As a long-term employee of social services departments (SSDs), recently defected to academia, I approached this book with considerable interest. The 1980s and 1990s had seen a period of turmoil within social services, which suffered under a mixture of Tory apathy and contempt. Massive legislative change at the turn of the decade, continued underfunding and the effects of local government reorganisation created a turbulent and unsettled environment within social services organisations. The main anxiety was that the research would reveal a seriously demoralised and demotivated workforce, thereby confirming some of the more gloomy preconceptions held by the reviewer; fortunately, the conclusions are much less simplistic and negative than that.

This book is the result of major research carried out on the social services workforce in Britain, the fieldwork for which was carried out by the National Institute for Social Work between October 1993 and December 1995. 2031 people were interviewed first between October 1993 and February 1994; 1577 of these were interviewed a second time between October and December 1995. The sample was constructed from five English SSDs, two Scottish social work departments and all four Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Boards, and was subdivided into four broad work categories – manager, field social worker, residential worker, and home care worker. As the book rightly claims, the size of the sample gives a unique insight into the working lives of the social services workforce.

The data was analysed from a variety of perspectives to produce information on a range of issues, including the employment history of staff, the changing nature of work, job satisfaction and stress, coping with violence and abuse, discrimination at work, gender and career progression, education and training, and job mobility. Different members of the research team took responsibility for the various chapters; however, due to the integrated nature of the research and all the contributors’ close involvement with it, the book reads as more unified than is normal for an edited collection.

Chapter 4, which focuses on satisfaction, stress and control at work, presented particularly interesting data, and provided plentiful evidence that the ability of the social services workforce to provide excellent services is being undermined by increasing levels of stress and decreasing levels of job satisfaction. As the chapter points out, patterns of job stress can be identified across the sample, particularly amongst managers, field social workers and residential workers, where levels of stress considerably higher than the norm could be observed. While the social services workforce has traditionally claimed considerable satisfaction with the job, there were indications that this has declined, with the amount of paperwork and constancy of change having particularly negative effects. The chapter notes the fact that large numbers of staff report a lack of control over their work, and hypothesises that there is an ‘association’ (77) between stress, low job satisfaction and low levels of control over the work. It concludes that, ‘if stress levels are rising and satisfaction is reduced, the stability and cohesion which has ensured continuity and quality of service may be threatened’ (84). This is potentially alarming for those people who receive social services, and should be a cause for great concern amongst those people paid to manage the workforce.
In the light of this it was no surprise to read (in Chapter 5) that the social services staff experience more verbal abuse and physical violence than other comparable occupations. Particularly vulnerable are people working in residential services for children, in the general area of mental health, or with people with severe learning disabilities. However, despite this, staff turnover was described as modest, estimated as being in the order of 9%, which is lower than for comparable occupations (see Chapter 9). The reasons cited for leaving jobs confirm that dissatisfaction and stress, along with a sense of dissonance deriving from the ‘mismatch between their expectations and the day to day reality of the job’ (172), are major problems to be resolved.

I felt that the book provided most enlightenment when addressing these issues. While the other chapters were never less than competently organised and written, they told the insider little that was not already known. However, those with less direct knowledge of the social services world will no doubt find it useful to be reminded how much of a gap there is between the rhetoric of equality and the reality as experienced by women and black workers (in Chapters 6 and 7). In addition, confirmation that investment in education and training struggles to keep pace with both need and demand (Chapter 8) was equally concerning, while being no great surprise.

In summary, this is an important book that provides a valuable insight into the working of the modern social services. Its only major weakness is the fact that the data on which it is based is at least 3 years old – the pace of change has been such that if a week is a long time in politics, it appears to be an eternity in the social services. Therefore, the extent to which the circumstances described by the book still appertain is an open question, although matters are unlikely to have improved dramatically. The book should prove to be of immediate practical benefit to those managing and working in social services, as well as providing a valuable source of data for both academics and students.

MARK LYMBERY  
School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham


This is a book with a set of very genuine aims, one of which is to review an area of psychological research and place this alongside current writing on management thinking. In the process the text covers a wide range of topics where psychological research has made a serious attempt at unearthing the complex nature of human behaviour. The author feels that the contribution of social psychology has remained insufficiently recognised by management. To overcome this barrier, Brotherton has the intention of creating a ‘dialectic debate’ to demonstrate linkages between research and management. The book also expresses a sense of urgency about the changes to work organisation and argues strongly that managers need to play a central role in understanding current work behaviours to enable them to plan and implement appropriately for the future.

A significant premise of the book is the insistence that applied psychology is based upon a scientific method and hence should be believed: ‘managers need to feel that they are not the passive victims of change and to realise that they need science to help in the realisation of the objectives of change’. [ix] Ever since Baritz in Servants of Power (Wesleyan University Press, 1956) pointed out how far applied sociology and psychology fell into the practice of pursuing managerialist agenda, it has been difficult to sustain the arguments for impartiality from those areas of
applied social science which explicitly set out to influence areas of management practice. In this sense, I think Brotherton sidesteps the problematic of ‘science as truth’.

Rather than deal with some generic view of management, Brotherton takes HRM as representative of management and suggests that it would benefit from this dialectic, but by selecting HRM he avoids a discussion of one of HRM’s great dilemmas, namely that it has experienced difficulties when trying to manage the quality of its independent professional knowledge base with its desperate ambition to ‘win friends and influence people’.

Having expressed concern about the lack of debate about the nature and status of science in this academic arena, this book does provide a very useful set of summaries of recent research. Influenced by recent writings of Manuel Castells and the future ‘networked society’, the book chapters cover a series of important topics from social change, performance and motivation, groups, teams and leadership, gender and diversity, technology and finally networked organisations and careers. In each chapter the reader is not just left to confront current psychological research, but given a useful set of pointers indicating how and why these findings should be considered important for management and how they might encourage change in the workplace. Often weaving in his own experiences and observations, Brotherton’s ‘research reviews’ provide both intelligible and informative synopses of recent psychological research.

However there are moments when the reader is left gasping for help where the implications for management are far from clear. In the case of the chapter on gender and diversity, the reader is provided with a synopsis of some research which discusses the contribution of social identity theory for understanding the creation and maintenance of racial stereotypes. Brotherton concludes that in this case the research poses problems for organisations and their managers. Given that managers might wish to develop the mosaic of diversity, how might they set about this task? No clear lines of action are suggested and the text moves on to the next topic of gender.

I suppose the million dollar question is whether any ‘dialectic’ has taken place between these insights and management? British management have displayed such a history of ‘muddling through’ that it’s hard to see how they might engage with many of these insights when they remain trapped in the shadow of modern capitalism with its current insistence on flexibility and uncertainty. This is not a criticism of the intentions of the book, but, unaddressed, it leaves me wondering just how this exposure to psychological research will impact upon management? In a sense the intent of the book might be that this dialectic occurs in the head of the reader who could well be a manager but this, I would suggest, might be missing a core issue, which is an examination of the position of management within the structure of modern society. Believing as he does that social psychology is based upon ‘science’, Brotherton might be criticised for his optimism in believing that by placing such insights in front of management is tantamount to winning them over. Anyone familiar with the experience of teaching some aspect of social science to MBA students might conclude that ‘truth’, ‘reason’ and even ‘knowledge’ are not always perceived as ‘relevant or useful’ to that particular company’s modus operandi. What often works in business and management as Legge (Human Resource Management, Macmillan, 1995) and others have suggested, is a mixture of rhetoric and reality. The more substantial insights of social science research are often quite unpalatable to management in their exercise of authority and control over others.

