This book is a Festschrift for Andrei Markovits, who has an extensive scholarly production in various fields with a particular focus on organized labour and Germany. The intellectual base of his research has been the Harvard Center for European Studies. As in all publications of this kind the content covers a broad field of shifting quality. I will not even try to deal with all in this review but will merely illustrate the variety.

Philip S. Gorski takes his point of departure in the Dutch Republic 1555–1787 when discussing the connection between Calvinism and democracy in a long historical perspective. Weber’s suggestion of a link between a specific Protestant ethic and capitalism is, of course, a given point of reference for the analysis of the links between Calvinism and democracy. Gorski’s work deals with how various religious institutions and practices are transformed into political institutions and practices. The complexity is clear in the interaction between religious and political movements, between religious and political orthodoxy and challenges by heterodoxy, when religious protests became political. The Calvinist movement in 16th-century Netherlands helped create and preserve a set of institutions, ideologies and practices favourable to the emergence of values and institutions based on ideals of liberty and equality. This historical framework was important for the democratic breakthrough in the 1860s and for the specific shape democracy got in the Dutch development. The differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism for the emergence of different political approaches in 19th- and 20th-century Germany and Netherlands are indicated. For any discussion of the political culture in Scandinavia, and the connections between religion and political institutions there, Gorski’s chapter is highly interesting.

Thomas Ertman analyses liberalization and democratization in 19th- and 20th-century Germany from a comparative perspective. His point of departure is the thesis established in the 1970s of a German historical Sonderweg, which describes the catastrophic German development as a deviation from a ‘normal’ western modernization pattern. The explanation was looked for in social structures and political and economic institutions. Later research has modified this thesis, arguing that all consolidated nation-states each have their own specific development pattern which makes it difficult to talk about ‘normalcy’. Ertman uses a broad comparative perspective when he puts the German development into a European context, where the three Scandinavian countries are included. He discerns in many respects great similarities between Germany, Sweden and Denmark, and still the developments were so different. Sometimes he is perhaps too keen to discern similarities and reject differences. For instance, when he rejects the political/parliamentary influence

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of the Swedish farmers with statistics showing that the distribution between large, medium and small estates in Germany and Sweden was similar. This kind of connection between economic structures and politics is too simple.

On the basis of his comparison, Ertman asks what can account for imperial Germany’s absent transition to parliamentary government, if it cannot be accounted for by late industrialization, or the absence of a bourgeois revolution, or institutional barriers, or the Social Democratic threat, or reactionary bureaucrats or Junkers. He finds the answer in the combination of insufficient national integration and great power aspirations, which played a decisive role in determining Germany’s subsequent development as a polity. The two other European countries that made no progress towards parliamentarism before the First World War, Austria-Hungary and Russia, shared these two factors with Germany. It could be argued that these were no ‘countries’, that is, consolidated nation-states, but empires. Ertman is convincing, when he brings forward their great power aspirations, rather than their multiethnic composition, as the ground for their collapse. From these aspirations to the lack of parliamentary institutions the step is short, because not only conservatives but also progressive thinkers and people like Otto Hintze (history professor in Berlin 1899–1920), who approached his field of speciality, constitutional history, from a social historical viewpoint, actually believed that parliamentarism would threaten Germany’s position on the world markets. Dualism between the executive power and the legislative power was seen as more suitable for Germany than parliamentarism. If the executive was directly responsible to the people, namely via the parliament, the fractious and poorly integrated nature of German society, itself a consequence of the late unification, would soon result in weak government, incapable of defending its foreign policy interests. So the argument went. Dualism persisted until 1917/18, that is as long as in Sweden. The great difference is that in Sweden parliamentarism became identified with popular victory and democratic breakthrough and in Germany with defeat and humiliation. The authors of the Weimar Constitution reacted accordingly and reintroduced dualism in the form of mixed parliamentary-presidential rule.

Christopher S. Allen discusses the politics of adapting organized capitalism: the united Germany, the new Europe and globalization. The historically developed German corporatism is seen in the face of challenges such as ‘globalization’ and ‘Europeanization’. What is an institutional heritage, based on collective and strong organization of interests, worth in the face of such challenges? To discuss this question Allen creates a German–American ideal-typical stereotype by means of dichotomic concepts like collective–individual, voice–exit (from Albert Hirschman’s model with the options of voice, exit and loyalty), ad hoc ‘one-off’ deals and stable contractual relationships; in brief, German virtues against American. The trend is obviously in the American direction of these extremes. To what extent does Germany fit with this trend? To what extent is it adjustable? These questions Allen addresses rather than answers.

