

BOOK REVIEWS

KIRBY, PETER. *Child Labour in Britain, 1750–1870*. [Social History in Perspective] Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke [etc.] 2003. x, 172 pp. £16.99; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004011770

For a large part of the twentieth century, historians have regarded child labour as a “social problem” of industrialization. Consequently, the historical debate on child labour has for a long time been concerned with the ethical and moral issues of the phenomenon. In the last three decades, insights into the social structure of households in the past, and into the ways people tried to adapt to the hardships of everyday life (“survival strategies”) have shed new light on the economic and social value of the work of children for the family economy. Peter Kirby acknowledges the importance of these new insights, but at the same time regrets the fact that long term analyses or general explanations for the changes in the period of industrialization (c.1750–1870) are still lacking. Without wanting to devalue the many, often regional, studies of children’s employment in individual sectors that have appeared in recent years, Kirby stresses the need of a general synthesis on the subject. However, it is not entirely clear whether his book is meant to be a first attempt. In his preface, Kirby seems to be more modest in his aims, hoping that the book will be a “useful teaching aid as well as a guide to potential research topics in the field” (p. ix). On the other hand, the author obviously wants to do more, by offering “a broad empirical analysis of how the work of children was integrated with the major economic and occupational transformations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain”, as he claims in his introduction (p. 5).

The thematic structure of the book, with its short, clearly written chapters, is very well considered. In the first chapter, Kirby goes into the different sources used for studying child labour, discussing both their advantages and problems. One of the main obstacles is that child labour has always been systematically under-registered, even after the appearance of national statistics in the first half of the nineteenth century. This does not only bring quantitative lacunas, but it also has qualitative implications, since not much can be told about the work children (and especially girls) performed within the household or in small domestic workshops. Furthermore, the contemporary authorities’ concern with child labour from the 1830s onwards was very specifically directed at the social problem it constituted, and at the excesses of industrial factory labour. Due to this focus in the sources, much less is known about the circumstances regarding children’s work in more “traditional” sectors, like agriculture and crafts.

The second chapter covers the social and demographic context of child labour. Kirby here deals with the growth of the dependency rate between 1750 and 1820, the rise of wage labour in the period of investigation, the influence of the family cycle on child labour, and the role of the Poor Law and clerical institutions. The author frequently underlines the many regional differences and variations according to gender. These nuances, however, make it difficult at the same time to draw broad and general conclusions.

In the third chapter, about child labour and the organization of production, the different economic sectors children worked in (agriculture, crafts, both in town and countryside, and heavy industry) are discussed. The chapter provides a good overview of the kinds of

tasks boys and girls actually performed during the era of industrialization, although again regional differences and under-registration make it hard to reconstruct a coherent image. Kirby's most significant conclusion here is that we should not overestimate the importance of child labour in heavy industry, and that the possibilities for children to work might have lain especially within the more traditional sectors like agriculture and handicrafts. But because of the under-registration in exactly these sectors, and the more general problem of the unpredictable and flexible character of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century labour market, it is hard to make general statements about this. The author therefore argues for more comprehensive research in all sectors of the economy.

The final chapter is about the relationship between child labour and the state. After an elaborate discussion of different aspects of state involvement with the issue of child labour, Kirby comes to the conclusion that the role of state legislation and education has been highly overestimated until now. Most likely, general social and legal welfare developments, rather than specific child-labour laws, have contributed to the decline of child labour.

All in all, this book offers a clear and desirable overview of child labour in a very turbulent and important period of British social and economic history. Kirby has brought together a lot of recent research results in a coherent and analytical way. Some recent insights, like the importance of child labour in the more traditional economic sectors, and the smaller role of state legislation than previously thought, are clearly pointed out. Another advantage is that the author pays a lot of attention to gender differences, not only in the historical description of child labour, but also in a methodological sense. After all, the work that girls performed was even less often registered than boys' labour was, and this implies some different research approaches, as Kirby rightly stresses.

Still, no answer is given to the main question the author would like to see solved: what changes took place in this period of industrialization, owing to which child labour transformed from a necessary share of the family income to a phenomenon in the margins of the economy? As he emphasizes himself in his conclusion, Kirby is even unsure if it is at all possible to make general statements because of the lack of reliable statistics before the mid-nineteenth century, and the highly complex relationship between households and the labour market before this period. The only way that this issue might be resolved, according to Kirby, is to provide much more historical evidence by further detailed local demographic, regional, and sectoral studies.

In my view, another thing might be essential to answer this important question, namely, prolonging the period of investigation into the twentieth century in order to measure the effects of earlier transformations. Although child labour certainly declined before 1870, the most decisive changes probably took place at a later stage, owing to changes that had perhaps started in the period 1750–1870 but had not for long been completed by then. I am thinking, for instance, about the effects of state legislation, which for the most part would have taken place after 1870, of demographic changes which led to entirely different family structures, and of the long-term benefits of both industrialization and late nineteenth-century colonization for the rise in per capita income in the motherland. All these aspects will have resulted in changing economic needs as well as different social and moral values regarding child labour in Great Britain.

Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk

DEFLEM, MATHIEU. *Policing World Society. Historical Foundations of International Police Cooperation.* [Clarendon Studies in Criminology.] Oxford University Press, Oxford [etc.] 2002. xiii, 301 pp. £50.00; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004021777

If you think (international) policing was “invented” in order to improve the enforcement of law or the control of crime, you should read the study reviewed here. Mathieu Deflem’s book has grown out of a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado. Inspired by the sociology of Max Weber, the study integrates findings from the literature on globalization but also picks up impulses from the sociology of police and social control. Deflem’s main thesis argues against an understanding of police practice as being mainly influenced by political and/or economic conditions. As the author puts it, international police practices “cannot be understood in terms of politics and law, for they do not follow government directives and do not target international criminals as legal subjects” (p. 226). Instead, police and international police practices are “determined by internal organizational developments related to a process of bureaucratization” (p. 15).

Deflem’s study has eight chapters. In the first some early, mostly politically motivated, initiatives for international police cooperation are analysed. Here, the main focus is on Germany in the nineteenth century. With a cross-border perspective, the second chapter sketches some intergovernmental efforts to formalize police cooperation, especially on a transatlantic level. The third chapter discusses how and why efforts towards international police cooperation became more and more effective, especially in the years before World War I, and the fourth focuses on international police activities during and immediately after the war. A special focus is placed on the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Chapter 5 analyses the considerable progress that was made in the 1920s, when the International Criminal Police Commission was established in Vienna in 1923. In 1956 it was renamed the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-Interpol). In chapter 6 the transformative impact of the rise of Nazism on international police cooperation is examined. Moreover, for the United States the “federalization of law enforcement” (p. 44) put forward by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is analysed. The last two chapters treat the development of the International Criminal Police Commission during World War II and how it was re-founded after the war.

Deflem underlines the point that international police organizations are no invention of the recent era of globalization. Thus, he makes three propositions about the preconditions to establish international police cooperation (pp. 21–27). First, the police must have gained bureaucratic independence from the political centres of their respective states (“formal bureaucratic autonomy”). Second, systems of expert knowledge must have been established to fight international crime (“operational bureaucratic autonomy”). But third, even then, national interests “remain paramount in the planning and execution” of international policing. In the history of international police cooperation, the technical apparatus of international police organizations was developed first, after which the internationalization of crime could be presented as a potential risk.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, international cooperation between police organizations was strongly dominated by the political aims of national governments. This began to change in the second half of that century, when police cooperation became independent of government orders and free from close supervision. In analysing the roots of this independence Deflem speaks of a “peculiar paradox”: by giving the police more opportunities to handle political problems, governments enabled police organizations to

cooperate internationally. The resulting intensification of personal contacts between police experts made the police more and more independent from politics and a common (police) culture took shape. The anti-anarchist congress in 1898, the international agreements on prostitution (1902), and on narcotic drugs (1912), and the First Congress of International Criminal Police (Monaco, 1914) were cornerstones of this development. During this process, international policing became more and more targeted on criminal concerns and was no longer concentrated on state-dictated political issues. In the cause of international policing in the early twentieth century, its main focus shifted from politics to crime.