The book provides a thoughtful, useful and engaging review of some key areas of social psychological research. It does however gloss over the rigidities of management hierarchy which so often block change and appears to remain
intentionally ignorant of social science knowledges, thus enabling many in management to remain useful ‘servants of power’ even in the face of such potential improvements in understanding human behaviour in the workplace.

PETER NICHOLLS  
Bristol Business School, University of the West of England


*The Wages of Affluence* is a welcome sequel to Andrew Gordon’s assessment of the evolution of labour relations in Japan prior to World War II (Gordon 1985). His latest work further enhances his reputation as a critical historical reviewer of developments in modern industrial Japan. The book deals with labour and management in the postwar period and works at two levels. Gordon presents an historical overview of the key stages in the unfolding of Japan’s ‘corporate-centered society’ and explores these in a close-up analysis of industrial relations in a single steel-making complex, NKK in Kawasaki. Throughout the book Gordon under-mines analyses of modern Japan that have overemphasised its uniqueness and exaggerated the extent to which cultural and institutional elements of Japan’s society have determined its industrial development. He does not deny the impact of institutions, history and culture but stresses that in three key respects – an early postwar sense of crisis, the salience of class conflict, and the eventual achievement of capitalist hegemony – Japan’s experience is similar to others. For Gordon, the central thread of postwar Japan, at least since the conflicts of the 1950s, has been the dynamism and adaptive capacity of corporate hegemony.

The ten chapters of the book, broadly speaking, follow developments in chronological order. The early chapters outline the immediate postwar era and demonstrate the central import of the US in establishing the backdrop for much of Japan’s subsequent industrial development. Initially the Americans supported labour organisation, trade union membership grew dramatically and activists were radical in orientation. During this time, unions were on the offensive, countering the Japanese government’s promotion of non-union organisation of the 1930s and 1940s, demanding status equality and a voice in management affairs. As one NKK worker put it at the time ‘Harmony without struggle is the road to death. Harmony backed by struggle is the great ideal’ (33).

However, following the 1946 ‘October struggle’ of over 100 strikes, MacArthur’s administration moved from ‘agent of antifeudal revolution to supporter of capitalist recovery’ (9). Gordon clearly expounds the international influences that came to bear during this period and ascribes the American ‘reverse course’ to the cold war politics of the time (in 1950, the Americans worked with the Japanese government to purge 12,000 accused Communist Party members from their jobs and union posts). By the 1950s, an American-sponsored cooperative unionism had emerged and Japanese management gradually restored authority. At this time the Korean War prompted an industrial revival, while institutions such as the American-funded Japan Productivity Center (JPC) promoted increased efficiency and pro-American business unions. In its first two years, JPC sent 53 groups of managers and union leaders to learn modern management from the Americans. Meanwhile, the state’s social policies helped to anchor corporate hegemony in traditionalistic gender roles.

In chapter four, Gordon provides further details through a discussion of management and labour in NKK. He shows that ‘permanent employment’ and
‘seniority wages’ are not traditional but rather developed out of the particular circumstances faced by Japanese industry in the 1950s. In addition, the adoption of American techniques in production and quality control shows that, ‘NKK was desperately trying to Americanize its system of managing production’ (70). Gordon argues that a conjunction of influences on the Japanese workplace – the social legacy of late industrial development, the impact of new technology and the need to respond to militant unions – led to a move away from centralised Tayloristic approaches and a system of widespread small group activities in the implementation of quality control. Such activities have become a central feature of contemporary Japanese industry practice.

During the 1950s Japanese workplaces were still the site of contest and conflict between labour and management as unions developed active workplace structures. Such widespread independence did not survive beyond the 1950s and the 1960s saw corporate values take hold in the workplace and wider society. Gordon argues that a key aspect of Japan’s cooperative unionism has been the move away from workplace activism and organising toward a greater centralisation of decision-making and less member participation, leading to top managers and union leaders consulting behind closed doors. The goal of such unionism is not to transform capitalism but improve it and union members traded personal autonomy and workplace democracy for affluence.

Gordon acknowledges the adroitness of managers in achieving and sustaining hegemony through ‘a dynamic process of appropriating opposing positions and incorporating them safely’ (202). Gordon’s view of such a corporate centered society sees wider institutions and social policy acting in support of Japanese corporations’ claims on worker hearts and minds. For example, state policies promoting gender divisions have acted as a buttress to male-dominated unions and corporate elites which determined that women’s primary obligation was to manage the family. Throughout the book Gordon shows how corporations have sought to exercise influence over workers outside the workplace. These various activities have contributed to Gordon’s view that corporate hegemony in Japan has been stronger and more enduring than anywhere in the world since the early 1960s. Moreover, Gordon is not persuaded by those predicting a fundamental shift in Japan’s capitalism. He foresees a slight shift toward a less regulated but no less encompassing hegemony: ‘the order of things in Japanese workplaces is adaptive and enduring’ (210). As throughout The Wages of Affluence, readers are likely to find Gordon’s position well-argued and persuasive. This book will be read widely by students of Japan from various standpoints and disciplines and is likely to prove a useful resource for those teaching about Japan and its business and industrial relations systems.

Reference


RICK DELBRIDGE
Cardiff Business School


It seems that one of the most frequent requests that I get from undergraduate students nowadays is that I should nominate the book, which covers the course
material. Such requests have increased rapidly since the University moved from courses to modules increasing the number of units that students have to study. I guess that this is exactly the market that Grint’s book aims to capture with its impressively comprehensive coverage. The second edition has an even wider focus than the first with a new chapter on ‘Globalisation and Work’ being added. Other changes from the first edition include each chapter finishing with a summary, recommendations for further reading and a list of exam/essay questions relating to the material in the chapters. Who exactly the latter is meant for, students or lecturers, is unclear. However, one could imagine that the appeal of a book which suggests its own essay and exam questions is exactly that it can function as the book around which to build a whole course of study.

In the introduction Grint sets out his approach clearly arguing that: ‘Although introductory texts are, by their very nature, overviews of broad areas I do not think this means the book should avoid pursuing particular and explicit theoretical lines with regard to the current orthodoxies of the day’ (1–2). Moreover, he is equally candid in mapping out what his own particular theoretical line with respect to work involves. ‘The ambiguous nature of work is a central theme running through this book.’ (1) and ‘. . . if the sociological approach to work tells us anything it is that our experiences are socially structured, not “natural” or “inevitable”.’ (24). The central theme of the socially constructed nature of reality is presented a number of times throughout the text, appearing several times in every chapter. The point is an important one and yet the constant repetition of this single observation reminded me of John Goldthorpe’s response to a paper making a similar point at a conference at Durham in 1994. Goldthorpe replied, ‘Of course these things are socially constructed, what else could they possibly be?’

If the above observation concerned only a matter of style then it would be a minor point. However there are rather deeper problems with Grint’s book. In adopting a post-structuralist and social constructionist approach we would perhaps expect the author to have produced an account which is alive to a plurality of voices: one that rejects the legitimacy of any single metanarrative and therefore can produce an account which opens up debate about the strengths and weaknesses of particular theoretical and substantive accounts of the nature of work. But in my reading what struck me most forcibly was the way in which the author closes down traditions which he personally does not agree with.

This is carried out in several ways. Firstly, where short accounts are provided of the work of others criticisms are made, the basis of which are unavailable for inspection. For example, in less than one side devoted to the view of work taken by William Morris we are told that, ‘As a foundational social ethic Morris argued that “No man [sic] would be tormented for the benefit of another – nay, no one would be tormented for the benefit of society” (1983: 42). Note here that notwithstanding the progressive thrust of Morris’s views, his assumptions about the “proper” role of women were hardly compatible with this non-tormented society’. (22). We are given no information about what these views may be. A second disturbing closure is that where generalised innuendo rather than evidence is used to defeat a specific argument. Thus in examining the claim reported by Hochschild that (male) professionals cannot construct an equal commitment towards domestic responsibilities because the organisation will not countenance split loyalties we are told by way of conclusion. ‘It may look as though professional men have no choice, but we have to be wary of the claim to external coercion; the fallacious self-denial of freedom and responsibility, or “bad faith” as Sartre called it, has a long and not very pleasant history’. (35).

