980s.

What makes *Strikes and Solidarity* such a telling contribution to the literature is the way that it qualifies and, in some ways, deconstructs the myth of the militant miner. A central argument of this highly absorbing and illuminating volume is that our senses have been deceived by a series of high-profile and politically charged miners' strikes over the last 100 years which have misleadingly endorsed the view of a highly politicised and cohesive workforce.

In focusing on the nature and incidence of 'ordinary' local strikes, as opposed to the more salient 'set-piece battles' enshrined in industrial folklore, Church and Outram identify major regional and temporal variations in the propensity to strike. For example, while the 'Celtic coalfields' of Scotland and South Wales were permanently conflict-ridden, it was only in the 1890s and in the post-nationalisation period from 1947 that Yorkshire miners showed a regular appetite for industrial action. Church and Outram also show how there has been a

tendency, down the years, for relatively small numbers of strike-prone collieries to push up the nationwide total, giving a false impression of widespread industrial turmoil. Their evidence further suggests that the principle of 'one out, all out' was seldom observed in practice: 'domestic sectionalism indicated by low strike participation rates was the long-term historic norm in the industry and "solidarity" was reserved for the occasional district, regional and national strikes organized beyond the confines of pit and village' (100).

Most of the above conclusions rest on statistical information drawn from manuscript ledgers at the Public Record Office. Such data is unavailable for the periods before 1889 and since 1966, hence the book's restricted historical focus. However, one of the most compelling and ambitious aspects of the study is that it attempts to juxtapose general statistical information with more in-depth case study analysis, sometimes extending to the comparative histories of 'matched pairs' of collieries – one strike-prone, the other not. By supplementing their statistical data with archival material, biographies of major trade union personalities, literature accounts and even a small number of interviews with former miners, the authors endeavour to address empirical historical data via social scientific theory and concepts.

The study is least effective where statistical methods are used to ascertain the strength of the relationships between strike propensity and possible predisposing structural factors like the size of colliery, the degree to which miners were isolated from other types of worker, the density of trade union membership, local management styles and the harshness of working conditions. Clear difficulties are evident in the authors' attempts to operationalise such variables. For example, data regarding average seam heights and depths of workings are used as proxies for high grievance levels, the latter for the dubious reason that 'Deep mines tended to be hot and so great depth tended to affect working conditions adversely' (183).

By contrast, the study is most persuasive where the authors employ sociological constructs to explain broad statistical patterns. This is most evident where they borrow and develop the concept of 'social capital', i.e. the presence in the locality of shared values, social networks and institutions – such as miners' trade union lodges and institutes, co-operative churches and chapels – and skilled individuals to facilitate communication throughout the community, to account for variations in the solidarity and strike-proneness of different groups of miners. As Church and Outram explain, 'The successful creation of solidarity requires first, appropriate social capital; second, time for its construction; and third, a concertation of interests where this does not already exist, typically by the transformation of an issue affecting one section to one affecting all sections' (116). Thus, grievances affecting one section of workers are less likely to be sympathetically supported where the requisite social capital does not exist, there is insufficient time to develop the issue before it perishes, and/or it is difficult to relate the issue to everyone's interests.

Despite the above reservations regarding their use of statistical measures, Church and Outram are to be congratulated on producing such an eclectic, innovative and, indeed, enviable piece of work. Certainly there is much to substantiate their claim that, by adopting such a systematic but pluralistic approach, they have 'offered a route to the development of greater and more concrete understandings of the origins, processes and outcomes of industrial conflict – and of industrial harmony' (268).

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Eugenia Date-Bah (ed.), *Promoting Gender Equality at Work: Turning Vision into Reality*, 1997, paper £15.95, xiv + 241 pp.

The value of this book lies in its broad international perspective covering equal opportunities at work in the developed, developing and post-communist worlds. Few comparative publications on gender and work adopt such an inclusive approach, focusing instead on either the industrialised market economies, or the 'Third World', or the formerly state-planned regions. The global scope of Eugenia Date-Bah's collection enables us to see all these areas as economically integrated and to make cross-national comparisons over a range of gender issues without being limited by regional boundaries. However, this approach has its own limitations, since what is examined on such a broad scale cannot also be examined in depth, nor placed within specific cultural and historical contexts. The book tries to compensate for this to some extent by including a number of single-country or single-region studies, such as a legal case study from Lesotho, an assessment of what employers' organisations could do for women workers in Malaysia, and an analysis of the effect on women of the economic changes in East Central Europe. But the book as a whole must be valued for its globally integrated framework rather than its contextualised interpretations.

The editor, a Ghanaian sociologist and academic who works on equality issues at the ILO, is well qualified for the task of bringing together a variety of disparate concerns on women's work across the globe. She has produced a coherent volume which combines consideration of the structural processes of globalisation, structural adjustment and economic transition with the specific problems of sexual harassment, equal pay and precarious forms of employment, as well as strategic questions of implementation through trade union organisation and the pursuit of legal rights.

Date-Bah's position is that the rapid socio-economic changes taking place towards the end of the millenium are disabling for women's attempts to achieve equality at work, and that a 'comprehensive, integrated strategy' for women workers is needed (1). The book contains four sections. The first looks at the macroeconomic context, and covers statistical problems in comparing international measures of women's work as well as methodological problems of separating out the effects of recession, structural adjustment and longer-term trends in women's employment. It analyses the reasons for the decline of women's labour force participation in the transition from centrally planned to market economies, and examines the damaging effect of globalisation and export processing zones on women's work in Africa, compounded by AIDS, civil conflict and environmental degradation. Finally, it traces the impact on female labour of changes in work organisation and technology, including biotechnology, computer technology and just-in-time production methods. Section 2 focuses on working conditions and social security, examining sexual harassment in developed and developing countries such as Jamaica, the Philippines, France and Australia and the changes needed in social welfare provisions to promote women's equality, given that most women in the developing world are excluded from benefits because they work in the informal sector. The third section, which addresses the implementation of equality laws, draws on a case study of Lesotho showing that labour law alone is not enough, that family and property law must also be looked at, and that informal sector workers fall outside the legal framework in any case. It finishes with an international assessment of various mechanisms for enforcing equality such as administrative investigations, legal aid and judicial actions. Section 4 analyses the role of institutions, including a case study from Malaysia on what can be done by employers' organisations and a global overview of what

women in trade unions can do to promote equality. Here, women's concentration among informal sector workers means that they are excluded from trade union organisation. The cross-national overviews and single-country studies together provide a valuable source of materials on equality for women at work in an international framework.

