

Book Reviews

Body and Organization

John Hassard, Ruth Holliday and Hugh Willmott (Eds)

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The theme of the 12 papers in this volume, taken from a Keele University conference, is to explore ways 'for re-membering or making connections between the body and organization, most notably gender . . . and sexuality' (p. 2), an area of study the editors claim is insufficiently addressed. A companion volume, *Contested Bodies*, will also be produced. Challenging the mind-body dualism claimed to be implicit in the masculinist rationality of modern organizations, most authors adopt feminist poststructural positions influenced by Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari.

While a focus on the role of the body in organizations is sensible and overdue, it runs the risk of overlooking broader technological, economic, and political conditions that frame workplace possibilities. The best contributions (Dale and Burrell; Casey; Hancock and Tyler) consider these broader considerations. Few of the papers understand that modern management techniques¹ actually colonize the soul and body through corporate values and aesthetics,² whereas traditional management intended only to colonize the body. Thus at the core of many of these papers is Weber's conclusion that, because the workplace is a site of rational production, it is necessary to exclude inappropriate dispositions. Pleasingly, those papers incorporating Weber do not demonize him as a patriarch of modernist rationality, rather understanding that he well understood the dystopic possibilities of workers becoming 'a little cog in the machine' (p. 6). Another theme dealt with in the collection is the 'absent presence' of sexuality in the workplace.³

Dale and Burrell's opening chapter ('What shape are we in?') provides a strong opening, by locating Weber's theory of the 'bounded organization' within the Western modernist tradition of Cartesian dualism, and they properly attribute Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*⁴ with countering the poststructural (later adopted by postmodernists) notion of a body that is 'more fluid and disorganized' (p. 16). Postmodernism, they claim, blurs the distinctions between 'mind and body; body and technology; self and other' (p. 25). Some feminist postmodernists take this considerably further, claiming that the bounded rationality of modern organizations cannot cope with women's 'leaky bodies'.⁵ Another strong contributor, Catherine Casey, in 'Sociology sensing the body' argues for a 'revitalized sociology' that acknowledges the role of the body in evaluating the

potential for change (p. 67). The old sociologies most associated with organization theory (especially Weber), she argues, are grounded, with some exceptions, in instrumental rationalities that have 'rendered its discourse . . . abstracted and dissociated from lived embodied experience' (p. 53). She too argues that Cartesian rationalism has dissociated people from conscious feelings of one's own body other than in 'culturally prescribed and delimited arena', and acknowledges that poststructuralism has also deconstructed the metanarratives of sociology.

Pleasingly, Dale and Burrell as well as Casey are not lured by naive postmodernism. Weber understood better than most the implications of modern forms of organization on the 'soul' though, to my knowledge, he never used this term. So, too, Taylor, whose name is an eponym for the regular, predictable, and reproducible features of Fordist production, hoped to produce a culture of 'friendly cooperation and mutual helpfulness' (p. 6), as the editors point out. The contemporary knowledge worker operates within a hypercapitalist economy, the fundamentals of which remain pretty much as Marx had described them. This seems to be understood in both these chapters.

Both Dale and Burrell and Casey challenge the claim that the 'postmodern organization has no centrally organized system of authority'⁶ creating a 'post-bureaucratic' and 'boundaryless' organization which threatens bureaucratic hierarchy.⁷ They are not duped by some postmodern theorists' collusion with the logic of late capitalism that fails to understand, notwithstanding Foucault, that power does centralize in definable clusters (around capital and gender in particular). Dale and Burrell point out that the new age organization 'often . . . disguises a widening of the boundaries of the organization, again in space and time, through homework or the expectations of professionals and managers to deal with "work" issues whenever and wherever' (pp. 27–28). They conclude simply that postmodern ideas about organizations 'do not entirely constitute a rupture in the modernist rationalist modes of organization, self and body, even if they do go some way to problematizing the concepts of structures, boundaries and wholes as we have considered as part of the "modernist project"' (p. 28).

Casey, too, is wary of postmodern claims of freedom from 'structural fixities' and 'malleable identities' (p. 58). She sensibly argues that Foucauldian notions of resistance through 'localized identity presentations . . . obscure and deepen the conditions and experience of the quintessentially modern problem: alienation' (p. 62). Quite rightly she argues that alienation and the loss of human agency 'is now normalized in postmodern conditions'. Instead, Casey argues for a new ethic which ontology is 'a creative, generative emancipation' (p. 63).

Of course, as there should be, some papers push the boundaries. Linstead's 'Dangerous fluids and the organization-without-organs' is one of the more radical papers, although I feel it may be better in a volume that discusses bodies and sexualities from a postmodern perspective. The linkage to organization theory, to be frank, was rather tenuous being based on the assumption that organizational body images are 'inescapably male' (p. 31). He argues that, because women's bodies are 'historically associated with wetness and fluidity, with flux and change, with fecundity and uncontrollable cycles of nature, with mood swings and passion', women will be dissonant with the organizational persona. Using the Irigarayan assumption that 'the object of desire . . . is to transform the fluid into the solid' (pp. 34–35), Linstead claims that the rationality of the organization (presumably inflexible, or solid) is like the erect penis and thus masculinist. Such metaphorical analyses, to my mind, lack rigour and must surely be seen eventually as a feminist

postmodern excess that briefly lured otherwise intelligent minds. More useful is Linstead's adoption of Deleuze and Guattari's⁸ notion that the body be seen as constantly unstable and constantly transforming, resisting 'hierarchization, sedimentation, striation, layerings and overcodings' (p. 44) that the structural features of organization presumably impose on human bodies. Developing this theme a little further, Parker's 'Manufacturing bodies' argues that conceptualizing bodies as cyborgs—humans that have 'a continually shifting set of relationships' (p. 81)—enhances our understanding of the ways that humans interact with the non-human in organized ways to produce certain outcomes.

Hofbauer's 'Bodies in a landscape' provides an empirical study of how a worker's 'experience of space as bodily experience' is vital to the layout of an office because space is not just a physical framework, but a control device. She considers three common types of office layout: open-plan, corridor, and open-design. To see the deployment of space in office buildings purely in terms of functionality, she argues, 'conceals their cultural significance and encourages the "myth of naturalization"' (p. 173). Surprisingly, given the democratic claims made for them, open-plan offices 'convey a sense of being nothing but a number and . . . a feeling of humiliation' (p. 177), whereas the less modish cellular corridor office affords the worker individualization of working space.