Most problematic of all is homogenising and then condemnation of whole theoretical approaches. This is most notable in relation to labour process theory
and more widely the whole of the Marxist project. The first mention of Braverman is given in the introduction to chapter 5 (147): 'the ghost of Braverman is raised within the labour process debate, which embodies one of the most popular class-based analyses of work, but it is raised in order to bury it properly, rather than to praise it.’ The point should not be either to praise uncritically or equally uncritically condemn and bury such approaches but to see where their potential and limitations lie. It is worth comparing Grint’s dismissive treatment of the labour process with that given by Michael Rose in *Industrial Behaviour*, Penguin, 1988, (esp. pp. 311–313), or by Richard Brown in *Understanding Industrial Organisations*, Routledge, 1992 (esp. pp. 165–224). Both of the latter are critical of central elements of the approach yet both also recognise the great contribution of such an internally differentiated tradition. The homogenisation of traditions is also evident in the discussion of theoretical approaches to class where (148) Marxists turn out to be Poulantzas and Ohlin Wright. Where is the discussion of Marxists such as E. P. Thompson? It is not only Marxists that are given short shrift by the author. The work of Blauner and Chinoy is dismissed for failing to successfully relate theory and evidence.

If, as I suspect, comprehensive texts are becoming more important in undergraduate teaching it is imperative that they perform the function of introducing students in a balanced way to the existent work within the discipline. I fear that this text will not perform that function. Whilst I have great sympathy for some of the author’s particular views, especially with regard to the negotiated order of institutions and an abhorrence of simplistic, unilinear and deterministic theory, his wholesale dismissal of either individual theorists or traditions is unfortunate. If context is everything we need to produce accounts which seek to place insights in their theoretical and historical contexts. We should encourage students to engage with primary materials in order to make their own judgements. Proclaiming intent to bury people and/or ideas before discussing them is unlikely to persuade students that they are worthy of the effort of exhumation.

IAN ROBERTS

University of Durham


This book confronts issues about low paid work and welfare in ways that will be useful to a UK audience. Ideas about welfare mothers and welfare dependency – especially those of Charles Murray – have been powerfully influential and UK policies for welfare to work owe a lot to the ideas developed in the US for reducing welfare rolls. The essays in this volume are a ground level view of the consequences and possibilities in current US programmes. They are written by twelve ‘scholar-activists who work in the areas of social welfare and low-wage policy’ (ix). The authors are mainly academics in law, though social welfare and policy studies figure in their biographies. The book addresses three questions: what barriers keep low-income women from entering into, staying in, and thriving in waged work? What innovations at different levels and in different policy areas could reduce or remove the barriers? How can advocacy enable community organisations to inform the policy process and make appropriate innovations happen? (ix). The essays cover a wide range of issues: low wage work, welfare restructuring, the low-wage labour market, self-employment through micro-enterprise, sustaining work quality through co-operatives, childcare, health care, unemployment, employment
services, advocacy and the globalisation of the ideology on which these policies are based. The interaction of paid and unpaid work is at the centre of the contributions: ‘policies should be advanced for all workers to ensure that all workers have both the resources and the time to function as both workers and parents’ (44).

Mark Greenberg describes the philosophy of ‘work first’ and the restructuring of welfare programmes. ‘The guiding principle of the philosophy was that any job is better than no job and that wherever possible, programs should emphasize rapid connection to the labor force rather than allowing access to education, training, or other skill-building activities’ (35). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) changed the landscape for decisions about the provision of support to unemployed and working-poor families in fundamental ways. It replaced the means-tested income support programme Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The new federal requirement limits the period during which adults can receive means-tested income support to five years in most cases. It requires that parents and caretakers ‘engage in work’ within 24 months of beginning to receive benefit. States have broad discretion about how they spend their TANF grants. They can provide assistance to needy families, promote job preparation, work and marriage, discourage out-of-wedlock pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. They can also decide whom to assist.

This welfare restructuring provides a key context for all the essays in the volume. On the one hand it puts stringent requirements on to low-income families. On the other it makes room for states to innovate. States are becoming ‘public policy laboratories’ (Jones: 79) and most essays in the volume explore both the cruel realities of life for low-income families and the potential of policy innovations to address these.

Contributors take a critical stance towards the assumptions of welfare restructuring and its consequences. Welfare mothers – far from being workshy – have cycled in and out of work and have worked – through necessity – while on welfare. There are not enough jobs in the labour markets open to welfare recipients and those that exist do not pay enough to cover child care costs and keep families out of poverty – even two parent families, let alone lone parent families. Julia Henly argues that employers prefer to use networks to fill vacancies and that women relying on public transport and with childcare needs are often out of reach of the jobs that exist. Lucie White is sceptical that the legislation will bring ‘safe and developmentally adequate care for the lowest-income single-parent families for all the hours that those women will eventually be required to work for wages to make ends meet’ (121). Professional quality child care is prohibitively expensive. Most chillingly, Kathleen Sullivan makes the link between inadequate social support and child neglect proceedings: ‘This reduction in welfare rolls has been accompanied by an increase in child protection activity. The numbers of poor women charged with neglecting their children have increased dramatically. The number of poor children removed from their homes and placed in foster care has increased at an alarming rate’. And there is a strong racial component in the judgements made of mothers: ‘In Connecticut, for example, African American children are roughly three times more likely to be found maltreated than are white children’ (191). As benefit time limits are reached more mothers are likely to be found unfit to care for their children.

Contributors also assess a wide range of possibilities for using the legislation to support innovation and creative ways beyond the work/welfare dichotomy – while admitting that the kind of model projects on which their accounts draw can be
difficult to replicate. Peter Pitegoff argues the need to incorporate employers in any policy depending on work and evaluates a co-operative route to higher quality work. The health care network he describes aims to transform the labour market of home health aids, by providing training, counselling, career upgrading and ongoing support. Susan Jones argues the possibilities of microenterprise development for a proportion of welfare recipients. A significant recent growth of this style of community economic development has taken place in the US, drawing on the Bangladesh Grameen Bank model among others. Small loans, peer support and technical assistance are made available to people starting very small businesses. TANF resources could be used to support self-employment, with gains to recipients in terms of flexibility and self-esteem. Lucie White argues that policy should ‘move beyond rigid, professionally-oriented approaches to ensuring quality in child care to more flexible, network-oriented approaches’ (139). A community-based development corporation could train and draw on a range of paid and voluntary labour, drawing extended families from inside neighbourhoods and volunteers from outside.

This collection of essays ranges widely but is tightly controlled and argued. The authors offer a critique of the assumptions of welfare to work policies, the damage caused to poor families by reducing state support, and the limited evidence about the ‘success’ of welfare to work policies measured in falling welfare rolls. But they also share a determination to find new solutions. This is an innovative book about innovative projects.

GILLIAN PASCALL

School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham


Theorising on the professions has developed over time to a point where in British sociology, with the predominance of neo-Weberian thought, the emphasis centres largely on the action of professional actors as individuals and collectives. Structural factors, such as social, political and economic, are considered important contextual features impacting on the form of project undertaken by professionals, but the focus remains firmly on action. Gerard Hanlon’s book, on the other hand, reaffirms the crucial importance of structural factors in any analysis of professional development and behaviour. He does this without undermining the significance of social action in influencing, and responding to, wider social forces.

