

## REVIEWS

*Workers' participation in decisions within undertakings* ILO Geneva, 1981 vii and 244 p. Price: Not stated.

IDE International Research Group, *Industrial democracy in Europe* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981 viii and 449 p. Price: \$26.95.

IDE International Research Group, *European industrial relations* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981 ix and 227 p. Price: \$45.00.

These 3 books review and analyse recent developments in industrial democracy, setting the analysis within the context of the industrial relations system of a country and its economic, political, historical, institutional and legal framework. There is a similarity in the format in that they analyse the objectives of the schemes, the influence of legalised joint rule-making compared to informal arrangements, and the effects on management, employees and the economy. The ILO's book is most beneficial for those wanting a quick summary of the various forms that worker participation can take, whereas the joint volume from the IDE research group takes a much more scholastic approach and is essential reading for any serious student of industrial democracy.

The ILO's book provides information on worker participation within undertakings from countries as diverse as Benin and the USA. Part II of the book describes briefly the machinery of participation, classified by country and form of participation such as self-management, membership of management bodies and works councils. Although one quickly discerns the large number of participatory styles even within a classification, the book is disappointing in that this descriptive material is not interrelated with the conceptual and analytical argument of the first part of the book. For example, the Yugoslavian self-management section summarises recent developments and historical changes, but not the objectives of self-management and hence the extent of the success in achieving the objectives.

The early chapters make useful distinctions, for instance the objectives being classified into ethical, socio-political (the basis for industrial democracy) and economic. Despite this, the distinction between developing and developed economies is overlooked, as are the effects of multinational corporations, inflation and structural change. The summary indicates that whilst the schemes of worker participation have a diversity of economic and ideological and political backgrounds they are all addressing the same sorts of issues in the same kind of manner. The book infers that collective bargaining is the ultimate form of participation as it stresses the divergent roles of employees and employers and provides a means for reconciling the often contradictory interests.

The IDE International Research Group consists of representatives from 12 countries in Europe, and a variety of academic backgrounds such as sociology, psychology and management, and a variety of political and ideological persuasions. The central focus of the study is "the differential distribution of power and influence in organisations subject to different types of national industrial democracy schemes." Thus it is not surprising that the group spend 10 pages discussing the various definitions of power which would emerge from the different disciplines and persuasions before defining power as "the degree to which a group (or individual) can determine the outcome of decisions (of a specified scope) which generate conflict." The foregoing indicates the thoroughness of the group. Although this debating of every major concept provides a useful summary of the relevant



literature, it does prevent the reader from quickly grasping the essence of an issue.

The early chapters of *Industrial Democracy in Europe* set out the theoretical model and the research methods. They exclude collective bargaining, and they separate *de jure* participation which is the formal, legal rules and regulations from *de facto* participation which is the actual outcome in terms of influence and involvement. The objective of the study is to investigate whether changes in the law on industrial democracy would result in changes in company structure and managerial behaviour, and what conditions were required before legislation to increase worker participation would succeed.

The research on industrial democracy was conducted by interview and questionnaire. It concentrates on several industries and then only on firms of the same size. Findings from this limited sample are that social change may be more feasible since industrial democracy is not determined by technological or economic factors, but by the socio-political environment (especially the degree of formal participation) and organisational hierarchy. On a cross-national perspective there appear to be many different industrial democracy strategies which give similar results.

This recognition of the importance of the country context variables in influencing the form and method of participation is the subject matter of *European Industrial Relations*. Each European country is analysed according to a quasi-systems view of industrial relations with sections on the socio-political economic background, the historical background to the existing industrial relations legislation, a view on the industrial relations "climate", the existing formal participatory schemes and recent developments. To condense this to 20 pages per country would defy even the *Readers Digest*, but ample references to the detailed literature is given. Across-country correlations show that where there are strong central union and employer associations they can promote a system of participation at any level in an enterprise provided that there is economic growth, a culture of co-operation, and a predominance of left-wing governments in power.

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- Ford, Bill and Plowman, David *Australian Unions: an industrial relations perspective* Melbourne, Macmillan, 1983, ix and 576 p. Price: \$19.95.  
Hagan, J *The history of the A.C.T.U.* Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1981, xiv and 476 p. Price: \$A18.50.

Australia has registered some 320 trade unions and these encompass 3 million members representing about 50 percent of the workforce. As with many industrialised countries, including New Zealand, the distribution band is weighted towards the larger unions and the union movement has a long tail of very small unions. Thus, in Australia, one third of the unions cover less than one percent of all union members while one tenth of the unions cover 70 percent of all union members. Agreement is easily reached that there are too many trade unions but little attention is given in practice to reducing the number. On the other hand a great deal of attention is given to the activities of unions. This attention ranges from occasional hysteria in the mass media, to self-serving polemics, to sober and scholarly works. Among the more recent of the latter genre are the 2 books presently under review.

The 2 books have much in common. Not only is each of substantial length but the presentation is similar. Each is divided into parts with Ford and Plowman distributing their readings amongst 18 chapters within 6 broad areas of enquiry: an introductory overview; the organisation and practice of unions; freedom and control (which comprises 2 valuable chapters on exploring the tensions between freedom to associate and freedom



in association); co-operation and conflict, (in which 3 papers describe internecine warfare); issues and policies (which consists of a series of chapters examining contemporary trade union issues such as unions and immigrant workers, unions and women workers, and unions and the media); future context and perspective (which looks at the changing environment and in particular the challenge of technology). There is an epilogue which neatly ties the whole work back to the historical context of the introduction. Not that this should be taken to imply that Ford and Plowman can be or should be read in the round and at one sitting. It is a meal of many courses; the contributors are academics of some standing, and postgraduate researchers whose standing will be enhanced by their inclusion in this valuable work. It is, it must be stressed, a book for serious students and each chapter bears the hallmarks of careful research. The editors are to be commended on their skill in marshalling and organising the fruits of the most recent research and reflection upon Australian trade unionism.

