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## Working in the Service Society: A Tale from Different Worlds

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(presumably more of a factor for women than for men, although this is unstated).

The following three chapters concern occupations, workplace settings, and health. A. E. Dembe discusses occupational injuries and their effects on families. Occupational injuries, *per se*, are associated in the United States with a poorly functioning workers' compensation system and widespread perceptions that injured employees are slackers. Families with working members who suffer occupational injuries often experience financial hardship together with heightened demands for care-giving, a recipe for strained relationships and, in many cases, divorce. The next chapter, by B. C. Amick III and C. Mustard, takes a social epidemiological perspective on occupations and health, and highlights in particular the pivotal role of class status as a determinant of health, independent of risky behaviors: the working class hero is often unwell and sometimes not even alive. In the section's last chapter, T. S. Kristensen, L. Smith-Hansen, and N. Jansen use some existing and some new data to link job demands to a host of conditions, including ill health and work-family conflict. The associations they find are among the strongest reported in the book. Among workers in high-stress occupations are food industry employees, office clerks, drivers, cleaners, and shop assistants.

The final substantive section focuses on low-income families. M. Perry-Jenkins reports results from a study of low-income couples with new children. Strikingly, the author cannot provide straightforward figures for working time or child care arrangements; in this working-class world, both are too unstable for meaningful estimation. I frankly cannot fathom how someone who is given less than 24 hours' notice of a shift change can successfully hold on to a high-quality child care arrangement, but these families often face such challenges. J. R. Henly and S. Lambert, who link occupational and employee data, also find extreme instability in job-child care linkages. The level of supervisors' supportiveness, they find, crucially affects outcomes for these low-income families. The following chapter (L. M. Burton, L. Lein, and A. Kolak) concerns mothers in the U.S. welfare-to-work program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. These women constantly juggle the health and financial needs of their children. As a result, 68% of those in the study who were working full-time ultimately lost their jobs because they put their children's health needs first—and neglected their own health needs in the process. The last substantive chapter, by J. Heymann, S. Simmons, and A. Earle, takes a global perspective on these issues. From this broader view, we see

that urbanization is at least partially responsible for the loss of extended family supports, that some of the most adversely affected children are older siblings (some as young as 12), who frequently skip school so that parents can be employed, and that poor labor market conditions and public supports often leave adults and particularly children suffering from diseases that could be cheaply and easily prevented.

In the book's final chapter, the editors provide a brief summary and a call for further, and explicitly interdisciplinary, research.

When I began researching work and family issues in 1995, I understood that the world had changed such that many high-level jobs left little time for family, most low-level jobs provided insufficient supports for families, and families themselves were becoming increasingly diverse. Research and policy improvements were clearly needed. This book is a valuable contribution to that on-going project.

However, the imbalance in our knowledge—and particularly the high quality of studies concerning maternal employment and child well-being—is not accidental. Behind it and, indeed, behind the field of work and family, lies a strong and persistent backlash against women's employment, rooted in a patriarchal belief that women should rear children, men should be breadwinners, and single mothers should be punished in any way possible for arriving at such an unseemly state.

Discovering this dynamic ultimately drove me to become an avowed feminist. However, the feminists who have tackled these work and family issues most directly and successfully, such as Rosalind Barnett, Nancy Folbre, Kathleen Gerson, and Arlie Hochschild, still find the field mired inside a sexist force-field. The need to move beyond those terms of the debate is clear, and this book helps to point the way by focusing on health.

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*Working in the Service Society: A Tale from Different Worlds.* Edited by Gerhard Bosch and Steffen Lehndorff. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 357 pp. ISBN 0-415-28322-1, \$149 (hardcover).

This book, presenting findings based on the EU-funded research project "New Forms of Work in the Service Economy" (NESY), is a very welcome addition to comparative studies of work and orga-

nization. It explores the development and expansion of the service sector and of specific service industries in Western Europe, and offers ample evidence that this process, called “tertiarization,” maybe a convergent development of industrialized societies, but its texture varies considerably across both countries and industries. Thus, the book not only contributes to the analysis of service work, but also draws some more far-reaching conclusions about convergent processes of reorganization, national institutional path-dependencies, and the tensions between those two dynamics. Hence, it presents a workable application of the “societal effects” approach to comparative studies of new and growing industries.

However, the book does not restrict itself to the academic debates. Specifically, the authors take issue with the neoliberal notion, shared by some economists, the business press, and European policy-makers, that a desirable increase in service sector employment is contingent upon labor and product market deregulation and a polarization of wages emulative of the U.S. “model.” Rather, the authors convert their European institutionalist outlook into a decidedly social-democratic political agenda. For the European service sectors to take the high road of quality production, service professionalism, and sustainable working conditions, a “strong institutional environment” (Jill Rubery, p. 284) is essential. However, the contributors acknowledge that creating such an environment may require some institutional innovation and learning, since services often are found at the margins of established institutional configurations and present new challenges.