Two papers discuss the body and managers using a Foucauldian perspective. Lennie, in 'Embodying management', applies not very successfully Foucault's⁹ analysis of the regulation of the body and Engels'¹⁰ insight that management of humans is understandable as 'a space waiting to be ordered by the vision of a mind that has become separate from it' (p. 134). Successful management, he concludes, 'creates a space of life and movement . . . that embodies the order it has produced. That buzz, lightness, and effervescence is an overflowing of a body that is open to the possibilities of organizing beyond itself' (p. 144). Kerfoot, from a feminist perspective in 'Body work' arrives at a very different conclusion. Within capitalist work organization, she concludes, managerial discourses and practices are most appropriate. Because men are 'disembodied' from their own emotions they pursue stability by striving to gain managerial control. Because men eschew non-instrumental and emotional uses of the body, they find few other forms of engagement than the workplace and so continue to be estranged as they try to deal with contradiction and uncertainty. However, Prichard's attempt to operationalize such notions are not successful in this exploratory article. He claims to show that identifying and mapping the changing organizational body topographies reveal 'the interdependence of the emotionality of work, its physical enactment, changing spatial practices and the changing character of the broader structuring orders' (pp. 162–163). Prichard defines the topography as the surface, comprising spatial, verbal, and physical dimensions of bodies, and depth as the body's senses, emotions, and desires. The surface he argues is clearly masculinist. As for body depth, organizational bodies are best understood from Deleuze and Guattari's¹¹ conception as being engaged in an 'interplay and "battle" between social inscriptions and desire' (p. 155).

Similarly, Brewis and Sinclair in 'Exploring embodiment' conclude that women's bodies 'might be understood as complicated sites which powerful discourses inform, affect and construct in various ways' (p. 211). The way that women experience their flesh 'as limiting or beneficial, is produced by the discourse'.¹² Rather contentiously, they argue that the Weberian rationality of (post?)modern organizations is masculine, thereby separating public and private

spheres. Bodies, instincts and passions play little part in the operation of the organization because of this rationality. Developing Synnott's work,¹³ this study considers how women see their bodies as: lacking in socio-culturally defined terms of beauty; as both 'problematic' and 'positive' signifiers in the working environment; and the bodily concerns (e.g. menstruation; motherhood) of women in the workplace. Brewis and Sinclair claim that discursively constructed managerial claims over the body are as real as they are disguised.

Masculine or not, few seem to acknowledge that this separation of mind and body may well be best for women in the workplace. Hancock and Tyler in '“The look of love”: Gender and the organization of aesthetics', based on labour process theory (LPT), consider the relation between processes, power structures, and the subjective identity. An empirical study, it provides real examples to support the concept of 'the instrumentalization of the aesthetic'; more particularly, how managers extend their control by reinforcing an 'essentialized conception of the female aesthetic' (p. 109).

Such a study is all the more appropriate as 'organizational symbolism' is both a conscious management strategy and an increasingly serious study.¹⁴ The findings strongly corroborate the twin hypotheses in the airline industry case studied: female flight attendants were required to perform not only as 'aesthetic artifacts'; furthermore, the workers developed an 'essentialized understanding of their embodied capacity for aesthetic communication as a natural outcome of their feminine gender' (p. 115).

This ambiguity is evident in Richardson's 'What can a body do?' which rethinks feminist strategy in sexual harassment litigation. Rejecting the Freudian notion of sex being a natural instinct that is repressed by exercise of power, she adopts instead Butler's Foucauldian analysis of body being constructed by discourse (p. 219) and Deleuze's Spinozan¹⁵ refusal of the mind-body division to negate the claim that the body is passively inscribed and static (p. 222). Adopting an anti-psychoanalytic position, Richardson opens new possibilities of conceiving of the body by rejecting the notion of desire as a 'lack'. She rejects the notion of the woman's body as fluid and without fixed boundaries because it implies that women are unable to defend their boundaries. Instead, as Spinoza argues, 'Man [*sic*] might be considered as a territory, a set of boundaries'. She concludes that the 'reverse-discourse' implicit in feminists' approach to sexual harassment simply individualizes the hurt and calls on the state or bureaucracy for protection. While not calling on women to abandon harassment protection, she does question whether 'women are naturally vulnerable to sexual harassment' (p. 227).

This is a useful volume for those interested in feminist and poststructural theory, especially in organizational studies with some papers, as I have indicated, being quite outstanding. However, overall, I wonder if the implicit doxa that the rationality of modern organizations is, by definition, patriarchal and masculinist is ultimately sustainable. It seems that the editors remain agnostic on this issue (p. 10), pointing out that new management style incorporating casualized and fragmented work patterns are more likely to employ women.¹⁶ Furthermore, I noted that no acknowledgement is made of the higher incidence of industrial accidents, disease and stress in traditional men's occupations.¹⁷ Nor is there any acknowledgment of the appalling exploitation of third world women (and children) as capitalism universalizes its production methods. And, for me, that is a crucial failing of poststructural, and more particularly postmodernist, theorizing. A failure to acknowledge the wider economic and technological context must

inevitably weaken the validity of such studies. Despite these reservations, this book contributes very usefully to the study of bodies in organizations.

Notes and References

1. See, for example, T. Peters and R. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-run Companies*, Harper and Row, New York, 1982.
2. P. Gagliardi (ed.), *Symbols and Artefacts: Views of the Corporate Landscape*, de Gruyter, Berlin, 1990; P. Gagliardi, 'Exploring the aesthetic side of organizational life', in S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy and W. Nord (eds), *Handbook of Organizational Studies*, Sage, London, 1996, pp. 565–80.
3. J. Hearn and W. Parkin, 'Sex' at 'Work', Wheatsheaf, Brighton, 1987.
4. M. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* (translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith), Tavistock Publications, London, 1973.
5. See E. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1994.
6. S. Crook, J. Pakulski and M. Waters, *Postmodernization*, Sage, London, 1992, p. 187.
7. See W. Mead and J. Mead, *Management for a Small Planet*, Sage, London, 1992.
8. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Athlone Press, London, 1984.
9. Foucault, *op. cit.*, 1973; M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (translated by A. Sheridan), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991.
10. F. Engels, 'The part played by labour in the transition from ape to man', in *K. Marx and F. Engels Selected Works, Volume 2* (translated by the Institute of Marxism–Leninism), Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958 [1876].
11. Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.*, 1984; G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux*, Athlone Press, London, 1988.
12. See M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972–1977* (edited by C. Gordon), Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980; J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, Routledge, New York and London, 1993.
13. A. Synnott, *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society*, Routledge, London, 1993.
14. B. Turner, *Regulating Bodies*, Routledge, London, 1990.
15. G. Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, City Light Books, San Francisco, 1988.
16. See M. Calas and L. Smircich, 'Dangerous liaisons: the "feminine in management" meets "globalization"', *Business Horizons*, March–April 1993, pp. 71–81.
17. M. Alvesson and Y. Due Billig, *Understanding Gender and Organizations*, Sage, London, 1997.

