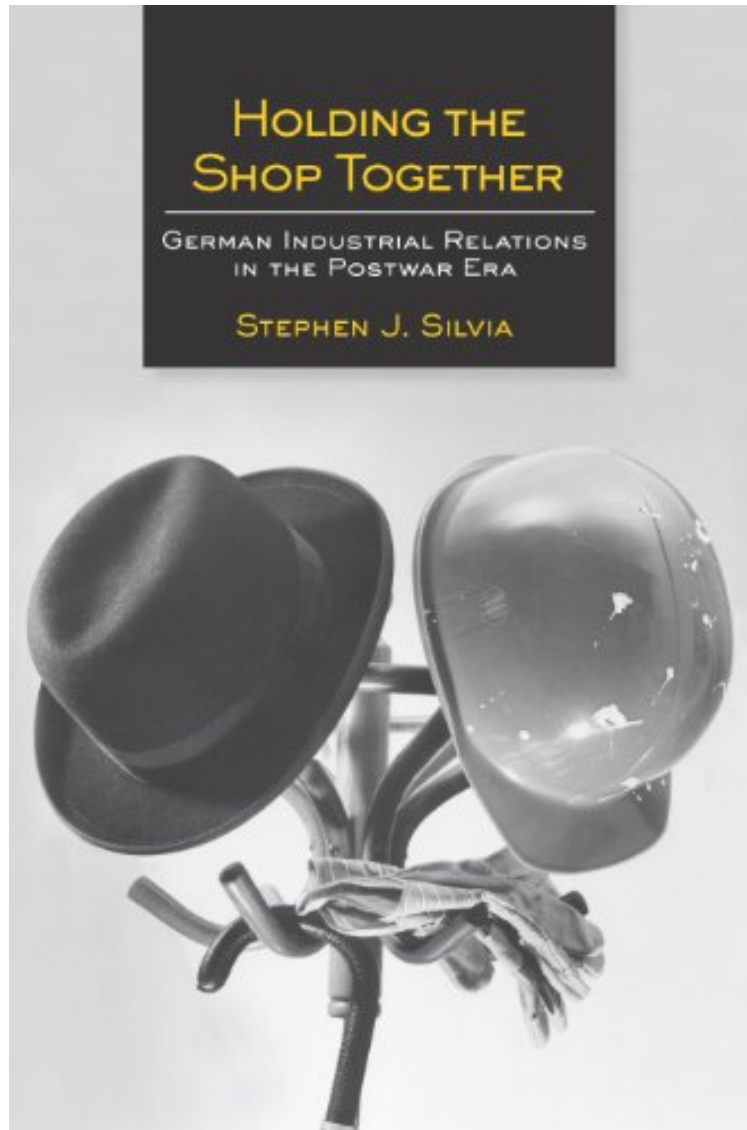


(Free download) Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the Postwar Era

Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the Postwar Era

Stephen J. Silvia

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Stephen J. Silvia : Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the Postwar Era before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Holding the Shop Together: German Industrial Relations in the Postwar Era:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This will surprise and provoke: not just about our view of Germany but how we think about Industrial Relations By Walter P. Jarvis, EdD This is a most insightful account of why German business - and its composites in history, politics, philosophy and society - is endlessly fascinating. We've heard of

postwar Germany as an "economic miracle", the dominance of their "Mittlestand" (SME, small and medium sized enterprises) and to a much lesser extent the legal practice of "Mitbestimmung" (codetermination). What is not commonplace is how each of these is related to something much larger. Stephen Silvia does just that - via insights into German industrial relations (IR). For readers steeped in Anglo-US perspectives on IR and/or business practices Stephen Silvia offers some remarkable and confronting insights. Here we begin to understand something perhaps unique about the nature of relationships in Germany (at least) between employers and employees, connections to the endlessly demanding enigma that is German history, and the role of the state - both before and after the horrors of WWII. No one word to sum up this work beyond "needed". Silvia's insights reward those who wonder about what we might learn from studying how others have collectively made sense of employee and employer contests - and in ways that - again for those steeped in entrenched Anglo/US win/lose perspectives - have been of mutual benefit - and better yet, for society more broadly. Idealistic? Ask why we might even think that such an outcome must be "idealistic". Just look at where and why the GFC started and then how Germany was better placed than most not just to cope - but to lead (even if problematically for others). This is a well planned and presented scholarly work that will reward close reading and reflection. It deserves a diverse audience - especially practitioners and policy wonks. We will be much the better for engaging with Silvia's coherent account of complex and contextualised IR interactions. At base though will be some fascinating accounts of how Germany has made sense of what is of broad concern for us all - ways to engage productively beyond sectional self-interest. Now there's an idea worth our time. It might just provoke new and informed questions. That would be a good and timely outcome.