Hanlon’s assertion is that, historically, professional ideology and practice have been mediated by the social, political and economic environment. He also claims that, in advanced capitalist societies, professionals have become a key group in terms of major social change because of their role as ‘regulators of central areas of social activity’, for example, through the provision of law and justice and health care. Focusing mainly on lawyers, the book starts with an interesting and detailed historical account of developments and shifts in British professional ideology and practice since the seventeenth century as a consequence of social, political and economic forces. It is clear that these shifts were characterised by conflict and struggle, not just with external agencies but also within professional cohorts themselves. Progression is charted from the ‘gentlemanly professional individual’ who emerged at the time of *laissez-faire* capitalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the shift to the professional representing social democratic principles with the rise of the interventionist state and a Fordist regime.
of accumulation. Significant shifts only occurred through negotiation with the state to ensure that professionals gained significant benefits. Thus lawyers cooperated with an expansion of the state and welfare, the introduction of legal aid being a crucial example, only where they had influence and preferably control. Significantly, Hanlon argues that the welfare state could not have developed to the extent it did without the co-operation of professionals. The development of the welfare state brought great benefits to professionals, including a massive expansion of direct and indirect employment, job security and, crucially, autonomy and control over service provision. Once adopted, social service professionalism, involving service provision on the basis of social citizenship rather than ability to pay, held much appeal for professionals and an ongoing expansion of welfare provision was likely to be in their interests and gain their support. Hanlon ironically points out that sociological theorising suggesting the altruistic and disinterested characteristics of professionals coincidentally emerged around the rise of social service professionalism.

Having established the development of social service professionalism Hanlon uses his recent research, involving legal firms and mainly corporate clients, to propose that the shift in Britain from a Fordist regime of accumulation to a flexible, market-oriented regime, marked politically by the rise of New Right politics during the 1970s and 1980s and aggressively pursued through its policies aimed at increasing international competitiveness and limiting the welfare state, has led to a ‘crisis of professionalism’. Over the past two decades, as a consequence of opening up the market, intense pressure from both the state and capital for professionals to become more commercially led and entrepreneurial has created a professional ‘winners and losers’ situation, with those professionals willing and able to adopt these principles reaping the grains of high income and status, and those unwilling or unable being, at least potentially, disadvantaged. Thus Hanlon claims there is a cleavage developing between professionals who not only favour but depend on a ‘social service’ professionalism which was predominant during the Fordist period, and those who have readily embraced ‘commercialised professionalism’. This cleavage cuts across the private–public sector divide as public-sector professionals have also become subject to market principles through the introduction of quasi-markets but are still largely dependent on public funds and thus are threatened by constraints on welfare provision. Nevertheless, Hanlon makes a strong case for the enormous gains accrued by those who embrace and relish the changes and who work in large legal firms in the private sector, while it is debatable whether a significant proportion of those in the public sector have enjoyed similar benefits. He does, in fact, make it clear that there are many variations between and within professions. It is quite apparent though that the introduction of a flexible regime of accumulation has had consequences for all professionals in terms of less predictable income, promotion and job security. Hanlon notes that there have also been consequences for societal well-being as, whilst all professional positions have been based on self-interest, ‘commercialised professionalism’ does not coincide with societal interests as did social service professionalism.

Hanlon argues that the very nature and definition of professionalism is currently in the process of being recast in line with commercialist principles. Furthermore Hanlon claims that the trust placed in professional competence no longer rests simply on an assumption of technical competence by the state and corporate clients; rather, increasingly sophisticated policing strategies are being used by clients to ensure competence includes being ‘commercially aware’ and ‘client-driven’. In this way professionals have lost some ground in terms of autonomy and service provision. Hanlon uses this work to take issue with Goldthorpe’s
‘conservative thesis’ by suggesting that, rather than being united, the professions are in danger of becoming fragmented with differential interests, that they no longer enjoy an ‘unambiguous trust relationship’ with employers and clients and that radical cohorts may develop. He points to polarisation of political support seen in recent voting behaviour where there has been a significant drop in support for the Conservatives in the case of, for instance, doctors and academics, but increased support among others. He suggests that the New Right in the form of the Conservative party may have failed because many professionals felt betrayed and alienated by its principles and policies. Hanlon makes no predictions regarding how the crisis of professionalism will resolve but he seems confident that the emerging ideology of ‘commercialised professionalism’ will be with us for some time yet.

This book is well-written in an engaging style, though there is a great deal of repetition of key points. This may well get the message across but tends to interrupt the flow of the book. Nevertheless, it was refreshing to read an account of current processes at work within the professional world which show that all social actors struggle with the differential impact of social forces.

LIZ PELHAM

University of Warwick


The author is the Director of the Cross-Department Analyses and Reports Team of the ILO. He draws upon a great deal of literature on the Asian financial crisis and examines the controversies over the nature, origins and remedies of this crisis in the three worst-affected countries, i.e., Thailand, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea. Further, he analyses the social impact of the crisis and its policy implications to expedite a social dialogue. He argues that economic development will not necessarily be at the expense of human rights, trade unions and social safety nets. The challenge for social and employment policy thus rests on full recognition of labour rights, democracy and social protection.

Instead of arriving at a final conclusion on the cause of the crisis, the book points out different but not wholly exclusive debates on the domestic and international dimensions while confronting the widespread ‘Asian Model’ in terms of ‘crony’ capitalism. In examining the Asian experiences, one question needs further consideration: ‘to what extent can a country liberalise its economy in response to global pressure but keep its nation’s differentiation?’ This query is relevant to what economic milieu should be set up. Is there a universal blueprint which will benefit all countries? Or, on the grounds that each country has its own particular political, economic and social conditions, do unique and diversified strategies need to be taken for fear of unequal benefits from an open economy discourse? Though it remains unanswered in this book, the author mentions the Malaysian experiment, which confronts IMF orthodoxy on high interest rates and takes up the measures of capital account controls as a case for an empirical examination for such a proposition.

In terms of the social impact of economic transformations, this book mainly focuses upon the issue of unemployment and poverty. Only the Republic of Korea provided unemployment insurance before the crisis, although this was limited in coverage and payment levels. Therefore, the negative impact of the crisis was relatively smaller than in the other two countries which suffered sudden turmoil after long prosperity and stabilisation. To mark the extent and impact of the unemployment problem, this book also delineates past employment figures for
comparison. The perception of absorption into the informal and agricultural sector has been eroded, especially for Indonesia and Thailand since they have respectively 44 and 40 per cent of total employment in agriculture. Accompanied by unemployment and the falls in wages and incomes, the workers and their families suffered a decrease in living standards and work-related benefits as well. Moreover, inflation makes the taste even more bitter which is particularly true for Indonesia. It is estimated that 10 to 20 per cent of the entire population in these three countries will succumb to poverty. Apart from unemployment and poverty, this book also points out some other ensuing social ills such as hunger, malnutrition, declining social services.