In studying the phase up to the 1920s, Deflem shows brilliantly how this process of depoliticization developed. He underlines how important it was that police institutions shared a system of knowledge on international crime. The crime experts who had established close personal networks were convinced that a “borderless society of dangerous criminals” was threatening (p. 95). This expert knowledge rested upon three technological innovations: (1) the widespread use of printed media, especially photographs taken of criminals; (2) the anthropometry system called “bertillonage” after its inventor Alphonse Bertillon; and (3) fingerprint systems of identification. Moreover, the positivist perspective on crime gained ground, postulating that there were certain people who, for various reasons, were “causally determined to act criminally”. Looking at these developments, Deflem reminds us that first the technical apparatus of international police organizations was developed. When this was achieved, the internationalization of crime could be presented as a potential risk.

With the establishment of the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) in 1923, nonpolitical cooperation had its final breakthrough. Johannes Schober, Police President of Vienna, instigated the International Police Congress in Vienna in September 1923. Here, the ICPC was founded and Schober became President until his death in 1932. The ICPC was to become the most important international police organization. It was this framework which demonstrated that the participating police institutions had “attained formal separation from their respective governments to create a structural condition of institutional independence” (p. 220). No international police organization with political objectives, i.e. fighting communism, was established in the twentieth century. Even World War I and the fight against Bolshevism did not bring the return of political policing.

In the US a different route was taken. It was as late as after World War II that the United States established firm contact with European international policing. This reluctance was, apart from other matters, owing to strong sentiments against the connection between national police systems and repressive political regimes in Europe (p. 88). Although international police cooperation was improved over the years, there was never ever a kind of supranational police force. Thus, police systems across the world “maintained traits based on national cultures and traditions”, and there was no “monolithic global police” (pp. 217f.) with sovereign powers of decision-making surrendered to a common organizational goal. Moreover, it was the “fundamental irony” of international police cooperation that police institutions “transcend national jurisdictional competence and move beyond the function assigned to them by their respective governments” (p. 225).

An important question Deflem poses is: what happened to the ICPC and its files during World War II? The author points out that the ICPC probably did not achieve “any of the Nazi-aspired continuity in international cooperation and effectiveness”; it was some kind of “institutional impression management” (pp. 193f.). However, the ICPC demonstrated the ability of international policing to become “politicized by whomsoever controlled the

organization and wanted to use it to advance a particular ideology, precisely because the organization was established as an expert institution that brought together highly bureaucratized police institutions from different countries” (p. 195).

All in all, Deflem has elaborated a wealth of brilliant theses on the roots and development of international police cooperation. Thus, there can be only some minor criticism. A general remark is that the main theses and their subcomponents are too often repeated throughout the chapters. This gives the book a tight structure but can also sometimes fatigue the reader. Over and above this, I would like to focus my critical comments on three points. First, it should be emphasized that the author has not written a real comparative study. Its main focus is on Germany and on some European police conferences. The divergent paths of international police cooperation put forward by the US police forces are not systematically integrated into the argument. Rather, they remain only a side issue. Second, Deflem elaborates his innovative findings mostly in the first six chapters. The parts that follow have a different focus. They contain some not so inspiring speculations about organizational Nazification of the ICPC, and about the relationship with the FBI. These chapters add no important insights to the book and its main theses.

However, there is a major problem even with the structure of these first six chapters. This leads me to my third point. Deflem follows a top-down perspective very consistently. Thus he paints a picture of international police organizations functioning like anonymous machinery, where the actions of individuals are unimportant. Some concrete case studies could have shown how the networks of police experts were built, destroyed, and rebuilt. Looking at the seemingly all-male character of international police institutions, one possible way of doing that would have been to integrate some of the findings of the wide range of stimulating studies on the culture of organizations.¹ Following this more culturally biased focus, one could have asked: what kind of gender codes ruled the seemingly all-male international police organizations? How did organizational myths influence the everyday routine work? All this would have worked against an understanding of organizations that in Deflem’s book sometimes seems to be too technocratic, since even a bureaucracy is a “gendered organization” (Joan Acker), and thus not gender-neutral. But asking these critical questions is only possible because Mathieu Deflem has written such a stimulating contribution that motivates the reader to question some of the established certainties in the field of sociology and the history of (international) policing.

Klaus Weinhauer

Irish and Polish Migration in Comparative Perspective. Ed. by John Belchem and Klaus Tenfelde. [Veröffentlichungen des Instituts zur Erforschung der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung. Schriftenreihe A, Darstellungen, 22.] Klartext, Essen 2003. 240 pp. € 28.90; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004031773

The comparative method is widely used in migration studies, albeit not always explicitly. The three most popular types of comparison have been classified by Nancy Green as *linear* (one group before and after migration), *convergent* (different groups in one place), and

1. See, as an overview, the contributions to the journal, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 9:3 (June 2002), and 11:3 (May 2004).

divergent (one group at different destinations).¹ Other types of evaluation, for example several groups in various places, are less common, not least because combining divergent and convergent methods complicates the analysis considerably. If neither the migrants nor the opportunity structure of the locality where they settle are kept constant, it becomes difficult to ascertain what factors can be held responsible for similar or different outcomes. This does not mean, however, that such comparisons should be avoided and yield only fuzzy results. Donna Gabaccia, for example, made an interesting attempt, not too long ago, to evaluate the migratory process of Chinese and Italian workers in various parts of the world. She argued that contrasting the Chinese with a group in a similar position debunks (partly racist) ideas about the assumed fundamental differences between both groups of labour migrants.²

This volume, edited by John Belchem and Klaus Tenfelde, can be placed in this fourth hybrid type of comparison, as the book deals with two different groups (Poles and Irish) in two different countries (Germany and Great Britain) in roughly the same period (1850–1930). What makes this combination work and bear fruit is the fact that the Irish and the Poles, but also the receiving society, had a lot in common. Both groups were – technically speaking – internal migrants; nevertheless, they were considered as ethnically, if not racially, fundamentally different. The Poles were categorized as Slavic people, the Irish as Celts, and therefore seen as inferior. Moreover, the migrants viewed themselves as inherently distinct for linguistic reasons (especially the Poles), and for other cultural and religious reasons (both were predominantly Catholic). Furthermore, they looked upon themselves as victims of colonization and strove for their own independent state, which in both cases was realized after World War I. Finally, it could be remarked that within both groups there was a minority of Protestants (Masurians and Protestant Irish, especially from Ulster) who, for ideological and cultural reasons, distanced themselves from the majority. Also, when we look at the receiving society, a number of obvious similarities stand out. Both the Irish and the Poles – at least a majority – migrated to booming industrial areas (Lancashire and the Ruhr), where most of them ended up in the lowest segments of the labour market, either as miners (Poles) or in a variety of sectors, such as the textile industry, metallurgy, and construction (Irish). Finally, one could mention the painful and slow process of integration, which was accompanied by a proliferation of associations, aimed at ethnic-group formation.

So, there are abundant reasons warranting a structured comparison, one which – strangely enough – has never seriously been undertaken before. This volume by Belchem and Tenfelde, the outcome of a conference held at the Bochum Institute for Social Movements in October 1999, is therefore most welcome. What makes the book even more timely and interesting is that most contributions find themselves at the crossroads of labour and migration history – an integration that should be warmly welcomed after years of specialization in splendid isolation within the common field of social history.

The book is divided into four parts. The first is reserved for general comparisons

1. Nancy Green, “The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies”, in Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (Bern, 1997), pp. 57–72.