Worthy of special remark is the part on organisation and practice of unions. While histories of individual unions, ranging from the smallest to the largest, are regularly produced, too little attention normally is paid to the internal structure and workings of trade unions, and a perusal of this part alone will reward the efforts of both students and practitioners of industrial relations. Adding to the practical value of the book is the inclusion in the relevant parts of the full text of the policy of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) on a range of significant issues including working conditions, a charter for shop stewards, a charter for shop committees, industrial legislation, union organisation, immigration, technological change and the ACTU policy on working women. In the Appendix is found not only a long bibliography presented in sub-sections to facilitate access, but also 16 tables of union statistics. In sum, then, the book stands as the most comprehensive and accessible work on contemporary Australian trade unionism presently available.

While the central thrust of Ford and Plowman is towards contemporary issues, the readings do contain chapters which direct attention to the historical perspective. Given this, there is a link with Hagan's weighty study of the history of the ACTU. Moreover we learn much about the closed community of industrial relations scholars when it is noticed that the chapter in Ford and Plowman on the historical context and perspective of Australian unions is contributed by Hagan, and that there is a chapter in Ford and Plowman on the ACTU's authority 1927-1957. The 3 decades also receive attention in Hagan's own history. Hagan had divided his treatment into 3 periods, 1927-49, 1949-72 and 1972-80. While this division is unremarkable in itself the perspective from which the 3 eras is approached is unusual and provocative. What Hagan does is allow the reader to see the ACTU at each period from the view of its affiliated unions, the Federal Industrial Tribunal (once the Court, now the Commission), and with successive federal governments. Each of the 3 nominated eras is introduced with a broad overview of the social, political and legal context in which the ACTU operated and concludes with a synthesis chapter tying the threads together. Such a Tolstoyian approach requires a high level of organisational skills, a rich command of the details of the material and a lucid style, otherwise both author and reader would flounder. To Hagan's credit he masters the problem. On the other hand, an initial reaction from the reader is that the same material is being reported but the final effect is to immerse the reader in an intricate tapestry comprising the issues which confronted the unions, the tribunals, the employers and the governments over the course of almost half a century. By this measure alone the book is invaluable to anyone interested in Australian industrial history. But the book is not without its flaws in both content and presentation.

As to the latter, it is possible to point to more typographic errors and orphan footnotes than one ought properly to expect in a work of this scale. Leaving that aside, it is possible also to lament the impression given that Australian industrial relations operate almost exclusively in what is sometimes pejoratively described as "The Melbourne Club", which is a shorthand way of identifying an interlocking relationship between the ACTU,



the employers' peak bodies, and the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. In reality, of course, there is much going on within each of the constituent members of "The Club" and also outside "The Club". In Hagan we learn little of, say, unavoidable squabbles within the executive body of the ACTU and we tend to drift away from the grass-roots when we enter the era 1972-80. In some ways the final chapter occurs in a more isolated context than the earlier ones and the book would have been enriched by an exploration of the wider factors impinging on the conduct of ACTU affairs in more recent times. But that said, it requires no emphasis that Hagan has produced a book worthy of the subject, not that this is to be taken as agreement with the hyperbole on the book's jacket that "... the ACTU plays as important a role as that of any of the political parties". The ACTU occupies a role in the popular mind which is greatly in advance of its real powers. The impact of personalities is what has long given the ACTU an apparent authority which in fact it does not have. Hagan is well aware of this and gives insights into the central role of significant ACTU personalities such as Albert Monk and Bob Hawke. Finally, the only proper way to measure the success of an enterprise as ambitious as Hagan's is to test the final product against the aims of the author.

Hagan advises us that to give a coherent shape to his undertaking he set out to explore the question, "to what extent have the activities of the trade union movement confirmed or weakened the power of employers to control the means of production and distribution?" The basis for this question is found in the sole constitutional objective of the ACTU expressed as being: "The socialisation of industry, i.e. production, distribution and exchange", and, to sharpen the enquiry, Hagan turns his attention to tracing the struggle between 2 conflicting pressures within the union movement.

Those pressures Hagan identifies as, one rooted in a reformist, Labour tradition and the other fixed in a radical, revolutionary, left-wing tradition. In demonstrating the ascendancy of the reformist tradition Hagan answers his central question, and the thesis of the book can be reduced to the proposition that the ACTU has paid merely lip service to its constitutional objective.

Ford and Plowman compliment Hagan by including him in their collection of scholarly readings and, in turn, Hagan's definitive history complements contemporary research. The 2 books sit comfortably together.

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Chiplin, B and Sloane, P J, *Tackling discrimination at the workplace: an analysis of sex discrimination in Britain* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, vii and 156 p. Price: £5.50.

This is a thorough, concise and well-signposted book which focuses on the measurement of sex discrimination at the workplace, within the context of sex discrimination in employment in Britain. Most usefully, the authors tease out the implications of all this for managements and trade unions.

Despite being couched in terms of the UK legislation and economy, this publication will be of great interest to all in New Zealand who are concerned with the issue of sex discrimination in employment. In their assessment of the need for prudent managements to develop equal opportunity policies and practices, economists Chiplin and Sloane are some way ahead of New Zealand employers. At the biennial convention of the New Zealand Employers' Federation in April 1984, it was reported that none of the 150 or so firms represented there had yet adopted the Federation's forward-looking equal opportunity policy.

The authors focus on workplace sex discrimination as a demand-side phenomenon and are not so much concerned with differences in supply-side characteristics which may



arise from sex discrimination in other spheres of life. They conclude that about one third of the difference between average male and female earnings is due to workplace discrimination, and the other two-thirds to factors lying outside the scope of the enterprise.

Workplace sex discrimination can occur in the recruitment of workers, their deployment, their treatment on the job, opportunities for advancement through training or job assignments, promotion procedures and so on. Discrimination may be direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional. The authors note that discrimination is not simply a synonym for prejudice. The latter represents a desire or intention to discriminate which may be unfulfilled, whilst the former can occur without intent in the absence of prejudice.

The authors' no-nonsense approach to sex discrimination at the workplace covers a lot of ground in a way that should be of immense practical assistance to managements, trade unions and government agencies wanting to tackle the problem. Starting with a discussion of the concept of discrimination and its definition by economists and lawyers, Chiplin and Sloane outline theories of discrimination in the labour market and the UK equal pay and equal opportunities legislation and its impact.

