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***Union Revitalisation in Advanced Economies: Assessing the Contribution of Union Organising*, Edited by Gregor Gall, London / New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 225 pp., ISBN: 978-0-230-20439-3.**

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leurs employeurs selon une perspective de réciprocité tacite : « ils s'investissent personnellement au travail, qui ne s'apparente pas à un devoir, mais à un droit à l'épanouissement [...] ». Ils aspirent à un enrichissement du contenu du travail, à de plus grandes possibilités de réalisation personnelle et à maintenir de bonnes relations sociales [...] » (p. 166). L'*ethos utilitariste* (22,5 %) vise quant à lui à maximiser les avantages matériels tirés du travail, de manière à satisfaire des besoins élevés en consommation et à favoriser également un équilibre entre vie privée et professionnelle.

Deux autres *ethos* sont caractéristiques de travailleurs pour lesquels la vie professionnelle est la sphère dominante. Si la centralité du travail est forte dans les deux cas, leur finalité diffère fortement selon qu'elle vise l'indépendance financière et l'autonomie personnelle qu'elle procure (*ethos de l'autarcie* : 4,3 %) ou une finalité expérimentuelle (*ethos de la professionnalité* : 7,8 %).

À l'opposé, les deux derniers *ethos* sont relatifs à des personnes qui placent le travail au troisième ou au quatrième rang dans leur échelle de valeurs, loin derrière la famille ou les amis. L'*ethos de la résignation* (14,9 %) est un anti-*ethos* du travail, qui est vu comme une obligation, sans véritables possibilités d'avenir. Finalement, pour l'*ethos de l'harmonie* (13,8 %), la sphère professionnelle est quand même porteuse de sens car elle est un lieu de sociabilité.

L'intérêt de ces *ethos* réside dans l'analyse de leurs cohérences internes, mais également dans les comparaisons transversales que l'on peut en faire. Celles-ci permettent de montrer que la place du travail dans la définition de soi varie très fortement d'un *ethos* à l'autre. Pour certains, il fait partie intégrante de l'identité alors que pour d'autres, il est un passage obligé, une condition, aux processus d'identité qui se développent dans les autres sphères de la vie.

Enfin, les analyses que nous livrent ces auteurs aboutissent à mettre en évidence un changement culturel profond touchant le travail. Les valeurs et sens qui lui sont aujourd'hui attachés sont désormais structurés par une quête d'autoréalisation de soi, d'authenticité ainsi que par une volonté marquée d'équilibre avec les autres univers de vie. Ceci est présent, bien qu'à des degrés divers, dans tous les *ethos* du travail. En fait, « la quête d'autoréalisation, d'épanouissement et de correspondance entre valeurs dites personnelles et vécus quotidiens semble de plus en plus s'affirmer comme une exigence incontournable, voire comme un droit fondamental à partir duquel le travail est, dans une large mesure, apprécié ou dénigré : ce n'est pas le travail, mais l'épanouissement personnel qui est la valeur nodale, le référentiel dominant, ce à quoi devrait correspondre le travail » (p. 222).

Gageons que ce constat majeur amènera le lecteur à s'interroger sur l'adéquation des pratiques de gestion du travail et de l'emploi avec cette évolution culturelle du travail. Ces pratiques sont-elles en phases avec cette évolution ? À quelles conditions peuvent-elles l'être ? De quelles ressources disposent les travailleurs et les travailleuses pour faire valoir une telle finalité culturelle du travail ? Autant de questions qui invitent les relations industrielles à explorer des orientations de recherches inédites.

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Union Revitalisation in Advanced Economies: Assessing the Contribution of Union Organising

Edited by Gregor Gall, London / New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 225 pp., ISBN: 978-0-230-20439-3.

Gregor Gall begins this useful contribution to the international union renewal debate with a sobering reality. In spite of the concerted emphasis on “organizing” by a wide swath of unions and federations over the past 20 years, it hasn’t paid off according to

the most obvious measure: union density. Despite the shifting of union financial and human resources to organizing, the creation of specialized programs and institutes to train and support organizers, and even, in the US, the emergence of a new rival federation of those unions who have made “organize or die” their mantra, the proportion of unionized workers remains stagnant or has actually continued to fall. In that troubling context, Gall has brought together a host of researchers to explore what difference “organizing” really makes to union revitalization. The volume is comprised of two (primarily) conceptual chapters on the meaning and complexities of the “organizing model” (Martinez Lucio and Stuart; de Turberville), four national-level surveys of organizing strategy in the UK (Nowak), the US (Dixon and Fiorito), Canada (Rose) and New Zealand (May and Goulter), and three chapters of UK-based case studies in aerospace manufacturing, banking and insurance, municipal government and hospitals (Danforth *et al.*), rail transportation (Darlington), and the British civil service (McCarthy). Despite the UK focus in six of the ten chapters, the book offers insights and methodological approaches that can be usefully applied elsewhere.