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Organizations in Depth

Yiannis Gabriel (with contributions from others)

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Yiannis Gabriel has been making use of psychoanalysis as a vehicle for developing an understanding of behaviour in organisations for 20 years and in many respects this book is both an outcome and a synthesis of those years of study. We all tend to have a view about psychoanalysis and its application and as Gabriel states 'few other theorists and their doctrines have generated as much passion as Freud' (p. 36).

Thus it is probably true to say that everyone commencing the reading of this book has a position on its content already established and that these positions will range from hostility to scepticism to acceptance of the value of psychoanalysis in this context. Those hostile to the approach will tend to reject what this book has to offer while those accepting of the approach will draw comfort from the way the book explains what they already believe. It is to the middle group—the sceptics or the unconvinced—therefore that this book is primarily aimed.

The book commences with an introduction to psychoanalytic theory and its concepts before proceeding to consider their relevance and application to the understanding of organisations. The theory is unashamedly based upon the work of Freud, as the founding father of psychoanalysis, but considers in some detail the work of subsequent developers of its use. Jung, however, who criticised Freud extensively and developed alternative theoretical insights, gets merely a passing mention. This is a shame because it limits the insights which are passed on through the book and places limitations on the interpretations of the stories used within the text. I realise that the incorporation of Jungian theory would greatly extend the book and possibly cause confusion but cannot help feeling that it would also enrich the message contained. There is an extensive glossary of terms provided and in this Jung gets considerable mention but surprisingly little in the text itself. Similarly the valuable developments of theory by Lacan and critiques by Habermas¹ and Baudrillard² get little in the way of mention and the book positions itself as essentially Freudian.

Naturally, the main concepts of psychoanalysis are elaborated in some detail, both in the explanation of the theory and in the subsequent application to the study of organisations, and this is generally well done. To detail this is beyond the scope of this review and it will suffice to state that the principal arguments of Freud and his followers are extensively referred to, quoted from and applied throughout the book. Indeed, the book is so extensive in this respect that a novice can gain an understanding of the theory of Freud and his followers without needing to tackle the original—indeed this is one of the declared aims of the book. There are, however, a few surprising omissions. For example, the death instinct is detailed in the context of culture but without reference to the work of Fromm.³ Similarly the concept of neurosis is extensively considered without really being extended into the area of psychosis, and Sievers⁴ work is not mentioned here, although he is extensively mentioned in other contexts. Thus there are some deficiencies in the book, although it must be admitted that such a book must necessarily be incomplete and omit certain considerations. I am equally liable to the accusation of wanting my own slant on psychoanalysis to be incorporated into someone else's work. Of course, this is in the nature of using psychoanalysis—it is subject to personal interpretations and psychoanalysts themselves, from Freud onwards, are notorious for dogmatically insisting on their own interpretations being paramount. This, to my mind, is both a strength and a weakness of the use of psychoanalytic theory—the different insights appertaining to different, individual interpretations—which is one of the main reasons why its opponents refuse to accept it as scientific.

The book is particularly strong in applying psychoanalytic theory in two areas. Indeed this forms the main thrust of the book. The first of these areas is that of considering what an organisation is and the relationship between an individual and an organisation and this is extended into the area of leadership. Gabriel rightly explores the different definitions of 'the organisation' given by different theorists

and even by a range of organisational stakeholders, and the problems associated with these definitions. He uses this as a platform to show the insights which can be gained from the application of psychoanalytic theory and uses many examples of scenarios to illustrate his message. Throughout the book other contributors to it have provided short articles and case studies to enrich the text and this is particularly evident and valuable throughout this part of the text.

The other main thrust of the book is the application of psychoanalytic theory to the study and understanding of culture and a wide range of theory is considered in this context. This is, of course, an important area of study for the understanding of organisations and Gabriel presents a convincing case for the use of psychoanalysis to enrich our understanding. He situates another strand of his work—namely the narratives and understanding contained in organisational stories—within this broader study of culture. The lack of reference to the work of Jung, however, limits the insights that can be drawn from this part of the work and closes the door to a richer understanding which could be drawn from the extension of this to incorporate the work of such people as Campbell.⁵ Thus the concept of the collective unconscious and the use of archetypes get only a passing mention. The application of Jungian theory could also be used more extensively to link into the work of Mitroff⁶ and his insights into the understanding of organisational behaviour. Equally, too, this study of culture is extended into a consideration of the emotional life of organisations without reference to the idea of bounded emotion mentioned in the work of Mumby and Putnam,⁷ although the authors are themselves mentioned in passing.

In case these comments about omissions from the book, and possible extensions of the work, make my view of this book sound negative, I would wish at this point to disabuse the reader. This is an excellent book, which is well researched and well argued, and I would unhesitatingly recommend it to anyone. Instead I merely point out that my slant on some of the issues would have been slightly different. The points which I consider to be omissions are perfectly understandable from the Freudian viewpoint adopted by the author and I would not in any way wish to suggest that this viewpoint is anything other than valid. In this context the book is well constructed and most of what I have suggested as omissions are mentioned and included in the copious references section of the book should someone wish to pursue these in greater depth. Indeed, both the references section and the glossary, which together comprise 40 pages of the book, are sufficiently comprehensive to provide a platform for anyone wishing to embark on further study of the content and argument of this book.