The male-female earnings differential in Britain is analysed, including a consideration of factors beyond workplace discrimination which might contribute to the earnings gap. These are: education and training; marriage (and childrearing); differences in motivation, performance and working hours; and the extent of trade union organisation. These subsections each comprise a quick tour of the literature, some more satisfactorily than others.

The case for the development of equal opportunity policies at the company level is presented in a chapter, "Monitoring discrimination and the law". An excellent section describes elements of an equal opportunity policy along the lines of the UK Equal Opportunities Commission's draft Code of Practice. In New Zealand, the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women is soon to publish a similar practical guide to the implementation of equal opportunity policies by managements.

Methods of measurement of sex discrimination at the workplace and in the recruitment of labour are described in detail and illustrated by Chiplin and Sloane's own research findings in 2 chapters which form the heart of the book. This exposition may seem a little esoteric to New Zealand employers and managements right now, but could be essential reading in the foreseeable future.

At the time of writing, the Human Rights Commission has just published "Women in Banking: a report on complaints of sex discrimination in the New Zealand banking system". It found that female employees do suffer sex discrimination in the major banks and recommends that this be rectified by the managements' adoption of equal opportunity practices in the form of an affirmative action programme. If the banks do respond positively, it will be the first such equal opportunity intervention by any company in New Zealand.

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Cockburn, Cynthia *Brothers: male dominance and technological change*  
London, Pluto Press, 1983, 264 p. Price: \$21.95.

The newspaper industry was the first of the traditional major industries to start the process of complete transformation to computerised methods of production. In the past decade newspaper production in America, Britain, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand has been progressively transformed from "hot-metal" techniques based on the linotype machine to "cold type" photocomposition. These changes have been the most rapid and radical since movable type was first invented more than 540 years ago.

As an industry undergoing rapid technological change and one which has a reputation



for effective worker control over the labour process, it is an appropriate choice for the study of the interdependence of the social relations of production and technology. What is exciting about Cynthia Cockburn's study of the newspaper industry in Britain is that she analyses the class and gender dimensions of the social relations of production refracted through the struggle over new technology.

The author explores the economic, political and technological context for the restructuring of the British newspaper industry and its labour force since the second world war. National newspapers were experiencing recurring financial crises throughout the sixties and early seventies. It is in the nature of daily newspapers production – a key factor of which is the uniquely perishable quality of its product – to “tilt power” towards production workers (p. 74). The high earnings and restrictive practices of craft labour and the degree of chapel (the name of in-house union structures in the newspaper industry) control provided the motive for, but also inhibited, technological innovation in Fleet Street. The experience undergone by Times Newspapers Ltd in the course of its conversion to photocomposition is the most well-known example.

Against this backdrop, Cockburn provides a lucid and readable account of the changes that have been occurring to the compositors' former trade of typesetting and composing the pages of the newspaper in hot metal. Now these men have been retrained for 2 kinds of work: to set type using a variety of typewriter-like keyboard devices (including the VDU) linked to a computer, and to “paste-up” onto layout sheets photo-electronically produced strips of editorial and advertising material.

The British print unions have been strong enough to retain the right of many existing compositors to the transformed jobs – an outcome which has been paralleled in New Zealand, although the introduction of new printing technology into this country's newspapers has taken place under very different circumstances: most noticeably, no single edition of a New Zealand metropolitan newspaper has been lost over the issue of new technology (Hill, 1983).

*Brothers* is based on a 2-year research project which took place between 1979 and 1981 and in which Cockburn studied 2 Fleet Street national and 2 “regional” newspapers in the London area. She conducted observations and interviews with management, technicians, “fathers of the chapel” (senior chapel officials) and women in the printing industry.

In particular, her analysis draws on in-depth interviews with 50 compositors, all members of the National Graphical Association, the NGA.

Cockburn traces the current labour process in printing back to its pre-capitalist origins in an apprenticeship system and chapel structure which were “intricately entwined” with the patriarchal family. She shows that within the male working class, as it emerged from the feudal strata, printers became a self-perpetuating skilled elite among workers. Cockburn unravels the class and gender processes which led to this outcome. The key strategy the printers developed in their struggle with newspaper proprietors was control over entry to the craft and the job. Craft organisation and social sanctions together effectively barred women from successfully competing for the skilled work of the compositor. By the time the rather late industrialisation of printing had created a potential demand for cheap female labour, the printing trade societies were already strongly organised to defend the men against any encroachment into their craft. Thus, Cockburn argues, the unions have continued to be “male clubs and their procedures and customs, language and ideology to be the cultural and political expression of manhood as much as of labourism.” (p.34) So successful has been the unions' defence of the craft that in 1977 the Royal Commission on the Press found that of the 5 000 compositors on Britain's national newspapers not one was a woman.

The study's focus on gender from a socialist-feminist perspective does not lead to distortion. The book provides a sympathetic and sensitive account of the effects of photocomposition on the male compositor: faced as he is with a technology which blurs the distinction between previously quite separate occupations and renders obsolescent many of his former craft skills. Equally disturbing however, is that the new technology threatens his perception of himself as a skilled artisan and as a man. Now he finds himself typing,



handling bits of paper ("a girl could do it really") and working in an office environment. One of the compositors explained it this way: "I think it may make softies of us. I feel it may make us, I don't know if this is the word, 'effete'. Less manly, somehow" (p.108). New Zealand research has shown remarkably similar responses.