Making general claims about “union organizing” is a difficult proposition because, as Gall points out, there is no consensus on either its goals or methods; rarely are we evaluating the same set of practices. In this book, as in academic and union circles, “organizing” has at least three main meanings: 1) membership recruitment – undoubtedly the dominant meaning in much union practice; 2) membership mobilization around workplace issues and collective bargaining; and 3) social movement building and mass mobilization based on renewed collective identities, union-community alliances, a reinvigorated commitment to social justice, and an alternative political agenda. Given such diversity, and a lack of consensus over

what kind of “organizing” union revitalization requires, Gall’s aim is not to prefer one approach over the other but rather to clarify “the basis for a future research agenda and ... the intellectual resources needed ... to create ... grounded theoretically-informed practice ... amongst labour unions themselves” (p. 3). All of the subsequent chapters, however, examine practices based on the first two meanings, leaving the contribution of large-scale and politicized mass mobilization to union revitalization unexplored, even if its desirability is acknowledged.

Gall sets out five major arguments for why organizing hasn’t “worked”, some of which are taken up by the volume’s contributors (p. 3-4). First, some argue that the displacement by “organizing” of “traditional” union activity like servicing is a problem, not least because servicing and organizing, whether in theory or in practice, are not mutually exclusive. DeTurberville takes up this issue in a review of his ongoing debate with Carter over whether “the organizing model” exists as a coherent and readily portable strategy against which we can measure union adherence. Second, others accept the basic premise and content of the “organizing model” and the difference it can make, but argue it has been insufficiently supported or adopted as yet. Nowak’s assessment of the TUC’s Organising Academy (p. 146-150), Rose’s discussion of membership certification efforts in Canada (p. 186), and May and Goulter’s exploration of the impact of scale on the New Zealand’s movement capacity to reorganize (p. 192, 200) all emphasize this point. Dixon and Fiorito also emphasize that resources, and not merely the will to organize, are key to union transformation (p. 165, 168). A third group argues that organizing as practiced has been flawed, whether because of its partial implementation, the top-down, staff-driven, managerialist techniques used, or the acceptance of partnership with management as an instrumental route to membership expansion (more on this

perspective below). Fourth are those who argue that “organizing” has been misconceived, wrongly compartmentalized from bargaining, and has not prioritized the crucial question of bargaining power (whether rooted in sectoral coverage or strong workplace-based unions) which allows numbers to make a difference. Finally, others – not represented in this volume but referred to by many contributors – argue that organizing in itself is too narrow and falls short of what unions need to do to become a renewed political agent, based on the formation of new identities and the use of social movement mobilization. Without such an ambitious political agenda, organizing “is a strategy without a mission, purpose or an ideology” (p. 26).

The empirical findings of the three case study chapters at the heart of the book are the most compelling, and all point to a shared conclusion: when union organizing is conceived as creating workers’ power through grassroots mobilization in the workplace, around an agenda independent from management, and using militant tactics, workers’ interests are more effectively protected and membership numbers grow. Danford *et al.*’s comparative and longitudinal research on six UK workplaces in three different sectors reveals the concrete difference unions with an engaged membership and an oppositional perspective can make to workers’ power in the workplace, when compared to those adopting either partnership approach or no particular strategy at all. While their research shows that having *some* strategy is better than none, the organizing approach outperforms partnership in all the measures of worker power, including the scope of issues subject to bargaining, the frequency of meetings with management, the ability to mitigate job loss, and membership recruitment. Similarly, Darlington’s examination of the Rail Maritime and Transport Workers union (RMT) shows that militancy in collective bargaining based on an organizing approach

to strike mobilization and explicitly linked to membership recruitment has produced positive results in both collective bargaining outcomes and extending the union’s reach to privatized or contracted out elements of the rail service. Finally, McCarthy’s examination of Britain’s civil services unions shows that non-union workers join following upsurges in collective mobilization rather than in response to more “instrumental” or partnership activity with management. While there are complexities in all these cases, together they make a convincing argument in favour of their view that union renewal must be based on mobilizing collective worker power in participatory and oppositional ways. As such, organizing strategies premised on recruitment as such not only put the cart before the horse. When they don’t also mobilize workers in opposition to management, such organizing neither creates the basis for strong and effective unions nor makes a convincing case to workers for why they need unions in the first place.