Although the book is written primarily by Gabriel there are contributions by many other people, who are fully acknowledged. Primarily these contributions are the short articles and case studies mentioned previously but three chapters are jointly authored by Gabriel and another, while the chapter on 'Psychoanalysis and ethic in organisations' is entirely written by another. These contributors include academics and practitioners, of both psychoanalysis and organisation theory, including at least one former student of Gabriel. These enrich the book and its arguments considerably. The book claims to be aimed at both novices and experts, as well as at those with a theoretical interest and those with a practical interest—in short to anyone interested in the topic. I am not sure that it achieves all these aims but makes a laudable effort. Anyone with an interest in the topic and the approach can get something out of this book. At the same time, however, the book is a position statement by the author who, in his very first sentence claims 'a deeply

held conviction that psychoanalysis can make a great contribution to the study of organizational phenomena' (p. vii). The book is, however, more than this in that it is also both an attempt to convert the unconvinced and a setting out of a research agenda for the future—a research agenda with an invitation for anyone to engage with. The book is therefore doubly challenging—in its content and in its invitation to self-reflection and engagement—and I would recommend it to anyone.

Notes and References

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2. J. Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (translated by I. H. Grant), Sage, London, 1993; J. Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* (translated by P. Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowski), Pluto Press, London, 1999.
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Organizations Evolving

Howard Aldrich

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I knew of Howard Aldrich through his work on entrepreneurs, the people who set up new businesses and small firms. Often a pioneer and original thinker and not afraid to question accepted assumptions in the field of entrepreneurship, this book reveals him to be a man of wide perspective and perception of detail. In his introduction, Aldrich emphasises (p. 18) that 'this book is about organizations, not just theories of organizations', about their emergence and the process of their emergence and about their change and transformation. It is a mine of information, citations and quotes for any academic writing a paper on many of the theories, topics and fashions which have passed through organisational and managerial research and enthusiasm in the last few decades. As a reference to sources on these and for Aldrich's own commentary, it is invaluable. There are over 900 references listed and the work thus seems to be a survey of the literature. It is, however, much more a review of Aldrich's own perspectives on how organisations come into being, change, evolve and disband and of the interaction in a population of organisations, i.e. between organisations in the same sector, and between communities of organisations, i.e. interaction between populations. The detail is enormous, the text moves quickly from one topic to another, it is massive in scope and complex in

its many ramifications. It is a highly organised review and one can only admire the breadth and reach of the author's grasp.

His approach is an evolutionary one. The second chapter is devoted to the evolutionary approach and the third to its relationship to other approaches to the study of organisations, the ecological, institutional, interpretive, organisational and so on, and the remainder of the work analyses events and developments in terms of the evolution of organisations. 'Evolution results from the operation of four generic processes: variation, selection, retention and diffusion' (p. 21) and each topic is discussed in terms of one or more of these processes. Thus, the emergence of organisations is the introduction of variation, but competition and the scarcity of resources enforce selection. Many new organisations and especially firms are consequently relatively short lived. Retention and diffusion are apparent in the way in which most new foundings consolidate existing practice, perhaps with incremental improvement, and thus themselves represent a further diffusion of existing practice.

The evolutionary argument for organisational transformation, Chapter 7, is that without change organisations are at risk and the population of organisations is also at risk unless the population is renewed by new entrants better able to match the changing environment. Transformation as such brings variants brought about by selecting forces, internal or external. The variations are retained when the transformed organisations survive and then the variations are diffused into the rest of the population enabling the population to survive. Variants may also be resisted. An example is the very limited role played by employees in US publicly held corporations in spite of the evidence that greater employee participation raises productivity. As Aldrich shows, there have been a good many attempts to change this situation, such as gain-sharing, i.e. schemes by which employees gain from productivity improvements, but they have made little progress. Small group activities, the Japanese name for what were termed quality circles in the US and UK, also failed to gain ground in either country. ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Plans) have failed to give workers a greater substantive voice because, at least in the US, the shares are held in a trust with voting being by the trust. Management has thereby ring-fenced them.

This and other discussions and examples referred to below are, from this reviewer's point of view, reasons why US industry is in fact in decline through a much weaker level of organisational change than in the past. Aldrich does not pursue the reasons why such attempted innovative changes failed or what the consequences are of the failure to change. His discussion is focused on his four generic processes of evolution as such.

Thus the centralist Fordist and Neo-Fordist organisational structures which became dominant in the post-Second World War period of economic growth and expansion in employment are not discussed, even though they have resisted real transformation for too long. A pervasive transforming technology like information technology demands, in parallel, significant organisational change and it is the integration of the two sets of change which bring about the wider changes in prosperity in society as well as qualitative improvement in products and services. The diffusion of the Fordist type structure into services and retailing with its focus on cost reduction, mass production and very large rewards for the management elite is having many negative consequences, such as the increasing polarisation of society in the US and UK, lack of real creativity, the loss of diversity and other barriers to innovative development. There are many questions. Aldrich rightly

emphasises the role of banks in entrepreneurial emergence and development of new firms, but mergers and the way in which information technology has been applied have led to a situation where centralisation has deprived the local manager from playing an active role in the local economy as was performed by local banks and branches of smaller banks in the past. Furthermore, what role has academic management education had in the narrow financial focus and restricted ability of managers? The MIT study¹ on the loss of technological competitiveness by US industry was in no doubt that 'we and our peer universities must share the responsibility'.

The complexity of Aldrich's structure can be a barrier to ease of reading. This was well illustrated for me by randomly opening the book, which is physically very well produced as befits a reference book to be often opened. At page 208, one finds that the headings are *Political events*, *Legal and regulatory events* and *Legal and regulatory events: mergers and acquisitions*. The chapter is entitled *Organizations and social change*. The three headings fall within a section on *Three components of a historical framework* which is further sub-divided by sections on each of the three components—age, period and cohort effects. The headings of pages 208–209 are within the *Period* subsection. 'Period effects reflect variations in environments to which organizations must adapt if they are to remain fit' (p. 216). The treatment is encyclopaedic rather than discursive but within a highly structured and fragmenting format to which access can be difficult because of the selectivity of the index, in which mergers and acquisitions for example do not appear.

