

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



**R. BEAN : *Comparative Industrial Relations : An Introduction to Cross National Perspectives*. London, Crom Helm, 1985, 261 pp., ISBN 0-7099-3251-9**

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ble à celle observée en Europe. En effet, de plus en plus de travailleurs américains quittent le marché du travail avant ou à l'âge minimum auquel ils sont admissibles à une pension de la sécurité sociale.

Les chapitres 9 et 10 analysent les mesures de retraite à la carte adoptées en République fédérale d'Allemagne. K. Eidnmüller, de la Fédération des institutions allemandes d'assurance-pension, et E. Smigielski, de la Fédération nationale des caisses-maladie locales, abordent principalement les répercussions de ces mesures sur la structure des pensions versées par le régime public de retraite et l'impact de la législation sur les finances du régime d'assurance-maladie.

Finalement, dans le dernier chapitre, M. Pfaff, professeur d'économie politique à l'Université d'Augsbourg, passe en revue les différents arguments en faveur d'une politique sociale intégrée et soulève la nécessité d'une plus grande compatibilité entre les objectifs économiques et les objectifs sociaux.

La plupart des auteurs présentent des données statistiques ainsi qu'une bibliographie récente sur chacun des thèmes abordés.

Lise CHRÉTIEN

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**Comparative Industrial Relations: An Introduction to Cross National Perspectives**, by R. Bean, London, Crom Helm, 1985, 261 pp., ISBN 0-7099-3251-0 (HBK) and ISBN 0-7099-3281-1 (PBK)

Books on comparative industrial relations are organized either in a series of national studies linked by summary chapters or by treating several topics in various national settings. Each approach has its advantages. The former favours presentation of the historical, political and other environmental factors that are so important to the operation of a national industrial relations system. However, they often are overly descriptive and atheoretical. By contrast, cross-sectional studies can highlight significant variables in a number of systems that produce theoretical hypotheses or conclusions, but at the cost of leaving the reader uncertain about how any particular system actually functions. This book is in the latter category. It contains an introduction to the field of comparative industrial relations, followed by chapters on unions, employers, the role of the state, industrial conflict, workers' participation, multinational enterprises, developing countries and a concluding overview.

The book is directed primarily at a student audience. The author suggests that it would be appropriate as an undergraduate text. But a secondary purpose is to contribute to the development of industrial relations as a discipline, a goal presumably of greatest interest to scholars in the field. Ultimately, neither the student nor the scholarly audience will be completely satisfied, although aspects of the book will be valuable to each. The student will find a clear and up-to-date treatment of comparative industrial relations in several developed nations, organized along logical and traditional lines. For the scholar, there is a comprehensive review of this body of literature that summarizes many theoretical issues in the field. Since the style is a literature review and there is no unifying theme, the material may present difficulties for students, at least in North America. Considerable additional work would be necessary for the student reader of this volume to describe industrial relations in any nation covered. On the other hand, scholars who are familiar with comparative industrial relations inevitably will find that much of the book covers familiar ground.

Given the task Bean sets out, the most successful chapters are those in which the volume of research is either large or relatively integrated. Models of union growth with an international scope are available, for instance, but systematic explanations of union structure are absent. Employer organization is even less thoroughly covered. The author concludes that cross-national comparisons of strikes almost inevitably neglect the mixture of economic and political factors that underlie labour disputes. However, collective bargaining, worker participation and industrial relations in multi-national enterprises are among the topics that lend themselves to the approach taken in this volume. The bibliography occupies 18 pages. While one can always argue with individual inclusions or omissions, it is generally quite complete and the book should be useful for that feature alone.

The lack of any central theme in the book detracts from its effectiveness. Chapters and even parts of chapters stand almost alone. This technique may be suitable for an academic literature review, but makes the book less interesting and challenging. An obvious motif would have been change in industrial relations. Instead there is little discussion of many contemporary issues in the field. Thatcherism and the recession, arguably the most important influences on British industrial relations are mentioned only in passing, for instance. Similarly, the intrusion of employment law into the regulation of American industrial relations is not addressed in any depth. The opening chapter addresses basic problems in the field of comparative industrial relations, but the concluding chapter does not return to them.

Readers of this journal should be aware of the geographic scope of the book. It covers the U.K., Continental Europe and the U.S. There is virtually no discussion of Canada, the treatment of developing nations is perfunctory and discussion of Australia and Japan is infrequent. Centrally-planned economies are omitted completely.

Overall, this is an ambitious work that was carefully executed. It should be on many course reading lists and will be a valuable tool for anyone seeking a topical literature review.

**Mark THOMPSON**

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**Les mises à pied et le travail à temps réduit dans quelques pays de l'OCDE** par Bernard Grais, Paris, Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, et Conclusions du groupe de travail de l'OCDE sur les statistiques de l'emploi et du chômage, 1983, 154 pp., ISBN 92-64-22391-6

Les modalités administratives d'indemnisation des travailleurs temporairement mis à pied ou dont l'horaire de travail a été réduit et par conséquent, les dispositions prises par les employeurs diffèrent largement d'un pays à l'autre. Les disparités très importantes entre les pays d'Amérique du Nord et ceux d'Europe ne sont pas sans conséquences pour les comparaisons internationales de l'emploi et du chômage.

Cet ouvrage présente une étude comparative des dispositions en vigueur dans plusieurs pays de l'OCDE pour indemniser les travailleurs temporairement mis à pied ou dont l'horaire de travail a été réduit. Outre l'intérêt au plan statistique, cette étude pourrait s'avérer utile dans le débat sur les modalités d'indemnisation du chômage partiel et l'équilibre qui doit exister entre la sécurité d'emploi et l'ajustement à l'évolution économique.