The author argues that social unrest and political turbulence are very likely to occur without appropriate social relief measures. To attenuate their social impact, it is necessary to adopt new social expenditures. Indonesia has mainly put the emphasis on subsidising subsistence goods due to severe inflation, whereas Thailand and the Republic of Korea stress employment creation measures. However, results are far from satisfactory. So-called ‘social safety nets’ in these three countries are far from safe. They do not provide genuine income support and welfare services to all who need them. Reasons for the lack of a sound social safety net include the weakness of labour institutions. The underdevelopment of effective tripartism, which is supposed to reconcile different needs between employers, employees and the state, is another factor. However, others may feel that it is important to recognise that tripartism was the product of unequal power embedded in compromises while entering into such a dialogue. Beside promoting the importance of freedom of association, the author goes further in challenging the prevailing ideology of ‘Asian values’ claimed by the cultural relativists to legitimise the deprivation of human rights along with the related instrumental argument of seeing that basic civil rights and political rights are detrimental to economic development. It is also suggested that the level of GNP is not pertinent to unemployment insurance, and that payments should be higher than has been the case. The worry about fiscal costs and administrative capacity does not hold good. The work ethic is not inevitably destroyed by the provision of unemployment insurance.

In brief, this is a concise but thought-provoking and timely work. The author’s alternative thinking provides a frame of reference to challenge dominant thinking in terms of economy and development. However, more empirical studies are still required to examine aspects of social impact such as income distribution, personal psychological stress, morale concerning the future. The issues raised here are of relevance not only in Thailand, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea, but also to other developing countries that are facing similar global challenges on the threshold of economic and social transformation. Readers who are interested in industrial relations or social security reform or who are practitioners in labour movements or trade unions will find this book intriguing and invaluable.

WEN-CHI CHOU


This book is based on an ESRC-funded research project on ‘Discourses of Social Exclusion and Integration in Emergent Labour Party Policy’ and that is exactly what it is about. As such it is very good indeed. Levitas makes her argument clearly and sums it up thus: ‘A major theme of this book is that the development of
a new language about social adhesion, stakeholding, community, social exclusion and inclusion, was central to the "creation of the centre-left consensus" on which New Labour's electoral success was presumed to depend." (2). She specifies exactly what she means by discourse: 'To talk about the language of politics as a discourse, or series of discourses, is to say more than that new words are being used to express new – or even old – ideas. It means that a set of interrelated concepts act together as a matrix through which we understand the social world. As this matrix structures our understanding so it in turn governs the paths of action which appear open to us. A discourse constitutes ways of acting in the world, as well as a description of it.' (3). This passage is the key to the book because what we have here is a critical review of contemporary history constructed around the significance of policy debates and presentations. On the same page as this passage Levitas distinguished the idea of discourse from that of ideology, and does so in a characteristically clear and exact fashion. The difference between discourse and ideology is precisely the issue which is central to the overall assessment of this book's project.

Levitas identifies three discourses of 'the centre-left', although she makes it perfectly clear that she sees New Labour as a party of the centre-right in practice and in understanding. These are the redistributionist discourse (RED), the moral underclass discourse (MUD) and the social integrationist discourse (SID). RED is the discourse of critical social policy in the tradition of UK social policy academics, particularly those associated with the Child Poverty Action Group. Its understanding of poverty is materialist. MUD is the discourse of the moralising new right and understands poverty in cultural terms. SID focuses on labour market attachment as central to social integration. Levitas identifies these as ideal types and recognises that actual policy positions are formed out of mixes of them. In particular, and this is the concluding argument of the book, she identifies a 'new Durkheimian Hegemony' constructed around: '. . . the mixture of SID and MUD which permeates current political thinking.' (179).

The book begins with an extended review of these three positions and a charting of the movement of 'centre-left' political debate from a concern with social justice to the assertion of the centrality of social cohesion. This shift is handled through a review of the thinking of 'think tanks' – Levitas makes a sharp note to the effect that one aspect of privatisation which has not been much noted as such is the privatisation of policy formation – and the reports of the varying commissions and committees of the great and good which have examined these issues in the UK. She continues through a consideration of the approach of Will Hutton, by far the most radical of those considered here, to a discussion of the ideas of stakeholding and the new communitarianism. All these chapters are clear, comprehensive, and extremely useful. The next three chapters are about how the Labour Party in opposition and government has taken up these ideas and used them as the bases of actual policy. The title of one sums up the trajectory – 'From Equality to Inclusion'. Again the account is coherent and comprehensive. Levitas has performed a service of exposition in the writing of this book.

The final chapter dealing with 'The New Durkheimian Hegemony' is very interesting. Levitas can write about important themes in social theory and the application of those themes to the actual conduct of politics in an accessible and intelligent way. This is a much better application of sociology to public affairs than anything Giddens has ever written. So far as it goes the argument is very persuasive, but there is the rub – so far as it goes. Let me turn to what I think is wrong with this excellent book which I recommend highly.

First, the lesser criticism: Levitas runs a feminist theme throughout this book. That is fine and proper in that it is constructed around the ignoring and/or
dismissal of the unpaid work of social reproduction in the SID discourse and in work-based integrationist policies founded upon it. This is absolutely right. However, Levitas interprets this as general feminist criticism. The trouble is that it is not. It is a criticism founded in the interaction of gender and class. In the US and the UK major persecutors of poor women have been women of the superclass, living in very high income households, who have played a role in the formation and implementation of public policy. Levitas’ confusions here are compounded by her endorsement of Campbell’s woefully inadequate and inaccurate Goliath (London: Methuen, 1993) with its account of the unleashing of horrific masculine propensities in the excluded world. Feminist academics ought to subject this ‘key text’ to the criteria of criticism in relation to substantive accuracy which is the foundation of evaluation of empirical work, and even more important, reflexively consider the views of the working-class women community workers of at least one of the locales who have dismissed its account and arguments very forcibly indeed. Gender matters but how it matters always depends on the class relation.

And that leads me to the big criticism: a criticism that Levitas at least implicitly makes of her own work when she compares the content of the ideas of ‘discourse’ and ‘ideology’. There is no real linking of the story told in this book to the material interests of sections of society in shaping the transition from industrial to postindustrial capitalism for their own material advantage. Of course Levitas does – perhaps of course is strong – so few do – recognise that the term ‘included’ serves to conceal the reality of the separation of the superclass from the rest of us and to cover up their appropriation of the material products of transformation and economic growth. But that’s it folks. As what it is, this is a really good book – clear, coherent, and plainly and intelligibly written, but ideology still serves us better as an organising concept than discourse.

DAVID BYRNE


The implications of corporate downsizing and delayering for white-collar workers have been discussed extensively in the mass media. McGovern, in this book, is interested in another process that bears on these workers: the bureaucratisation of employment. The novelty of this research for sociological debates lies in the focus on human resource management (HRM) practices and the impact that these practices have on employment relations within white-collar work.

This study looks, in detail, at the significance of HRM practices for the employment relations of technical workers in four Irish branch plants of multinational corporations (MNCs). It is a study in industrial sociology rather than social class. However, McGovern stresses that the research was informed by debates about social class and has something to say to them (mainly about distinctions between professionals and managers within organisations). Underpinning McGovern’s study is an understanding of employment relations derived from the work of Alan Fox (1974) in Beyond Contact on trust and employment. In addition, Goldthorpe’s description of the ‘service class’ (consisting of higher white-collar workers) is used to capture the situation of technical workers. The question, then, is whether and to what extent trust, discretion and autonomy for technical workers have been eroded by the emergence of HRM.

The choice to study the impact of HRM in the context of technical workers is well justified. Technical workers are of interest because they exhibit varying
degrees of intrinsic motivation; there are blurred boundaries between technical work and managerial work; and there are significantly different types of technical work. I am rather less clear about the methodological argument for looking at MNC branch plants in Ireland. The Irish context is indisputably interesting for many reasons, including the relevance of debates about the New International Division of Labour indicated by McGovern. But this geographical consideration is presented as an afterthought in the overall objective of the study. It is difficult to see how this follows from the chosen critical case approach to conducting research. Essentially, there is either too much on the Irish context for a book that is focusing on service class employment relations; or too little, if the objective is to look at employment relations in the context of New International Division of Labour debates.