In Chapter 7, *Organizational transformation*, mergers and acquisitions appear in two separate places, pages 166 and 167, and one is referred to further discussion in Chapters 8 and 10. In Chapter 8 is the heading quoted above and the text is devoted to the five waves of M&A in the US from the late 19th century to the 1990s and the role of liberalisation and regulation in these waves. In Chapter 10, *Reproducing Populations: Foundings and Disbandings*, mergers and acquisitions are treated on pages 261–264 as *Other vital events*, that is other than foundings and disbandings. The discussion, although beginning with a statement that M&As have been paid a great deal of attention, is devoted to the data such as numbers of M&As, amount of capital involved and sectors in which concentrated. What effect M&As have had on the acquirer, what benefits have accrued and to which of shareholders, employees or managers they accrued, these are questions hanging in the air. Aldrich (p. 264), acknowledges that 'the economic impact of M&A is unquestionable' but goes on to say that the 'impact on the economy and other populations deserves more attention'. Yet, for example, Porter² has pointed out that most mergers are failures and others have pointed to managers as the only group to benefit along with their financial advisers. There are many outcomes of mergers and acquisitions which are negative to the point that few achieve that efficiency which is their justification in the view of many commentators and financiers. The clash of cultures which prevents any real integration in many instances, together with what one might call the Hanson effect—the cutting out of R&D as an unwanted cost—and other reported outcomes, could have been briefly referred to but somehow are beyond Aldrich's reach in exposing his evolutionary theory.

Another blind spot is undoubtedly that whilst there are references to some European papers, major areas of European research, for example on the local social environments or communities which spawn dynamic small firm innovative systems with intensive interchanges and collaboration, are unmentioned as are the

new types of organisation which have evolved in them. Even the analysis by Porter,³ who discovered somewhat belatedly the significance of these types of communities and districts, is not referred to. I was reminded of a response which I once received from a US academic whom I had tried to help with a number of journal references, all European, not obscure and in English. He eventually wrote back that he lived in a metropolis, with seven major universities and therefore seven very large libraries. None held any of the journals. Discussion of organisational communities, networks, culture, organisational boundaries and so on would have been enriched, in places significantly so, by inclusion of relevant European literature. Such isolation is not unusual in American academic culture.

Inadvertently, Aldrich highlights another problem which is common also in Europe—the quality of research. The massive expansion of universities in the US and Europe after the Second World War inevitably required many more professors and lecturers and they are dependent on research and publication for tenure and advancement. The scope for research which meaningfully extends knowledge and the ability to carry it out are not infinite or infinitely held. Much research becomes the serial pursuit of minutiae. There are several indicators of this phenomenon in this work such as ‘Shortcomings in previous research on organizational change’ (p. 169), and ‘Lawrence cautioned that empirical results have been weak and inconsistent’ (p. 132). The pressure to publish and consultants search for a new idea on which to extend business are major reasons why academic findings and consultants enthusiasms tend to have a life of 5 years. The underlying research in fact lacked depth. Some, such as re-engineering, were disastrous in their effects on organisations. Others, which did seem to address major failings in the dominant hierarchical organisational structure, failed to penetrate the dominant culture.

Undoubtedly, this book is a rich source of ideas and of sources of ideas. There are some limitations of which to be aware but, nevertheless, it is informative and stimulating even when irritating.

Notes and References

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Organisations in Action: Competition between Contexts

Peter Clark

London, Routledge, 2000, x + 354 pp, £22.99, ISBN 0-415-18231-X pbk

Peter Clark’s new book shares a title with J.D. Thompson’s classic text of over 30 years ago, and it is equally ambitious. The book commences by outlining its two key concerns which, are first, putting action into organization studies and, second,

examining the theme of competition across contexts. This endeavour is pursued by a 'journey' through five perspectives, namely from the modern to the neo-modern political economy (NMPE) through the social constructionist, post-modernist and realist turns. The NMPE approach sees Clark weld together analytical insights from these perspectives whilst being critical of the project of modernity. In terms of the content of NMPE, Clark is clearly taken with the current fashion for critical realism, of which he gives an insightful overview of the works of both Margaret Archer and Andrew Sayer. From his treatment of realism it would appear that his interest lies far more in the analytical equipment of the morphogenetic approach, rather than the emancipatory claims of progress, reality and truth. Of equal importance in the NMPE are insights drawn from post-modernity, and Clark goes beyond the more typical coverage of Foucault, to extend his interests into Baudrillard, Bauman and Lyotard. In particular, he is quick to pick up on Bauman's¹ thesis of the loss of the legislative role of academia and of Lyotard's² notion of the performativity of knowledge. Clark engages with post-modernity and demonstrates how concepts such as hyperreality and simulacra are useful in the study of organizations. This naturally raises the question as to how this assemblage of mutually antagonistic perspectives actually hangs together, and more particularly, how does his perspective impact upon his analytical concern of the study of organizations both in action and across contexts?

Those familiar with Peter Clark's previous work will recognize many themes in the book, which have been developed over a long period. This book is not, however, a mere restatement of his earlier work; rather, Clark seeks to reinterpret earlier themes, which among other things results in a Burrell³ influenced, retro-linear account of the Whipp and Clark Rover study.⁴ That said, many of his enduring accounts are still present, with American football acting as a device with which to explain the American System of Manufacture. The parallels between this analysis and the role of French court society by Norbert Elias are striking; Elias taught Clark at the University of Leicester a long time ago!

The book is packed with interesting vignettes through which to explore his ideas, for instance Clark poses and then seeks to answer the question: 'would Henry Ford have succeeded had he set up his factory in the Birmingham/Coventry corridor?' His argument is that Ford would have been likely to fail, the reason being the absence of the distinct social-cultural and institutional factors that were present in early twentieth century Detroit, the corollary of his argument being that the mass production capability was a manifestation of American exceptionalism. The analysis provided by Clark acts as a caveat to the more evangelical accounts, which stress the nature of the borderless world, and the concomitant infinite possibilities that are supposedly open to organizations. Working as he does at Birmingham University, not far from the Rover factory, he can be only too aware of the organizational consequences of not being able to compete across contexts. This analysis is, of course, broadly concurrent with the ideas promulgated by the Aix group and the more general societal effect movement. Clark's position is, however, distinct, in the sense that rather than simply using the cultural/institutional explanation he attempts to theorize the differences in terms of a rich conception of organization, which accords emphasis on temporal reckoning and structural activation within a firm specific, organizational repertoire.

