Review of the Book *Unemployment Insurance: The Second Half-Century*

Ronald G. Ehrenberg
*Cornell University, rge2@cornell.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles)

🔗 Part of the [Labor Economics Commons](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles), and the [Labor Relations Commons](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles)

Thank you for downloading an article from DigitalCommons@ILR.

Support this valuable resource today!
Review of the Book *Unemployment Insurance: The Second Half-Century*

**Abstract**

[Excerpt] This extraordinary volume is one that all people interested in the unemployment insurance (UI) system will want to read. Although research on a wide variety of aspects of the UI system has been published in many articles and monographs in recent years, this volume represents an attempt to summarize what is known about many aspects of the subject in one place, to provide some new findings, and to speculate about future research and policy directions. The thirteen included papers, written by a mix of scholars and practitioners, are revisions of a set of papers that were originally presented at a 1986 conference.

**Keywords**

unemployment compensation, unemployment insurance, poverty, labor supply, financing, eligibility

**Disciplines**

Labor Economics | Labor Relations

**Comments**

**Suggested Citation**


**Required Publisher Statement**

© Cornell University. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

This article is available at DigitalCommons@ILR: [http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles/863](http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles/863)
subjects over which disputes arise. The relatively short cases that follow present the pertinent facts, the parties' positions, and Zack's ruling.

The cases are followed by numerous questions and answers illustrating fact variations that advocates and arbitrators should anticipate, and substantive issues that Zack wishes to highlight. This dialogue is the heart of the volume. The discussion is fact-specific and directly related to the preceding case. The author stresses that arbitration cases are won or lost on the evidence presented at the hearing. He identifies the key facts in the case, and discusses how the results would change with different facts. He also explains how different evidence and arguments could have strengthened the parties' positions. This explanation should help advocates to improve the cases for which they are currently preparing, and it also affords them an opportunity to anticipate both the opponent's strategy and the arbitrator's concerns. Arbitrators can apply the analysis to their own cases. The questions and answers also probe how the parties could have prevented the dispute.

This volume is especially good in reviewing particular kinds of evidence on which arbitrators rely. Zack identifies and discusses corroborative evidence that would be important in each case; witness credibility; evidentiary issues; and the need to produce specific evidence rather than relying on unsupported generalities.

This practical information can, of course, be applied when the parties are investigating and processing grievances. The "window" into the arbitrator's thinking gives fresh, detailed answers to the parties' perpetual question in discussing settlement options: "How will an arbitrator rule in this case?" That information will promote settlements, in addition to improving arbitration advocacy.

The author also discusses the arbitrator's role in awarding remedies, particularly those not specifically sought by the parties. He reviews the arbitrator's role in the hearing process, stressing that the arbitrator is bound by the evidence in the record. The final chapter reviews the grievance process from the beginning to arbitration. It discusses arbitrability, timeliness and definition of a grievance, rules of evidence, and the arbitrator's decision.

Zack directs particular attention toward the effect grievance arbitration has in several "new areas and fields" that he correctly perceives as needing further examination: management-administered arbitration for employment at-will terminations; newly unionized sectors; new issues and problems within traditional labor management relationships, such as alcohol and drug abuse and sexual harassment; and the "constant influx of new union and management personnel."

The reader will discover, however, that this volume is extremely useful for arbitration disputes in all fields, not just the "new" ones. It is a first-class resource that should be a part of every advocate's and arbitrator's library.

Lamont E. Staltworth
Member, National Academy of Arbitrators
Associate Professor
Institute of Human Resources and Industrial Relations
Loyola University

Economic and Social Security and Substandard Working Conditions


This extraordinary volume is one that all people interested in the unemployment insurance (UI) system will want to read. Although research on a wide variety of aspects of the UI system has been published in many articles and monographs in recent years, this volume represents an attempt to summarize what is known about many aspects of the subject in one place, to provide some new findings, and to speculate about future research and policy directions. The thirteen included papers, written by a mix of scholars and practitioners, are
revisions of a set of papers that were originally presented at a 1986 conference.

Eight papers in the volume discuss issues that have been of long-time concern to UI policymakers: the extent to which UI helps to stabilize income cyclically and reduce poverty (Wayne Vroman; Sheldon Danzinger and Peter Gottschalk), UI effects on labor supply (Gary Burtless), UI financing and layoffs (Robert Topel), incentives for noncompliance with eligibility criteria (Paul Burgess and Jerry Kingston), federal-state relations (Murray Rubin), and lessons from European experiences (Beatrice Reubens). Three papers look at "new" directions for UI: its relationship with retraining programs (the editors), short-time compensation plans (Martin Morand), and the use of controlled experiments for policy purposes (Robert Spiegelman and Stephen Woodbury). Two papers on the history of the UI program in Wisconsin (Raymond Munts and Clifford Miller) stress how the lessons of the past are relevant for contemporary policy debate. The book is "tied together" by a fine introduction by the editors that both summarizes all the other papers and presents an extensive research agenda for scholars and policymakers interested in UI.

This book is not only for specialists. The papers by scholars are written, for the most part, in a nontechnical fashion, and even those that report new econometric findings (such as Danziger and Gottschalk's paper) are accessible to a wide range of readers.

Ronald G. Ehrenberg
Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics Cornell University


This volume contains a multidisciplinary collection of essays with the purposes of (1) advancing the state of knowledge regarding gender-based wage differentials (with particular emphasis on the wage effects of occupational segregation) and (2) analyzing the wisdom of instituting "comparable worth"-based pay policies. The editors succeed in the former purpose, but not in the latter.

Papers analyzing rare firm-level data (Gerhart and Milkovich), large, nationally representative samples of individuals (Sorenson), and samples in which occupations are the unit of analysis (Filler) provide convincing evidence that even after controlling for differences in job characteristics, human capital, and preferences, a wage gap exists between men and women. In fact, the paper by Filler provides, to my mind, the most convincing evidence ever presented that a wage gap exists and is substantial. In a regression of the mean wage in 430 occupations on 225 control variables and the fraction female, Filler still finds a substantial wage shortfall for predominantly female occupations.

On the other hand, the papers in this collection that attempt to address the "side effects" of implementing comparable worth provide little information on the likely consequences of its impact on the labor market in the United States. Evidence drawn from countries with labor market institutions different from ours (Gregory et al.) and from the limited experience in the public sector in the United States (Orazem and Mattila; Evans and Nelson) unfortunately shed little light on the likely effects of instituting comparable worth in the U.S. private sector. Particularly neglected in the analyses is the potential for adverse employment effects among women, which could conceivably more than erase any benefit provided by reduced wage differentials. Significantly more research on the possible efficiency losses that comparable worth may induce is necessary before an informed evaluation of its relative merits can be made.

Lecturer Princeton University

Phillip B. Levine


In this passionate book, Susan Moller Okin brings together three strands of contemporary thought: the development of theories of justice; the recognition that families are in trouble; and feminist analyses of gender (that is, the social construction of sexual identity). Her primary aim is to show that the family as