There are, nevertheless, certain contradictions which run through the collection and which are not explicitly addressed in either the introductory or concluding chapters. One is the assumption that implementing equality provisions is consistent with economic efficiency and is good for business in a capitalist production system. For example, according to the editor, 'Improving [women's] conditions . . . is essential for economic efficiency, owing to the beneficial impact of improved working conditions on productivity and the morale of workers' (14). What is the evidence for this series of causal effects? I suggest that the 'business case' for equal opportunities and sex equality at work is more an assertion of hope than an argument substantiated by data, especially in the light of the intransigence of most private sector organisations to initiate material change in the gender balance of power, and the extent to which women's unpaid and low paid work subsidises the production of profit. A different position is taken in Barbara Einhorn's analysis of the change from state-planned to market economies, in which she acknowledges that an organisation 'struggling to survive in the market is likely to shed as an "optional extra" the child-care facilities that were previously its responsibility' (69). Yoke Wan Lee shows that in Malaysia, when employers' organisations have supported equality initiatives, it is because of their own interests in resolving the labour shortage and acquiring a flexible labour force, not because of their concern with women's equality (230).

What then happens to gender equality when it is not in the interests of the organisation? This question needs to be examined because it relates directly to the editor's argument that economic change is undermining rather than improving women's position at work. In order to propose a 'comprehensive, integrated strategy' for challenging women's inequality at work, we need some conceptual understanding of why and how the changes in the global economy are damaging women's equality in the workplace. Is gender inequality incidental to the organisation of global production, or is the success of the market economy predicated on women's inequality? Without a clear perspective on this issue, the question of strategy remains uncertain.

What this book thankfully does not do is fall into the trap of assuming that women's position at work must necessarily be better in the developed than in the developing or the post-communist countries. For example, the U.K. is quoted as an example of the 'appallingly low success rates . . . and the difficult and lengthy procedures' involved in taking equal pay claims to Industrial Tribunals (199), while Afghanistan and India are used as models to show the greater effectiveness of class actions over individual complaints in equal pay claims (203). The book therefore contributes to the international debate on equal opportunities at work without at the same time reproducing the myth that only the fully developed market economies are 'advanced' in the matter of gender equality.

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Rick Delbridge, *Life on the Line in Contemporary Manufacturing: The Workplace Experience of Lean Production and the 'Japanese' Model*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, £35.00, xiii + 232 pp.

Until recently, analysis of lean production has focused primarily on those technical and organisational changes at work which secure for capital the elimination of unnecessary human and material costs in production. The International Motor Vehicle Program and other influential management benchmarking exercises catalysed enormous business and academic interest in Japanese-influenced techniques of managing inventory and labour. However, only rarely have the experiences of workers who labour under systems of lean production been considered in any detail. Delbridge's book is one of just a small number of recent workplace studies and ethnographies which attempt to redress this imbalance by critically examining the impact of lean production management techniques on factory employees.

The book's analysis rests upon extensive qualitative data collected through participant observation techniques at two manufacturing firms in 1991. The author's reliance on ethnography reflects his ontological and epistemological assumptions, which firmly reject positivistic and deductive methodologies. As Delbridge replies to the self-interrogative: 'If I want to understand what it is like working under JIT and TQM shall I sit in my office and mail out questionnaires or shall I go and observe it, experience it, and ask people about it at first hand?' (15). The result is the generation of 'hundreds of pages of hand-written notes describing and recording the day-to-day events on the shop-floor of the research settings' (21). The contents of these notes are liberally reproduced throughout the book, resulting in a piece of work rich in descriptive analysis but also, like many ethnographies, more limited in its explanation of the underlying structural forces which can shape social action.

The case studies comprise Valleyco, a medium-sized, European auto-components factory located in South Wales, and Nippon CTV, a south of England-based, Japanese-owned TV assembly transplant. Chapters 2 to 5 and 7 describe the case study firms' work organisation, labour processes, systems of management control and paucity of employee participation. Chapters 6 and 8 examine workers' individual and collective responses to the systems of control. Chapters 9 and 10 summarise conclusions and locate the findings within wider debates surrounding the nature of lean production.

The capitalist wage-effort bargain is characterised by elements of consent and conflict. Workers rarely overtly challenge management's right to direct the labour process but they do seek to forge their own localised controls and to place limits on particular managerial attempts to intensify the rate of labour exploitation. Delbridge uses his two case studies to provide a neo-Weberian angle on this. At Valleyco, a piece-work system of remuneration and control, coupled with different facets of market uncertainty, forces management to depend on processes of informal negotiation with labour, providing the shop-floor workforce some influence over the pace and organisation of work. At Nippon CTV, by contrast, it seems that prison walls have been substituted for the frontier of control. Delbridge argues that the Nippon management has marginalised uncertainty through greater discipline and control. That is, supplier reliability, predictability of customer orders, assembly line production techniques, the discipline imposed by reduced buffers, individual worker accountability and the maintenance of formal surveillance systems combine to ensure worker compliance with, if not support for, management objectives of maximised product output and quality. Nippon CTV's management regime secures the twin objectives of efficient capital accumulation

(‘quantitative efficiency’) and the near total subordination of labour (‘qualitative efficiency’).

The book contains an abundance of rich qualitative data on the social impact of these processes. At Valleyco, for example, a management system of ‘directed chaos’ caused by unpredictable supply systems and production schedules makes for a production process that is underpinned by informality. Here, workers practise systematic ‘soldiering’, they mislead industrial engineers and managers and maintain some counter-control over the pace of their work. But, increasingly, this counter-control is being undercut by the new interventionist powers of the customer. The book describes how one such Valleyco customer, Nissan, injects real fear and uncertainty into the minds of workers by sending in its own engineers to conduct time and motion studies on the Valleyco shop-floor. And at Nippon CTV, management control appears complete. Delbridge provides a persuasive diary account of life on this Japanese-style moving assembly line, where workers have to incessantly fit ten or so components within thirty-second cycles. The assembly line ‘hypnotises you after a while and when it stops it seems as if it is going backwards. I almost became entranced by it on occasions’ (90) he reports. Physically sick workers may remain on the line aided only by a sick bucket (127); labour flexibility is frowned upon because it impairs efficiency; the insanity of being shackled to a constantly moving line causes workers to turn on themselves in petty disagreements and conflicts; and when the buzzer sounds for the end of the shift, a stampede-like exit of workers results in a whole shop of nearly 400 people emptying in two minutes. This then is the stifling new world of the ‘post-Fordist’, ‘post-industrial’ workplace which Tony Blair and New Labour are so keen to promote as the industrial face of ‘Cool Britannia’.