Despite these important findings, complexities remain which condition their application to other sectoral and national contexts. For instance, Dixon and Fiorito argue that the “typical” strike has become a weapon for management rather than for unions: strike-baiting has become a key union-busting strategy for employers seeking to ruin unions both financially and reputationally, and the historic link between militancy and collective bargaining gains seems broken in the US (p. 158). Given that the legislative framework for organizing is very different in the four countries under examination, the particular mix of strategies that will be effective will also vary. Moreover, it is still unclear whether organizing must come from above or below in order to be effective or sustainable. Although the case studies all point to the importance of grassroots activism, there is also much evidence that union leadership must play a role in both fostering and

supporting that activism and articulating a union vision that engages those members. While most contributors to the volume agree that the dichotomy between leadership and membership is false, it is no simple matter to sort out how to exit what Gall calls the “circularity of the straightjacket”: unions seek to regenerate themselves on the basis of social forces which are not yet in existence, leading them to rely on the very top-down practices which are part of the problem (p. 8).

Given the wide range of definitions of “organizing”, of sectoral, national or regulatory opportunities and constraints faced by unions, or of union structures and cultures that must be engaged with, the reluctance to make “recommendations” is well founded. However, the book’s overall agnosticism on the question of what works is somewhat unsatisfying. It may well be that the research available to us has not yet asked the “right” questions. Given the severity of the situation unions find themselves in, concrete prescriptions for action are also urgent. That said, this book provides some basis for such prescriptions, and is an important contribution to thinking about what it will take to regenerate unions as effective economic and political actors.

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Travail et citoyenneté : quel avenir ?

Sous la direction de Michel Coutu et Gregor Murray, Québec : Presses de l’Université Laval, 2010, 475 p., ISBN : 978-2-7637-8771-8.

D’emblée, les directeurs de cet ouvrage collectif constatent la désuétude du concept de *citoyenneté industrielle* qui a connu son âge d’or à la fin des années 60 et au début des années 70, non sans le situer dans le cadre théorique et d’action de la citoyenneté, pour bien marquer que la désuétude d’une application particulière n’entraîne pas pour autant celle du cadre

général. Cela leur permet de mieux poser ensuite la question fondatrice de l’ouvrage, celle de la pertinence contemporaine de la réflexion sur la *citoyenneté au travail*.

Ils esquisSENT l’évolution historique de la citoyenneté civile à la citoyenneté politique, sociale et à la *citoyenneté industrielle* : représentation des intérêts collectifs des travailleurs, accréditation syndicale et négociation collective ont, à ce moment, en Amérique du Nord, jeté les bases d’une démocratie locale qui conférait aux travailleurs syndiqués une meilleure protection contre l’arbitraire et les risques économiques, mais aussi un droit de participation à la régulation locale et sociale du travail et à la formulation de politiques publiques.

En 1967, au Canada, Harry Arthurs (qui contribue à l’ouvrage) a particulièrement loué les mérites de ce *pluralisme industriel* au sein duquel syndicats et patrons élaborent la *loi des parties* (convention collective), encadrés juridiquement par l’État. Il salue l’émergence d’une citoyenneté propre aux travailleurs dont la portée dépasse celle de la citoyenneté sociale, car plus que des droits protecteurs, les travailleurs syndiqués gagnent un statut dans la régulation du travail. À la même époque, en Europe, Marshall (1964) déplore qu’elle demeure réservée aux seuls travailleurs syndiqués et fasse plus d’exclus que d’inclus, tout en supplément à l’État dans la sphère des droits sociaux. À terme, l’État devrait prendre en charge la protection universelle de ces droits. Selon Arthurs, la citoyenneté au travail passait par la généralisation de la syndicalisation, ce qui n’est pas à l’ordre du jour en Amérique du Nord ni en Europe, bien au contraire! À ce chapitre, le *mea culpa* d’Arthurs, très pessimiste, ne contamine pas l’ouvrage mais force les auteurs à fournir un effort d’autant plus exigeant pour « parvenir à une vision plus articulée et plus englobante des tendances récentes observées dans nos milieux de travail » (p. 453) démontrant qu’un nouveau concept