2. Donna Gabaccia, “The ‘Yellow Peril’ and the ‘Chinese of Europe’: Global Perspectives on Race and Labor, 1815–1930”, in *ibid.*, pp. 177–196. Another example is Klaus Manfrass, *Türken in der Bundesrepublik. Nordafrikaner in Frankreich. Ausländerproblematik in deutsch-französischen Vergleich* (Bonn, 1991).

between the two groups (John Belchem and Panikos Panayi). The second deals with case studies on the Irish in Britain (Frank Neal, Paul O'Leary, Alan O'Day, John Herson, Louise Miskell, and Elizabeth Malcolm). The third part then focuses on the Poles in Germany and the adjoining Belgian-Dutch mining region (Dorota Praszalowicz, Susanne Peters-Schildgen, Frank Caestecker, and Diethelm Blecking), while Pien Versteegh and Matthew J. O'Brien complete the book by concentrating on the Poles and the Irish in the United States. As might be expected from conference proceedings, the authors take many directions and have their own hobbyhorses, but it is very useful that most of them draw on their own recent research, little of which has received much attention internationally because of its limited scope and the languages (Polish, German) in which it was published. The collection therefore gives a good overview of the recent state of the art and, moreover, shows the added value of this comparison.

The book starts with a thorough and well-written introduction by John Belchem, who elegantly links migration and labour history and shows how much these fields have in common. He also points to the way Polish and Irish migrants created their own ethnic identity in a largely hostile environment, especially through numerous associations. In the long run, however, these associations had various integrating effects. In contrast, Panayi's overview of the migration history of both groups is rather shallow and dutiful, although useful to readers who are new to the field.

In the Irish section most contributions deal with well-known themes in labour history. Thus, Neal (on Irish seasonal workers in the Midlands) and O'Leary (on permanent immigrants in Wales) deal with the exclusion of the Irish by English workers and analyse the often violent conflicts that arose between the two. Neal rightly points to the importance of the specific structure of local labour markets in understanding these conflicts. Both concentrate on competition at the workplace, but they could have been more explicit about the fact that these conflicts were rather restricted in time and place and tell only part of the story. Interestingly, these examples unintentionally highlight a remarkable difference with the Poles, most of whom entered a more or less "empty" area, especially in the sparsely populated Ruhr, so that competition for jobs and violent clashes seldom occurred.

The other four "Irish" contributions deal with various, and not always central, themes, such as Irish migrants in asylums (Malcolm) and the use of family history at the micro level to map the integration process (Herson). The most interesting paper in this section is the analysis of ethnic politics among the Irish by Alan O'Day. Using theoretical concepts from the study of nationalism, especially the three-phase model in the development of nationalistic political movements formulated by Miroslaw Hroch, O'Day shows why the Irish, in the end, failed to develop a fully fledged ethno-nationalist mass movement in Great Britain. According to him, mass mobilization was deterred simply because there were never any exclusively ethnic issues or demands, while ultimately the intellectual leaders were hesitant to manoeuvre themselves into a political ghetto.

The contributions on the Poles are much less rooted in labour history and focus predominantly on migration issues. Although Tenfelde himself published a paper on conflicts between German and Polish miners many years ago,³ this topic – for reasons hinted at above – was eclipsed by the focus on migration and ethnicity. Thus, most researchers, often influenced by American community studies, have been fascinated by the

3. Klaus Tenfelde, "Die 'Krawalle von Herne' im Jahre 1899", *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung IWK*, 15 (1979), pp. 71–104.

creation of a Polish ethnic community (Murphy, Klessman, Murzynowska, Stefanski). It was therefore to be expected that the authors in this volume would focus on the role and function of Polish (ethnic) associations, although a paper on the position of the very successful Polish unions, as studied by Kulczycki,⁴ would have made a nice counterpart. The chapters by Peters-Schildgen and Blecking especially offer interesting insights. The first author shows that, notwithstanding the inward-looking character of most Polish associations, they stimulated greater participation in urban life, and in the long run, especially in the 1920s, became much more focused on integration. Furthermore she discusses the often neglected role of women's associations.

Blecking is also interested in organizations and is one of the few authors who makes an explicit comparison with another group. Not with the Irish though, but with the Turks in Germany almost a century later, thus adding a fifth type of comparison that has become popular recently.⁵ He criticizes German politicians who in the past have stimulated historical legend-making by giving a much too optimistic picture of the integration of the Poles, and then continues by pointing to three fundamental differences between the situation of these "old and new" migrants in Germany. First, he argues that the Poles had an easier time fitting in, because – in contrast to the Turks – they arrived in a virtually "empty" space. Secondly, the Poles entered an expanding industry. And thirdly, they obtained good housing. With regard to the formation of ethnic associations, however, he claims that the Turks integrate faster, because they lack one central political ideal and because these organizations (sports clubs for example) are much more interwoven with German society.

Whoever expects the final part of the book to attempt to present more structured thematic comparative approaches, such as the function of unions, the state, or the Catholic Church, will be disappointed. Instead, we move to the United States, where Versteegh's interesting paper makes the gender perspective central by discussing the limited options available to women in ethnic organizations and the specific function of the Polish Women's Alliance of America (PWA). The book then ends with an equally interesting analysis by O'Brien of the changes in ethnic politics within both the Irish and the Polish groups caused by continuous immigration from Ireland and Poland in the twentieth century.

This book makes it clear that a comparison between the Poles and the Irish has much to offer, both for labour history and migration history. One can only hope that, after this first exploration of the field, many will feel challenged to go beyond specific case studies and choose other and overarching units of analysis. If they do so, I hope they find a publisher prepared to put more effort into producing books than Klartext has, at least in this case, where different styles of annotation have been used (compare the contributions of Praszalowicz and Blecking with the others), and some footnotes have disappeared (note 2 on p. 136). In the case of Blecking, the entire list of references is missing, so the reader is forced to guess what "Siebel 1997" etc. might have been. Furthermore, in view of the pioneering and programmatic character of this book a combined bibliography and an index would not have been out of place.

Leo Lucassen

4. John Kulczycki, *The Polish Coal Miners' Union and the German Labor Movement in the Ruhr, 1902–1934* (Oxford [etc.], 1997).

5. For a comparison between old and new migrants see Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven, CT, 2000).

SEIDMAN, MICHAEL. *Republic of Egos. A Social History of the Spanish Civil War*. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison [etc.] 2002. xi, 304 pp. Maps \$55.00. (Paper: \$24.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S002085900404177X

SEIDMAN, MICHAEL. *A ras de suelo. Historia social de la República durante la Guerra Civil*. Alianza Editorial, Madrid 2003. 388 pp. Maps. € 18.70; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004051776

Republic of Egos; A ras de suelo: two very different titles for the same book. The former probably refers to the author's ultimate intention, while the latter (meaning "at ground level") may just be a decision of the Spanish publisher. Despite this, the Spanish title is the one that best reflects the book's content, as I will try to demonstrate below. The subtitle of the Spanish version is also more appropriate than that of the original. The book is not a social history of the Spanish Civil War, but rather just a study of the Republican zone, with very little information on the "National" camp (according to the term used by the Francoists, and which the author echoes). As for the term "social", which appears in both editions, this should be taken in the most restrictive sense. As the author himself points out, it refers to the experiences of the "civilians and low-ranking soldiers of the Popular Army" (*Republic of Egos*, p. 10). However, other aspects that a "social" study in the broad sense of the term should cover, from the actions of the unions and the working-class parties to the collectivizations of the Republican zone, or the repression and reconstruction of the social order on the Francoist side, only appear insofar as they are related to those experiences, or in any way to the author's line of argument.