One of the key findings of the book is that culturalist and institutionalist arguments over the development of the ‘Japanese’ model and ‘Japanisation’ are ill-founded in that they fail to recognise the defining characteristic of the model: ‘the way in which management seeks to marginalise uncertainty and simultaneously combine qualitative and quantitative efficiency’ (208). While not disagreeing with this I would question the way Delbridge conflates a system of heightened labour subordination with total management control. His concluding arguments stem almost exclusively from the Nippon case study data rather than Valleyco, which is a problem in itself, and they also convey a picture of workers actively engaged in merely ‘surviving’ in the cloying intensity of a management system which makes collective resistance almost impossible (189). The likelihood of a one-month ethnography (in the Nippon case) capturing the spasmodic nature of worker struggle at any one location might be reflected on here. Although Delbridge’s argument implicitly denies any potential for significant change, in various parts of the book workers clearly blame management for their grievances rather than attributing them to personal factors or more fatalistically to ‘the system’. The social categories of ‘them and us’ have not disappeared and, despite the introduction of certain forms of teamworking, these factory workers remain collective labour sharing the experience of an intensification of labour exploitation. In the same circumstances, workers in other Japanese electronics transplants have mounted campaigns of labour disruption, for example at Panasonics and Hitachi in South Wales and with this in mind Delbridge might have contemplated the *source* of the conflict which is inherent in the capitalist labour process and the possibilities for both social agents and politico-economic conditions to change.

However, I would not wish these criticisms to detract from what is a very detailed ethnographic account of the reality of contemporary mass production work. It provides a welcome antidote to the fallacious rhetoric of ‘empowerment’ and ‘enrichment’ which dominates too many management texts on this subject

and I suspect it will be widely read by both students and academics in industrial sociology.

ANDY DANFORD

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Tony Eardly and Anne Cordon, *Low Income Self-employment, Work Benefits and Living Standards: Studies in Cash and Care*, Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1996, £47.50, xiv+ 321 pp.

Self-employment grew rapidly in the U.K. in the 1980s, rising from 1.769 million people in 1980 to 3.47 million in 1990, according to Labour Force Survey (LFS) figures. Although the level dropped between 1990 and 1992, it increased again subsequently and by 1997 stood at 3.334 million. While the growth in the numbers recorded as self-employed was seen by government in this period as a vindication of the importance of the market and of entrepreneurial values, increased self-employment was accompanied by growing disparities in income amongst the self-employed.

This book explores the experience and living standards of the 'low-income' self-employed who are claiming family credit. Living standards are considered not only in terms of income and expenditure, but also in terms of the choices and constraints facing families. The book opens with an account of the growth in self-employment and goes on to review the financial circumstances of self-employed people. Its overview of the self-employed looks particularly at the difficulties of definition, since the 'self-employed' person cannot always be clearly distinguished from the employee. The authors then turn to the question of how self-employed income is measured. Their focus is on weekly income and they review published data and discuss the technical problems posed. Responses from the self-employed about income levels for example tend to report lower income than for employees. This may result from concealment of income by the self-employed but the authors point out that it could also reflect the difficulties for this group of reporting in a prescribed format.

The later chapters are based on research undertaken between 1991 and 1993 for the Department of Social Security, looking at family credit recipients and the importance of family credit in sustaining living standards. The authors show that there is a substantial group of self-employed people whose income level is low and whose position is insecure. The analysis of family credit returns indicates that the self-employed are likely to receive higher family credit payments than the employed. Self-employed incomes are lower and working hours are longer than those for the directly employed and family credits fail to bring the families of the self-employed to an income level commensurate with that of employed families in many cases. Through research interviews, the authors explored the experience of self-employed working parents who were in receipt of family credit. They point to the differences in experience based on the diverse occupational backgrounds and routes into and through self-employment. Some of the people whose positions were considered were from professional backgrounds, while others were in manual occupations; some had turned to self-employment as a consequence of redundancy, while others had followed a pattern of family activity or been attracted by the opportunities of self-employed life.

One of the more interesting features of the book is the attention which it gives to the position of self-employed women. Although the number of self-employed women grew during the 1980s it was from a low base and women remained a small minority – approximately one quarter – of the total number of self-

employed. Some of women's self-employed work may reflect family interests, through their involvement in a family business, usually without formal payment. The authors point to the substantial contribution made by women to this kind of business and also show that work outside the home is rare for women with self-employed partners. The authors also highlight the ways in which self-employment is used to reconcile economic activity and family commitments, sometimes on the fringes of the formal labour market. Many self-employed women have a work role which is home-based, such as outworking or paid childcare. Not all women are in a subordinate position to a partner, though; the book also reports on the minority of cases in which self-employed women were the main family breadwinner, often in a relationship which had previously been dual income. Single, self-employed parents were disadvantaged by the absence of support in the business as well as in the parenting role.

The self-employed have been relatively neglected in discussions of work and income and this study provides a useful counter to the traditional bias. To some extent though the book's title is rather misleading, since the research focus is on self-employed recipients of family credit and less attention is given to low-income self-employed who may not be in this category. There is some discussion of the problems of income for periods of sickness and old age. However, there is little attention to the work experience of the self-employed in terms of their relations with suppliers of work, for example in terms of slow pay as well as low pay. Many people became self-employed in this period because of unemployment, as organisations were restructured to reduce direct employment in favour of contracting-out or externalisation of labour. Such factors must be relevant where the circumstances of the self-employed derive not only from their own choices but from choices made by others which impact on their income and expectations.

JANET DRUKER

University of Greenwich

Sandra Fredman, *Women and the Law*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, £45.00, paper £17.99, 422 pp.

We live in a crazy, crazy world. And this world looks even odder when seen through the eyes of women in the recent past. How shall the financial resources essential for survival in a capitalist economy be allocated? By giving women least. Who shall perform the caring work necessary for continuation of our society? Women. How shall that work be remunerated? Little or not at all. And how shall women's paid work be organised? By clustering women into a narrow range of undervalued occupations.

How has this crazy world developed? What has permitted female disadvantage to be perpetuated despite great social change and struggle by women? Why on earth have women put up with all this blatant injustice? In other words, how has it happened, where are the culprits and why have they been so difficult to slay?