The importance of contest leads into Clark's other preoccupation, that of trying to provide a sophisticated account of process, which following Clegg, he argues is a tortuous undertaking. It is Clark's view that organizations are recursive,

sometimes chronically so, which is something that makes transformation problematic. He rightly points to the way in which there has been a suppression of process generally within organization studies, attention instead being paid to fanciful blueprints at the expense of the problems of 'becoming'. The difficult nature of change and the non-portability of concepts across contexts create difficulties for the concept of strategic choice, an idea that has become axiomatic since its inception in the early 1970s. Clark's position problematizes the notion of strategic choice arguing instead that an organization possesses a zone of manoeuvre which is largely determined by the broader habitus of the organization. Clark crafts this position, while distancing himself from the more deterministic of the new institutionalists, emphasizing that actors in organizations are knowing subjects or 'savants' and moreover that unintended consequences are likely to abound. Other targets include the resource-based theory of the firm,⁵ which has gained popularity in recent years, and time line analyses of organizational change.⁶

The breadth of Clark's command of both contemporary sociological and organizational discussions make for an interesting but difficult read; at times it is polemic, at other points it engages with high theory. There is considerable humour in this book and Clark is evidently an incisive observer of society. Given the magnitude of this book, it is perhaps a little craven to criticize the poor proof reading in parts of the text, for instance, Bob Dylan becomes Dylon, while Gibson Burrell losses an l. In more substantive terms, Clark does not really engage with the possibilities of the Internet and e-commerce, and in particular the implications that they might have for his chosen themes of organizations in action and the competition between contexts. That said, Clark's position of NMPE should be regarded as an emergent one, and as such rather than aiming for closure seeks to open an important conversation for organization studies, in particular in terms of drawing insights from both critical realism and the post-modern turn. In this sense his position of NMPE is far more than an awkward bricolage, instead it offers a refreshing attempt to avoid the theological disputes of the paradigm warriors. Furthermore, NMPE is also useful in that it avoids the popular 'end of history' proclamations, with it consciously leaving room for the possibility of a resurgence of the left.

This book can be read at a number of different levels; primarily, it will appeal to colleagues within the organization studies field. The sheer breadth of the coverage coupled with the interesting vignettes make it a very challenging but interesting overview of organization studies for both advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students. For those serious about engaging with the complexities of organizing, Professor Clark's book is too important to be left unread.

Notes and References

1. Z. Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987.
2. Lyotard, 1984.
3. G. Burrell, *Pandemonium*, Sage, London, 1997.
4. Whipp and Clark, 1986.
5. See Grant, 1990.
6. See Pettigrew and Whipp, 1991.

Thinking about Management: Implications of Organizational Debates for Practice

Ian Palmer and Cynthia Hardy

London, Sage, 1999, 352 pp, UK £19.99, ISBN 0-7619-5536-4 pbk

With the turbulent decade of the nineties seeing the category of 'middle management' effectively removed from the shelves, increasing popularity in quality circle and related 'empowering' ground-up approaches, and the general melee created in the random placement and replacement of would-be managers, perhaps it is time to take a breath and reflect on that age old, multi-constituted notion of 'management'. Palmer and Hardy have put together a text which will appeal to a wide grouping—ranging from refugees and current practitioners of the aforementioned, students and academics searching for a roadmap and text on general management, and, believe it or not, possibly the current management practitioner wishing for some reflective moments, or a refresher on key streams of both historic and modern (indeed possibly post-modern) management theory.

Bringing together those two grand and antipodean traditions of theory and action, this publication first justifies and then explores the merits associated with assessing theory for the ultimate purpose of achieving better performance in that most practical of arts. This book can best be described as a discovery map of management theory—both historic and current trends. It outlines key texts along the way, has highlighted reference sections for each segmented chapter and box 'quizzes' and related prompts which engage the reader in more than merely an armchair visit to management points of interest. Indeed the quizzes give the book the ability to be customised to particular sectors or businesses in an interactive way.

This is not one of those books of 'management quotes from great leaders', nor so praxis oriented that it forms the basis of a crash course substitute for management school. It will entice and satisfy those listed above who expect only what can be expected from such a feat as this—roadmap, updater, companion/encyclopaedia—in the process, certainly going well beyond Management 101 and 201.

As a cross section of the texts cited, journals range from *Human Relations* to the *Academy of Management Review*, *Industry Week*, *Administrative Science Quarterly* and the *European Journal of Applied Psychology* whilst including book titles as esoteric as Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Management* to the similarly aged but more bland and functional such as Silverman's *The Theory of Organisations*. The author selection also ranges from Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team, through Foucault to Polanyi. The real question—does it work? Given the segmented, fickle and multivarious markets laid out for authors and publishers alike in this realm, I believe it hits its mark for the variety of willing consumers listed in the first paragraph, whilst bringing some sense to the integration of those usually opposing or mutually exclusive cultures—theory and practice.

Whilst of no great need of brow raising, perhaps from an academic point of view, the inclusion of post-modern/deconstructing approaches within management research certainly can be applauded for its courage amidst the company of potential antagonists. Does this succeed? Given the environment of 'Learning Organisations', 'Organic Structures' and self organising work groups, perhaps the process itself—and the reflexive nature inherent in PM approaches—is the key

offering. In this sense certainly the point is presented and effective—whilst, in the book's own style, engaging the reader in these very issues to draw it away from mere theory.

Given the book's proclamation of being segmentable into chapters of focus, a mechanical point of note is that the chapters may possibly be more effectively served by having their bibliographic section linked with their referenced endnotes at the end of the chapters or all in one place at the back of the book—perhaps in one single bibliography. I found myself flipping constantly between both. However, the continuity otherwise gained forms this publication into a highly practical text for both student and practitioner. The reference lists are useful, if in some overlapping chapters repetitive. As for aiming to be comprehensive, books dedicated to one topic alone would have trouble achieving this of course. The book sufficiently covers its vast terrain while doing justice to content to be expected in more than mere undergraduate texts. It is necessarily lean in order to be punchy and effective.

Indeed, many an academic course designer and their students, as well as numerous others from all those walks of life grouped into that crude category of management, will find the walk-through browsing nature of this publication no doubt useful for their own personal purposes. Whether juggling 'Culture Change', talking 'Strategy', 'Power' or 'Structure' management, swimming through 'Organisational Learning', or merely finding the commonalities and clashes of the varying forms and benefits of 'Leadership', there are choice moments of reflection for the purposes of perfection for us all.

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Newspapers: A Lost Cause?

Patrick Hendricks

*London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999, viii + 251 pp, £45.00,
ISBN 0-7923-5608-X*

This book takes as its starting point the newspaper industry and the changes which are occurring to that industry, in order to examine the factors affecting the industry and the possible effects for the future. It is essentially therefore a study of the newspaper industries of the United States and the Netherlands during the 1990s and aims to address the question of how the changing competitive forces upon that industry are affecting it. It is based upon a study which was undertaken between 1993 and 1997, and as such it provides an interesting and valuable case study of this industry at a time of flux, and as the author states, 'it is difficult to pick a better time to study change and competition in the newspaper industry' (p. 5).