The research itself was clearly well executed and thorough, and this is the strength of the book. Seventy-nine people were interviewed across the four firms, covering different roles and different levels of seniority. The results from the interviews were used to develop a questionnaire survey of technical employees in the four firms. The findings are presented in five chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of technical workers’ employment relations. Extensive use is made of quotations from the interviews, and these serve very well to construct the arguments. Rather less use is made of the questionnaire survey. There are only five tables in the book from a questionnaire that asked sixty questions.

Two of the chapters deal with the nature of job hierarchies within firms and the implications that shifts towards market solutions might have for the selection and retention of staff. There are two chapters about the organisation of technical work (including a useful discussion of project management styles) and managerial authority (including discussion of appraisal and performance management). A further chapter concentrates on remuneration and shifts toward performance related pay.

The analysis reveals interesting differences between the firms, suggesting that there are industry specific conditions that bear on the nature of employment relations. There are also significant differences according to the type of technical work that is involved, particularly between technicians and engineers or chemists. Rather surprisingly, however, there is no identified difference between those working on new product development and those working on longer term scientific programmes of research (who may be expected to retain more autonomy, despite attempts to impose HRM practices).

The book concludes by referring back to the issue of trust in professional employment. McGovern argues that the new management practices have had an impact on professional employment in that they are no longer simply trusted to carry out their work. However, McGovern argues that to treat the bureaucratisation of technical employees as a fait accompli misses many of the important subtleties. Detailed analysis reveals the limits of management practice and the existence of employee resistance. Many of the claims from sociology are consequently over exaggerated.

McGovern has produced a very useful book that fills a gap. It adds crucial empirical weight to some of the grand theorising of sociological accounts and adds a valuable sociological perspective to the largely uncritical or prescriptive management literature on the topic. It would have been useful to have had a review of some of the management literature, particularly that which looks at the management of innovation. It is true that this literature has very few studies explicitly about HRM, but there are numerous studies on management practices that we would now understand to fall within the ‘HRM paradigm’.

This book will make interesting reading for researchers in a number of social
The crisis of the 1970s redefined the relation between capital, labour and the state. Massive unemployment, new forms of labour struggles, financial crisis and recomposition of the nation-states underlie the current process of globalisation of capital. However important this is, labour, money and the relation between them have been neglected, taken for granted or undertheorised by social sciences. The experience of labour and social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, ending up in the collapse of both socialism and Keynesianism, highlighted two facts: the political significance of the subjective dimension of the capital relation and the inner connection between subjectivity and money, money being the most abstract form of capital. Within current Marxist debates on abstract labour, money and class struggle and the centrality of work, Neary and Taylor's *Money and the Human Condition* aims at the exploration of the human forms of existence of money.

After considering 'the inability of sociology or economics to understand or explain money' (10), Neary and Taylor examine, through Marx's method of determinate abstraction, 'the concrete ways in which life is lived as money-capital and the limitations and possibilities of this human condition' (10). In chapter 2, *Marx, Magic and the Search for the Secret of Money*, Neary and Taylor present Marx's critique of money as the key to grasp the fact that, although it seems that money changes everything, 'money changes nothing [for] the real “spirit” of money is alienated labour power' (11). Chapter 3, *Risky Business: the Crisis of Insurance and the Law of Lottery* focuses on the relation between risk and money. Current analyses of risk fail in neglecting the material contradictions of a risky society. The crisis of the welfare state is a crisis of the form of socialisation of risk: ‘the crisis of Keynesianism is simultaneously a crisis of the law of insurance which has resulted in the recrudescence of the “law of lottery” in the postmodern global capitalist order’ (11); and ‘the crisis of insurance is thus a crisis of the reproduction of labour as labour-power in the circuit of capital accumulation’ (53). Chapter 4 *Probation, Criminology and Anti-oppression* challenges the criminological discourse and practice in the probation service. Here, Neary and Taylor argue that ‘studying human life as a processed form of money-capital . . . opens for us the possibility of a theory of anti-oppression’ (12), which ‘points to the condition of cruelty rather than culture as the focus through which we should consider the human condition’ (83). Chapter 5, *LETS Abolish Money? Is there a Community Outside the Community of Money?* highlights that money is not just a means of exchange, ‘a harmless device allowing the exchange of equivalent values between free and equal individuals’ (91) but is constitutive of social subjectivity. Through the analysis of functioning of the local exchange and trading schemes in the UK the authors show that, although the struggle against money is politically relevant, alternative forms of exchange will not lead to alternative forms of society unless money, as constitutive of ourselves is destroyed, for ‘the limits of the struggle against money are that money is just the perceptible appearance of the contradictory social relations of capital’ (123). Finally, in the last chapter *The Alien World of Money and Beyond* . . . Neary and Taylor argue that ‘the infestation of the world by money-capital has
reduced the planet to an alien place inhabited by man-made machines and machine-made man’ (12). Here the argument that subjectivity is a form of money is pushed forwards toward its limits through the claim that money and the self have the same ontological status, in so far as both categorisations are determined through ‘a real abstract historical process’ (128). Statements like ‘in a society dominated by money, I am money. I am an embodied manifestation of money in all its contradictory manifestations’ or ‘money is society and money is the self’ (128) force us to think of the status of social identity and class consciousness, that is, of human practice. At this point, the book becomes as much interesting as contested. The ontological identity established between money and the self (that is ‘we are money’) is a dangerous one. Although capital is nothing else than alienated labour, it can only exist if and only if it maintains itself as a discrete thing, something else than labour. This ‘objectification’ is sustained through the constitution of subjectivity which is contradictory and the real site for resistance, experience and struggle. The apparent externality between money and the self is a real appearance, so the notion of form seems to be more appropriate than one of the ontological identity. Form entails real existence and contradiction. In the notion of form, the verb to be is conjugated in present continuous, i.e. as a mode of being.

The most important contribution of the book is that it poses the right question at the right time. The question of how we constitute ourselves through the capital relation, through money, has got crucial political implications: money is not just a means of exchange but a social power rooted in the constitution of social subjectivity. To that extent, this necessary and exciting book certainly grasps the inner connection between the different forms of human unhappiness and the unbearable lightness of money. *Money and the Human Condition* stands against the most significant project of our time: the political celebration of the end of social dreams, because as Neary and Taylor claim: ‘there is life in the social universe that has not yet been discovered: sustainable life’.

ANA DINERSTEIN

Department of Sociology, Warwick University


In this book Jane Pilcher explores the much neglected issue of age and cohort as an important source of diversity among women while simultaneously pursuing a number of theoretical and methodological propositions surrounding the sociology of knowledge, the concept of generations, the success of feminist debates and the relevance of qualitative research. The book is based on research with a multi-generational sample of 57 women from South Wales. Three cohorts of women from 19 families were asked to give accounts of gender issues and feminism in the course of qualitative interviews.

Pilcher aims to put into practice the theoretical and methodological implications of Karl Mannheim’s (1952; 1960) theory of generations and C. Wright Mills’ (1970) approach to the sociology of knowledge. Mannheim argues that people are crucially influenced by the socio-historical context that dominated their youth, and in this way, social generations have distinctive historically determined world views. Mannheim’s advocacy of qualitative work to explore social generations is supported by Mills’ sociology of knowledge approach whereby vocabularies are used to locate individuals. Accounts are circumscribed by what is available and acceptable and thus they reflect social generational consciousness. Thus Pilcher argues strongly for the need for a qualitative approach to the study of
cohorts. She states that quantitative work that documents differences between cohorts gives us 'little sense of the “reasoning”, particularly in relation to gender, that results in the reported disagreement or agreement.' (2). Furthermore, she argues qualitative work allows an examination of vocabulary and the influence cohort has on the very language the women use to discuss gender.