These are the main issues addressed by Sandra Fredman in her book. Although published as part of the Oxford Monographs on Labour Law series, it is a central tenet of the author's project that to understand how labour law has affected women, we need to look both at other types of law which affect women and beyond the law to other social forces shaping women's lives. The book adopts an historical approach, examining the nineteenth and twentieth century to investigate the changing contours of enduring gender disadvantage in the U.K.

It is this setting out of women's position over the last two hundred years which is the major strength of the book. Fredman has carefully researched and put together a wealth of information about various facets of women's lives. Chapter 2 examines *inter alia* how women's legal status changed upon marriage, their fight for the vote and their treatment in assistance and insurance-based relief schemes, while Chapters 3 and 4 examine women's employment in relation to job segregation, pay, education and training, setting these in the context of women's role in the family and their treatment by the social security system. The remaining chapters – more familiar terrain for equality lawyers – examine legal issues relating to women and work, at times drawing on other jurisdictions for lessons as to how to reform U.K. law and policy. The legal treatment of pregnancy and parenthood, pay, discriminatory practices and structures in the workplace, pensions and different legal mechanisms for improving women's position (litigation, positive action) are considered, evaluated and critiqued. Apart from this breadth of scope the author makes good use of telling details to illustrate some issues. For example, to know that 'women in the Post Office only secured the right to fresh air at lunchtime in 1911 after a strenuous campaign' (111) helps us to see the practical reality underpinning statistical analyses of segregation in work. Perhaps most importantly, in the latter half of the book the author presents a welter of complex, highly technical European and U.K. legislation and case-law in a clear, accessible and coherent fashion. While one may differ with her presentation of certain issues, overall the book achieves an account of law and practice in the field of gender equality which can be read and used by lawyers and non-lawyers alike. This in itself is a significant achievement.

Less convincing, however, is her identification of the 'culprits' in the perpetuation of women's enduring disadvantage. The chief culprits, identified in Chapter 1, and returned to periodically, are liberal principles – rationality, autonomy, individualism, equality and State neutrality within a free market – which present 'the most exacting challenge' (414). While it is clear that liberalism and neo-liberalism are important in considering how women have been able to make the gains they have (such as the vote) and the constraints they face, without deeper and more nuanced specification, such broad concepts are problematic as an explanatory framework for critiquing the nuts and bolts of gender equality legislation. For example, U.K. equal pay legislation is critiqued for being premised on the liberal principle of equality, essentially a comparative concept, based on what Fredman calls the 'male norm'. We are told that 'the male norm is expressed in the EqPA in its most concrete form' (234). But it seems to me that the problem is not essentially the liberal principle of equality or the 'male norm'. Women in the U.K. are paid less than men and they do not want to be. This claim can most usefully be made by looking at what men are paid – by comparing themselves with the 'male norm'. The problem with the U.K. legislation lies not in this but in how that comparison is carried out. This is not a necessary corollary of 'equality' or the 'male norm', as Fredman's positive evaluation of EC law – also premised on equality – on the following page bears out. Many of the pay cases used to support the argument that liberal principles prevent women's undervaluation being addressed are simply cases where the U.K. courts wrongly applied the equal pay legislation.

More fundamentally, while Fredman's book admirably depicts the tenacity of women's disadvantage through a 'paradoxical amalgam of liberal principles and pre-liberal status ascriptions' (413), these factors do not explain *why* it has been tenacious. Segregation of men and women can be illustrated – but not *explained* – by pointing to the exclusion of women from many professions in the nineteenth century or the growth of the postwar service industry. Similarly, while we can show

how women's monopoly of care work constrains their participation in the labour market, this does not explain why women have always cared. Indeed, the evidence Fredman presents from Sweden shows that even when parents are paid to care only 9 per cent of the leave-time available is used by fathers (219). Thus, it seems that to think that 'a thorough-going policy commitment . . . which relaxes the rigid boundary between work and family while maintaining terms and conditions' (224) will be sufficient to 'set us on the path to true equity' is overly hopeful. If anything, the evidence in this book points us towards the need to analyse in more detail the psychological construction of male and female identities, inside and outside the home. We want to know why men, in order to feel 'whole', have insisted on differentiating themselves from women by working in different spaces, receiving higher pay, doing little or no care work or housework and harassing women. For many men and women, an intimate relationship with a partner and building a family is a crucial part of the fulfilment of their identity. At present, however, women pay a very high price for this intimacy. Therefore, rather than seeing the 'male norm' as the problem perhaps it is the construction and playing out of the gendered roles informing the 'heterosexual norm' to which we need to turn our attention. It is, however, a book like Fredman's, with its meticulous research and broad historical scope, which opens up such possible directions for future research.

CLAIRE KILPATRICK

University of Bristol

Celia Lury, *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity*, London: Routledge, 1997, £47.50, paper £14.99, viii+ 248 pp.

By 1930 the proliferation of industrial, scientific and technological goods prompted Freud to call humans 'prosthetic Gods'; due to inventions such as the telescope, the gramophone and the train our abilities were no longer limited by our bodily capacities, they could be 'extended' far beyond them. For Celia Lury prosthetics have ramifications which exceed the merely practical, they go deeper, impacting on the very constitution of our identities. The basis of this bold assertion rests on her belief that self-understanding has been transformed, in contemporary Euro-American societies at least, from a process grounded in reflection – 'I think therefore I am' – to one founded on self-extension – 'I can therefore I am'. Prosthetics facilitate this self-extension which, in turn, lies 'at the heart of prosthetic cultures and the self-identities it makes possible' (219).

To substantiate this claim Lury examines one mode of extension, photography. In choosing this medium she is consciously opposing what she sees as the current preoccupation with narrative, an absorption which eclipses the importance of the visual. What is consequently overlooked, she argues, is the inextricable and formative relationship between vision and self-understanding; by investigating the photographic image we may come to know how it has 'contributed to novel configurations of personhood, self-knowledge and truth' (2).

