

J. Labour and demographic economics

KESSLER (SID) and BAYLISS (FRED). *Contemporary British Industrial Relations*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992. Pp. xvi + 291. £40.00 hardback, £12.99 paperback. ISBN 0 333 56745 5, 0 333 56815 X.

The focus of this text is an account and assessment of the new developments which occurred in British industrial relations during the 1980s, and their implications for the future. In this period there was both greater decentralisation in the level of collective bargaining and a reduction in its scope, together with a move by management – who were now firmly in charge – to more direct communications with individual employees. Within a more competitive product market environment there was a search for greater employee commitment and workforce flexibility, to promote more efficient use of resources and higher productivity. At the same time, a Conservative government introduced a series of legislative measures to curb the power of trade unions and weaken the fabric of collective bargaining in order to allow market forces much greater impact in the determination of pay and employment conditions. The authors state that the book is ‘a combination of academic description and analysis with the reporting of the opinions of those who have shaped the 1980s and will be in the driving seats in the 1990s’ – the latter being obtained via interviews with 40 practitioners (mainly union general secretaries and company personnel directors) to provide a view from the operational level of industrial relations. After the first 2 chapters on the traditional industrial relations system in earlier postwar decades, which are somewhat overburdened with details of incomes policy measures, the book is lively, analytical, and highly readable. There are chapters on government, the law, unions and managements, strikes, and collective bargaining in the private and public sectors, but not on new technology as such, as well as a particularly illuminating discussion of outcomes in terms of pay and productivity changes – all with an abundance of statistical tables. There is, however, some awkwardness in the structuring of the material which leads to repetition and extensive cross-referencing. Although it eschews an explicit theoretical framework and is less comprehensive in scope than some of the established texts it is a useful addition to the industrial relations literature.

RON BEAN

LIVI-BACCI (MASSIMO). *A Concise History of World Population*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992. Pp. xvi + 220. £40.00 hardback, £12.95 paperback. ISBN 1 55786 270 2, 1 55786 269 9.

The economic literature on world population is not particularly large, and there is a need for a good historical treatment of world population growth. This book, first published in Italian in 1989, goes a long way towards fulfilling that need. The author aims to provide a wide-ranging but concise account of the main influences on world population. The discussion is chronological in arrangement: chapter 1 deals with the basic demography of animal and human populations, chapters 2 and 3 look at hunting-gathering and agricultural societies, chapters 4 and 5 cover the recent experiences of developed and less-developed countries, and an epilogue offers some commentary on the future. Despite the obvious difficulties of limited and unreliable data, world population history appears to be dominated by two ‘demographic transitions’ which brought significant increases in the population growth rate: the Neolithic transition, which accompanied a gradual movement from hunting-gathering to agriculture, and the modern transition, not yet completed in the less-developed countries, which accompanied a more rapid movement from agriculture to industry. The transitions seem to have been economic in character, but doubts persist as to exactly how they occurred. At all times the author is suitably cautious about the relation between population and economic growth; he is neither a ‘catastrophist’ nor an ‘optimist’ and takes an eclectic position on the world’s demographic prospects. In general, the book gives a clear, non-technical summary of world population history, which should be of considerable value to economists.

WILLIAM A. JACKSON

VERHAAR (C. H. A.) and JANSMA (L. G.), (Eds). *On the Mysteries of Unemployment: Causes, Consequences and Policies*. Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992. Pp. 500. £70.00 hardback, US \$132.00 hardback. ISBN 0 7923 1976 1.