The book considers in some detail the economic aspects of the newspaper industry and focuses rightly upon economies of scale and the relationship between price and revenue, recognising that advertising is at least as important as cover price. The author argues that, and explores the reasons why, volume is so important to the newspaper industry. He considers the relationship between concentration and profitability and explores the differences between the two countries under

consideration. Obviously the scale of production is considerably different in the two countries but surprisingly, as shown in the analysis (which is amply supported by clear tables) the largest circulating newspaper in the United States has only a volume three times that of the largest in the Netherlands. This leads to a consideration of the regional versus national focus of newspapers in the two countries to show that there is a much greater regional focus in the United States than in the Netherlands. This is explored in terms of economies of scale but not in terms of the cultural focus, and differences, between the two countries. This restricts the analysis and conclusions to those based upon economic factors, a form of analysis which pervades this book.

The question of elasticity of demand in relationship to price is explored in depth to argue that this is inelastic in terms of circulation but that this circulation is crucial to advertising revenue. In considering the industrial context, the author dwells upon changing technology and the changing competition for advertising revenue in an industry which is part of the cultural communication sphere of society. Thus the supply and price of newsprint is considered in detail along with environmental drivers of production while alternative marketing techniques, replacing newspaper advertising, are treated to a passing mention. The book recognises, however, the threat from both an increasing range of alternative reading matter, such as magazines, and from non-printed forms of information, such as television and radio, identifying that these are different in the two countries under consideration. The differences and similarities between the two countries considered in this study are not, however, explored in any detail and as a consequence no clear view of how representative the two industries are is arrived at. This, in my view, limits the prognosis arrived at in completion of the study.

The arguments in this part of the book are clear and lucid and few would argue with the conclusions that the newspaper industry has moved from a stable environment to one in which there is increasing competition. The evidence presented shows that this has led to a reduction in circulation of newspapers in the United States but a continued growth in the Netherlands. These differences are surprising to me and seem worthy of greater exploration than is undertaken. The arguments of the book are more an economic evaluation of what has happened than an attempt to evaluate and explain and this must be considered to be a limitation of this book, as cultural effects would seem to me to be more important in deriving an understanding of the industry than seems to be recognised. It is very much an internal perspective upon the industry rather than a situating of the industry within a broader social context. Thus the author considers developments in printing and distributional technologies and dwells in depth upon the concomitant labour relations issues. He then proceeds to evaluate changes in the industry in terms of vertical and horizontal integration and in terms of the expansion strategies adopted through attempts at diversification.

Some cultural issues of potential significance are identified and mentioned. For example, the author states that 'younger people are among the strongest and largest groups that have stopped reading a newspaper on a daily basis . . . the problem was not that today's youth does not read; they just do not read newspapers' (p. 81). Again this seems like an important issue which is mentioned in passing without being given the analysis it deserves in order to develop a full understanding of the changes affecting the industry. Equally the author recognises that the timeliness of newspapers as a competitive advantage has disappeared in that other forms of media are able to bring news to people much more frequently than can

a daily newspaper. This is a factor which has changed the emphasis of newspapers from the reporting of news to the giving of more detailed analysis, with possible implications for both their competitive advantage and for the production frequency and quality but any analysis of this is largely absent from the analysis of the author. This, in my view, is a serious omission which results in a simplified form of analysis and prognosis.

Competition and innovation is, however, discussed fully in the context of the broadcasting services and the advent of cable news stations and the effect of these upon the increased demand for regional, rather than national news services. This is extended into a consideration of the effects of the Internet upon newspapers. Cultural misfits and internal resistance to change are well covered in this context but without the radical transformation of the industry, which others consider, being adequately explored. Again this seems to me to be because the analysis is situated within the newspaper industry itself rather than being concerned with the wider societal and cultural issues which are mentioned without being adequately explored.

Having completed the analysis of the newspaper industry and the effects upon it of the changing climate, the book then devotes the final two chapters to a consideration of the prospects of the industry in the future. It argues that the industry is reasonably healthy in terms of the returns which it provides but that it suffers from the typical problems of a mature industry with a capital intensive base. Its particular problems are brought about because its circulation base is under threat from alternative media and its advertising revenue is equally under threat from the same sources. The book also considers opportunities for the industry in terms of the repackaging of its products to meet different needs in different markets. This analysis is adequate but could have been enhanced by situating it within the theoretical arguments surrounding globalisation and the discontinuities of postmodernity. Instead these are considered in the context of the barriers to change, such as internal resistance, organisational structure and a focus upon short-term issues. Nevertheless the author concludes, and adequately argues his case, that newspapers are not suffering from a terminal decline and will not be replaced, at least in the short term, by new forms of competing media. He does, however, conclude that the traditional model of the newspaper industry is under threat and its basis of operating satisfactorily is being steadily eroded. Moreover he argues that the firms in the industry can only survive by adaptation and the focus of their attention and activity upon their core assets and skills. His previous analysis of the industry has shown that such skills exist and that the outcome for the industry could well be healthy but that the prognosis is uncertain without action being taken. His conclusion that 'the production systems of the future should be able to support smaller niche markets ... without capitalising upon huge economies of scale' (p. 200) is adequately supported by his analysis and argument.

Although I have pointed out what I believe to be deficiencies in the book, or at least areas where further analysis would have enriched the argument and findings of the book, this is by no means a poor book. The book is well written and both readable and methodologically robust. It is well presented with a large number of tables and figures to add clarity to the argument. It has an extensive bibliography and detailed appendices covering the research methodology adopted. It considers the newspaper industry in the two countries concerned in the study from a particular perspective. This perspective is primarily internal to the industry itself

and primarily from an economic perspective. This inevitably gives a particular focus to its contents and leads to the consideration in detail of specific issues at the expense of others. Taken in this light the book meets its objectives well and for anyone interested in the issues considered from the perspectives adopted this book is well worth reading.