Michael Huelshoff has a chapter on the unemployment problem in Germany. The economic transformation is seen in respect of implications for the labour market. Huelshoff asks what role Anglo-American, Dutch and European models for employment creation play in Germany. He demonstrates the ambivalent position of gender equality in German society. The Constitution guarantees equal gender rights at the same time as it incorporates many patriarchal laws from the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, particularly as reflected in the German social welfare system.
These patriarchal norms are most deeply rooted in the rules governing paid and unpaid labour. Indeed, according to Huelshoff, the German model relies on an explicitly gendered division of labour. Men are assumed to be the employed breadwinners while women are to be responsible for family life. He underpins his argument with statistics.

Also Allen demonstrates that, contrary to public rhetoric, German welfare expenditures have grown despite the pressures of the neoliberal language, but that the distribution of expenditures has narrowed. The question whether this trend predated the onset of the globalization language he answers, with reference to Claus Offe, rather in the affirmative. In the mid-1970s, the then Social Democratic government had already begun to pursue policies that reduced access to welfare arrangements by tightening eligibility requirements for those seeking social welfare citizenship. A conscious strategy shared by Germany’s major political parties was designed to protect the organized core of the workforce to the detriment of the weaker members of the labour force with the gradual emergence of a ‘two-third society’ as its long-term consequence.

As this survey of the content demonstrates, the scope of the book is broad. Political culture, and the historical preconditions for its emergence and transition, could be seen as a kind of common denominator. However, most readers will probably select one or two articles dependent on their particular field of interest. The sample in this review has indicated such fields. In this sense the book is rich and merits attention from people working in the area.

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Since the 1980s the numbers of employee owners in the US have increased steadily. Employee ownership has become a fact of life in many companies. The increasing demand for technical skills is not only making companies more dependent on the abilities of their employees – the employees themselves have more to contribute. Employee ownership involves risks and challenges of both a social and administrative nature, and reflects a willingness to learn and serve. But it also has its own social rewards, including financial ones, which, as ownership becomes a genuinely felt social reality, change the self-perception of many an employee. Erik Maaloe’s book The Employee Owner tells the story of what can happen when employees become personally involved as part owners of a business. It presents a study of the potential impacts of employee ownership at both the individual and organizational levels. The focus on the individual level is one of the major contributions, since there are not many studies that have tried to capture individual employee owners’ attitudes, opinions and behaviour.

The study is wider than just measuring the sheer economic effect of having a vested interest in the business where one is an employee. The author states:
The book tells the story about how the hitherto hidden creative energies of the workforce can be released into conscientious action through participation. . . . Ownership is important . . . since . . . it opens up the possibility of a new industrial age, where technical activism and social cohesion based on sharing could replace the adversarial organisational cultures of the past.

Despite this positive attitude towards employee ownership, this is not a prescriptive guidebook for those who want to introduce employee ownership. Rather, it is a thorough and almost ethnographic observation of how the ownership process has actually developed over time in a number of companies, detailing positive and negative events and also adversarial attitudes and behaviour during the process.

The book is based on field studies. It is a classic study of the grounded theory approach looking for patterns to be unravelled. Erik Maaloe, a Danish academic at Aarhus Business School, started the study in 1987 and ended it in 1994. He visited and researched seven US companies four times. This resulted in about 200 taped interviews with rank-and-file workers, managers and union representatives. The presented case studies therefore offer a wealth of detailed observations with lots of quotations on the development of employee ownership in a fairly diverse sampling of US manufacturing companies. At the end of the book the author attempts to condense the findings of the case studies in a theoretical framework of individual and organizational change towards more participation. The preceding chapters present the seven stages of the process of employee ownership development based on the longitudinal cross-comparative analysis of the cases while highlighting in each chapter one or two cases in particular.

The model of the process of change is the most theoretical part. The chapters concerning this model are rather short but interesting. They offer a general sociopsychological change model towards more ownership and participation. In the interpretation of the findings the author appears to draw on the work of Karl Weick, using the concept of sense-making as a change concept. The author seems also to be aware of the symbolic interpretive perspective (Hatch, 1997) and the socialconstructionist approach to cultural change (Bouwen and Fry, 1991; Steyaert, 1995). However, there is some lack of references here and in my opinion the interpretation of the findings could have been more embedded in the prevailing discussion in this branch of literature.

The cases show a pattern of emerging change and the book offers an insight into how change agents throughout the companies operate. In so doing, the author distinguished three groups with a specific attitude to change and subsequent behaviour: the activists, the complacent and the troublemakers. His findings on the role of the activists are interesting: a group of managers and workers to a large extent act together as entrepreneurs within the company, driving the change process and overcoming peer pressure. It is also this group which eventually is able to convince the complacent majority. The book offers a detailed description of how the group emerges and how it drives the process of change. This is good reading not only for those interested in employee ownership but also for students of organizational change.


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