This line of argument may be interpreted differently in the two countries in which the book has been published. In the United States, it will probably appear as one more example of the rejection of history centred on "race, class, and gender", against which Seidman defends a perspective based on individuals. It will, however, undoubtedly be seen in a different light in Spain. In the bibliography on the Civil War, a debate with a highly political, and not just historiographic, content has re-emerged in recent years on the causes and responsibility for the conflict, and also on the reasons for the defeat of the Republicans. In this context, the book may be interpreted as indirect support for the ideas of certain historians in favour of the Francoist camp, or at least as a criticism of pro-Republican historiography, and in particular of many academic studies on the war. The latter tend to highlight the popular struggle against Francoism, at the same time as attributing the Republican defeat to the better military organization of the insurrectionists, and to the help that they received from the fascist powers. On the contrary, for Seidman, the decisive factors were, on the one hand, the Republic's inability to organize "an industrial war, particularly a trench war, which requires massive supplies of food, clothing, materials, and weapons" (p. 235), and, on the other hand, above all the population's lack of commitment to the Republican regime and the fighting spirit of the soldiers of the Popular Army.

Leaving to one side these possible readings of the book, I shall now endeavour to examine it in the light of the author's own intentions. Individualism is stressed in both the introduction and in the conclusion. Seidman uses this term profusely, but not always in the same sense, and at times inconsistently. Individualism refers, firstly, to a methodological choice. Instead of the usual study of groups, such as parties, classes, or gender, the book focuses on individual people. But individualism is also understood as a certain historical and sociological conception, which rejects social determination and insists on the

autonomy of individuals. So far, both versions are compatible. If “individuals make history” (p. 5), the best thing that a historian can do is to convert them into the main characters of his account.

There is, however, a third sense of the term, which does not necessarily fit in with the others. According to Seidman, individuals act solely, or fundamentally, according to their immediate material interests, related to their basic bodily needs (food, clothes), or to obtain financial benefit. He excludes individual behaviours guided by moral principles or religious and political ideals, that is those that respond to the “rationality of values” (the *Wertrationalität* that Max Weber talked about). Starting from this presupposition, the author reduces individualism, or at least the individualisms that were apparent during the Spanish Civil War, to just three types: the “acquisitive individualists”, whose maximum priority was consumption, the “entrepreneurial individualists”, more interested in obtaining benefits for themselves than in working for the community, and the “subversive individualists”, who refused to fight or to work.

It is even possible to talk about a fourth sense of the term. Here, individualism means rejection of the collectivist projects of both sides, whether anarchists and communists or Falangists and fascists, against which the individualistic impulses demonstrated during the conflict “form the foundation for the present-day consumer society” (p. 13). This formulation is difficult to understand if we bear in mind two basic considerations. On the one hand, in all historical periods, and not just in consumer societies, individuals have tried to meet their needs in the best way possible. On the other hand, the first characteristic of a consumer society is the abundance of goods, especially goods that do not respond to the basic needs of the consumers, while during the military conflict what the consumers hoped to achieve was a larger proportion of the scarce basic essentials.

Starting from these ideas, the author presents an account that closely follows the military history of the war, but that always presents the other side of the conflict. Instead of describing the military strategies of both sides and their positive or negative results, the author offers us the reactions of the Republican soldiers to the problems raised by the military situation. Divided into four stages, the first one (“Militancy”), which corresponds to 1936, already uses the tone that will dominate the whole account. It was not the people as a whole, but just the activists, who confronted the military uprising, while the majority of the population remained passive and apathetic. There was a very small number of volunteers (120,000 Republicans and some 100,000 “Nationals”), and it was therefore necessary to resort to compulsory military service. The volunteers were attracted more by the high salary than by their convictions. The militias acted out of egotism, their lists inflated by people seeking more food and money from the government. Not even the resistance in Madrid against the attacks of the Francoist troops is free from these criticisms. Many combatants were not from Madrid, solidarity was not universal, and “there were many workers who could be classified as egotistical” (p. 63).

In accordance with his previous approach, the author ends up finding just what he was looking for: not acts of courage and a fighting spirit, but the hoarding of goods, apathy, indiscipline, and the refusal to work or to fight. Even more remarkable is that the description of just a few cases allows him to draw conclusions of general validity. Thus, a small number of examples of absenteeism and small-scale theft lead the author to assert, “These actions revealed the failure of revolutionary social projects to induce workers to sacrifice” (p. 66). On another occasion, the refusal of sixty-two workers from the

communication sector to abandon Madrid following the Republican government is used to support the statement that “*many people from Madrid* [italics mine] proved reluctant to follow their government to the new capital” (p. 57).

After this stage of “Militancy”, the following phases are defined as “Opportunism” (from November 1936 to autumn 1937), “Cynicism” (end of 1937 and the whole of the following year) and “Survival” (1939). If we leave to one side the higher doses of defeatism of the last stage, it is not easy to discover the differences between these diverse types of behaviour. In all these stages, the account refers to the same matters: desertions from the front, massive flight from the attacks of the “Nationals”, friendly relations and fraternization between the soldiers of the two sides on the “quiet fronts”, complaints due to the scarcity of food, delays in payment or the absence of leave, looting, lack of a spirit of sacrifice; and, in the rearguard, absenteeism, the resistance of peasants to collectivization, the hoarding and concealment of goods, and indiscipline among the workers. A single case or a small number of cases are again used to make a general statement. One of many examples is the following citation: “Problems of indiscipline also persisted in Madrid. *A worker* from the Cooperative of Wholesale Fish Workers who showed up inebriated was suspended without pay for one month. *Other* absentees or those who trafficked in fish were expelled, suspended, or subjected to heavy fines. *A go-getter* who held two jobs was ordered to choose one or be dismissed” (p. 146, italics mine). Without more specific details, it is difficult to prove that the war was the only reason for the inebriation of one person, the absenteeism of others, and the opportunist attitude of the go-getter.

In short, the book presents a wide-ranging collection of anecdotes on egotistical (this term would appear to be more adequate than individualistic) behaviours by Republican soldiers, starting from direct information supplied, to a large extent, by their letters and accounts from the trenches (*a ras de suelo*). Curiously, after this long account, the last paragraph of the book presents a radically different perspective. It now appears that political doctrines were more important than egotistical motives. In particular, Seidman states that the middle classes that supported the Francoist camp were capable of overcoming individualism and achieving more widespread support for their approaches than that obtained by their enemies. In the author’s own words, “[i]ts doctrines of nation, religion, and property rights provoked greater loyalties than the competing ones of internationalism, rationalism, revolution, and collectivism” (p. 240). If we understand this theory correctly, what it suggests is that on the “National” side the egotistical tendencies were surpassed by ideological coherence. What is left in this case of the individualism, or of the various individualisms, previously presented as the general rule of behaviour of all individual people? Or does the individualistic, or egotistical, behaviour only refer to the soldiers of the Republic? In this case, how come these individualistic soldiers resisted the more united Francoist army for three years?

Manuel Pérez Ledesma

BENNER, CHRIS. *Work in the New Economy*. Flexible Labor Markets in Silicon Valley. [The Information Age Series.] Blackwell Publishing, Malden [etc.] 2002. xviii, 293 pp. £55.00. (Paper: £16.99.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004061772

Uncovering Labour in Information Revolutions, 1750–2000. Ed. by Aad Blok and Greg Downey. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2003. 261 pp. £15.95; \$24.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004071779

The ambiguous term “new economy”, and its near-pseudonyms “information economy” and “knowledge-based economy” present huge challenges to empirical researchers. From a distance, the idea of a new economy seems simple, inviting easy sweeping generalizations, but the closer you approach it to try to take its measurements, map its reach, or plot its growth, the more it dissolves into nebulosity. Attempts to define its boundaries in relation to the “old economy” are fraught with difficulties. Some are based on fairly crude posthoc distinctions (e.g. “the NASDAQ industries”) which turn out, on closer examination, to have little underlying logic. Others err in the opposite direction and, in their attempts to operationalize abstract notions of what the informatization process consists of, run the risk of creating complex typologies which are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to map onto the real world. In either case, any definition, or at least any definition which makes reference to specific technological infrastructures, processes, products, or delivery media, is likely to become rapidly outdated in the light of continuing technological change.