Not surprisingly the genre of photography to which Lury first turns her attention is portraiture. Following the development of the photographic portrait, from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century to contemporary advertisements, a shift is perceived in the way human differences are represented; from one based on variety to one based on diversity. Diversity, as exemplified by recent Benetton advertising campaigns, is 'the containment of difference precisely through the alienation of type, the making strange of genre: it is a staging of the leap-frogging of the individual over the type in a play of difference, that is, as a

matter of style or personal taste' (72). The result is what Lury describes as the 'flexible' and 'transparent' individual; 'the ideal of an individual without narrative continuity or memory, lacking interiority and depth, who is instead flexibly constituted across contexts through a strategic display or performance of the effects of indifferentiation, adopting motives and claiming effects without regard for the conventional requirements of narrative coherence' (4). The performative mode of self-understanding is thus embedded in a process of experimentation (which Lury sees illustrated in the contemporary photographic practices of the family album) that make it 'possible for an individual to discard old selves, to try on personae and compare the multiplicity of subject-effects of retrodictive self-transformation' (84). By being able to dissociate from our biography and choose our own we can be said to acquire – using Harré's term – a prosthetic auto/biography or biographies. Here again the photographic portrait is said to play a significant part, albeit an equivocal one; it simultaneously encourages this experimental process while rendering identity ambiguous.

This ambivalent role is further explored through the phenomena of false memory syndrome and the digitalisation of the image. Via a discussion of the former Lury attempts to show how 'seeing photographically' can help alter ideas concerning self-identity which to begin with seem to be unrelated to photographic representations. The effects on self-understanding ensuing from the digitalisation of the image is analysed in relation to Walter Benjamin's notion of the 'optical unconscious'. In fact, the work of Benjamin is central to this book, particularly his concept of mimesis which Lury takes up and develops. Thus, she concludes by proposing the existence of two coexisting forms of mimesis; autopoiesis, which is complementary to, and blind imitation, which is antagonistic towards prosthetic culture. Ultimately mimesis as blind imitation 'may ... cause the viewer astonishment, and continue to provoke the question, "why is it I am alive *here* and *now*?"' (227).

This is a dense book which defies adequate précis and, despite the odd minor slip (David Crossley [18] should read Nick Crossley), helps bolster the important argument that the significance of the visual should not be adumbrated by an over-emphasis on narrative. Yet neither should we allow the visual to eclipse the investigation of phenomena associated with changes concerning the auditory, the tactile, the olfactory, the gustatory and the kinaesthetic.

TIM HOLT

The Royal Society

John R. Hall (ed.), *Reworking Class*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997, £41.50, paper £15.95, xiii + 408 pp.

We are all by now very familiar with the various attempts in the U.K. to rescue class analysis from its critics. The pages of *Sociology* over the last ten years have been replete with claims and counter-claims about both the promising future and the ante-diluvialism of class analysis. Thus the opportunity provided by the collection of essays in *Reworking Class* to see how the same issues are viewed by our American cousins is not without interest. Of course, the debate conducted in *Sociology* has been almost exclusively from within the mainstream of the discipline, and its terms have been set largely by the work of the resolutely anti-Marxist John Goldthorpe. However, because in the U.S. serious class analysis is almost wholly the province of Marxist sociologists and historians, these essays will provide readers with a second dimension to compare with British sociological discussions of class.

For a British sociologist associated with the mainstream, it would be all too facile to attempt to deride *Reworking Class*. Every essay in the book is grounded in an attempt to escape from the self-imposed Marxist straitjackets of teleology and determinism in historical and sociological explanation and thus to shift from wishful to critical thinking. Some reviewers might thus be tempted to concentrate on what has divided Marxist from sociological accounts and to be disdainful towards neo-Marxists who have finally seen the light. Such an approach would not simply be patronising; more importantly it would miss the degree to which a consensus is now emerging between serious analysts of class, whatever their theoretical pedigree. Moreover, this consensus is not merely about the continuing importance of class to our understanding of contemporary society. It is also, and most crucially, an agreement about the nature and purpose of sociology as a discipline. It involves a rejection not only of determinism and historicism, but also of the more recent and pernicious scourges associated with certain types of cultural analysis and of post-modernism in general, with their concomitant relativism and anti-scientism.

Reworking Class thus contains much that is of interest. It is divided into three sections and twelve substantial chapters. Following a short foreword by Patrick Joyce and Hall's introduction, Section 1 is concerned with 'Changing Cultures of Class Analysis' with chapters by Wright on re-thinking class structure, Somers on class formation (both previously published), Donnelly on official social classifications and Rose on class formation. Section 2 deals with 'Cultural Structurings of Class Identities', and includes chapters by Biernacki on class ideologies, by Lamont on the meanings people attribute to class, by Rupp on rethinking cultural and economic capital and by Walton on class and community in Monterey. Section 3 examines 'The Economic, the Social and the Political Agencies of Class' (chapters by Tomich on world systems, Brustein on class and politics in Nazi Germany, Steinmetz on the new radical right in Germany and Jenkins and Leicht on class and social movements).

In a short review it is impossible to discuss any of the contributions in detail. However, one can discern some common concerns throughout all the chapters. The most obvious is the need to abandon any form of determinist or reductionist accounts and thus to recognise the need for theoretical approaches which allow space for historical contingency. Allied to this is the recognition of an associated virtue – empirically testable middle range theories. Third there is much reference to 'social constructionism' as a way of allowing for contingency and thus many approving comments on the work of both Max Weber and E. P. Thompson. Indeed Thompson is probably the most widely quoted author in the book, praised for his recognition of human agency ('making' class and the concept of the moral economy) but also criticised for being over-concerned with cultural analysis.

In his foreword, Joyce states the need for new ways of thinking about the 'economic' while dissolving disciplinary boundaries. Certainly all the contributors would seem to be in sympathy with this view, although Wright's essay (which was originally produced in 1989) seems dated by comparison with the rest. The range of thinkers whose work is drawn upon to aid in the escape from determinism and relativism is wide. For example, Rose looks to Sartre's concept of seriality and Somers to narrativism, each to rethink working class formation. Hall abandons Marx for Weber, in direct contrast to Wright. In Part 2, Biernacki takes Joyce and Thompson to task for embracing reductionism in their approaches. He shows how similar economic settings in the textile industries of nineteenth century Germany and Britain nevertheless led to contrasting cultural specifications of labour as a commodity. And Rupp tries to use Bourdieu's ideas to distinguish cultural and economic fractions of the working class.