Therefore, as in the New Zealand case, the contemporary development of the labour process in the British newspaper industry must be explained in terms not only of the threat which female workers posed to the job opportunities of male workers, but also to the men's perceptions of themselves as skilled tradesmen. With the change from hot metal to cold type the printing tradesmen began to work on machines which they associated with "women's work". In addition, in some British and New Zealand newspapers the change also meant that the tradesmen began to work alongside women. "(People) would say — even though a woman is doing what has been a man's job, they would tend to think that because the woman is there, the man is now doing a *woman's* job." (p.180) At the same time, the new technology had replaced, or had the potential to replace, many of the former craft skills of the printing tradesmen. In analysing the processes of class and gender relations, "the difficulty for most of us," Cockburn argues, "is to hold in sharp focus both sets of connections at one and the same time." (p. 192)

It is as though we have in front of us one of those drawings used to illustrate optical illusion. We look at it one way and interpret it as a particular shape. Suddenly our perception switches and we see the same lines form another object, another meaning. One is the image of a class structure, the other of a sex/gender structure. (p. 195)

In the book Cockburn explicitly or implicitly addresses a number of important issues in current debates on the labour process and, within feminist theory, on the relationship between gender and class. *Brothers* is one of only a few sociological studies concerned with the complex interaction between gender, technological change and the labour process. Most studies in this area treat gender relations *either* as a by-product of class relations, subsuming gender under the umbrella of labour process analysis; *or* they examine sex-segregation of occupations and industries by recourse to a theory of patriarchy which is often unhistorical and uninformed by political economy.

Cockburn's book is also a convincing demonstration of the point made by many of Braverman's critics that general theories about technological change cannot be developed in the absence of concrete, specific studies of industries and occupations, and hence that the proper unit of analysis for labour process theory is the industry or the occupation not the capitalist labour market as a whole. Accompanying this move from the more abstract to the more concrete is Cockburn's shift from a study of the *elements* that make up the class to a study of the *relations* of conflict and alliance between the classes of capital and labour, as well as between men and women.

*Brothers* also shows the active part played by the working class itself in the process of its own formation, demonstrating — as a number of Braverman's critics have pointed out — the need to take into account the role which labour plays in the restructuring of the labour process. As Cockburn argues, class responses are not totally determined from without. There is more than one way of organising resistance to capitalist exploitation. The craftsmen made choices. "They chose union practices which included the carving-out of a uniquely defensible identity that was skilled, white and male." (p.32) In a final chapter, "Men and the Making of Change", Cockburn explores the implications of her analysis for future directions in the labour movement.

Criticisms of the book are few. Firstly, despite the fact that the author shows a clear understanding that technology is the consequence of human and social choice, she lapses occasionally into a form of technological determinism. For example, at one point she describes the new technology as a "force acting from without on established social relations." (p.216) Secondly, her use of the term sex/gender rather than simply gender (although explained adequately) proved irritating in the reading. Finally, use of photographs in the text itself (and not merely on the cover) would have illustrated graphically



the "male world" of the hot metal compositor and the blurring of the distinctions between "men's work" and "women's work" with the move into photocomposition.

Game and Pringle (1983) have argued that studies of gender and studies of the labour process are incomplete unless they take each other seriously. This Cockburn has done. The task that remains is to spell out explicitly the conceptual links between the 2 sets of gender and class relations and, in doing so, to incorporate other of the most recent developments in the labour process debate.

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### References

- Game, A and Pringle, R (1983) *Gender at work* Sydney, Allen and Unwin.  
Hill, R M (1983) *From hot metal to cold type: labour process theory and new technology in the newspaper industry* University of Canterbury, Ph.D. thesis.

Werneke, D *Microelectronics and office jobs: the impact of the chip on women's employment* Geneva, ILO, 1983, 102 p. Price: Not stated.

This small book is a useful condensation of information about the impact of micro-electronic technology on women working in offices. Werneke has used as her primary sources of information studies conducted in the OECD countries of the USA, Britain, France and Australia, but makes some reference to studies from other "developed" countries.

For those who are interested in the topic, the book provides a good overview. It documents basic points which have now become sadly familiar to those of us concerned with women's employment. These are as follows:

- (1) That clerical work is "womens" work.
- (2) That microelectronic technology is responsible for female job loss, although this does not happen according to a simple "enter machine - exit worker" model. Rather, the machines allow for the expansion of business and a rise in productivity without the employment of more workers. Job loss is by "natural wastage" as typically mobile female workers leave jobs for the usual personal reasons and are not replaced. Overall, opportunities for female employment in offices are shrinking.
- (3) Those jobs that remain are frequently de-skilled by the application of machinery. Theoretically women could enhance their job content and satisfaction while remaining in the office if they
  - (a) had access to the more skilled jobs involving the new machines, e.g. programming, systems analysis, or
  - (b) use the time saved from routine clerical tasks to move into administrative and managerial areas.

In practice neither of these possibilities is a current reality for women. Werneke cites the Swedish situation concerning sex segregation of jobs in the computer field, where 90 percent of the data processing managers are men, and 97 percent of routine data entry positions are filled by women (p. 34). Nor are women being given opportunities to enter management (p. 83). (4) The new machines pose new health and safety problems for their operators. In addition to physical discomfort induced by poorly designed screens, seating, lighting, etc, there are the psychological stresses involved in doing dull, highly structured work at a rapid pace. Office workers are now at risk of suffering the same stresses as blue collar assembly workers, as their jobs are de-skilled and speeded up in a similar fashion. (5) That if things are to improve for women workers, a number of changes need to be made



in their social status. A major change, which is recommended by Werneke and others, is better education and job training for women which takes account of the fact that traditional clerical work opportunities are shrinking and that they must be prepared for different jobs in the office.

All these points are dealt with in greater depth in the book, and the book is worthwhile as a reference resource. However, for those already familiar with the subject, this book raises the usual nagging questions which we don't seem to be able to find answers for.

It remains very hard to predict and quantify actual job losses. New technology is always introduced within an economic climate. Depending on whether business is warming up or cooling down, new technology may boost jobs or cut them. In voicing concern about the effects of new technology, it is hard to know where the line between overly-anxious pessimism and sober realism should be drawn.

Practically, unions are forced to take heed of the most pessimistic scenarios so as to be prepared for the worst which could affect their membership. If the worst does not happen, at least no-one loses out.

Conversely, employer organisations have a stake in underestimating the impact of new technology. Redundancies, retraining, redesign of the work place, new technology spells not only potential profit but also potential problems for them, and lots of them would rather not know the worst.

Nor are workers and bosses the only ones with a need to know more about this subject. Society as a whole will be affected by job change and job loss, and the role of social institutions which could or should take some interest in and display concern for the problems posed by new technology is varied and vexed.