At least part of the explanation for this state of affairs lies in the units of analysis which are normally used in the study of economies and labour markets. At the organizational level, this is normally the “firm” (either in its entirety or in its specific local embodiment as a “branch” or “establishment”) which is then aggregated up, at the level of a regional or national economy to the “sector”. Just as the demand side is made up of firms classified according to sectors, the supply side is conceptualized as groups of workers classified according to occupations, and these two classification systems form the basis of most labour market statistics. The relatively slow pace of change in these classification systems (inevitably lagging behind actual developments by several years, or even decades, and reflecting the worldviews of their creators) has the effect of imposing an appearance of order and continuity onto a state of affairs which, viewed from below, might be seen very differently – as a seething, unstable flux, rather like pond-life seen through a microscope, with a continuous process of splitting and coalescing, deconstruction and reconstruction at the level of skills, labour processes, occupational identities, organizations, brands, and sectors.

Chris Benner, in his ground-breaking study of *Work in the New Economy* has done us an immense favour by offering an alternative way to conceptualize labour markets, a way which not only allows us to capture the dynamics of change within them, but also helps us move dialectically between structuralist approaches and those rooted in notions of individual agency. He has done this by taking as his unit of analysis neither the firm (or sector) nor the worker (or occupation) but the *labour-market intermediary*, an entity which can be seen simultaneously both as a structure, in the sense that it has a specific organizational form and institutional identity and “place” in the functioning of a local economy, and as an expression of the agency of the individuals who shape and reshape it through their daily practices. He identifies a large and diverse range of these intermediaries,

some of which are membership based (such as guilds, trade unions, and various self-help organizations and networks) and some of which can more properly be regarded as arms of the private or public sectors.

The setting for his study is Silicon Valley, the paradigmatic “new-economy” region. Using these intermediaries as his starting point, Benner is able to open windows into the functionings of the local economy which bring into visibility a range of activities which take place in the interstices between the “firms” and “workers” that lie outside the field of vision of most conventional accounts. Central to his analysis is a distinction between flexible *employment* and flexible *work*. This enables him to bring some analytical clarity to the dissolution of the boundaries of the individual firm associated with the transformation of traditional employment relationships through the use of temporary help agencies, consultant brokerage firms and professional employer organizations (PEOs), and online recruitment agencies. We are shown a process whereby many traditional HR structures are literally turned inside out as a range of functions from recruitment, to the administration of payroll, to the negotiation of benefits packages, and acting as the legal employer of record are outsourced to a range of intermediaries which are both interconnected and in competition with each other.

By studying these changes over time, Benner has given us an insight into the elaboration of value chains within the IT and business-services industries, showing how these are shaped by the interactions of players on both the supply and demand sides of the labour market, as well as by aspects of the local state. Here, he examines a range of public agencies involving training and job-search, whose intermediating roles have become much more proactive in recent years, thus also blurring other boundaries, such as those between “public” and “private”, and between “education” and “training”. This provides a context within which he can explore the agency of individual workers as they struggle to survive in this rapidly-changing environment in which no stable future can be assured for any given employment relationship or for any set of skills. They can thus be positioned as occupying the contested interface between flexible employment and flexible work.

Brenner’s work on the multiple roles played by membership-based labour-market intermediaries is developed further in his essay “‘Computers in the Wild’: Guilds and Next-Generation Unionism in the Information Revolution”, in *Uncovering Labour in Information Revolutions* (edited by Aad Blok and Greg Downey). Here, he demonstrates that, to varying degrees, the “guilds” which are growing up amongst IT workers in Silicon Valley, play a part in developing networks, swapping information, technical problem-solving, renewing and developing skills, helping to find work, and promoting a positive image of particular groups of workers, as well as many of the roles more traditionally taken on by trade unions in campaigning, or occasionally even negotiating, for improvements in pay, status, and working conditions.

In this volume, his study sits alongside eight others in a collection of essays linked thematically by their focus on labour in very different environments in which the only common feature is some sort of change involving information. The editors’ use of the phrase “information revolutions” in the title begs a number of questions. Mercifully, most of the contributors do not ask when a technological innovation acquires the status of a “revolution” and present us with case studies, in a range of geographical and industrial settings, stretching back to the eighteenth century. Often the environment is not one of cataclysmic change, but rather of small incremental developments whose cumulative impact is not immediately apparent.

This is illustrated by Aristotle Tympas's study of computing electrical power transmission, which follows the subtle shifts in gender and status of the human "computers" as pen-and-paper calculations gave way in turn to calculating boards, artificial lines, and network analysers before the introduction of mainframe computers, and also by Helen Sampson and Bin Wu's study of computerization and international shipping labour. Over a period of years, a series of interlocking developments in containerization, communications, hardware and software technologies, and their accompanying organizational changes gradually brought down staffing levels, reduced turnaround time in ports, and increased the desk-based work required during loading and unloading. But by the end of this period, the daily experience of seafarers had been transformed into something very different from that of their predecessors, with a loss of personal contact with dock workers and of opportunities to go ashore so that, in the authors' words, "time-space compression makes the world less rather than more accessible, limiting rather than expanding their spatial and communicative horizons whilst distorting time in such a way that periods spent aboard drag on interminably". The shore workers in the Netherlands described by Sampson and Wu present a striking contrast with those in Bernard Dubbeld's account of the development (under apartheid), and subsequent casualization, of stevedoring work in Durban, providing an eloquent illustration of the ways in which work organization is shaped by specific historical and geographical contexts.

How occupational identities are formed is a question which reappears in different ways. It is addressed most directly by Nathan L. Ensmenger in his account of the contradictory pressures which brought the computer programmer into existence, though it is implicit in most of the other essays, including Eve Rosenhaft's account of the birth of a new breed of salaried clerical worker in the administration of eighteenth-century German pension funds. After examining the alternative designations of "professionals", "managers", or "clerical support staff", Ensmenger decides that programmers can best be categorized as "technicians", but to what extent can this be extended to other office workers? Greg Downey, in his concluding piece, addresses the vexed questions of how information workers are to be defined, and whether they can be said to be undergoing processes of deskilling or upskilling in times of technological change. Surely, the point here is that both take place simultaneously. Any elaboration of the division of labour involves a process, whereby what has previously been tacit knowledge is appropriated and systematized and becomes the basis of new labour processes. I use the plural here because this is inherently a dual process: a new separation of "head" from "hands" simultaneously strips some of the skills from the manual side of the split, whilst creating new intellectual on the other side of the divide, thus deskilling one group whilst generating new skills for the other. With the next turn of the technological screw, these new tasks, too, become the basis for further divisions in the social division of labour, so the process is endlessly repeated.

What is fascinating in these accounts is the light they shed on how the identities which result are shaped by the interplay between coercion and resistance, initiative and inertia; how the employers' ad hoc demands for particular discrete skills and competencies are countered by workers' aspirations for coherently demarcated occupations which provide personal identity, development, and status; and how these in turn are shaped by specific histories and geographies.

With daily headlines on offshoring of information work and the emergence of a new global division of labour in information work, such discussions could not be more timely.

Ursula Huws

HUWS, URSULA. *The Making of a Cybertariat. Virtual Work in a Real World*. Monthly Review Press, New York; The Merlin Press, London 2003. xiv, 208 pp. \$18.95; £13.95; DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004081775

If you are interested in the research field, “women, labor and technology”, you should put this collection of eleven essays on your reading list. The pieces were written (and partly published) between 1970 and 2003, and based on the British author’s experiences as social scientist, freelancer and teleworker, single mother, socialist feminist, and trade unionist. The essays reflect (with rare self-irony) the development of academic and political debates since the early 1970s, are characterized by an unpretentious language, and offer a persuading Marxist critique of current concepts like “service society” or “knowledge society”. The wide range of topics cover work in the private household as well as in the “global office”, health risks at the workplaces of women, as well as the “myth of a weightless economy”. The question whether a cybertariat is in the making, however, links all essays like the proverbial red thread.

