**NOTEWORTHY BOOKS IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOR ECONOMICS, 2013**

The Industrial Relations Section is pleased to announce that this year’s winner of the William G Bowen Award is *The great escape: health, wealth, and the origins of inequality* by Angus Deaton. The winner of the Richard A. Lester Award is *No more invisible man: race and gender in men’s work* by Adia Harvey Wingfield.


Using a wide range of sources, Berkowitz and DeWitt present the history of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. They examine its creation, the effect of the public debates over the definition of “disabled,” early attempts at reform, and the effect of the 1996 welfare reform on the program. With the support of the Nixon administration, which chose cash grants over the social services created by the Democrats, SSI consolidated existing aid to the elderly, blind, and totally disabled at the federal rather than the state and local levels, though administrative variations at the state level complicated its implementation. Political compromises and incremental changes led to a lack of clear direction for SSI, the inclusion of coverage for controversial beneficiaries (noncitizens, substance abusers, and children), and a host of exceptions from the calculation of income. The authors conclude that, as frequently happens with social policy, “the program’s history illustrated how yesterday’s solutions become today’s problems.” (p. 242)


Cooney, Biddulph, and Zhu provide a more nuanced picture of labor standards in China than has previously been depicted. They examine the structure of Chinese labor laws and regulations, the conditions they address, how they affect different classes of workers, and whether they are enforced through institutions or extra-legal means. Reflecting the influence of the International Labour Organization, Chinese laws regarding wages and working time are not unlike those of other countries, though with local adaptations. While the new labor standards embody China’s concern for the relationship between law and social stability, the government continues to use enforcement methods from both the Republican and Maoist eras, such as campaigns to address social problems, in addition to the means stipulated by the regulations, an approach which the authors see as unsustainable in the long run.


Using his expertise in economic development and a broad historical lens, Deaton explains the economic progress experienced by industrialized countries that raised their
material standards of living and provided health advances for their citizens. He does
not overlook the societal inequities that came along with increased GDP. He notes that
there has been a significant rise in income inequality in the United States since 1970, at
the same time that global poverty has been reduced. He offers strategies for foreign aid,
trade restrictions, and migration to serve as paths for developing countries to escape
poverty successfully. With the exception of targeted health goals or local projects of
“decent governments, where aid is a relatively small share of the economy,” Deaton
explains why external aid, whether from national or international governmental agen-
cies or from non-governmental organizations, has done more harm than good. (p. 318)
Quoting Peter Bauer (Dissent on Development, 1971), Deaton emphasizes that if
conditions are not present for development, no amount of external aid will be effective,
and when they are, aid is not required.

Executive remuneration and employee performance-related pay: a transatlantic perspec-

The editors state that there is little empirical evidence underlying the common as-
sumptions that asymmetrical compensation schemes encourage excess risk-taking and
that labor contracts limit pay for performance. The contributors to this volume, using
data from 1500 American firms and 900 companies in the European Union, provide
some of the necessary comparisons, both cross-national and cross-industry, to fill this
gap. The researchers recommend that incentive pay should be constructive rather than
punitive and that reforms should be implemented by improving corporate governance.
For workers’ compensation, collective bargaining tailored to the specific national char-
acter is the better vehicle for changing pay practices.

Gender and the European labour market. Edited by Francesca Bettio, Janneke Plantenga,
$140.00. ISBN: 978-0-415-66433-2

Concern over continuing European labor gender inequality—issues such as the wage
gap and the gendered division of paid and unpaid work—led to the publication of
reports by the European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE) and its
predecessor, the EU Expert Group on Gender Equality (EGGE). The chapters in this
volume draw on these country reports, comparing the indices used to measure gender
equality, analyzing employment trends, particularly in paid and unpaid care work, and
reviewing policy developments. The editors note the irony of the narrowing of “gender
gaps in employment, pay and activity” that resulted from the recent recession. “As
equality is more often measured by absence of gender gaps rather than by attainment
of a given standard, the current times of crisis may seem to ‘improve’ equality even if
everybody is worse off.” (p. 9)

Growing income inequalities: economic analyses. Edited by Joël Hellier and Nathalie Chus-

Contributors to this volume analyze major developments in income inequality over the
past thirty years by reviewing both the theoretical and empirical literature. They assess
the impact of globalization and technological advances in explaining these changes,
analyze the impact of labor market institutions (collective bargaining, wage rates,
etc.) on inequality, and examine the role of education and the long term dynamics
of inequality. In looking at developing countries, Chusseau and Hellier (Ch. 2) note
that both the theoretical and empirical literatures offer contradictory explanations for
changes depending on the mechanisms involved in globalization. They point to both
an increase in inequality and variations indicating more egalitarian growth. The stud-
ies Kalugina discusses in Chapter 3 found that there is less in-work poverty in families
with dual earners, more education, and fewer children. Minimum wages alone provide only limited protection, but are more effective when combined with “well-conceived in-work benefit schemes.” (p. 96)