In several European countries government agencies play an active part in assessing trends in new technology, and alleviating negative social affects. This is beginning to happen in Australia. New Zealand unions have been asking for the government here to play such a role since 1979, so far without success.

In the meantime, the technology goes on changing the face of employment, and dramatically affecting women's lives. Werneke's book gives a good flavour of how this is happening. What to do about it is the next question.

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Joseph, George *Women at work*, Oxford, Philip Allen, 1983, x and 273 p.  
Price: \$19.95.

Finch, Janet *Married to the job: wives' incorporation in men's work*, London,  
Allen and Unwin, 1983, x and 179 p. Price: \$A27.50.

These 2 rather different books each make a different kind of contribution to the state of knowledge of women's work, paid and unpaid. Both are written by scholars, but *Married to the job* contains considerably less jargon than *Women at work* whilst still addressing itself to complex ideas. Non-graduates can still make a good deal of sense out of *Women at work* by concentrating on the tables and the concise summaries of theories as well as the summary pages at end of sections.

In *Women at work*, Joseph focuses mainly on women's situation in the paid labour market, using British data, and economic theory drawn mainly from Britain and the US. His material is, however, quite relevant to New Zealand, where the trends closely resemble those in Britain, although the details may differ. Both reflect a worldwide pattern showing women workers concentrated in the lower levels of a few low paid, low status occupations in comparison to male workers.

Although there are many other books documenting this situation, this book comprises a more thorough review of the relevant economic theory and demographic data than I



have previously found between one set of covers. There is no study based on New Zealand data as comprehensive as this. Reading this book could inspire New Zealand analysts to make better use of the data available to them, although it also highlights some gaps in the data. For example some of the analyses in this book could only be matched if New Zealand had a Household Labour Force Survey, a project which has been repeatedly shelved by the Government.

On the other hand, New Zealand's census data apparently becomes available earlier, for he states in his notes that the latest census data which could be compared with the preceding decades (starting with 1881) was taken in 1971. This could be due to changes in classification rather than delays in processing, but we are not informed. (This is not the only cryptic methodological note, and the notes are inconveniently located at the ends of the chapters). In New Zealand 1981 results would have been available before the publication date.

Joseph takes some figures from other sources to illustrate women's working situation in the 1970s, but there are some large gaps in the analysis compared to the earlier time series. The data provide a mixed but not markedly optimistic picture of the last decade. For example, female concentration is tending to increase rather than decrease in the female-intensive occupations, relative male and female earnings first drew closer and then drew apart again, women are suffering disproportionately from unemployment, but the employment situation of single women has improved somewhat.

It is claimed on the jacket that Joseph draws on 5 disciplines (economics, demography, sociology, social history and political science), but he covers the first 2 much more comprehensively than the last 3. He looks most closely at economic theories which attempt to explain the labour market behavior of women and their employers. He finds some deficiencies in most of them, of which a major one is that most fail to take sufficient account of the complex relationship between domestic and work roles. However, he himself spends more time on economic and demographic than social analysis, even in the ostensibly socially-centred chapter entitled "Work and the status of women".

He acknowledges that housework is "real" work, and that stereotypes of men's and women's roles influence employers' attitudes, yet he takes it for granted that domestic and parental roles belong to women workers alone. He does not examine the mechanisms connecting and re-inforcing women's home and work roles in any detail.

The second author I am reviewing, Janet Finch, a sociologist, fortunately fills some of the gaps in Joseph's analysis. On p.80 of *Married to the job* she says "One needs to look . . . at the economic and cultural characteristics of contemporary marriage to understand why it is that *wives* are the primary domestic labourers," and she does so with depth and thoroughness. Her analysis too is confined to the British Isles, but it also rings true for the New Zealand situation.

A recurring theme in her book is the asymmetry between men's and women's work and family roles and the manner in which the 2 inequalities reinforce each other. Finch is highly critical of the "separate spheres" paradigm which isolates domestic and public life (including work) from each other for most forms of analysis. She sees it as an artificial distinction which conceals the true nature of men's and women's lives. Her theme in *Married to the job* is based on a relationship which transcends the boundaries of the spheres.

Her central proposition is that "The relationship between a wife and her husband's work is seen in this study as a 2-way one: his work both structures her life and elicits her contributions to it". Her conceptual starting points are taken mainly from the sociology of the family and of work. Her bibliography, which also includes feminist theorists, neatly fills the gaps in Joseph's.

Because relationships which cross the boundaries of the separate spheres have hardly been researched, she finds a very limited quantity of empirical data available to draw on, and makes considerable use of her own research into the wives of clergy (published under



the name of Spedding). As a result the book seeks to illustrate and explore her thesis "in the hope that others will want to explore it further," rather than attempting to test the theory.

*Married to the job* is set out in 3 main parts. In the first part, she looks at "How men's work structures their wives' lives". This includes the husband's job determining where they live, how often they shift house, whether the husband does work at home, and what hours of the clock are available for her own paid work.

The second part is entitled "Wives' contributions to their husbands' work" and covers domestic labour, giving moral support, and direct contributions, which range from unpaid helping on farms and dairies to entertaining for manager or diplomat husbands.

In the final part of the book, Finch looks at her subject in the context of wider social issues and theories, and concludes that wives' incorporation in men's work is supported and reinforced by a wide variety of social structures, values and ideologies, so that it seems "natural".

Being married to the job makes perfect sense for most wives . . . it makes good economic sense; the organisation of social life makes compliance easy and developing alternatives very difficult; it provides a comprehensive way of being a wife.

If Finch is correct, we have located a powerful explanatory factor for women's own disadvantage in the labour market. If women's motivation, use of time, physical location and the structure of their daily lives is centred on their husband's work rather than their own, men's privileged and women's underprivileged position in the work force is subject to continuing reinforcement. Parental responsibilities cannot interfere with his job if they both, with the agreement of society, see it as more important than hers.

