

## A Cornucopia of Research, Discussion, and Debate

ROBERT P. ALTHAUSER

*Indiana University*

*Sourcebook of Labor Markets: Evolving Structures and Processes*, edited by Ivar Berg and Arne L. Kalleberg. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2001. 764 pp. \$135 (cloth).

*This comprehensive handbook provides an overview of the key developments in a variety of labor market contexts and in the analyses of these that have occurred during the two decades since the publication of the 1981 volume Sociological Perspectives on Labor Markets. A distinguished roster of authors (sociologists as well as economists) examines the interplay between social institutions and markets in producing important outcomes for producers of goods and services, for their organizations' owners, and for their customers. For example, the authors investigate how social institutions such as unions, business organizations, and the government interact with labor, product, political, and capital markets to produce a variety of labor market outcomes, widening income inequality, career paths, and changing employment relationships.*

**Keywords:** *labor markets; career paths; income inequality; changing workplace*

Issued 20 years after Berg's (1981) *Sociological Perspectives on Labor Markets*, the sheer heft of this sourcebook testifies to the evolution and present size of labor market studies among sociologists and economists, both represented here. The predecessor volume zoomed in on matching jobs to people, on firms, on occupations and labor markets, on employment, on unemployment, and on labor market discrimination. This volume ranges far more broadly, first placing markets within a broad macroeconomic, policy, and institutional context, then within the broad confines of employment relations. Seen as outcomes of the foregoing, the editors segue to various forms of stratification ranging from income inequality to changes in the size and

WORK AND OCCUPATIONS, Vol. 32 No. 1, February 2005 95-98

DOI: 10.1177/0730888404271978

© 2005 Sage Publications

tasks of management to social networks and, of course, to segregation, segmentation, and discrimination in the workplace. As would be expected of a companion to the earlier volume, the stress is on change and evolution since 1981.

This review follows closely the volume's four-part thematic structure. The range of content within parts is considerable. In the first and shortest of parts, "Evolving Markets and Institutional Structures," the labor markets are framed by historic and theoretical treatments of the U.S. labor movement, as in Daniel Cornfield and Bill Fletcher's treatment of the density of unions in various sectors, the analysis of the professional industrial relations and the failed labor relations system of the New Deal (Thomas Kochan), various forms of nonpublic welfare systems (Sanford Jacoby), and the evolution of employment, labor organization, and unemployment in Central and Eastern Europe (Jenkins). Jacoby interestingly treats the way in which mutual aid and fraternal associations, commercial insurance, welfare capitalism, the New Deal, and contemporary European and U.S. markets pool labor market risk. A clear contrast emerges between Cornfield and Fletcher's call for a revitalization of the sociology of the labor movement and Kochan's discussion of uncompetitive collective bargaining and ineffective conflict-resolution tools. Michael Wallace and David Brady revisit David Gordon and Richard Edward's treatments of labor market segmentation and control of work, extending the latter's social structure accumulation of theory to a fourth emerging stage of spatialization and technocratic control.

Contributions relating to employment relations comprise the second and longest part of this volume. Such relations structure outcomes such as careers, job security, and employee decision making. The central focus of changing employment relationships is, not surprisingly, the much-declared decline of internal labor markets (ILMs). Some authors see this decline as an unambiguous return to bygone competitive employment relations. Ivar Berg laments this decline within the broader demise of industrial democracy and its New Deal institutional supports. Peter Cappelli succinctly revisits his previous assessments of this decline, coupled with a discussion of the broader historic sources. Others are more taken with the ambiguity of decline or see islands of exceptionalism. In the latter vein, Eileen Applebaum and Peter Berg reprise their earlier 2000 work on high-performance work systems. In the former vein, Arne Kalleberg carefully disassembles the varied components of nonstandard work arrangements, reviews the evidence, and finds against the widespread view of disappearing standard work. Similarly, William Bridges assesses the descriptive evidence for changes in subjective and objective job security, failing to support the expectation that current changes

are disproportionately hurting older workers' objective and subjective job security.

