Industrial & Labor Relations Review

Volume 62, *Issue* 3 | 2009 | *Article* 11

Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa

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both forms of non-union voice are welcomed and are associated with positive outcomes for workers. This pattern of findings represents a notable break with the classic literature on these institutions, particularly in Britain, which tended to emphasize their marginality—in particular, their proneness to deal with issues that were incidental, not central, to the employment relationship, and their typically early demise.

Much of the treatment of these institutions in the book is concerned with their relationship with union voice, and contributors assess what can be thought of as competing substitution and complementarity theses. The evidence presented is variable across the six countries but provides support for both viewpoints, suggesting that there is no single or necessary relationship between union and non-union voice. Evidence for substitution is strongest in Britain and the United States, and takes two forms: first, demand for union voice is reduced where there are institutions of direct worker participation; and second, there is some evidence of these institutions "out-performing" union voice, at least in terms of worker estimates of management responsiveness to their concerns. Evidence for complementarity is found more broadly, and again takes two forms. On the one hand, both direct and indirect non-union voice are associated with a union presence; in fact all three institutions are commonly found operating alongside one another in a single workplace. On the other hand, there is evidence of a reinforcing effect, with the outcomes for workers and workers' own subjective assessments being most positive when dual systems of worker participation exist. This is particularly so where union and non-union indirect voice sit together.

The primary conclusion the contributors draw from this set of findings is that there is room in the workplace for a diversity of voice institutions. The book calls for the revitalization of unions, identifying a need for greater investment in organizing but also in the development of new partnerships with employers. But its authors want union renewal to lend support to and work together with systems of direct participation and non-union representative forums. This mix of diverse but complementary institutions is seen to be developing across much of the Anglophone world, with the glaring exception of the United States. Here the distinctive form of U.S. labor law, referred to above, makes it difficult to establish non-union representation. The book ends with a statement that governments must "guarantee the right to union representation" but also "give workers and managers the right to establish non-union forms of representative voice, where they seek that mode of voice regime." "In both areas," the editors note, "the United States has much to learn from the experiences of the other major English-speaking countries" (p. 220).

The book makes a very strong case for the diversity of voice regimes, and the argument mounted here must be a reference point for all future discussion of worker representation. Nevertheless, I have two reservations about the argument, one minor and the other of greater substance. The minor reservation has to do with the language of consumer choice that is used to frame the discussion and endow all "voice-products" with equivalence. Workers certainly "chose" trade union voice historically in that they created the labor movement with their political and intellectual allies. What they did not actively choose, however, was systems of workplace participation, which were created by their employers. The purpose of these institutions has variously been to pacify workers, integrate them into the firm, and manipulate their attitudes and behavior. Workers have been the objects, not the subjects, of these institutions. Non-union institutions have a distinct origin and status, separate from that of unions, and the notion of a market for voice disguises this fact.

The major reservation concerns the standard that is used to assess different institutions, the subjective preferences of workers expressed through a survey. Of course, these preferences must form part of any assessment of workplace governance, whether one regards workers as consumers or as citizens. But they are not the only measure, and perhaps they should not be the sole standard against which institutions are judged. From a radical frame of reference one would argue that institutions of worker voice should be assessed on the degree to which they challenge the existing settlement at work and are redistributive both in channeling income to workers and in endowing them with power. By this standard, trade unionism historically has been a more potent force than the non-union alternative and for this reason must occupy the primary position in any project to enhance voice at work.

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Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa. Edited by Jon Kraus. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. x, 296 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-60061, $90.95 (cloth).

The existence of strong trade unions has histori-

cally been central to the creation of a democratic order. Labor in Africa, as was the case in Europe and North America, has been at the forefront of the struggle to create and maintain democratic institutions and democratic rule. Vibrant militant independent trade unions, it can be argued, are the most important bulwark against authoritarianism. This collection of essays edited by Jon Kraus is an important demonstration of the role unionized workers played in post-colonial Africa in forcing out authoritarian rulers during the democratic wave of the 1990s.

Since the heyday of African labor studies in the 1970s, very few scholars have closely studied the crucial role played by trade unions in contemporary Africa. (One notable exception: *Labor Regimes and Liberalization* [2001], edited by Bjorn Beckman and Lloyd Sachikonye.) They have preferred to research ethnic groups, women's groups, students, market women, the informal economy, or the exotic, including the perennial Africanist favorite, witchcraft. When they have scrutinized the democratization process they have tended to favor statistical studies focusing on the procedural elements of democracy—election outcomes, levels of political liberty, and whether voting has been "free and fair."

At the empirical heart of Kraus's valuable collection are seven original country case studies—on Senegal, Niger, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia—and an excellent overview of the democratization process in Africa. As Kraus correctly concludes,

> The real significance of trade unions for democratic life in Africa is that they are virtually the only group representing the popular classes that has continuing organizational influence at the national level and poses challenging questions about rights of mass access to public resources. (p. 256)

In four of the seven countries examined (Niger, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), political liberalization was directly prompted by union strikes and mobilization; in the other three (Ghana, Senegal, and Namibia), it was induced when the unions' struggles created a favorable political space. Indeed the ongoing militancy by South Africa's largest trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), contradicts the argument from conventional wisdom on democratization that high levels of trade union militancy are likely to throw the democratization process off-track.

An important finding drawn from the case studies is that the struggle for democracy in the 1990s was a response not to external events, such as the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, but to workers' experience of falling wages and living standards as a result of the imposition of neoliberal economic reforms:

> The imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in many of these countries forced states to adopt macro and micro economic policies that led to public and private sector layoffs, rising unemployment, disruptions in collective bargaining, rising food prices, and sharply falling or stagnant wages. (p. 268)

These conditions provoked major populist protests and strikes in all of the countries examined in the book except Namibia.