There are alternative ways of viewing the causality. Maybe his job became more important because her parental interests were stronger than his. Finch does not ignore alternative perspectives, but she does focus on the relationship she has singled out, and catalogues convincingly the structures and cultural values which reinforce it. Although the sparsity of available empirical data makes her use extreme rather than average examples, she does convince the reader that she is chronicling a real and pervasive phenomenon.

A limitation is her relatively superficial examination of *men's* work and domestic roles, and the power relationships between the sexes at home and at work. Women are kept in their "place" not only by cultural values but by men's better access to resources. Finch documents the persistence of these patterns and women's motivation for compliance, but not men's motivation, which I suggest rests on what they have to lose. As a result her conviction, expressed in the final chapter, that most wives actively embrace their role of being married to the job and use it to gain satisfaction through "vicarious careers," is at the same time too optimistic about women's well-being and too pessimistic about the possibility of change.

Despite its narrow focus, I found Finch's book more intellectually challenging than Joseph's, as it led me to question and extend my own conceptualisation of social structures to a greater degree. On the other hand, Joseph's more rigorous analytical approach served as a reminder that new perspectives must be formulated in a way that can be falsified and then tested thoroughly against empirical data. This task has yet to be undertaken for Finch's proposition.

In conclusion, both these books are a useful addition to the bookshelves of those interested in the position of working women. Both in their own way illustrate the complexity of the structures reinforcing that position and help to explain why it resists easy solutions.

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Handy, Charles *The future of work* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984, xiii and 314p. Price: \$22.50.

Handy's purpose in writing this book is made clear on the final page, where he claims that we are "imprisoned by our own assumptions" and that it is important for us to challenge and discard them (p. 188). In the course of unmasking our assumptions about work, the author produces more than a Handy book to have around. Despite its shortcomings, *The future of work* is essential reading for those interested in future patterns of "work" and "leisure". For as well as providing a very readable account of the most recent UK literature on "futures", Handy defines the important issues and concepts, provides simple but useful conceptual schemes and critically evaluates different futures scenarios. He also introduces the reader to new futures "buzzwords" – of which "talkabouts" (as in "walkabouts") and "flexilives" are my particular favourites.

Though many of the futures scenarios discussed by Handy make for gloomy reading, and the measures needed to achieve his favoured scenario are complex, he remains cheerful that Britain's economic decline can be reversed (p. 187). And while the book is mainly intended for a British audience, the New Zealand parallels and contrasts provide a fascinating counterpoint to the text. For example, Handy argues that new work patterns will require people to seek formal educational qualifications periodically during their lives, yet the English university system is inflexible and does not encourage intermittent, periodic study patterns. A better alternative, according to Handy, is a credit system, which would "allow individuals to study courses at a range of comparable institutions and over an extended period of time" (p. 150). The New Zealand university system certainly compares favourably in this regard (though some continuing rigidities suggest that a credit system is an important but not sufficient step towards greater flexibility). To take a second example (and one which casts New Zealand in a less favourable light), Handy believes that shorter working lives are a necessary part of *his* favoured futures scenario, and to achieve this he argues that people should be encouraged to leave the paid workforce after 35 years. This could be achieved by such means as making better provisions for flexible retirement, with adjustable pensions. In New Zealand, superannuation payments, as presently organised, encourage the reverse trend, as those on career ladders "hang on" as long as possible in the hope of optimising the size of their retirement pensions.

*The future of work* covers a lot of ground, but if it has a central theme or message, it is that "orthodox", single-factor, solutions to solving the unemployment problem are wrong and that an alternative must be found.

Amongst the "orthodox" solutions canvassed and rejected by Handy, 2 have particular relevance to New Zealand at the present time. The first is that the Government is capable of creating enough jobs in the public sector – by expanding state-provided human services, for example – to "soak up" the unemployed. Such a solution assumes that the capital infrastructure is adequate to service the needs of an expanded public sector workforce. It would also create a heavy taxation burden and, according to Handy, as far as the UK is concerned, it does not take account of the year-by-year increase in the size of the labour force. The second "orthodox" solution is job growth through economic growth – the latter resulting from the export of goods with high added-value. Mike Moore's "lamburger" concept – where further processing of primary products is done in New Zealand – might be a local example. One problem with this "solution" is that most "added-value" ventures require fewer workers rather than more, and the "downstream" or "spin-off" employment effects of any given increase in economic growth have not been established. Moreover, in New Zealand, as in the UK, the rate of economic growth needed to return the society to full employment is well beyond anything that has been seen in most, probably all, of the post-war period.

Handy's belief is that on present trends, there will be job growth in the UK in the information and personal services sector, but not enough to compensate for the decline



in agricultural and manufacturing jobs *and* the growth in the labour force. Moreover, what job growth does occur in the new employment sectors will probably involve a high proportion of casual workers and will depend on the acceptance of lower overall wage-rates than has come to be the norm.

Handy's own preferred "solution" or scenario is not simple, nor is it "quick-fix". It will disappoint some readers – those who have their own single-factor hobby horses to ride or those who believe that one should not write a book which raises questions unless one has a simple, clear-cut answer in mind. Handy's solution has many components. It will require, for example, social policies which encourage rather than hinder movement between "work", "leisure" and "education". It will require a readiness to reconceptualise what we see as "work" and "leisure", such that the distinction between the formal and the informal economy can become usefully blurred. And perhaps most important of all, it will require a recognition that the 50 000 hour job, not the 100 000 hour job, is to become the recognized length of our working lives. Some readers may regard this as a far-fetched option, but Handy believes that it is the very pragmatic basis of the shorter working life which makes it an attainable goal.

The 50 000 hour job is . . . not a panacea, not an imaginative national work-shaping plan, but an economic compromise . . . it will have come about largely because employers want lower costs and thus higher productivity, while workers want higher wages for less time (p. 63).

Creation of the 50 000 hour job will depend upon persuading people to join the paid workforce later (at age 20) and leaving the workforce earlier. It will also require people to be more flexible in their work patterns while they are of working age, and here such things as portable pension schemes and educational credits become important social policy facilitators.