The authors examine the socioeconomic impact of the increase in immigration to the United States (from 5% to 13% since 1970), including the effect of national origin composition of recent immigrants on the poverty rate; effects on wage distribution for both native and immigrant workers and between more recent and earlier, low-skilled immigrants; and the labor market effect of residential segregation of foreign born in the U.S. In Chapter 5, for example, Ellis, Wright, and Townley, looking at the geography of immigrant poverty, propose a “metropolitan context effect,” which “essentially summarizes the net impact of the local economy on poverty among immigrants and natives.” (p. 12) They show that emerging destinations, which provide better opportunities, have lower poverty rates for immigrants than the metropolitan areas where immigrants have traditionally settled. While traditional immigrant destinations offer better community support, they also have more competitive job markets than emerging gateways, some of which—other than rural and small metropolitan areas—had lower rates of immigrant poverty.


By analyzing occupational licensing, Kleiner attempts to show how labor markets work within government regulation. Each of his chapters focuses on a different occupation (interior designers, mortgage brokers, preschool teachers, electricians and plumbers, and dentists and dental hygienists), describing the evolution and structure of each, the reason licensing and government regulation was sought, and how regulation of the occupation has changed over time. Kleiner chose occupations that are at different stages of regulation and shows that “as an occupation increases its coverage and the time it has been regulated, it enhances its ability to raise wages and reduce employment growth.” (p. 210) Kleiner’s explanation for this is the customary control of licensing boards by members of the occupation, which gives them the power to limit the supply of jobs available.


As the first anthropologist in residence for the NYC Sanitation Department, Robin Nagle used interviews with New York City sanitation workers and officials, archival files, and driving an actual trash route in her research. She stresses that sanitation workers are invisible to the public and even to the government bureaucracy that employs them, except on the occasions—such as the 1968 strike, which lasted for nine days and resulted in mountains of debris on the sidewalks and streets—when the stuff of their work becomes unavoidable. She notes the relatively small size of the department, which has somewhat over 9,000 employees serving the more than 8 million residents of the five boroughs. The dimensions of their workload are staggering. They dispose of over 11,000 tons of household trash and 2,000 tons of household recycling on a daily basis. They also sweep the streets—6,000 miles several times a week—and remove snow. Though neither the workers nor their bosses initially welcomed Nagle’s inquiries, over time they shared experiences that bring Nagle’s reporting to life and underscore her appreciation for the workers who make New York City livable.

The contributors to this volume examine various aspects of economic inequality in Israel, including employment and unemployment, wages, and occupational concentration, between the approximately 150,000 Arab citizens of Israel and Jewish Israelis. The book begins and ends with discussions of discrimination and segregation. Chapter 2 examines the current Israeli legal framework, which the authors feel fails to address nationality-based employment discrimination. They strongly recommend that the new Israeli Equal Employment Opportunity Commission be independent and adequately funded to deal with entrenched practices. Four chapters focus on women—the variation in women's representation in different occupations, the predominance of male-only household earners among Palestinian as opposed to Jewish households, the growing rate of Palestinian women participating in the labor force (in particular in the Israeli retail industry), and the place of social services as the "predominant point of entry into the labor market" for Arab women. (p. 179)


The findings in Working scared describe the experience of American workers at the turn of the 21st century. They are based on surveys conducted over fifteen years by the staff of the Rutgers University Heldrich Center's Work Trends project. The surveys were administered to approximately 25,000 employed and unemployed Americans. The criteria for the sample were broad in terms of geography, occupation, age, and experience, though a special sample of workers laid off during the Great Recession was also included. Van Horn describes the impact of globalization, offshoring, corporate mergers, and the rise of the technology-driven economy on the labor market. Almost half the survey respondents indicated a lack of confidence in public officials' and government institutions' ability to deal effectively with unemployment. Van Horn predicts that without strengthening the workforce and the educational institutions that prepare people to enter the workforce, the American economy will struggle to remain globally competitive.


Wingfield looked at the 25% of black men in America who are employed in professional or managerial jobs, providing a window into power and inequality issues in the workplace. She conducted in-depth interviews with forty-two men—African American lawyers, doctors, engineers, and bankers and a few white male professionals—allowing subjects to describe in detail their occupational experiences. Far from painting a stark and uniform picture of racism, discrimination, and stereotyping, Wingfield's black respondents revealed that they were able to establish easy relationships with white as well as black male colleagues. Wingfield hypothesizes that this limits cross-class solidarity within the black community and the ability to challenge racism in general. Black male professionals acknowledged the tokenism they still face. These men often developed a propensity to display indifference rather than anger in reaction to racialized experiences, a response with negative implications for their health. Wingfield's informants frequently gained an enhanced appreciation for the challenges faced by women in their professions, and the author suggests that "black men may be important supporters in attempts to challenge and end sexism." (p. 162)