As in E.P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class*, three (closely connected) sources of class-formation are discussed. Considering the tension between structure and agency or between “class as an analytical term (objective class-position) and class as an aspect of personal identity (subjective class position)” (p. 155), it is argued that a new class emerges as a result of dynamic economic change; it is created by entrepreneurial strategies of using labor power; and it constitutes itself as a conscious political subject.

As to economic change, the author states that the current phase of capitalist development is still characterized by “commodification”, i.e. by a “tendency of capitalist economies to generate new and increasingly standardized products for sale in the market” (p. 17). Her analysis covers, however, not merely the sphere of production but also the sphere of reproduction, arguing that unpaid labour is increasingly externalized from private households. In a longer-term historical perspective, various kinds of unpaid labour (like the washing of clothes) were first transformed into paid labour (e.g. the services of washerwomen), and later turned into new physical commodities (like washing machines). Consequently, new services (offered, for instance, by launderettes), and new consumption activities (like buying, using, and maintaining private machines) were generated. This paved the way for new services (repairing private washing machines), as well as for the next generation of physical commodities (like detergents or steam irons).

As the number of goods required for everyday life is thus constantly increasing, individuals are virtually soaked into commodity production as consumers and producers: “The inevitable impetus is toward a complete industrialization of the globe, with the entire population involved on the one hand in contributing toward the production or circulation of commodities and the capital accumulation process in some capacity and on the other in an ever-greater dependence on the purchase of these commodities for their survival” (pp. 152f.). These permanent changes in the social division of labour are neglected in writings assuming the advance of a “service” or “knowledge society”.

According to the author, the “primary sector” only appears to be declining if the mechanization of agriculture and the commodification of food production are excluded, although the manufacturing of tractors and fertilizers or the processing and packing of food are obviously “primary-sector” activities. A decline of the “secondary sector” is similarly difficult to prove, as it only applies to industrialized countries, whereas manufacturing (and the consumption of raw materials like iron and aluminium) is still increasing at the global level. At the same time, the expansion of the service sector would

appear less impressive if considering that huge groups of service workers, i.e. domestic and agrarian servants, have virtually disappeared in developed countries in the twentieth century (p. 130).

Finally, the author doubts that value has been increasingly generated by knowledge rather than labour, as the term “dematerialization” indicates. Even in the case of “knowledge work”, she argues, value is still created by drawing upon “the dead labor of past workers embodied in the machinery used to make it [...], and the appropriated living labor” of deskilled “process knowledge workers” or “creative and originating knowledge workers” (pp. 140, 148). The “emergence of the specialist knowledge worker” is even presented as an intrinsic aspect of commodification: on the one hand, it is “a product of the increasingly specialized division of labor in manufacturing” (p. 136); on the other hand, it contributes (like any other kind of work) to the expansion of standardized mass production (for instance of software packages).

Among the entrepreneurial strategies of using labour power, the increasing application of information technology (IT) has had especially far-reaching consequences for the spheres of production and reproduction. First of all, wage labour has increasingly been transferred into private households: although the number and share of home-office arrangements have remained small, the changing popular images of “electronic homeworkers” (from high-skill male telecommuters during the energy crisis, to creative “hippies” inhabiting “electronic cottages”, and finally to low-skill “family women” in the 1990s) has always reflected contemporary “hopes and fears about the future of work” (p. 88). Moreover, IT has facilitated the use of wage labour across national boundaries, culminating in the emergence of “global offices”.

After all, the ongoing social division of labour has resulted in an expansion of low-skill information processing, and digitalization promotes the global distribution of information. At the same time, standardization of tasks as well as the convergence of skill requirements across occupations, which accompany the spread of IT systems, render outsourcing to distant world regions possible. This does not automatically result in a convergence of working and living conditions, however: “The very fact that employers now have an huge range of alternative locations to choose from appears, paradoxically, to have increased rather than decreased the degree of geographical segregation in the global division of labor” (p. 149). Hence, the impression that an ever smaller proportion of a commodity’s cost is attributable to the labour involved in its manufacture, may also be due to the “super-exploitation” of vulnerable workers in developing countries, whom “the ‘new’ economics simply render [...] invisible” (p. 136).

Finally, IT functions as an effective means of increasing routinization and productivity, especially among service workers. As this has “led to an ever-increasing amount of ‘consumption work’ being foisted onto the consumer” (p. 27) in turn, the socialization of (formerly unpaid) services has not reduced the time devoted to housework. The character of housework has changed dramatically, though, increasingly approaching “the monotonous, fragmented, and stressful work of unskilled assembly-line workers” (p. 27): as specialized knowledge (e.g. of healing or food processing) is externalized to experts (like doctors), or embodied in commodities (like preserves, ready-made meals etc.), low-skill self-service is expanding, no longer restricted to collecting one’s own goods in supermarkets. Instead, the Internet has massively increased the need to participate in adapting services individually (for instance, by filling in money transfer forms for online banking). This may be perceived as empowerment first, but turns into compulsion once

alternative (personal) services are abandoned. In the end, less paid labour, but an increasing amount of unpaid labour is wasted in virtual waiting queues at call centres (p. 184).

Is a “global cybertariat” in the making, then? In the face of the “erosion of any belief in the power of collective action” (p. 124), even among political activists, since the 1980s, the author is rather sceptical as to the emergence of a self-conscious new class of “office workers”. However, computerization has generated a considerable potential for the emergence of a common class-consciousness among information-processing workers, based in a common labour process, common employers, and a common relation to capital” (p. 175). After all, more and more workers share the experience of being glued to computer monitors for ever-growing parts of their working day. Along with the disappearance of the “myriad tools of the mid-twentieth century” (like linotype machines, card indices, etc.), “the mastery of which entitled one to a specific designation”, distinguishable identities of occupational groups have been weakened (p. 165). Moreover, the increase of tasks mainly involving standard computer skills makes it easier “to skip laterally from job to job, company to company, and industry to industry”, rendering workers more easily replaceable at the same time, especially as the “trend towards routinization outweighs, in numerical terms, the tendency for work to become more creative, tacit, and multiskilled” (pp. 166–167).

Even the expansion of IT-based self-employment does not erode the basis for a common class-consciousness, the author argues, as freelancing has often no permanent status, and the possession of a computer should not be equated with owning one’s means of production: “[t]he value of the computer to the employer rests on its being linked to others, in a system that is not owned by the worker” (p. 169). Despite this considerable potential for a common class-consciousness, however, its emergence is far from clear. First of all, the ambivalent relation of many office workers to the “means of production” is equated by a similarly ambivalent relation to their “means of reproduction”, as many of them own houses and employ servants (especially in developing countries). Moreover, even if working in the same multinational company, competition and conflict between workers of different status, sex, and ethnic or regional background are likely to hamper a common class-consciousness, especially as “exploitation of labor by capital” may appear less obvious than “exploitation of natives by colonialists” (p. 175). Finally, office workers’ “economic best interests”, i.e. the existence or lack of promotion prospects, may influence the attitude towards “making common cause with one’s fellow workers”. Hence, it “is apparent that a new cybertariat is in the making. Whether it will perceive itself as such is another question” (p. 176).