Since the onset of the Great Recession, Germany's economy has been praised for its superior performance, which has been reminiscent of the "economic miracle" of the 1950s and 1960s. Such acclaim is surprising because Germany's economic institutions were widely dismissed as faulty just a decade ago. In *Holding the Shop Together*, Stephen J. Silvia examines the oscillations of the German economy across the entire postwar period through one of its most important components: the industrial relations system. As Silvia shows in this wide-ranging and deeply informed account, the industrial relations system is strongest where the German economy is strongest and is responsible for many of the distinctive features of postwar German capitalism. It extends into the boardrooms, workplaces and government to a degree that is unimaginable in most other countries. Trends in German industrial relations, moreover, influence developments in the broader German economy and, frequently, industrial relations practice abroad. All these aspects make the German industrial relations regime an ideal focal point for developing a deeper understanding of the German economy as a whole. Silvia begins by presenting the framework of the German industrial relations system—labor laws and the role of the state—and then analyzes its principal actors: trade unions and employers' associations. He finds the framework sound but the actors in crisis because of membership losses. Silvia analyzes the reasons behind the losses and the innovative strategies German labor and management have developed in their efforts to reverse them. He concludes with a comprehensive picture and then considers the future of German industrial relations.

"In this wide-ranging, thoroughly researched study of industrial relations in Germany, Silvia (School of International Service, American Univ.) examines the evolution of trade unions, employers' associations, and collective bargaining in various economic sectors since the end of WW II, as well as the development of "codeterminations," i.e. the role of work councils and of employee representatives on supervisory boards. . . . This volume will be a value to economists as well as political scientists interested in collective bargaining and the postwar German economy."—H.D. Renning, *Choice* (April 2014) "As the culmination of three decades of research, Silvia's book utilizes new evidence and an interdisciplinary approach to detail the trajectory of German industrial relations over the course of the postwar decades. . . . Stephen J. Silvia has provided economists and historians with a readable and clearly argued story of trade unions, employers associations, and the challenges that they have faced."—Adam T. Rosenbaum, *German Studies* (May 2015) "*Holding the Shop Together* represents scholarship at its best; Stephen J. Silvia's immense erudition is visible and palpable in every sentence and every thought. This is far and away the best book on German trade unions and industrial relations bar none, in any language. Silvia tells a complex story and concludes that the fate of unions is decided by the political culture in which they operate."—Andrei Markovits, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor and Karl W. Deutsch Collegiate Professor of Comparative Politics and German Studies, University of Michigan, author of *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* "Insiders have known for years that Stephen J. Silvia tracks the progress of the German industrial relations system more fairly and extensively than any other English-language labor expert. This new book marks the culmination of a stalwart career and constitutes the most up-to-date survey of the state of German labor-management relations currently available anywhere. *Holding the Shop Together* will be valuable both to those uninitiated in the German system as well as to old Germany hands and other experts in comparative political economy. The central, highly original argument that the changes to the system in the last several decades have been so extensive that they effectively constitute a second postwar German labor system will both illuminate and provoke debate."—Gary Herrigel, University of Chicago "Stephen J. Silvia has a marvelous grasp of

what makes the German system of industrial relations tick, along with the ongoing capacity of its actors to 'hold the shop together.' His book provides valuable insights for readers both in Germany and abroad. It is high time for this publication." ?Michael Fichter, Freie Universitaet Berlin "[Silvia] stresses the importance of established traditions and the stability of institutions giving the system its ability to stand up to economic crises and political change. At the same time, he highlights the learning ability of the stakeholders, allowing them to adapt to changes in the overall socio-economic situation. In doing so, the book successfully interweaves structural history and event history . . . The book is a great asset for German readers, as Silvia, looking at Germany from abroad, is able to describe in an incomparable manner the specific features of German labour relations. Readers from other countries will benefit from a book allowing them better to understand German labour relations." ?Otto Jacobi, European Academy of Labour, Frankfurt (2014)About the Author Stephen J. Silvia is Associate Professor in the School of International Service and Affiliate Associate Professor in the Department of Economics at American University.