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Organisational Change and Gender Equity: International Perspectives on Fathers and Mothers at the Workplace

Linda L. Haas, Philip Hwang and Graeme Russell (Eds)

Thousand Oaks, London and New Dehli, Sage Publications, 2000, xii + 291 pp., pbk, ISBN 0 7619 1045 X

The assumption that the two spheres of work and family should be separate and gendered is deeply rooted in our Western or industrialised capitalist societies. This is something that the reviewed book rightly questions by analysing recent changes and trends. Although 'gender equity' is part of the title, the authors go beyond the concepts of equal pay and sexual (in)justice at the work place. The publication's most valuable contribution is the successful attempt to study the relationships between work and family from the perspective of both, women/mothers and men/fathers.

Most gender studies traditionally focus on changes in female employment and on how women balance workplace commitments with bringing up children and looking after family members. However, women's larger contribution to the paid labour force in the last 50 years has a direct effect on their male partners as well as on how society and organisations in the West deal with the issues of gender equity. The ambition of the authors to provide the complete picture, i.e. discuss the changes in relation to women and men, deserves congratulations. The underlying concept of the book is summarised in the words of the editors: 'When women's job opportunities are not influenced by presumptions about their work commitment or responsibilities for family care, companies can take advantage of women's full range of skills and talents. When men do not have to make difficult decisions about dividing their loyalty and time between job and family, companies may gain workers whose quality of life and experience developing close relationships with family members make them more productive' (p. 3).

The international team consists of 19 researchers (15 women and four men) and they have worked on a set of projects funded by the Ford Foundation in the 1990s. Their backgrounds are in a wide range of areas, namely anthropology, business, economics, education, law, psychology, social work and sociology, and most of them have experiences both in business and academia. The team tackles the problems at three levels:

- analysis of female and male employment trends;
- analysis of government programs and policies addressing work-family and gender issues; and
- case studies of particular organisations in how they deal with gender equity.

Each of these levels is discussed in the context of four different countries, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Sweden (or Scandinavian countries). Although the comparative aspects of the study are predominantly left to the reader, I found very useful the richness of observations and information for each case as well as the introduction and conclusion to the volume and the introductions to the various chapters. The individual sections of the book are competently written and they present a mixture of original empirical research, examination of statistical trends and discussion of theoretical concepts. The fact that there is no common methodology applied across the case studies and countries does not diminish the value of what the authors have to say. The reader will be in a position to discover on the one hand some important differences between the countries. Examples of this are: women's participation in paid employment, childcare arrangements, and statistics on paid and unpaid work for men and women. On the other, there are some striking similarities: e.g. women's access to well-paid jobs, men's involvement in childcare, and predominant business culture often expressed in 'invisible' policies.

Have you ever wondered why men have family pictures on their desks while working women generally don't? Have you witnessed successful women leaving large organisations to set up their own businesses instead of climbing the hierarchy ladder? Why is women's employment still more steadily affected by parenthood and why do men tend to work longer hours even when they have small children? The publication is providing some insight into the answers to these questions as well as a discussion of a wide array of problems, such as job burnout, job-to-home and home-to-job spillovers, work rich and work poor families, the concept of flexibility at work and parental leave arrangements.

The international perspectives add to understanding the social construction of work-family linkages and the impact cultural factors have. For example, the long working hours ethos in the United Kingdom has been recently challenged by pressure from the European Union. Although the UK was the first within the EU to set up equal opportunity policies, they relate only to the employment of women and the country has delayed to recognise that men also have a role to play in family life. The slow progress in Australia is preconditioned by the lack of emphasis on gender equity as a business issue and the traditional patriarchal nature of most Australian companies (even the selected case study for organisational change is that of a subsidiary of an American company). Recent changes have been triggered by the efforts of the trade unions. The United States have long had a history of encouraging working parents to rely on their own resources for balancing between family and work and the government has been reluctant to provide resources such as subsidised childcare. Although some American companies interested in keeping their best employees have started to offer benefits to working parents, the usage of such programs has been limited due to the prospect of workers being considered disloyal.

The main message the book sends is that although there is a long way to go before gender equity is achieved, there are reasons for optimism. There is a greater number of women participating in the workforce; equal opportunity laws have been introduced; gender equity programs and policies are being developed and established; corporate and institutional culture has started to change; men have increased their activity in the family. However, while men have slightly increased their involvement with house work, women have dramatically increased their

contribution to paid employment. The book presents a thorough insight on how the four countries (regions) have coped with these changes.

Not surprisingly, most of the positive examples come from Sweden leaving a lot of room for progress in the other parts of the world. The Swedish Government has been actively involved with the raising of children as a top priority since the 1960s. Most recently, companies have also started to change their attitudes towards men's involvement in looking after children and, in particular, towards men taking parental leave. Passive opposition is no longer the predominant behaviour and companies have started to discover advantages from fathers' leave taking. For example, according to Haas and Hwang, (p. 150) after returning from such leave men tend to have increased work-related competence, including enhanced abilities to balance multiple tasks, deal with the unknown and unexpected, tolerate interruptions, develop social relations, handle stress and learn something new.

As pointed out by the majority of the authors, gender equity has not been the main driver behind workplace policies and programs adopted by governments and organisations. In most cases they have reflected behavioural shifts which have already happened within society and were aimed at providing benefits. The section on government policies gives a historical overview, then discusses the current regulatory climate and points in future directions. It is interesting for the reader to get familiar with the hot issues in the four countries as they are significantly different and reflect the progress made on the path from a 'profit ethic' to a 'caring ethos' (to use Bowen's vocabulary).

Something that this publication does not do is challenge the notion of paid work and the existing economic system of national accounts which does not take into consideration labour outside the formal employment sector. There are no references whatsoever to the large body of literature in this field, a lot of it coming from feminist writers. It is not clear whether the decision not to challenge the existing economic culture is a result from the authors' acceptance of it; however, it is surprising that no alternative views are discussed. In this sense the publication can be described as a study which does not push the boundaries beyond the traditional understanding of contribution to family and work.

The audience targeted by the book covers scholars and researchers as well as people in the field of management. It will also be of interest to policy makers and even working parents. Although there are no easy recipes provided, there are a number of lessons learned from this study. Firstly, government policy is necessary but not sufficient in order for the long transformation process towards gender equity to take place. Secondly, business culture is changing very slowly. Thirdly, the link between work and family is difficult and society should be committed to the future and well-being of the children. Fourthly, in most advanced industrialised societies the roles of men and women have become more similar. The authors' fresh perspective on all these important issues is a useful contribution to the field of gender studies.

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