All in all, this collection contains an inspiring discussion of computerization’s consequences for the global distribution of paid as well as unpaid labour. Still, readers expecting a coherent, and theoretically and historically elaborated analysis (because of the title’s allusion to Thompson) may be disappointed, given the fragmentary and preliminary character of many of the arguments. Taken as a whole, however, the essays do confront political and academic “common sense” with a consistent critique, and convincingly question the liberating potential of “virtual-knowledge work” in a “weightless economy”. According to Huws, “[w]e must reinsert human beings, in all their rounded, messy, vulnerable materiality – and the complexity of their antagonistic social relations – at the very center of our analysis” (p. 151). The sheer attempt to do so would make this book worth reading even if it didn’t have so much more to commend it.

Nicole Mayer-Abuja

HIGH, STEVEN. *Industrial Sunset. The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969–1984*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto [etc.] 2003. 306 pp. Ill. Map. £27.95; \$55.00 (Paper: £18.00; \$35.00.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004091771

Industrial Sunset compares the processes of industrial transformation and eventual decline in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the United States between 1969 and 1984. Through an examination of two cities on either side of the border – Youngstown and Detroit and Hamilton and Windsor – readers are offered a skillful analysis of economic decline and how workers, their unions, and their communities responded to job loss. The book makes a valuable contribution to the literature on de-industrialization.

High quite skillfully utilizes 137 interviews with displaced workers in Canada and the United States drawn from a pre-existing collection and 43 of his own interviews. Placing working people at the center of the story allows the reader to get a better sense of what happened, as well-paid work disappeared, than a series of tables and graphs might do. However, I do wish that High had provided a table that brought together basic data on job loss and plant closings in Canada and the United States. He makes the argument that de-industrialization was different on both sides of the Great Lakes in the 1970s and early 1980s, so such a table would have helped readers grasp the distinctions.

The interviews are central to High's efforts at conveying the deep personal loss workers felt when their factories closed. A tool-and-die maker stated: "You're in a little world. Then you leave that world" (p. 41). A bricklayer's observation captured the shock and bitterness such closing generated: "I heard about the closure on television on the 6 o'clock news. Then a couple of weeks later they phoned me up and said, 'You got a thirty-five-year pin that we have here. We'd like to give it to you.' I said OK. He said, 'Meet us at the front gate.' You know, everything was closed, so the fellow, our superintendent at the time, he gave me the thirty-five-year pin. You can picture a chain link fence; he handed it to me through the fence. 'Here's your thirty-five-year pin.'" (p. 41) In my research on de-industrialization in New England's Connecticut River Valley after World War II, a machinist I interviewed likened his plant's closing to a death in his family while others decried the loss of the everyday neighborhood atmosphere inside the factory. Thus, High's observations ring true.

Along with the interviews, High makes use of popular magazines, film, photography, music, and period labor cartoons by Fred Wright to describe and analyze the emergence in the early 1980s of the Rust Belt concept in American popular culture. Central to the Rust Belt idea is the life-cycle metaphor. The industrial Midwest and much of the northeastern United States had reached old age, and in the words of *Time* magazine "like an aging heavyweight gone to flab, US industry has fallen behind some of its world-class competitors" (p. 25). Decline and its opposite took on spatial boundaries, such as Frostbelt and Sunbelt, and so-called smokestack America approached metaphorical death when its rivers began to catch fire. As the early 1980s recession worsened, a December 1982 *Time* article titled "Booms, Busts and the Birth of a Rust Bowl" described factories as "mausoleums of a passing age" (p. 30). Yet, on the northern side of the Great Lakes, "The visual images of abandoned steel mills and urban blight that signified industrial decline in the United States did not resonate in Canada" (p. 39). Instead, padlocked factories served as images to fight back; closings were not inevitable but reversible through human agency.

High alleges that US workers reacted to plant closings under the banner of local community, and barely softened the blow of economic dislocation. On the other hand,

Canadian workers utilized nationalist claims to fight shutdowns and pressured their politicians to legislate things like advance notice of layoffs, severance pay, and pension reinsurance for affected workers. High contends that much of the American literature on de-industrialization focuses on capital and community, emphasizing “personal loss over collective resistance”. Thus, de-industrialized cities have their own biographer “who has recorded their life and death” (p. 13). In Canada, this literature is located in a distinctly national context, with shutdowns observed as “pitting Canadian workers against American bosses” (p. 14). At the same time, in the years under review, Canadian cities did not undergo the rapid de-industrialization that their US counterparts did, thus the inevitability of the Rust Belt did not slam into Canadian workers. Rather, as High documents, Canadian workers engaged in widespread collective resistance. He summarizes that while the identities of many dislocated US workers were “irrevocably altered” by plant closures, “Canadians continued to see themselves as workers and as union members. The rusting of hope and self-respect in the United States was less marked in the plant shutdown narratives told in Canada” (p. 73).

In chapter 4, ‘The Deindustrializing Heartland’, High analyzes job loss. Runaway plants – a trade-union term to describe firms eager to escape their union contracts – and the more gradual strategy of planned obsolescence resulted in the displacement of millions of workers. High describes planned obsolescence as a decision by corporate executives to shift their investments to increase returns, “either by producing the same product in a low-wage area or diversifying into a more profitable sector of the economy” (p. 93). In this way, corporations shifted blame for job loss onto “aging equipment, unproductive workers, and the apparent unprofitability of the plant” (p. 110). By whatever label, almost 100,000 manufacturing plants were shut down between 1963 and 1982 in the US. Almost 21,000 of these plants were in the industrial Midwest. This region lost almost one million manufacturing jobs between 1979 and 1986.

High points out that, though industrial jobs were lost in Canada, the unemployment rate in Canada’s industrial center remained lower than the national average. To explain the differences between job loss above and below the Great Lakes, High returns to the notion of planned obsolescence, what he calls a quiet aging process. Here, he reviews investment decisions in the automobile, rubber, and steel industries. Corporate decisions in the US during the 1950s and 1960s to build new plants in the non-union South and Southwest manifested themselves in plant closings in the 1970s and 1980s. Economic obsolescence came in the 1990s in Canada, because many factories were first built in the 1950s. Remarkably, while dozens of steel mills and auto-assembly plants closed in the United States, “not one integrated steel mill or auto-assembly plant closed in Canada between 1969 and 1984” (p. 130).

After his explanation for job loss, High enters the debate over how workers in the US and Canada responded to plant shutdowns through a discussion of plant-closing struggles in several cities. He concludes those US workers and their community allies took a too narrow, community approach to battle the closings and failed to “dampen the hypercompetitive atmosphere that existed among the fifty states within the breadth of America” (p. 164). A too narrow place-based and protectionist strategy did not mobilize broad-based public opinion against corporations that closed plants. As a result, no national legislation to block, or at least slow, closings and win workers some protections against the economic impact of job loss materialized. Thus, state legislatures backed away from legislative restraints on capital flight, arguing that such laws would weaken their state’s

competitiveness. In Canada, the more nationalistic focus of a broad-based anti-plant closing movement energized workers and trade unions, and led to a series of legislative actions to require mandatory plant closing notification and severance pay for affected workers. And, unlike the US, where federal labor law required corporations to negotiate the affects of a plant closing, Canadian trade unionists “were free to find a political solution to the plant closing problem” (p. 171).

High makes the persuasive argument that unionists and their allies in the New Democratic Party were able to make the highly charged political argument that de-industrialization was caused primarily by Canada’s dependent relationship with the US. Thus, he concludes, “The convergence of economic nationalism and the anti-shutdown movement resulted in a fundamentally different understanding of the issue in Canada; every time a mill or factory closed, it signaled the negative effects of American economic domination over Canada” (p. 178). Protests against closings took on a militant edge and included things like illegal factory occupations. Ultimately, even Ontario’s Conservative provincial government legislated mandatory severance pay regulations, and industrial workers across Canada won legislative victories that softened the economic impact of displacement, at least for a time. However, High finds that de-regulation, privatization, and NAFTA soon created a convergence of the political discourse on both sides of the Great Lakes. Trade and consumption, not ownership and production, are today at the center of the conversation. Indeed, Canada’s Foreign Investment Review Agency was renamed Investment Canada soon after the 1984 national election that put Brian Mulroney’s Conservative Party in power.