However, it is Part 3 of the book which is likely to prove most attractive to readers of this journal. In particular, the essays by Steinmetz and by Jenkins and Leicht both examine the role of Fordism and post-Fordism in shaping working class consciousness and action. Steinmetz argues that the concept of Fordism is based in regulation theory and proceeds to argue that it is this theory which offers the best way forward for understanding the variability of working class identities. There seem to be echoes between this approach and Lockwood's use of the concept of social integration, in so far as regulation refers to institutions and norms which permit the reproduction of conflictful social relations. Similarly, Jenkins and Leicht in a wide-ranging and insightful (if not always empirically accurate) essay on class analysis and social movements look to post-Fordism as a partial explanation of the disruption of working class politics via the flexible labour market's tendency to disaggregate and disorganise the class. And, *contra* Goldthorpe but *pro* Savage *et al.*, Jenkins and Leicht see the '“new class” professionals', because of their occupational solidarity and relative security, as the most likely source of leftist politics. This is not, however, a politics of revolution but a humanitarian politics of protest concerned with the environment and minority rights; a politics reflecting the concerns of status and citizenship rather than those of the market. Here, too, we find echoes with Lockwood and his most recent essays on citizenship, the more so because of Jenkins' and Leicht's recognition of processes of social exclusion which affect the losers in the post-Fordist world.

Altogether a stimulating and thought-provoking collection of scholarly essays and one which makes the concerns of some British class analysts seem rather narrow and parochial. And (publishers take note) for once a faultlessly produced book with a decent index!

DAVID ROSE

Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex

Patricia Lunneborg, *OU Men: Work Through Lifelong Learning*, Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1997, paper £14.99, xv+139 pp.

First, let me start with an explanation of the title. 'OU men' are not yet another version of new men nor men from the older Oxford University; rather they are some selected graduates from the newer Open University, the U.K. state-funded distance learning university. And the 'Work' referred to in the title means not just paid or employed work but the full range of work – paid, gift, home, and study – though the focus is clearly on the elaboration of work through the last of these.

The book is 'a kind of sequel' (xi) to Lunneborg's 1994 *OU Women: Undoing Educational Obstacles*. It also apparently takes the same unusual form. There are fifteen short chapters, each in this case summarising an interview with a man who has graduated from the Open University, (almost) alternating with fifteen further short chapters providing brief (three or four page) commentaries on different aspects of work and lifelong learning, such as job dissatisfaction, the stress of presenteeism, and the stress of obsolescence.

The underlying thesis is that, although at the end of the twentieth century ('The Age of Uncertainty'), technological and other changes mean that men's relation to work is becoming more problematic, continuing lifelong education is one way of developing men's security – in terms of identity, activity, and, perhaps, financial income. In some ways this is all fair enough. The first part of this thesis has already been well documented, not least in *WES*; the second part is more novel. The book concludes with a four page chapter on 'The End of Work?', which

discusses complete career changes, promotion, enhanced careers, thriving retirements and nonpaid work. These are certainly important issues; the gendering of current debates around paid and unpaid care/work, job creation, time use, and citizen's income/wage is urgently needed.

There are, however, several very real problems with this book. The first is that it is so uncritical both of the individual men and of the general question of men's relation to work. These two aspects are of course highly interconnected. For a start the men's names were provided for interview by the Open University Press Officer from lists of graduates from 1993–94. The men also appear to be presented under their real names; there is no question of anonymity here which might have made the material more reliable. The author provides character references, as these men are also apparently 'nice men, gentle men and thoughtful men' (viii). Under these conditions it would seem more appropriate to treat these accounts with considerable caution; it is unlikely that the men are going to present themselves in any kind of negative light. There is no sense at all of a critical stance towards men's (auto)biographies, as exemplified in, for instance David Jackson's 1990 work, *Unmasking Masculinity: A Critical Autobiography*. A particularly interesting link between the 'methodology' and the problematisation of work is that at the beginning of the project Lunneborg had decided 'to focus on how a university degree, aside from benefiting a man's job prospects, affected his emotional life, recreational life, interests, values, and needs.' She explains:

... that idea didn't work very well ... the men kept coming back to what was the centre of their lives – indeed most men's lives – jobs. Questions about relationships, sex roles, and housework produced a lot of hemming and hawing. But about their careers, they couldn't tell me enough (xi).

There are many things (use of time, power and decision-making in personal relationships, childcare and housework) that are very important here but they are left largely unexplored.

A second problem is that the book appears to have been written with little awareness that there is a very large area of research out there on men, gender relations, work, organisations, employment and unemployment. Virtually the whole of this existing literature, whether from feminist scholarship, critical studies on men, industrial sociology, or wherever, is ignored. Instead, the 'main resources in this project, in addition to the men themselves, are three books, Charles Handy's *The Age of Unreason* and Jeremy Rifkin's (1995) *The End of Work*, both published in 1995, and Will Hutton's *The State We're In*, published in 1996. Almost the only other source of information cited is the author's library of cuttings, with more than fifty newspaper articles referenced, mainly from the broadsheets, providing many snippets of information, sometimes interesting, sometimes unreliable. For example, it is not helpful to say, under the heading 'The sex hardest hit', that because '(a)mong office staff, men work longer hours than women, with 81 per cent saying they work forty hours or more weekly compared to 56 per cent of women' it follows that '(t)he "long hours culture" is harder on men than women' (20–21). This uncritical use of literature is surprising from a former Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Washington.

Who is this book for? The book is certainly not an academic work in the conventional sense. According to the author, it is for 'men who are frustrated, angry and frightened about the workplace changes that threaten their status, earnings, security, and sense of self-worth' (xi). Well, may be this is so. But perhaps the most likely readers are those men who are thinking of 'doing the OU'. Indeed, the publisher's promotional material puts this quite explicitly: '*OU Men*

will interest the ever increasing number of people involved in or considering an OU course, or any other distance learning programme.' This is especially the case as the book is lucky enough to have a Foreword by Sir John Daniel, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University, who tells us that the book is not only 'inspiring and powerful', but that 'the stories of these OU men pack a tremendous punch of optimism and hope' and contain 'some wonderful vignettes of modern life.' Not too much uncertainty there! Indeed later in the book the author informs the reader that Sir John Daniel gave a talk in 1991 in which he said '(t)he only space left where there is room for growth in today's world . . . is intellectual space.' She continues:

The OU is, naturally, Sir John's idea of the ideal personal intellectual territory. Its hallmarks are insisting that (1) degree-level knowledge is accessible to all, and (2) mastery (*sic*) of knowledge is demonstrated at exit – more than other universities do (71).

Bad luck all you other universities; not too much uncertainty there either.