Two remaining contributions more indirectly relate to these discrepant assessments. In the context of closed (including ILMs) and open employment relationships (typical of more market-driven employment relationships), Aage Sørensen expounds his theory of rents to explain how human capital investments in the context of employment relationships produce careers. Nancy DeTomaso explores the possibilities and difficulties of professionalizing managers, an occupation that Cappelli and others view as particularly endangered in the wake of the demise of ILMs. Such a project would extend to managers the advantages achieved by the professionalization of more established knowledge workers.

The third part of this volume attends to the consequences for U.S. social stratification of these changing employment relations. Earnings inequality is often the topic. Francois Nielson and Arthur Alderson assess the relative contribution to earnings inequality of the usual (and also overlooked) suspects, ranging from outsourcing of jobs, deindustrialization to weak trade unions, increasing demand for highly educated workers and for those with a high cognitive skills net of education, among others. Following a thorough assessment of changing distributions of wages, employee benefits, job instability, job tenure, and new jobs, John Schmidt suggests that many of the indicators of the declining job quality he finds describe standard rather than nonstandard work. In the midst of torpedoing seven arguments that technical advances lead through skills shortages to growing wage inequality, Jared Bernstein and Lawrence Mishel also raise doubts about the thesis that wage inequality overall is increasing, stating that some measures have grown and others have remained flat.

The remaining contributions in this part range widely in their topic. In a piece that presents a sharp contrast to Cappelli's (and other's) take on the decline of middle management, Marshall Meyer documents a growth in the ranks of management. He places this growth in the context of the growth in the number of businesses, the rise of less hierarchical, intermediate (hybrid or network) organization and evolving managerial roles marked by broader responsibility and diminished authority. Peter Marsden and Elizabeth Gorman provide a lengthy and thorough review of the wide variety of networks, their differential use by employees described by gender, class, age, their use by employers, and the outcomes of their use. John Beggs and Wayne Villemez review the often overlooked impact on status attainment and inequality of regional labor markets, an absurd omission in an age of multilevel modeling and geographic information systems, not to mention inter-

esting models of various spatial effects models. Thomas Bailey provides the historic background and current developments that inexorably lead to his conclusion that the United States lacks a coherent workforce development policy.

The final section of this volume concentrates on gender, racial inequalities, and urban or immigrant labor markets. Jerry Jacobs reviews the issues posed by sex segregation, alternative measures and explanations thereof, and recent trends. Paula England, Jennifer Thompson, and Carolyn Aman focus instead on pay gaps as functions of job segregation and gaps in job experience and consider the merits of alternative accounts of such gaps and of comparable worth policies. Barbara Reskin discusses employment discrimination, its history, the federal government's role therein, and current levels. Robert Kaufman reviews the current data on racial differences and then undertakes to integrate labor market segmentation theory and race-sex queuing theory by showing how factors that segment work, such as general skill and training requirements or sex, and race-typed work tasks affect queuing. Philip Moss and Chris Tilly explore the impact of labor supply and especially demand for urban labor through an interesting analysis of metropolitan area survey data, whereas Frank Bean, Susan Gonzalez-Baker, and Randy Capps revisit research findings about the relationships between U.S. labor markets and international migration.

In sum, this is a very useful volume whose established contributors do not always agree about specific trends or favor the same explanations. Even when authors revisit their past writings, the results are often focused, well-organized, and useful to scholars and others surveying the state of our current understanding of labor markets.

## REFERENCE

Berg, I. (1981). *Sociological perspectives on labor markets*. New York: Academic Press.

*Robert P. Althauser, Ph.D., is a professor emeritus of sociology at Indiana University. His research interests within the sociology of work have focused primarily on internal labor markets, both conceptually and empirically, through analysis of job history data from specific firms and on work of allied health occupations.*