Robert Farrant

GUTMANN, MATTHEW C. *The Romance of Democracy. Compliant Defiance in Contemporary Mexico*. University of California Press, Berkeley, [etc.] 2002. xxx, 289 pp. \$49.95, £32.50. (Paper: \$19.95, £12.95.); DOI: 10.1017/S0020859004101776

For a political scientist working on issues of democratization and economic development across Latin America, Matthew Gutmann’s book *The Romance of Democracy* offers an outstanding lesson in the value of cross-disciplinary dialogue and reveals the true complexity of many of the political concepts that form the bulwark of our discipline. In examining Mexico’s somewhat unique version of Latin America’s “dual transition” through the lives of the residents of a working-class neighborhood in Mexico City, Gutmann’s beautifully written work highlights the tremendous contradictions and conflicts that course through such terms as democracy, political culture, participation, and societal cleavages. Though public opinion surveys, such as the annual *Latinobarómetro*, may provide a rough gauge as to Latin Americans’ views of their political systems and their behavior within those systems, finding for example that only 37 per cent of Latin Americans were satisfied with “the way that democracy works” in 2000,¹ these data offer little help in understanding what exactly has gone right or wrong with the political and

1. *Latinobarómetro*, “Press Report: *Latinobarómetro* Survey 1999–2000”, available at <http://www.latinobarometro.org>.

economic changes that have taken place in the region over the past twenty years, from the perspective of the people experiencing those changes on a daily basis. Works such as Gutmann's are absolutely essential for development practitioners and scholars across all the social science disciplines to take meaningful steps forward in our attempts to understand and perhaps improve the prospects for meaningful economic and political change to occur.

Gutmann's journey into the lives and minds, at least the parts that he was permitted access to, the residents of Santo Domingo and their ongoing and turbulent "romance" with democracy begins with their memories of the destruction of Mexico's "mask of democracy" in 1968. With the tragic revelation of the authoritarian nature of Mexico's regime, following the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre, Mexicans' relationship with democracy became soured with skepticism and cynicism. Gutmann argues that Mexicans' attitudes towards, and behavior within, the country's burgeoning democracy of the 1990s was shaped in many respects by the violent deception and abuse of the concept that occurred under the Mexican regime of the 1960s. Lost on that tragic day in October 1968 were the last remnants of revolutionary, democratic ideals that the PRI's one-party regime may have had. Gained, however, was a greater reliance on social movements and an increased willingness by Mexicans to "call the bluff" of the PRI's democratic façade (pp. 70–71). These seeds of change clearly emerged in the 1980s, as the PRI's loss of economic, social, and political legitimacy became increasingly evident.

With the Tlatelolco aftermath as the backdrop, Gutmann then moves to the watershed decade of the 1990s, and offers a compelling account of how the residents of the *colonia* Santo Domingo viewed and managed their daily lives in the midst of the national crises and monumental changes in the economic and political landscape of Mexico. Gutmann weaves a critique of several of the extant theories of political attitudes and behavior of *los de abajo* in and out of a narrative that offers at once a recounting of the major events and issues in Mexico during the 1990s, and the daily routines and commentaries of the individuals that are the focus of his story. The central theoretical concern throughout the work revolves around the ongoing agency–structure debate among scholars interested in explaining the sources of working-class political action and inaction.

What makes Gutmann's work compelling in this debate is his attention to the utility of understanding *both* the action and inaction of those whose stories he is telling. More specifically, Gutmann argues that in examining the role of agency in the political action of the working-class poor, analysts must understand not only those extreme cases of individuals who exhibit extraordinary agency, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the far more numerous cases of individuals who do not typically vote, protest, or go on strike. It is this majority that analysts have largely ignored at the expense of a far more complete understanding of how the political and economic changes over the past two decades have actually manifested themselves in the lives of Latin Americans.

Alongside his attempts to untangle the structure–agency relationship among the residents of Santo Domingo, Gutmann explores the variety of issues confronting Mexicans during the 1990s that, in one way or another, seemed to be fundamentally altering some of the basic societal characteristics of Mexico. The Americanization of Mexican culture, the globalization of the Mexican economy, the transnationalization of the Mexican immigrant, and the reorganization of gender roles within Mexican society all catch the attention of Gutmann in his inquiry into how working-class Mexicans responded to the turbulent decade of the 1990s. With varying degrees of success, Gutmann seeks to dispel some of the

conventional wisdom regarding popular reaction to these momentous changes taking place in Mexico, while reaffirming other notions of how Mexicans view and respond to these changes.

With respect to the Americanization of Mexican culture and economy, Gutmann's chapter entitled "For Whom the Taco Bells Toll" analyzes not only the symbolic and substantive import of the appearance and ultimate rejection of American-style *tacos* in Mexico, but also popular reactions to the North American Free Trade Agreement and the more general restructuring of Mexico's economy. Gutmann convincingly argues that the loss of Mexican identity to the United States and other global forces is a phenomenon evident primarily among those who brought it about, the political and economic elites of Mexican society. While certainly affected by these processes of globalization, Gutmann presents his subjects as Mexico's last line of defense in the onslaught on Mexico's sovereignty. Ironically, though, the fight of the working class is less a fight against the cultural and economic invasion from the north, and more one against the loss of control over their daily lives that became worse during a period where Mexico's political regime was purportedly becoming more democratic and inclusive. Here again, Gutmann emphasizes his underlying theme of the growing disjuncture between elite and academic discourse concerning Mexico's regime change and the on-the-ground realities of the increasing loss of control by Mexico's working poor over their economic and political worlds, "The issues of immigration and trade are the currency in which these popular nationalist sentiments deal [...]. But a yearning for more control over one's political and economic future is evident in all cases" (p. 94).

Attempts to regain what little control had existed for the people of Santo Domingo are revealed in the myriad actions and inactions of their daily political and economic lives. Where many have seen "covert and hidden forms of resistance" (p. 141) in these actions, Gutmann again finds merely efforts to exert through whatever means possible a greater control over one's life in the face of NAFTA, globalization, a growing crime wave, and the breakdown of one political system and the emergence of another that seems to offer little improvement. Ultimately, the romance of democracy resides in the potential for control over one's life that more ideal forms of democratic governance promise.

The repeated assertions by Gutmann's friends in Santo Domingo that democracy is far more than elections reveals the political sophistication of his subjects that oftentimes is absent from academic discourse on democratization processes taking place in the developing world. Elections in Mexico, even when competitive, free, and fair, offer little in the way of control over one's life for those working-class poor that must confront the consequences of the elite-dominated policymaking process that prevails between election days. Though free and fair elections may hold the potential for greater control over one's life, the danger that Gutmann identifies in the *colonia* of Santo Domingo, and one that likely exists across many of the newly democratized regimes around the world, is that the romance will quickly sour, indeed may have already done so, for the simple fact that economic and political power has arguably become more concentrated and less transparent as Mexico moves into the twenty-first century.

In sum, Gutmann offers a compelling view of how such democratization processes, in the context of dramatic economic and social changes, are viewed and responded to by the working poor of Mexico. Though focused on the individuals of one neighborhood in one city, this study is essential for any observer of the economic and political changes that have occurred across the developing world over the past twenty years. For it brings to life how

such a dual transition has shaped and altered the attitudes and behaviors of the majority of citizens living in those countries. While countless variations in the story Gutmann tells surely exist across different societies, the essential element of an increased feeling of powerlessness and the subsequent attempts to reassert control over one's economic and political world surely resonates throughout a developing world characterized by very "thin" democratic regimes and the internationalization of domestic economies. For this reason alone, Gutmann's work will surely be one on many required reading lists for courses devoted to a more complete understanding of, not only Mexico's economic and political transformation, but that of the developing world's as well.

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