The book is in three parts. The first part addresses the macro patterns of service employment in ten European countries, which turn out to have fairly varied profiles. The figures are based on Eurostat, OECD, and the European Labor Forces Sample Survey and cover years up to approximately the century’s end. In order to allow for differences in working times as well as service sector structure, Gerhard Bosch and Alexandra Wagner measure the structure of countries’ service sectors and functions not just by their respective share in employment but also by the volume of work done in the respective sectors. The results are not so different from the well-known typologies of welfare states and varieties of capitalism: the highest levels of tertiarization are reached by both Scandinavian and English-speaking countries, and social and health services and business services are among the fastest-growing segments of the service sector. The Scandinavian countries take the lead in the social services. Luxemburg, Great Britain, and Ireland have the highest volume of business-related

services, followed by some Continental European countries and, again, the Scandinavians. All of these nations also have high proportions of service functions in the secondary sector—indicators of knowledge-intensive manufacturing sectors. In Continental European countries, both the share of the economy represented by services and the service share of employment are more modest, especially for women. Here, social services are limited and often provided through unpaid work in the home. Service sectors and service work volumes are especially small in Southern European countries, with the exception of consumer-oriented services in tourism.

The book’s second part presents comparative analyses of five service industries with varied skill levels: home care for the elderly, nursing, software engineering, retail, and banking. Patterns of reorganization are found to be fairly similar across these industries. The authors find both cost-cutting and some professionalization in social and health services (Dominique Anxo and Colette Fagan; Christophe Baret), customer-oriented and fairly autonomous work in mostly normal employment relationships (permanent, regulated full-time jobs) in the software industry (Janneke Plantenga and Chantal Remery), Taylorization and cost-cutting in the retail sector, which still puts increased demands on workers’ problem-solving and customer relations skills (Florence Jany-Catrice and Steffen Lehdorff), and “lean banking” (Thomas Haipeter and Martine Pernod-Lemattre). Variation across countries is found specifically in hours of work and in some institutional effects of the vocational training system or the regulation of services. The distribution of long- and short-hours part-time work and the length of the full-time work week are found to be contingent on incentives and disincentives associated with welfare-state and tax policies, childcare provision, and gender relations, in ways that are generally consistent with the predictions of existing socioeconomic models. The flexibility demands of the respective service industries tend to fit themselves into these patterns. However, the industry analyses are restricted to the broad picture and do not systematically address the variety of organizational structures and management strategies. For example, even in software engineering, with its notorious long-hours culture, the percentage of software engineers working more than 48 hours per week is considerably lower in Finland and Sweden (5–6%) than in Germany (12%), France (16%), and the United Kingdom (22%). But how do Scandinavian software companies do it? The intrigued reader will want to know how their management and competitive strategies are

actually shaped by their institutional and cultural environment. A closer, organization-level examination would have added further strength to the argument in favor of strong institutions.

Also limiting the possible conclusions on the quality of service work is the book's focus on work hours and employment levels. Those subjects certainly are relevant to service work quality, but wages, skill levels, and levels of autonomy are also key indicators of a "high road" in service work, and they are somewhat neglected by the authors. Quite possibly, the book's research focus mirrors some of the restrictions service workers face, since work hours appear to be more malleable than pay systems and the valuation of women's work. In his excellent chapter on nursing, Christophe Baret points out that working part-time is an individualized strategy of nurses coping with heavy workloads, limited pay, and lack of autonomy. Especially in the feminized social services, which traditionally relied on women's altruism and limited options and aspirations, the professionalization that the authors observe does not necessarily bring improved pay and autonomy. The tensions between women's heightened expectations and problematic working conditions thus exacerbate an already high labor turnover, especially in countries with high employment participation of women.

The concluding chapters, which focus on the common and, to some extent, convergent processes in service work development, bring together an interesting combination of research paradigms. Jill Rubery argues for combining labor market segmentation theory with the "societal effects" perspective in order to address both inequality and institutional coherence. Going well beyond the scope of the book, she also argues that institutional and competitive influences are articulated primarily at the level of the organization, and underscores the importance of understanding how power and control take shape both within organizations and along value chains. This is based on the observation that service companies such as large retailers, media, and IT companies are playing an increasingly central role in the reconfiguration of value chains. Steffen Lehndorff and Dorothea Voss-Dahm summarize the changes that have taken

place in the workplace. Flexibility, they write, is articulated in new configurations that go beyond the dichotomies of numerical/functional and internal/external. It is distributed and shifted between companies and passed through value chains in outsourcing and service relationships. As a result, even in the lower-skilled services such as retail, numerically flexible workers still are required to mobilize their problem-solving and customer relations skills. Jon Erik Dølvik and Jeremy Waddington provide an overview of unions' situation in the reorganized services, with an emphasis on increasing challenges. Constituencies are becoming polarized between the high-skilled and professional groups who occasionally form their own, new unions, and the lower-skilled groups in private-sector services whose affinity to union representation is low. While European unions overall can no longer be said to be dominated by male manufacturing workers, they find themselves torn between centralization and decentralization, and recent mergers may have increased bureaucratization rather than effectiveness. In the concluding chapter, Jean Gadrey, invoking the familiar sociological notion of the social embeddedness of markets, recapitulates the vision of a European service "high road": if markets generally depend on institutionalized rules and regulations, service and quality markets do so all the more, but strong regulation in turn should enable an equitable sharing of gains in the quality of service work, life, and democratic participation for customers and workers.

In sum, *Working in the Service Society* provides a valuable overview of the European service sector, brings together a considerable range of perspectives, and sets an impressive benchmark for comparative studies of work and organizations in terms of depth, focus, and theoretical outlook. However, it leaves plenty of work still to be done—which for researchers and students in the field is a good thing.

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