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Frontiers of Labor: Comparative Histories of the United States and Australia, Edited by Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist (2018) Chicago and Springfield, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 375 pages. ISBN: 978-0-252-08345-7

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of brokering how immigrant labor was to be consumed for domestic purposes and under what conditions" (p. 137). Importantly, assisted migration programs, despite their strenuous efforts, proved limited in their ability to compel servants to remain in jobs. The same could not be said of the federal government. Immigration officials having the power to "make immigrants' entry contingent on accepting service work changed this dynamic in dramatic ways" (*ibid.*). For example, immigration officials established strict controls over unaccompanied immigrant women's freedom of movement and contract. They justified these regulations by claiming they protected unaccompanied women from white slavery. Fears about white slavery and the international sex trade were legion, but Urban suggests that many officials used white slavery as a smokescreen. Their real goal was to help household employers who were undermined by free market conditions by providing cheap and tractable servants. These practices did not go uncontested. Missionaries and officials from charitable agencies forcefully argued that placing women in jobs prior to their release undermined their economic agency. In order to regulate the entry of Chinese immigrants under domestic service contracts, officials developed an enforcement apparatus and made the employers take out bonds. Nevertheless, many domestic servants abandoned their employers to find better opportunities. Finally, southern black women, whenever possible, resisted being labeled ideal servants and challenged employers who demanded they act submissively.

Brokering Servitude speaks to modern debates about citizenship, guestworkers, and immigration. As the author notes, the federal government "has failed to enact provisions that would give domestic workers equal rights to other laborers" and "has also fallen short in reforming immigration policies—an area of governance that is its sole domain" (p. 260). In sum this book

cuts across disciplinary boundaries and will interest scholars as well as non-academic audiences.

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Frontiers of Labor: Comparative Histories of the United States and Australia

Edited by Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist (2018) Chicago and Springfield, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 375 pages. ISBN: 978-0-252-08345-7.

The task that confronts all of us is to reach an "understanding" of the chaos that is the real world. How are we to make sense of that which happens? What factors, or what scholars describe as parameters, are at work, which explain whatever it is that piques our interest? How can we be confident in the explanations that we develop in trying to explain real world phenomena? Scholars in the physical sciences have developed a very successful technique to overcome such fears: controlled experiments and replication. Parameters are selected and applied in a controlled experiment, which produces a result. This experiment is repeated again and again to determine if the same result will occur. After numerous 'successful' tests, scholars maintain that there is no basis for rejecting propositions so derived. Every time we turn on a light, a controlled experiment, further confirmation is given to the theoretical insights associated with electricity. Our confidence in electricity is such that if the light did not go on, we would say that the light bulb needs to be replaced or the equipment is faulty.

Controlled experiments and replication are not luxuries available to those who work in the social sciences. In seeking to make sense of whatever it is that interests us, we are not even sure what parameters are at work; with most social science scholarship seeking to discover what they may

be and whether or not they help to explain the phenomenon in question. Moreover, scholars in the social sciences cannot replicate the same set of events at another time or another place to test a hypothesis based on insights gleaned from one observation.

Some social science scholars have attempted to get around this problem by comparative studies. As the title to Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist's edited volume *Frontiers Of Labor: Comparative Histories of the United States and Australia* indicates, comparisons can be conducted between nations which, it is claimed, have similar characteristics and provide a 'legitimate' basis for comparison. This volume reveals three different ways in which the respective authors approached this problem, which centre on their approach to the issue or handling of parameters.

The first is to engage in meta-analysis, which translates into more complex issues, where attempts are made to engage with *national parameters* in attempting to understand the phenomena in question. Such attempts quickly disintegrated into a more or less sophisticated highlighting of different factors at work in both nations and an attempt to dance around the dialectic of common and uncommon variables while maintaining the usefulness of comparative research. This is also associated with a downplaying or ignoring of other variables that do not fit the comparative narrative.

There are four chapters on World War I and the role of radical and working class organizations, which opposed the war in both nations and conscription. America quickly legislated conscription following its entry into the war; while there were two unsuccessful attempts by referenda in Australia. The accounts of Australian developments ignore the role of the Catholic Church and Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne in opposing conscription following the April 1916 Irish uprising. Jennie Jeppesen contrasts the coercive use of convict labour in Virginia

between 1614 and 1788 with a kinder incentive-based approach in Australia from 1788 to 1853. In two and a half centuries, it might be reasonable to expect there would be differences! In doing so, she makes no mention of America's use of slavery as a demonstration effect in determining its treatment of American convicts in comparison to Australia.