This book is a collection of papers which were presented at the Conference on the Unemployed in their Regional Environment (CURE) held in April 1990. Separated into 4 parts, the first introductory section gives a general perspective on the work and is written by the editors with M. de Goede, J. van Ophem, and A. de Vries. B. Millan, the European Commissioner, has also contributed a short paper on regional policy with a European perspective. The second part discusses the problem of unemployment from an economist’s point of view. Topics include labour market adjustment (R. MacKay), empirical evidence on outsiders, insiders and unemployment (B. McCormick and S. Searle), unemployment resistance and labour mobility (D. Jones), and also a number of papers on regional unemployment by mainly European economists. The

third part considers unemployment from a broad social science perspective. Here are papers by psychologists, sociologists, and medical practitioners. One of the recurring themes is the connection between unemployment and health. The fourth part concentrates on policies regarding regional unemployment and the papers are mostly by regional economists. Topics include local government labour market policy (R. Boin and J. van Dijk) and skill shortages and retaining needs (J. Lewis). It is clear that this volume is aimed towards a broader readership than just academic economists. Given this, it would be better if more attention was given to describing the main economic interpretations and explanations of unemployment. I would, however, recommend this book to economics students and to professional economists with an interest in the phenomenon of regional unemployment. Its primary usefulness is to be found in helping to articulate the complex and the multidimensional nature of unemployment.

STAVROS A. DRAKOPOULOS

L. *Industrial organisation*

AUDRETSCH (DAVID B.) and SIEGFRIED (JOHN J.), (Eds). *Empirical Studies in Industrial Organization: Essays in Honor of Leonard W. Weiss*. Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992. Pp. xi + 282. £58.00 hardback, US \$109.00 hardback. ISBN 0 7923 1806 4.

Leonard W. Weiss is an economist who has over many years made a distinguished contribution to the development of both the methodology and substance of empirical research in industrial organisation analysis. The 14 essays in this volume were presented originally at a conference in Berlin in 1991, held in order to honour Weiss's seminal contributions to his field. The contributors – several of them former students of Weiss's – are themselves drawn from amongst the best known exponents of the empirical approach, and the topics in general reflect his preoccupation with rigorous collection and interpretation of data. All of the contributions relate to those areas of research to which Weiss has made a special contribution, and to which F. M. Scherer provides a useful introduction. Five of the papers address one of his early interests, the relationship between concentration and price, and 3 of these focus on particular industries: baking (Dunne and Roberts), banking (Hannan), and highway construction (Brannman and Klein). Two of the papers analyse the issues of price changes and merger activity (Stewart and Sang-Kwon Kim) and price changes and changes in concentration (Kelton). Another of his interests, albeit at a more academic level, has been in antitrust, and 3 of the contributions deal with aspects of this issue: the delineation of markets (Auerbach, Stone and Campbell), predatory pricing (Koller), and the relationship between antitrust and special interests in the political process (Pittman). Weiss's interest in the measurement of productive efficiency, in particular the idea of suboptimal output, is reflected in papers by Audretsch and Yamawaki, Caves and Klein, Schmidt, and Yaisawarng. Finally, there are papers on management control (Hirschey and Fedenia) and on entry and exit in US manufacturing (Siegfried and Evans). Overall, this is a valuable collection, illuminating both the techniques of empirical analysis and the distinctive features of particular industries.

R. ROTHSCHILD

BOWBRICK (PETER). *The Economics of Quality, Grades and Brands*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. xvii + 343. £45.00 hardback, £14.99 paperback. ISBN 0 415 07847 4, 0 415 07848 2.

This book sets out to apply basic economic analysis to quality issues in order to improve the marketing of specific products. It is argued that marketing flair might sometimes produce highly effective results, but that these results might be less reliable than an analysis based on an appropriate economic model. Nevertheless, the book is strongly orientated towards marketing itself and the discussion is located firmly in the context of markets. It has been written so that it may be used as a textbook, with each chapter arranged to be as self-contained as possible, and there is clearly a role for such a book. The subject matter is complex – for instance 8 of the many possible concepts of quality are explained – and the discussion develops systematically, dealing with the basic concepts before tackling more complex issues and relating them to a competitive environment. The author is to be commended for writing in a clear manner. As he points out: 'too many writers on the subject have tried to achieve academic respectability by writing obscurely, and have confused both themselves and their readers'.

SIMON JAMES

DOGANIS (RIGAS). *The Airport Business*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. xiii + 226. £45.00 hardback, £14.99 paperback. ISBN 0 415 07877 6, 0 415 08117 3.

This interesting and innovative new book which focuses on the main issues facing the airport business throughout the world offers an insight into how to deal with the major economic and financial difficulties

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