

fare reforms demonstrate that the welfare structure is catching up with the poorfare culture, and also that these reforms will produce free or cheap work, leaving more government money available for other purposes, probably to benefit the middle class.

From a policy standpoint, this poorfare culture overindividualizes and overmoralizes the meaning and causes of poverty, which, Tropman argues, complicates our ability to deal with the problem. The tension between the poorfare and welfare cultures causes continuing fluctuations—more liberal vs. less liberal—in how we think about and act on the poor. These conceptions of the poor also have more to do with the concern of all classes for themselves than for the poor directly. Therefore, education based on facts about the poor, especially about the external nature of the causes of poverty, will do little to change people's perceptions of the poor or their support for new policies. It may even make them more negative.

Consequently, Tropman concludes his analysis with a call for a new set of values, at least in marketing policies for the poor. He offers a list of what he calls "subordinate" or complementing values to replace the "subdominant" or conflicting values of the welfare state. These supposedly would moderate the dominant values of American society, but leave them basically intact. This tempering of our national culture would be accomplished through better marketing of interventions to help the poor. As Tropman argues, "packaging matters."

This book is obviously aimed at students and scholars of social welfare policy and policy makers themselves. Sociologists, however, may see in this book some challenging ideas for further research on attitudes about the poor. Although this topic is not foreign to sociology, more of our attention traditionally has focused on documenting the inequalities that exist and the external conditions that cause them. A better understanding of the existence of possible causes of the "poorfare" culture may well lead to better policies for dealing with poverty, or at least, as Tropman might argue, with how we market those policies.

Unfortunately, Tropman gives only scant attention to what might be the ultimate cause of the poorfare state: that it is one of the cultural contradictions (which he does point out) of a capitalistic society. His lessons from the analysis are limited primarily to recognizing and address-

ing the poorfare culture, not changing it. The dilemma is not to be solved or resolved, but rather "managed and handled." Although this marketing approach will be offensive to some, his research and analysis (not without limitations) provide important evidence of a culture of ambivalent attitudes and moralistic overtones that ultimately lead Americans to blame the poor and the elderly for their condition. Although the book is a research monograph, the easily accessible data would make this an interesting, although expensive, supplement for a course on stratification and inequality.

Contingent Work: American Employment Relations in Transition, edited by **Kathleen Barker** and **Kathleen Christensen**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press/ILR, 1998. 350 pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-8014-3369-X. \$18.95 paper. ISBN: 0-8014-8405-7.

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Once upon a time, large bureaucracies scared us. Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956) presented a frightening specter of the power of large bureaucracies to constrain the potential and warp the lives of long-term employees. Weber's metaphor of the iron cage combined broad historical sweep with insidious and life-narrowing individual effects. Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) extended the critique to lives dominated by consumption, and supported the romanticized 1960s view of the drive to find freedom. The 1970s and '80s taught us how poorly our major corporations seemed to do in competition with those from some other nations—especially Japan. All of this left many observers with a deep concern about large organizations—both as employers and as institutions managing the bulk of the country's physical and financial assets.

Fast-forward to today. The organization man and woman are dying, and some aspects of our economy are the envy of the world. Though there is little overall evidence of declining average job tenure, talk of the decline of the bureaucratic career—the golden handcuff of the secure internal labor market—is everywhere in the air. Hallelujah! We celebrate the possibilities of freedom and increased self-determination of the

"boundaryless" career. Moreover, U.S. corporations show a renewed ability to perform well on a variety of economic dimensions, relative to their peers in other places. Some of this can be attributed to the same "flexibility" in U.S. labor markets and employment practices that is whittling away at the bureaucratic career. But this freedom and performance come at a price and through processes that are too easy to overlook.

Barker and Christensen's well-organized, interesting, and useful book takes us on a tour of the downside of changing employment relations. Make no mistake about the editors' intentions to show us how bad it is. They cite the old world of the "Organization Man" as a *positive* model and express the belief that something "profound is happening to the basic contract between employer and employee that has defined . . . the fundamental obligations and responsibilities between the firm and the worker" (p. 2). The language the editors use to describe the changes they see is striking. For example, employers "abdicate" (p. 5) (twice on one page!) responsibility toward employees, contingent workers are "robbed" (p. 18) of privileges, firms and the federal government have "colluded" (p. 123) to the detriment of contingent workers, and the federal government is also seen as "reneging" (p. 197) on commitments.

Nonetheless, within the domain of what is bad about changing employment relations, the book is well balanced—and even a page-turner. Several chapters provide useful historical and legal background. Dean Morse excerpts his 1969 work "The Peripheral Worker," and effectively demonstrates that most of the issues raised in this book—and in the broader discourse about changing employment relations—have been with us for at least 30 years. Other chapters describe work done by the temporary help industry to alter the legal environment in which it does business, and argue that neither labor law nor labor unions have kept up with changes in employment relationships. Carnevale et al. paint a convincing and disturbing picture of the complexities and ambiguities of federal employment law. They show how somewhat arbitrary variations in legal definitions of "employer" and "employee," and the employer size thresholds at which laws take effect, determine who is excluded from protection under a panoply of important federal employment laws. James Rebitzer provides evidence that in the petrochemical industry, the legal framework provides incentives for

employers to maintain an arms-length relationship with huge numbers of contract employees, even though closer supervision and training are associated with fewer refinery accidents.