The chief benefit of the 50 000 hour job is that it will be possible to raise the flow of people through the same number of "smaller" jobs (p. 64), but the cost will be the impossibility of earning the same total life-time income in the formal economy as was formerly the case. For this reason, other forms of "work" – acting as an income supplement, saving money or a money-substitute – will become increasingly important, and policies and attitudes will need to be changed accordingly. Handy's serious discussion of the "colourful" informal economy – "the black" (illicit market activity), the "mauve" (personal services and home businesses) and the "grey" (legal but unrecognised domestic and voluntary work) – is given added force by this context.

The shorter working life we will experience in Handy's favoured scenario will probably not be spent in workplaces as we know them at present. An increasing proportion of the workforce – even in the public sector – will be employed on a contractual basis and paid a fee for service rather than a wage or salary. Employment in the service and information sector will be of growing importance, and factory work will decline as automation increasingly dominates the manufacture of basic goods. For workers who remain in the manufacturing sector, new technology offers the possibility of dispensing with alienating assembly-line production and reinvigorating unit or batch production. The work "gang" – elsewhere known as the semi-autonomous work group – is likely to be revitalised. (Handy cites the Volvo example as a precursor of this development (p.72)). Employing organisations themselves will increasingly adopt the principle of federalism as a way of gaining the benefits of being independent, small units (less bureaucracy; reduced impersonalism), while reaping the advantages of size and economies of scale. Finally, the economic seascape may come to reflect the "Japanese drift", with larger organisations "floating" on a raft of numerous, small, sub-contractors (p. 90).

As I hope this review will have demonstrated, Handy admirably provides a coverage which is broad and deep. Given the complexity of futures scenarios and the inter-dependence of their elements, I take from *The future of work* the implication that futures researchers will need to become generic in their approaches rather than ever more highly



specialised. For example, Handy shows that it will become increasingly archaic to study education as though it were something which took place in a physical institution which can be appropriately delineated and labelled. More than ever before, education will need to be seen as a life-long process to which many institutions – including the workplace – make significant contributions.

Despite the insights which Handy offers, and the careful consideration of alternative scenarios, there are certain weaknesses in the discussion which should be acknowledged. These weaknesses are particularly evident in the discussion of pathways of futures scenarios. In arguing that British society has a choice about which pathway to take, Handy neglects to specify the boundaries between choice and constraints. I believe this neglect arises, in part, because the capitalist economic system is treated throughout as a constant, and its determining role is largely ignored. In particular, Handy should have considered (even if only to reject) the role of capitalism in creating the present unemployment situation, and the extent to which capitalist economic imperatives limit the choices available for futures pathways.

For Handy, the questions which govern the choice of pathways are moral questions and he, like Emile Durkheim (an earlier moral theorist of industrial civilisations), leaves his discussion of morality open-ended, without adequate consideration of the material grounds of moral choice. The relationships between moral positions, and class interests, for example, is not considered. Nowhere are the tensions and vagaries of this approach more apparent than in Handy's discussion of reorganising work (chapter 4). Handy recognises that the "Japanese drift" could be a recipe for exploitation, and he does consider organisational means by which sub-contractors can avoid being exploited by large companies – notably by the formulation of cooperatives. Nevertheless, sub-contractors can only do so much to defend themselves organisationally, for they must "... learn to live in the shadow and under the patronage of the large corporations, such patronage will ease their marketing problems . . ." etc., etc. (p. 93). Ultimately, for Handy, the defence against exploitation is conditioned by moral, not material factors. "For its part, the large corporation has to act responsibly rather than narrowly and selfishly . . . Responsibility cannot be imposed on them by law; it has to be voluntary" (p. 94)

To conclude, in its failure to treat the mode of production as an important cause of present problems and as a constraint on futures pathways, Handy's discussion resembles much other futures literature. However insightful this literature is, and however exciting the alternative scenarios it considers, it tends to be hollow at the theoretical centre. Where Handy's book is most valuable, I believe, is in its recognition of the *complexity* of futures scenarios, and in the perspectives it gives us to view current "solutions" to unemployment. As Handy says:

Unfortunately, "jobs for all" is a good slogan. It sounds worthy, and it allows its proponents to duck the new agenda. It links the right and the left of political parties, the right believing that an industrial revival will bring us back to full employment, and the left seeing the State as the employer of last resort. To both of them talk of alternative scenarios is defeatist, irresolute and immoral. [But] . . . if "jobs for all" means full-time, lifetime jobs for all who want them at good rates of pay, then full employment is not feasible in the foreseeable future (p. 178).

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Beaumont, P B *Safety at work and the unions* London, Croom Helm, 1983, 193 p. Price: \$45.50.

This analysis of data gathered by Beaumont during research into the British experience



with occupational health and safety since the passing of the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 is of particular relevance in New Zealand at a time when there is increasing pressure for similar improvements in the regulation of the work environment.

This mounting pressure has resulted in unprecedented media coverage of health and safety disputes, and the *New Zealand journal of industrial relations* recently devoted an entire issue to the subject. As reported in that issue a joint FOL/CSU committee is currently developing a review report of present and projected trade union involvement through a series of Trades Council seminars held throughout the country.

The debate by interested parties attempting to find solutions to what appears to be an immense problem centres on identifying an existing model which can be adapted to New Zealand conditions. Several other countries have instituted reforms which allow varying degrees of worker participation in discussion and decision-making on work conditions that affect them. As Beaumont states (p. 3) the provisions of the British legislation "have already been hailed as having important implications for extending industrial democracy."

Accordingly, the model currently favoured by trade unions is based on the British legislation. This gives extensive powers to worker health and safety representatives and joint worker/management health and safety committees, both working to complement the existing public sector enforcement agencies.

The research covered in this book looks at many of the issues which are the basis for at least the trade union initiatives in the field, and the conclusions drawn are vitally important to the current debate. The point is made that industrial accidents accounted in several years during the 1970s for up to 8 to 10 times the amount of time lost through strikes in the UK. The extent of the problem is discussed, taking into account gross under-reporting of occupational accidents and illness, with the conclusion that it constitutes an enormous social cost — a point not readily accepted by some parties to the debate in New Zealand.