The second is to conduct cross-national comparisons on more narrowly based issues where *specific parameters* are so powerful as to render irrelevant *national parameters*. The chapters by Nathan Wise on mutinies by Maine soldiers in the American Civil War and the Australian Imperial Force in World War I, and by Bradley Bowden and Peta Stevenson-Clark on railroad conflict in the 1890s, in both nations, fit into this category. These studies serve, however, to call into the question the relevance of *national comparative studies* per se.

The third approach is to *ignore parameters* altogether. Such an approach was employed with narrowly based accounts of individuals whose lives and careers involved time in both America and Australia, and elsewhere. An essentially descriptive approach is provided of these individuals' connections with both nations. Another variant is to provide a descriptive account of something, which occurred in both nations, such as Greg Patmore and Nikola Balnave's examination of co-operatives. These are examples of cross national rather than comparative research.

The basis for using America and Australia as comparators is linked to them being "frontier" societies founded by the British and speaking English (does this deal out immigrants who speak different tongues, or suggest reference to a common language is a form of mysticism to justify comparative *national studies*?). However, even on this dimension there are marked (parametric) differences. Spanish, Dutch and French colonisers arrived in the United States in the sixteenth century, with the first settle-

ments occurring by the Acadians (France) in *Île Sainte-Croix* in 1604, the British in Jamestown in 1607, and Samuel Champlain (France) in Quebec in 1608.

If we take 1607 as a starting point, America has 181 years on British colonization of Australia in 1788: the equivalent of seven generations. In 1790, two years after the settlement at Botany Bay, America had a population of almost four million.¹ In this period, America had created a system of slavery of people imported from Africa. This produced a Civil War and racism, not just confined to the Jim Crow South that has dogged America ever since: an overarching stain that has no Australian equivalent.

Frontiers of Labor, besides a brief introduction and conclusion by the editors, which amount to little more than summaries of what is to come or what has been done, comprises sixteen chapters which range in length from 13 to 19 pages, excluding reference material. There are four chapters on World War I, two on the Irish diaspora, three on radical, labour activists, and one each on convict labour, union avoidance strategies in the meat industry, railroad conflict, mutinies, trade union oligarchy, welfare legislation and co-operatives. The editors maintain that: "the essays in this volume break new ground" (p. 2). An examination of the reference material of the respective chapters reveals, however, that these are issues that most of the authors have written about long before. Except for the chapter on mutinies—military scholarship is something which has escaped my attention—, the chapters have a sense of *déjà vu* or rediscovery of the wheel. It is doubtful if this volume will have any lasting impact in either the field of labour studies or nationally-based comparative research.

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1 1790 *United States Census*.

The Daunting Enterprise of the Law – Essays in Honour of Harry W. Arthurs

Edited by Simon Archer, Daniel Drache, and Peer Zumbansen, Montreal/Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 386 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-7735-4890-9.

Anyone interested in better grasping the meaning of labour law, and positing it within a realist perspective, should be acquainted with Harry Arthurs' knowledgeable, creative and astute body of work. The idea that the existence of choice does not necessarily entail the absence of duress, examined and disseminated by Robert Hale in the early 1920s, contributed to found the Realist school of law, which has since impregnated the culture of generations of labour (law) scholars. *The Daunting Enterprise of the Law – Essays in Honour of Harry W. Arthurs* is a tribute to Harry Arthurs' characteristically comprehensive view of the factors deemed pertinent to legal analysis and, by ricochet, to the influence of this school in Canada.

Twenty-eight scholars celebrate Arthurs' work in this collection of essays engaging with thoughtful questions about legal education, legal theory, as well as the transformation of labour law and political economy. They judiciously reveal Arthurs' commitment to social justice and legal pluralism against universalism or, more particularly, against globalization and neoliberalism. Against this background, the book offers a satisfactory description of the key proposal to reconceptualize labour law as the "law of economic subordination and resistance", while taking stock of the demise of traditional industrial relations systems. On the ideological level, as summarized by David Trubek, this reconceptualization should follow the development of a new political economy, with a view to achieving "growth with equity in both the North and South".

It is with respect to this more or less explicit economic agenda that the book,