Two early chapters provide starkly different definitions and estimates of the number of contingent workers in the United States. Cohany et al., a group of Bureau of Labor Statistics economists, define contingent workers as "individuals who do not perceive themselves as having an explicit or implicit contract for continuing employment" (p. 41). Three variants of the definition produce estimates of between 2.7 and 6 million contingent workers in the United States in a survey designed specifically to measure contingent employment. Spalter-Roth and Hartmann use a different data base, and a definition of contingency based on a combination of full-time or part-time status, number of jobs held in a year, and whether or not a person worked for a whole or part year. They count 19 million contingent workers and another 16 million "questionable" workers for a grand total of 29 percent of U.S. workers classified as either contingent or questionable. Unfortunately, data limitations seem to drive the definitions in the latter chapter, and the estimates do not appear very compelling. (For people interested in a direct and useful critique of the BLS figures, I suggest various analyses published by Ken Hudson, who has, along with Arne Kalleberg and others, attempted systematically to assess and adjust the BLS estimates. In particular see Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson, forthcoming in ASR.)

None of the authors in the book accepts or adopts the BLS definitions or estimates; and as far as I can tell, none adopts the Spalter-Roth and Hartmann estimates. This is simultaneously frustrating and informative. It is frustrating because, by the end of this book, it is hard to say much in general about "contingent" work. The term disappears in a morass of partially competing, partially overlapping definitions. Are self-employed contract workers contingent? Are part-timers? Should we call every "nonstandard" job contingent, or just the "bad" jobs? Is every worker who is viewed as a cost rather than as a valued employee thereby contingent? The lack of agreement on definitions is also informative, because it puts the largely atheoretical nature of the arguments into relief. When someone calls the BLS definition too restrictive, by what criteria are we supposed to make this judgment?

Using their idiosyncratic definitions, the authors in this volume argue—to my mind, fairly persuasively in many cases—that a variety of systematic bad outcomes afflict people doing contingent work. For example, many women find themselves in particularly bad contingent jobs, and for some of them bad dead-end temporary jobs are a long-term trap from which they can't seem to escape. There are suggestions—though not much evidence—that firms have failed to understand the costs to the bottom line of creating contingent jobs, and that cost reduction and flexibility benefits are overstated. Evidence from Australia—where the legal environment is very different from that of the United States—suggests that the role of contingent employees in buffering protected “core” employees may typically be very limited. Manipulation of experimental vignettes provides evidence that academics who accumulate time in adjunct faculty roles may hurt their chances of gaining tenure track positions.

Overall, this book is a compelling introduction to the human issues of the downside of contingent employment. It is written at a level that should be accessible and interesting to most undergraduate students.

The Future of Anomie Theory, edited by **Nikos Passas** and **Robert Agnew**. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997. 240 pp. \$50.00 cloth. ISBN: 1-55553-321-3.

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Rumors of the death of Merton's anomie theory of deviance have been greatly exaggerated, it turns out. In his classic 1938 article, “Social Structure and Anomie,” Merton drew on Durkheim to outline an elegant theoretical framework for understanding deviance. In essence, he argued that anomie is caused when a culture universally inculcates certain success goals (e.g., the American Dream ideology that economic success and mobility are desirable and possible for everyone) while structural inequalities block many people's access to legitimate means for achieving those goals. This macrolevel breakdown in societal regulation is experienced at the micro level as “strain,” which increases the probability that some individuals will be pushed toward “deviant adaptations.”

From the Chicago School sociologists in the early twentieth century through Merton, Cohen, and Cloward and Ohlin well into the 1960s, poverty and class were causally central to theories of deviance and crime. But they were pushed into the sociological shadows by a curious conjuncture. Labeling theorists drew attention away from the causes of deviance by focusing, rightly, on the construction of the categories of deviance and how social control agents went about filling them. Critical criminologists complained that anomie/strain theorists focused only on street crime among the lower class and ignored “suite crime” among the powerful. Control theorists focused on delinquency in the general population (what Hagan and McCarthy in this volume insightfully call “school criminology”), which it explained in terms of individuals' bonds to conventional institutions rather than culture and social structure.

Historically, conservatism created a context that was increasingly inhospitable to anomie/strain theory. Politicians pushed aside liberal theories of crime and the rehabilitative ideal in favor of the demonization of deviants and a wave of imprisonment. Nothing about the priorities or policies of Nixon, Reagan, Bush, or Gingrich welcomed a theory that situated the source of deviance in dominant values and the structure of the status quo.

The authors of this thoughtful book provide a convincing critique of the various ways in which anomie/strain theory has been neglected for newer political or scientific fashions or abused by reductionist testing. They re-examine the empirical research based on the theory and find much support for its original formulation. They go on to propose a promising array of solutions to the problems identified by critics and to extend the theory in important ways.

For example, whether a disjuncture between universal goals and legitimate means pushes a given person toward deviance depends largely on how he or she interprets and reacts to that disjuncture. This interpretation and reaction are in turn a function of various intervening variables and mediating mechanisms, many (though not all) of which are associated with one's social-structural location. In several well-developed chapters, the contributors link the macro and micro dimensions of anomie/strain theory by creatively integrating theories of reference