An assessment is also made of the evolution of the functioning of worker health and safety representatives since the enactment of the legislation which gave them their extensive powers. An important part of Beaumont's assessment of the evolved function is the effective interaction that has developed between the worker representatives and the factory inspectorate, with both playing a complementary role in targeting and eliminating occupational hazards. Areas in which further research is required are also identified. As an industrial relations researcher he laments the fact that overwhelming emphasis is placed on research into the cause of strikes even though accidents account for far greater lost time. He also expresses doubts about the adequacy of public policy discussion on occupational health and safety when there is such a surfeit of relevant research data.

Beaumont discusses (p. 1) the opportunity that has arisen since the passage of the 1974 Act in the UK "for industrial relations scholars to make a major contribution to both the academic literature and public policy discussion on workplace health and safety." Unfortunately his presentation is likely to limit the accessibility of his findings to the participants in the public policy discussion, so his contribution is likely also to be limited. The academic style adopted, complete with lengthy citations, numerous tables, and frequent statistical analyses, is really suitable only for a short article. There is little relief from his style of writing, and for the average reader this is compounded by a type face which is not easily read, section headings which are simply underlined lower case lettering, and even typographical errors.

The participants in this particular discussion are no longer exclusively professionals and academics, so while the book contains excellent material, it is unlikely to be shared widely.

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Geare, A J *The system of industrial relations in New Zealand* Wellington, Butterworths, 1983, vi and 435p. Price: \$36.50.

Geare, currently senior lecturer (industrial relations) in the Department of Management at the University of Otago, has written a book which the general public as well as a student new to industrial relations would find beneficial. While "one of the main objectives of this book is to explain the IR Act 1973 and analyse its impact . . . on New Zealand's industrial relations system", Geare wisely does not take a clause by clause trip through the legislation. Instead we find a book divided into 4 parts – introductory, the parties in industrial relations, the making and interpretation of the rules of the system, with part 4 discussing "major issues".

Part 1 quickly arrives at a definition of industrial relations, adopts a pluralist frame of reference and then gives an extremely brief outline of historical developments over the last 150 years. The cinderella of industrial relations, the public sector, gets separate consideration in this section and elsewhere in the book, although it is still accorded a minor proportion of the book.

Part 2 covers the actors in the system. Geare's coverage of the Government's roles as lawmaker and creator of institutions (Arbitration Court, tribunals and the Industrial Relations Council) and provider of conciliation, mediation and enforcement services is unspectacular. However, in the chapter on workers and unions Geare concisely presents, for example, the arguments for and against voluntary unionism concluding that "it is by no means clear cut that voluntary unionism is in any way a 'better' situation than compulsory unionism. Opinions are purely based on value judgements."

In the chapter on managers and employers Geare discusses managerial prerogatives and asserts . . .

there is no fundamental logical or ethical argument for managerial prerogatives. We are talking about power. Managers try to maintain and increase their power in the work situation – as does the Government and as do workers and unions. It would undoubtedly make life easier for managers if they could retain all the so-called prerogatives, but they cannot. Whether one believes they should be able to depends on one's value system.

The section covering the rules of the system opens with the theory and practice of collective bargaining and then concentrates on productivity bargaining, suggesting in true pluralistic fashion that the latter "indicates an effective approach to industrial relations on the part of both management and workers and unions." When discussing dispute settlement, Geare devotes useful space looking at how "industrial matters" has been progressively narrowed in interpretation by the Arbitration Court and the influence Australian decisions have had on New Zealand cases. Geare persuasively argues for a pragmatic definition to be adopted, but warns that:

a comprehensive definition of industrial matters will clearly not be a panacea for all industrial relations problems. It will however remove an absurd illogicality from the system . . . [where] . . . matters of major importance in industrial relations today such as redundancy and new technology could be ruled as "non-industrial" and therefore beyond the pale of our legislated industrial relations system.

Nearly half of the book is found in part 4 which covers "major issues". These are deemed to be industrial conflict, strikes, wages and incomes policy, disciplinary action and dismissals, and redundancy.

The chapter on industrial conflict, 12 pages in length, which notes that we are obsessed with strikes even though accidents and absenteeism cause more working time to be lost, is followed by a 40 page chapter on strikes! Geare states his position on strike penalties clearly and unequivocally:

penalties for strike action fail to fulfil a deterrent function, an acceptable punitive func-



tion, or a reformative function. As such they should be removed from the legislation, in both explicit and implicit form, and it should be stated explicitly that strikes are not considered illegal.

When it comes to incomes policy, Geare maintains that "it is probably impossible to assess accurately the impact of an incomes policy" and considers that price inflation and unemployment would be better tackled by "Government action to encourage through training and incentives increases in efficiency leading to increased productivity, quality and supply." The progressive liberal approach to the major issues canvassed in the book continues into the discussion on redundancy where Geare's final sentence in the book reads:

Until there is a change in the economic situation the call for guaranteed redundancy pay is simply a humane demand to reduce the trauma of future unemployment.

This is a book which reads easily, probably because Geare has adopted a writing style which favours elegant simplicity over academic pomposity. However, while this may endear the book to the general public, the tertiary student will find the absence of an index and a table of tables frustrating. Even the table of contents contains incorrect page numbers for at least half of the chapters. And this reviewer is still awaiting the industrial relations book which, in addition to discussing the formal system, will boldly venture into the at-present largely unrecorded informal system of industrial relations in New Zealand.

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Norris, Keith *The economics of Australian labour markets* Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1983, viii + 251 p. Pre-devaluation price: \$12.95.

This book is aimed at third or fourth year classes in labour economics at Australian universities. It presents general theory and Australian empirical work. The most recent theories from the US, both neoclassical and institutionalist, are presented. Individual chapters deal with: the supply of labour, the demand for labour, education and training, the working of labour markets, segmentation and discrimination in labour markets, pay structure, inflation and unemployment. The book would adequately service the market for which it is aimed. However, it is too theoretical for the general New Zealand reader who wishes to learn about Australian labour markets. Given Australia's cultural and institutional similarities to New Zealand, this book could usefully replace the UK or US textbooks that are forced upon labour economics students in New Zealand universities.

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