The book may be an example of a new genre of publication – a hybrid of academic and PR writing, a virtuous circle in which all can be congratulated, preferably by each other. It strikes me rather as a disturbing example of the increasing interlocking of education, academia, public relations, 'rebranding', publishing, media, self-help, commerce, and the governance and surveillance of citizens.

JEFF HEARN

University of Manchester and Åbo Akademi University

Linda McDowell, *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, £45.00, paper £15.99, xvi+240 pp.

Well, this is exciting stuff, a book that sets the lie to all those who do not celebrate the blurred boundaries of social science disciplines, the cultural turn in geography and sociology and decentred subjectivities of postmodernity. Linda McDowell's book demonstrates the productive and creative spaces that crumbling borders can generate. Ostensibly this is a book about the ways in which women (some women) are positioned in the financial services sector. In one discourse it is about the gender division of labour, gender segregation and the new political economy of the square mile – the City, all of which form part of the analysis. However, what is so engaging about the book is the way in which a conventionally organised substantive study based on interview data from three banks is re-framed within an account of gendered subjectivities within the culture of the City, these subjectivities being interpreted as part of performative gender work within specific sites. For those of us who have been struggling to write recent theorisations of power, racism, culture, place and gender into substantive work this is wonderfully encouraging.

The book begins with an overview of recent and past theoretical work in relation to gender, culture, place and work, drawing especially on earlier studies of women in the professions and banking as well as later studies of men and masculinities in the workplace. These studies are set within the context of the rise of global cities, the familiar space-time compression of the present era and the understanding that work is changing, shifting into new forms and organisational modes which are increasingly feminised. The scene is then set for the changes in the City that have accompanied the growth of the sector, including the impact of

deregulation and changes in the built environment and, perhaps, in the cultures of work within the City. It is a fascinating, ongoing and very obviously an important story, soon to hit the screens with the movie about Nick Leeson and the demise of Barings. Enter Nicola Horlick, while this book was in press, and the scenario into which the research was inserted can be readily seen.

Linda McDowell's overview of the City and the main City institutions presents a culture born of the rhetoric of gentlemen and belonging to a specific class, schooled in public schools which are reproduced in the City buildings and gentlemen's clubs – a specific version of masculinity. It would have been interesting to pursue the ways in which these forms of Englishness mark the City and City institutions, because this is not simply a classed, but also a racialised, masculinity, one with which Jewish financiers have battled and negotiated in a similar way that Asian financiers do now. This is the white masculinist culture into which women are recruited – not just any women but women who, on the whole, are familiar with this class culture, having lived within it, been educated at the same universities and married within this cultural complex. This is why the methodological appendix is able to note the similarities in rather than the differences between the narratives of the women and men respondents.

Framed by the changes attendant upon deregulation more women entered the City with increasing levels of qualifications. These fixed attributes, however, are in marked contrast to the performative work that is crucial to the gendered identities that steer their way through the working day. Drawing on Judith Butler's work, among others, the book uses interview material to construct the ways in which masculinities and femininities are negotiated within the culture of the City. As the author acknowledges, these are constructions because it was not possible to engage in ethnographic observation of the performances as they were played. Nevertheless, these accounts do produce a 'thick description' and a clear sense of the amount of work that is necessary for the making of the self in this environment, from the choice of clothes to the tone of voice. In this, the author suggests, women are at a disadvantage because they are seen to be 'the Other' of the financial sector, placed in 'no win' situations in which their options are to become 'one of the boys' a sort of ladette (which does not work), or to be seen as aggressive and pushy, or to be seen as too sedate, too quiet. Within all of these constructions women have constantly to negotiate the sexualised space of work in which the ribaldry and sexualised language of the trading rooms provides some part of the backdrop to all encounters between men and women.

This world of the trading rooms with its burlesque also provides the script that can be parodied by women and transgressed both by men and women. The author is very clear that while her initial research questions focused on ways of 'doing' femininity in the masculinist context of the City, masculinity is also complex and contingent and open to transgressions and parodies by men. The importance of deconstructing masculinities in this environment is evidenced throughout the book, which left me wondering why the notion of a 'hegemonic masculinity' stayed in place.

Capital Culture is a rich book, written with the verve and energy so often associated with the City. I enjoyed the story and it should be enormously popular. But the story is only one part of a theoretically astute and imaginative work which constantly prompted a re-examination of some of the texts and ideas which are woven into the narrative. If as suggested by Linda McDowell, social science is going to follow the City in re-defining the binary work and fun (which is another attribute of another masculinity I would argue) this is an excellent way to begin.

Sarah Neal, *The Making of Equal Opportunities Policies in Universities*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, paper £18.99, xiii + 150 pp.

The Making of Equal Opportunities Policies in Universities provides an illuminating and reflexive insight into the contradictory ways in which two academic trade unions – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – have responded to equal opportunities, with specific reference to anti-racist initiatives. Central to Sarah Neal's book is an analysis of four university case studies conducted over an 18 month period between 1992 and 1993. The analysis is derived from equal opportunities policy documents and from a series of semi-structured interviews with senior managers, academic staff and local academic trade union officials. Despite an unfortunate omission regarding the ontological status of race itself and attendant equal opportunities implications, Neal's book will be regarded as a useful and much needed corrective to the current quantitative bias in the literature.

The book begins with Neal's reflexive discussion of her experience of undertaking qualitative research as a young female researcher using both anti-racist and feminist methodologies. She is refreshingly honest and direct in documenting the emotional distress engendered by the unavoidable processes of compromise with respondents. In particular, this first chapter highlights the impossibility of sustaining a consistent ethical position in all contexts, as exemplified by the excerpts from her interviews with male respondents. Chapter 2 explores the changing face of higher education and profiles the four university case studies. Chapter 3 delineates the contradictory and ambiguous ways in which the trade union movement in general has responded to equality questions and assesses the extent to which the AUT and NATFHE and their members have or share values congruent with equal opportunities politics. Chapter 4 deconstructs the equal opportunities policy of each case study university, highlighting the generic technicist and rationalist nature of the policies. The universities' policy approaches were found to be predicated upon a liberal, rather than a radical, equal opportunities framework.