The book is well structured with each chapter analysing a particular issue that has been central in debates about gender and feminism. Each issue is put in the context of socio-historical debates as well as a discussion of related survey data and the women’s responses to it are then divided into categories of 'hostile' or 'sympathetic’ and the vocabularies used to express these are explored.

At one level there are no surprises; those who show more progressive views on gender issues are from the younger cohorts and those who express more traditional views are from the oldest cohort. However, the strategy of examining vocabularies allows Pilcher to reveal the complexities behind these ‘unities of outlook’. For example, the women's use of conflicting vocabularies is well illustrated. When exploring views on gender discrimination in paid work Pilcher identifies three distinct ways to talk about gender equality; a vocabulary of inequality where inequality is seen as negative and equality yet to be achieved, a vocabulary where equality is deemed to be achieved and a vocabulary of essential difference where inequalities are viewed as natural. All were used in contradictory ways. The oldest cohort used a vocabulary of equality but also one of essential difference, suggesting equality had been achieved but this was not a positive change. In contrast the middle cohort utilised a vocabulary of inequality with one of essential difference whereby they aimed for equality but also feared it might challenge the social conventions of femininity they enjoyed. For the youngest cohort an essential difference vocabulary was not available and a vocabulary of equality was used. Such conflicts would not be uncovered by quantitative work and Pilcher shows a feminist vocabulary was more accessible to women in the middle cohort as discrimination was problematised during their early life courses.

This was supported by many of the other gender issues Pilcher covered in the course of her interviews. In one of the most fascinating chapters of the book Pilcher reveals the vocabularies surrounding the issue of abortion available to the three cohorts of women. Again, the middle cohort utilised what Pilcher terms as ‘feminist vocabularies’ in terms of choice and women’s rights over their bodies indicating that exposure to such debates in the 1970s had indeed, as Mannheim suggests, produced a fixed quality in their world views. In contrast this vocabulary was not available for the oldest cohort and surprisingly not used by the youngest cohort who drew upon ideas of individualism.

Pilcher reveals the growing significance of individualism for younger women over issues such as abortion, homosexuality and particularly the cultural representation of women’s bodies, using the example of the tabloid display of bare-chested women known as ‘Page 3’ to explore this. An overwhelming individualistic response to the issue is uncovered. Whereas quantitative work could interpret such emphasis upon choice and freedom as feminist the examination of vocabularies showed they were not. Pilcher shows that in relation to ‘Page 3’ it was the oldest cohort whose views complied with a feminist stance because of its similarity with a moral discourse and rightly identifies this as a problematic area for feminism.

Indeed one of the strengths of this book is the exploration of feminism from the perspective of women. As Pilcher’s states ‘In debates about the nature and the significance of feminism, the understandings and conceptions women hold about feminism have . . . been neglected’ (108). She tackles women’s relationship with feminism directly and finds that feminism holds connotations of extremism for women from all three cohorts. Not surprisingly the oldest women are more nega-
tive but the middle cohort’s enthusiasm for feminism compared to the younger
group gives strong support for Mannheim’s theory. Pilcher establishes this middle
cohort as the most ‘sociologically interesting’ and her arguments regarding the
significance of age and cohort are established well through an exploration of this
‘intermediary’ social generation which has smoothed the path of gendered social
change between the oldest and youngest cohorts.

However her approach to qualitative methodology could be regarded as prob-
lematic. The focus upon vocabularies works well ensuring a comprehensive
coverage of her empirical work and making the book an enjoyable read. Yet it is
important to question the significance with which she bestows these vocabularies
and whether a focus solely upon them alone can illuminate the ‘reasoning’ behind
women’s views on gender issues and feminism. Does the way people talk about a
situation highlight the full meaning of a situation or would an examination of the
ways these women personally experienced these issues in their everyday lives and
enacted them tell us more about how membership of a cohort has framed their
gendered experiences?

Linked to this is the abstracted way in which the women’s responses were used,
unsupported with any biographical details concerning their education, work
situation and family relations. These may have helped us build up connections as
to the influence of cohort membership and its interaction with other variables.
This is more evidence that the material experience of the women is seen as
peripheral to the vocabulary they used. Perhaps more of a balance between
materiality and meaning would have made the most of the more obvious advan-
tages of qualitative work, such as the contextualising of responses and a focus on
personal experience.

However Pilcher does show that women construct gender issues in contrasting
ways according to their cohort location in historical time, and fundamentally that
they retain distinctive world views as a result. Thus she is successful in demon-
strating the importance of age as a source of social diversity among women and the
continuing relevance of Mannheim’s approach. At a time when feminist research is
still coming to terms with exploring difference she makes a convincing case that
age cannot be ignored within these debates.

Yet the political aspects of this book must not be overlooked. The over-
whelming leanings towards individualism found in this study have important
implications for a feminist perspective based on women as a collectivity. Pilcher
proves that women’s accounts of gender issues are important in their own right
and must be adhered to if a future feminist politics is to thrive and be relevant to
women of all ages.

GAIL HEBSON

Ian Procter and Maureen Padfield, Young Adult Women, Work & Family:
Living a Contradiction, London & Washington: Mansell Publishing Ltd.,
£50.00, 1998, xii+272 pp.

This book discusses qualitative research conducted with 79 young women aged
between 18 and 27 in the Coventry/Warwickshire area. The participants are
conceptualised into two separate categories: single, childless women working in
full-time employment and partnered mothers who are not working or working only
part-time.

The authors aim to examine the transitions in early adult life and the inter-
relationship between paid work and family responsibilities in the lives of women,
thus contributing to the literature on transitions in early adulthood and on gender, work and families. By comparing the past lives of young single women in full-time employment with those of young partnered mothers who had no or only part-time employment, the authors expect to determine whether the two groups are permanently divided ‘into separate life histories’ (4). The experiences of the young single women since leaving school and up to their first interview are explored in detail and summarised as being ‘generally characterised by vocational training and skill development, continuity of employment and job progression, supportive families of origin and a degree of independence in their relationships with boyfriends’ (5). In contrast, the young mothers had little vocational training, tended to be in low-skill jobs with little chance of job progression, and placed more emphasis on their relationships with their boyfriends (102–128). The authors conclude that the second group became mothers because this option made sense in the context of their lives at the time (103). Future aspirations are also discussed with both groups, situated within the complex enabling and constraining social structures which facilitate or impinge on the young women’s agency. The two groups are chosen because they could be argued (not unproblematically, I would suggest) to represent the two polarised extremes outlined in Catherine Hakim’s theory of women’s orientation towards either career or family outlined in Key Issues in Women’s Work: Female Heterogeneity and the Polarisation of Women’s Employment (1996). A major argument presented in the book is a critique of Hakim’s thesis.

The authors certainly present evidence which challenges Hakim’s concept. They show, particularly through the longitudinal aspect of their interviews with single employed women, that far from being an orientation which women as agents choose freely, their career and family choices are constrained by structural forces such as education, social background and relationships with boyfriends. Hakim classifies those women who are not obviously career or family oriented as ‘drifters’ (Hakim 1996: 111) but the women interviewed by Proctor and Padfield did not casually drift through life; they had aspirations and plans which inevitably changed as their opportunities and circumstances beyond their control altered.