At the core of the book is the argument that the extent of labor's contribution to the struggle for democracy on the national stage is determined not simply by the number of trade unions, but also by the unions' *quality*. Quality, for Kraus, is measured by the degree of autonomy, as "the greater a union's autonomy, the more likely the unions will mount oppositional protests" (p. 24). Significantly, he goes on to argue that it is greater internal democracy that is crucial as to whether a union remains autonomous, "as such unions will generate pressure on leaders" (p. 24).

However, it is not simply the degree of union autonomy that determines the role of trade unions in the democratization process. Drawing on the volume's case studies, Kraus is able to demonstrate that the characteristics of the existing regime and antecedent regimes (in particular, the extent of their democratic experience) also influence the outcome. He shows how these regimes lead to three major patterns of democratic transition. First is the category "authoritarian collapse—new regime," in which an authoritarian order collapses in the face of sustained strikes and protests. This is illustrated in the book by Niger. Second is the pattern "regime weakening—negotiated transition." Here there is a long, sustained resistance in strikes against the old order, which gradually opens itself to the opposition, culminating in a negotiated pact. This is illustrated by South Africa, Zambia, and, to a lesser extent, Namibia. Third are the cases Kraus calls "resistance—regime-controlled transition," in which resistance is less widespread and the regime is able to retain control over the security forces and write the rules of the transition. This is illustrated by countries such as Senegal, Ghana, and, possibly, Zimbabwe (pp. 258–68).

Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy fills a major gap in the literature on trade unionism in Africa. It also develops an original and compelling argument on why unions have emerged as key actors in the struggle for democracy in Africa. However, it does leave the reader unclear as to how unions could advance their political influence while simultaneously protecting their autonomy. Does South Africa's COSATU represent a case

in which unions have successfully been able to maintain their autonomy and influence while being closely allied to national politics? Kraus has performed a major service to scholars and activists alike in stimulating an informed debate on some of the key issues facing Africa today.

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Economic and Social Security and Substandard Working Conditions

Motherhood, the Elephant in the Laboratory: Women Scientists Speak Out. Edited by Emily Monosson. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press (an imprint of Cornell University Press), 2008. 232 pp. ISBN 978-0-8014-4664-1, $25.00 (cloth).

Emily Monosson has edited a very interesting book. She has collected essays written by 34 female scientists on how they managed to combine being a scientist with being a mother. The women, who received their degrees between the 1970s and 2000s, are a heterogeneous assortment: single, married, divorced; working full-time, working part-time, self-employed; academics, government researchers, industrial scientists, teachers, consultants, writers. Besides contributing one regular chapter, Monosson wrote the book's introduction and conclusion, as well as a short introduction to each of the four sections.

It is regrettable that the subject of this book has continued to be relevant despite many decades of struggle by scientists to find a balance between work and family. The problems remain unsolved.

It is illuminating to compare the essays by the older women with those by women who have only recently received their degrees. The older women show the fatigue that results from years of compromise. For example, Deborah Ross (Ph.D. from Rutgers, 1974; currently a Professor at Purdue University) writes,

> If I sound bitter, it's because I am. I think I have given up a great deal over the years but have not received adequate recognition for it. I enjoy teaching, and my students think I am good at it, but this is not sufficient to receive promotions or above-average salary increments at my institution. My research isn't of sufficient quantity to receive adequate recognition from my peers in the scientific community. But I'm not so sure I would have done things differently.... I still wish, however, that I hadn't had to choose between my daughter and my career during my years before tenure. (pp. 39–40)

Similarly, Suzanne Epstein (Ph.D. from MIT, 1979; currently an Immunologist at the FDA Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research) writes,

> It's true that I was lucky to have humane bosses, but I made an effort to choose them. Women I knew who were ambitious above all else might not have selected those jobs. I also had to accept the consequences of my choices, such as not traveling a lot or having a large lab. My chosen career path in a non-academic setting was also looked down on by some. A few years ago my graduate school sent a letter inviting alumni to give talks on career options, and I volunteered. I never received a reply. (p. 60)

The women who have recently received their degrees seem, at first blush, to be somewhat more optimistic about their prospects for achieving a good work/family balance. But this optimism is sadly tempered by a recognition of difficulties that could lie ahead, difficulties that do not seem very different in kind from those endured by these women's older peers. Kimberley D'Anna (fourth-year Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison) writes,

> I don't know how long I will stay in science. I can only hope that as more women with children enter the academic sciences, science will become more accommodating to our needs as mothers, which ultimately will increase the quality of the work. I also hope to give the message to women in science who have children or are thinking about having children that it can be done, and done well. This was something I was unaware of when I entered the sciences. I assumed most women in science chose not to have children and that female scientists with families were rare. I now know differently and am so happy to meet other mothers in science because we need to know that even if we feel we are alone, we're not. (p. 201)

The essays are provocative and refreshingly informal. I do have a few reservations, however. First are two superficial ones, concerning the book's title and cover illustration. Speaking as a mother who worked during my childbearing years (two children, born 1972 and 1975), I find the "elephant in the room" metaphor painfully evocative of my own shape in the labs where I worked during my pregnancies. As for the photograph on the dust jacket, showing a woman in a laboratory holding a flask filled with green liquid, we see a rubber ducky, a teething ring, and a milk-filled baby's bottle *in her lab coat pocket.* The point of the juxtaposition is obvious, but the image itself is jarringly implausible. Labs are exceedingly strict these days about safety and sterility, and no lab safety officer would permit such a breach.

My substantive criticism concerns the contributor selection and a lack of analytical depth. The