Importantly, Neal argues for the essential *elasticity* attaching to current conceptions of equal opportunities, thereby necessarily limiting their efficacy at the outset. I liked her use of the notion of the 'condensation symbol' (69) for it neatly encapsulates the conscious or unconscious vagueness intrinsic to the case study universities' employment of the notions of 'equal opportunities', 'anti-racism', 'sexual harassment', etc. Indeed, Chapters 5 and 6 draw upon her interview data to highlight different responses to equal opportunities policies and how different meanings entail differential courses of action. In her concluding chapter, Neal carefully eschews any facile solutions to the problems currently bedevilling equal opportunities policy making and implementation. As she rightly points out,

the managerial control or top-down model of equal opportunities that prevailed in the case-studies [and indeed elsewhere] needs to be reviewed and replaced with a process involving a much higher degree of concerted, open and wide-spread consultation and debate throughout the institutions. This needs to be combined with a centralized but democratic process of on-going policy generation (122).

No reasonable practical analyst would wish to disclaim this particular recommendation. However, given that Neal's substantive focus is anti-racist policies and the desire to extend equal opportunities policies and concomitant procedural arrangements, I was somewhat disappointed that she does not (even briefly)

attempt either a critical discussion of the ontological status of race or try to tease out her respondents' thoughts about race. It would have been useful to know precisely what policy makers and enactors *think* about race. Indeed, logically the concept of anti-racism, like anti-sexism, presupposes a specific referent. Yet the referent of anti-sexism is real, whereas for racism the exact opposite holds. In fact, it was impossible *not* to come away with the impression that Neal holds the notion of race to constitute an ontological given rather than an ideological construct. Of course the current nomenclature is not going to disappear overnight simply because discrete, homogeneous races do not exist. As John Solomos pointed out in his 1993 book, *Race and Racism in Britain*, 'What is interesting is that although many writers argue against the use of race as an analytic category in social analysis their own accounts are persistently bedevilled by the paradox that ideas about race continue to pervade social, political and cultural relations' (36).

However, it would be a *non sequitur* to assume that because ideas about race exist then race itself may be legitimately utilised by social researchers. What would have added further rigour and sophistication to Neal's analysis would have been precisely an analysis of how ideas about race are elaborated in the policy documents, what agents make of them and the socio-cultural limits to agents' mediation. This would then enable a more informed and robust approach to policy formulation to be developed. Indeed, it may be that the vagueness attaching to the concept of anti-racism as a 'condensation symbol' lies in the very fact that races do not exist. Nevertheless, Neal's book is informative, well-written and provides a useful historical/contemporary contextualisation of equal opportunities policy making and enactment in universities.

ROBERT ARCHER

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I. Seccombe and G. Smith, *Taking Part: Registered Nurses and the Labour Market in 1997*, Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies, 1997, £25.00, Report No. 338.

This report from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) presents the findings of the twelfth annual survey of the U.K. nursing labour market conducted for the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in March and April 1997.

The first chapter reviews existing data about the registered nursing work force. It discusses trends in registration and characteristics of registered nurses, as well as trends in numbers employed in nursing. It then goes on to discuss previous estimates of nursing work force participation. The chapter finishes by providing new, lower estimates of the 'pool' of registered nurses potentially available for nursing employment. In order to keep vacancies down, it suggests employers should focus their efforts upon strategies which improve the retention of employees as well as improving recruitment and return to nursing.

In the second chapter the authors move on to discuss the demographic and employment characteristics of the respondents to this survey. The group surveyed were 6000 members of the Royal College of Nursing, the union representing the largest number of the U.K.'s nurses. It also includes data from a follow-up group of 1900 who had consented in the previous 1996 survey to take part in subsequent ones. While the samples consisted of members of one specific union, the authors conclude that respondent profile is consistent with other data from large-scale nurse surveys and independent national sources. The report then goes on to discuss three aspects of the survey's results: pay and satisfaction, working hours and patterns and turnover.

The value of the report as one of a series reporting an annual survey is particularly apparent in the third chapter about pay, where a number of comparisons with data from previous surveys is possible. The data reveals that promotion opportunities have deteriorated and that a high proportion of nurses are receiving pay at the top of incremental grading scales. This means that opportunities for nurses to increase pay are limited to annual pay awards. Nurse satisfaction with pay is deteriorating and is lower among full-time and hospital-based nurses.

I was particularly interested in the data concerning working hours and employment patterns in Chapter 4. This revealed that nurses were increasing the hours that they work, with a fall in part-time working amongst NHS nurses as well as a rise in the proportion of nurses working excess hours. A controversial issue in this field is the employment of permanent staff as bank staff when a ward or unit requires its staff to work extra shifts. This issue was related to two parts of the report: excess hours working and second jobs. Bank nursing work was however presented in this report solely in terms of its position as a second job rather than as an alternative payment/contract option for excess working hours. I was left wondering what proportions of those being paid for excess hours were paid overtime or on (lower) bank rates. Perhaps future surveys will be able to address this emerging issue more explicitly. The fifth chapter discusses turnover of nursing staff. A familiar picture emerges of nurses leaving NHS employment for reasons associated with professional development and career progression (factors which the authors comment should be within the control of management).

The report finishes with a short two-page conclusion. I would have preferred a more detailed and analytical discussion of the issues raised in the report. However, this brief conclusion together with the summary pages at the beginning of the report and the key findings summaries at the end of each chapter will be useful for the report's intended audience of politicians, civil servants, union officials and health service managers. The need of such an audience is that of getting the basic essence of the report's findings without having to wade through much in-depth analysis. For those wanting to delve deeper into the report's findings, the summaries do make the report very accessible and provide a useful springboard from which to return to the content of each chapter. The bulk of the report contains a great deal of descriptive statistical information concerning the survey. Much of this data is summarised in graph form which also aids digestion of the material.

The authors are careful to distinguish the population about which the survey is concerned, namely those who have current registration with the UKCC. What is not made completely explicit, however, is what is meant by nursing employment. Registered nurses working in nurse education (now outside NHS employment) and in health service management were described as having non-nursing work. In Chapter 5 (56) (where turnover is discussed in terms of nurses leaving NHS nursing) nursing work appears to be discussed in terms of being 'direct care nursing jobs'. It would have been helpful to have had a more specific definition about what is actually being counted as nursing work or employment and why.

The message contained in this report is depressingly familiar. The demand for nursing and nurses is set to grow, while the number of nurses available to meet this demand will continue to shrink. Current shortfalls in nursing hours are being met through employers encouraging nurses to work longer hours. Opportunities for nurses to progress and develop their careers appear to be shrinking. These are not strategies congruent with promoting employee retention.

Overall the report provides invaluable statistical, baseline reference data for those studying nurse work force participation in the U.K.