The interplay between structure and agency is a core theme of the book, the authors recognising the interdependence of these two aspects of the social world and suggesting that throughout their discussion they ‘will find many examples of this, of examination systems, workplaces, and gender-based expectations as external realities forming the context in which women exercise their own agency’ which in turn ‘is partly facilitated by structured situations, partly channelled by them, but also impacts upon such structures’ (45). While the authors do examine such structural institutions as education, family support, relationships with boyfriends and employment, I found it disappointing that they did not relate these to metastructures, and despite the quote from page 45, most notably to gender and patriarchy. By concentrating, by their own admission, on participants from ‘middle England’ in the geographical and social sense (33), they were not able to explore fully differences in class and ethnicity, though they do admit their own shortcomings in terms of examining the latter, along with sexuality and disability (26). Another flaw in the research design, I believe, is the concentration on two distinct categories of single women in full-time employment and partnered mothers with at most only part-time employment. By omitting employed and unemployed single mothers and partnered mothers in full-time employment from their analysis, several key issues affecting young women’s lives and the inter-relationship between work and family are neglected. For example, the crucial relationship between the ability to pay for adequate child-care and women’s employment choices is largely ignored. I would vehemently disagree with their
premise that class is not significant for experiences of family life (3) whilst agreeing
that women are made to feel individually guilty and responsible for the contra-
dictions inherent in being a mother and participant in the paid work-force (252).
A positive aspect of the book is that the women interviewed do feature
prominently in the analysis, whether in the summarised accounts of their lives
given by the authors or in the quotations from the interviews. The reader gets an
impression of what these women’s lives have been like so far, particularly from the
multiple interviews held with the group of single women. Indeed, the authors
express a desire to continue with their research and interview these women again
(217) and I think that this element of the study has most value. By examining the
lives of a group of women over a period of several years, their experiences of
employment, motherhood and family life can be explored and contextualised
within their social positions and individual aspirations. Such an approach can
further facilitate the authors’ investigation of the relationship between structure
and agency in these young women’s lives and the ways in which they cope with the
contradictions of employment and motherhood.

References
Catherine Hakim, *Key Issues in Women’s Work: Female Heterogeneity and the

STEPHANIE JONES

University of Wales College of Medicine

Keith Whitfield and George Strauss (eds), *Researching the World of Work:
Strategies and Methods in Studying Industrial Relations*, Ithaca: Cornell

Whitfield and Strauss’ collection presents seventeen chapters dealing with different
topics on research and methodology on ‘the world of work’ by twenty-two differ-
ent authors. By attempting to go ‘beyond how to do’ contributions the publication
enters the area of ‘epistemology’ (52): the scientific process of gaining know-
ledge’ (85). In their introduction ‘Research Methods in Industrial Relations’
(IR) the issue of ‘what is IR’ is once again discussed and answered as ‘the
world of work’ including ‘all aspects of labour, employment, and the work-
place’ (6). In the second chapter of Part One, Kochan illustrates the
‘distinctiveness of IR research’ by pointing to its ‘problem-centred orientation’
based on Dunlop’s ‘organising analytical framework’ (33), carefully avoiding
the word theory. IR seems to be stuck with: ‘a pound of facts and an ounce of
theory’ (122).

Part Two on ‘Strategies and Methods’, the core of the collection, starts with
Whipp’s discussion of the standard dichotomy of ‘qualitative’ vs. ‘quantitative’
methods. Although many authors mention ‘the standpoint of the researcher’
(57, 123) and ‘positivism’ (52, 57), ‘postmodernism’ (17, 62, 243) and
‘language’ (23, 61, 62, 124, 146), there are no extended discussions of these
hotly debated issues in contemporary social science nor of Agger’s recent work

The next chapter is Whitfield’s contribution on ‘qualitative methods’ stating
that ‘American journals were especially likely to publish quantitative articles’
(65). Recently, such presentation of collected data introduced by a literature
survey (usually called theory!) has been labelled: journal science. In his
chapter on ‘experimental methods’ Bruins describes such an approach as employed ‘to determine if a causal relationship exists between two variables by manipulating one’ (85). Even though he announces a discussion on the limitations of this approach, he mentions only that ‘tide experimental control reduces generalisability’ and that ‘typically undergraduate students’ (99) are used as subjects. Unfortunately contemporary leading discussion such as Rorty’s critique of experiments as ‘enclosures’ in his work on ‘critical realism’ is absent (e.g. his ‘Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature’ and ‘Consequences of Pragmatism’).

A rather different view to Bruins is presented in Kitay and Callus’ chapter on ‘case study design’ described as ‘a research strategy on one or more selected social phenomena to understand or explain the phenomena by placing them in their wider context’ (103). Friedman and McDaniel examine ‘ethnography’ that ‘involves the ethnographer’s participation in people’s daily lives for an extended period’ (114) to ‘understand work and work relationships’ (116). Even though they mention ‘interpretations’ and understanding as essential to ethnography, both stop short of any discussion on hermeneutics. Whyte advocates ‘participatory action research’ because ‘by treating informants as passive subjects, social researchers are simply manipulating and distorting reality’ (134). Millward, Marginson and Callus show how this is done in ‘large-scale national surveys’ which is followed by Hartley and Barling’s chapter on ‘employee attitude surveys’.

In Part Three on comparative analysis, Strauss discusses ‘splitters’ vs. ‘lumpers’ (183) and Whitfield, Delbridge and Brown examine ‘workplace surveys for comparative research’ and the unconscious use of surveys conducted in different languages (202). In Part Four Patmore examines ‘historical methods in IR’ and Hammond and Ronfeldt discuss legal methods. One of the most interesting chapters is Cornfield and Kane’s work on ‘Sociological Approaches to Employment Research’. Both emphasise bureaucracy, career mobility and embeddedness as core research fields. Even though contemporary feminist research methods such as Clough’s ‘The End of Ethnography’ or Smith’s ‘Texts, Facts and Feminism’ have been seen as ‘perhaps the most powerful source of interpretative theory today’ (Agger 1998: 32), such methodological approaches are never discussed in the Whitfield & Strauss book.

The final part includes two chapters on public policy, one on American policy-making by Siegel, and the second by Brown providing an enlightening account of how state funding influences research in an attempt to eliminate ‘academic freedom’ (276). The book finishes with a ‘conclusion’ that reads more like a summary (288ff.): ‘Kochan deals with . . ., Cornfield and Kane agree . . ., Hammond and Ronfeldt argue . . ., Whipp suggests . . ., some researchers focus . . ., etc., etc.’

In conclusion, almost all authors in the collection have excluded the ‘classics’ and carefully avoid mentioning contemporary social science and research such as the postmodernist contributions on language and hermeneutics, critical theory’s examination of the limitation of positivism, or feminist research methods. Furthermore one might agree with Strauss and Whitfield that ‘German sociology is virtually unintelligible to US readers’ (17). Nevertheless Habermas’ Knowledge and Human Interests [Erkenntnis und Interesse] may provide some useful insights into research strategies and methods. Put briefly and simply, Habermas sees a knowledge-constitutive interest as guiding principles of research. This takes place in three forms: (a) empirical-analytical science operating with hypothetico-deductive connections with an interest in
'facts’ and control, (b) historical-hermeneutics using interpretations as method and interested in understanding, and (c) critical-emancipatory interest as a rejection of positivism with an aim ‘to transform our individual and collective consciousness of reality in order to maximise the human potential for freedom and equality’ (Morrow’s ‘Critical Theory and Methodology’, 1994: 146).

If one looks at the Whitfield/Strauss book, one cannot escape the impression that present industrial relations research is trapped in the simple application of empirical-analytical science with the occasional excursion into hermeneutics. And all of this without any discussion, reflection or self-awareness of social science terminologies and methodologies. Without such deeper reflections on IR research, the field remains disconnected from contemporary social science and will fail to establish itself as a discipline.

References

THOMAS MURAKAMI
University of Western Sydney, Australia