

## Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations



*Research Handbook of Employment Relations in Sport*, Edited by Michael Barry, James Skinner and Terry Engelberg (2016)  
London: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 424 pages., ISBN: 978-178-34-7 046-7

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Volume 74, numéro 1, hiver 2019

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1059478ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1059478ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Weststar, J. (2019). Compte rendu de [*Research Handbook of Employment Relations in Sport*, Edited by Michael Barry, James Skinner and Terry Engelberg (2016) London: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 424 pages., ISBN: 978-178-34-7 046-7]. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 74(1), 202–204.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1059478ar>

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pas d'un ouvrage d'histoire professionnelle, ce qui explique, et justifie, son caractère descriptif (plutôt qu'analytique) et partisan.

Pour retracer le parcours de la FIPOE, l'auteure remonte à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, avec le développement de l'éclairage électrique et de l'industrie à laquelle il donne naissance. Elle relate ensuite la naissance du syndicat américain (NBEW, qui deviendra IBEW en 1900) et ses premiers pas au Canada et au Québec. En plus des difficultés de syndicalisation, l'enjeu linguistique associé à la situation particulière des travailleurs québécois au sein d'un syndicat nord-américain est mis en évidence dès le chapitre 2 et abordé à plusieurs reprises en cours d'ouvrage. En plus du fait français, c'est de la question des cotisations des membres québécois au régime de retraite américain que naît le litige entre la section locale 568 et la direction internationale de l'IBEW, dont il est question aux chapitres 5 à 7. L'ouvrage permet de suivre, pas à pas, le déroulement de ce conflit, alimenté par la concurrence inter-syndicale dans la construction québécoise, qui mènera à la tutelle de la section locale et à la fondation de la FIPOE, ainsi qu'à son expulsion du Conseil provincial du Québec des métiers de la construction (chapitre 9) et à la fondation de la FTQ-Construction telle qu'on la connaît aujourd'hui (chapitre 10). Le chapitre 8 porte, quant à lui, sur les premiers remous vécus par la nouvelle organisation: le saccage de la Baie-James, la Commission Cliche et la mise en tutelle de la FIPOE jusqu'en 1978. Les chapitres 11 et 12 couvrent enfin les décennies 1990, 2000 et 2010, une période plus paisible, mais ponctuée d'événements néanmoins importants, telle que la réunion éphémère (1999-2006) des syndicats internationaux du Conseil provincial du Québec des métiers de la construction-International (CPQMCI) et des syndicats nationaux de la FTQ-Construction au sein d'un Conseil conjoint.

Au fil des quelque 150 pages que compte l'ouvrage, c'est donc l'organisation syndicale qui se raconte, rigoureusement

mais avec quelques partis pris évidents. Compte tenu du faible volume de littérature sur le syndicalisme dans la construction au Québec et au Canada, cette contribution est la bienvenue, car elle constitue un matériau de recherche intéressant mais qui doit toutefois être traité avec les précautions qui s'imposent compte tenu de la partialité du récit. Malgré ces réserves, et l'intérêt peut-être limité de l'ouvrage pour une partie du lectorat de *R/IIIR*, il faut saluer cette initiative de représentants syndicaux souhaitant doter les membres de leur organisation d'un moyen d'accéder à l'histoire de leur syndicat. À cet égard, nous espérons que la qualité de la rédaction, ainsi que l'excellente facture visuelle de l'ouvrage contribueront à attirer de nombreux lecteurs et lectrices.

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#### Notes

- 1 Commission de la construction du Québec (2016) *Statistiques sur la représentativité syndicale avant et après le scrutin 2016*, Montréal: CCQ, 8 pages et Commission de la construction du Québec (2018) *Statistiques annuelles de l'industrie de la construction 2017*, Montréal: CCQ-Direction de la recherche et de la documentation, Tableau C 16.
- 2 À notre connaissance, la seule autre monographie historique sur un syndicat de la construction québécois est: En collaboration (1987) « Histoire de la Fraternité unie des charpentiers et menuisiers d'Amérique (1886-1981) », *Histoire des travailleurs et travailleurs québécois. Bulletin du RCHTQ*, 13 (2), 1-102.

#### Research Handbook of Employment Relations in Sport

Edited by Michael Barry, James Skinner and Terry Engelberg (2016) London: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, 424 pages. ISBN: 978-178-34-7 046-7.

In addition to an introduction by the editors, this volume includes 16 chapters organized into four main themes: regulation

of professional sports, employment relations of professional sports, the management of professional sports and sporting careers and the economics of professional sports. The contributors are an international bunch specializing in economics, psychology, organizational behaviour and human resource management, employment relations, and law, most with a specific academic focus on professional sports. The chapters in the volume include discussions of many sports and national regulatory contexts but focus primarily on Europe and North America and the sports of European football, North American football, baseball, ice hockey and basketball.

As stated in the Introduction, the book "aims to address an area of research that remains greatly underdeveloped in sport management...the interconnection between Employment Relations (ER) and sport." (p. 1) The editors note that sport may represent an optimistic trend to the de-unionization and declining union influence across OECD countries. They point to the strength and development of player associations and the movement to institutionalize more collectivist approaches which support elements of seniority and greater attention to the equity of team salary structures, bargaining power, and working conditions. As such the Introduction places the volume as an important contribution to studies of union revitalization and renewal. The volume also situates occupational health and safety, and discrimination and harassment as key and growing issues in sport. The former in the context of the obvious wear and tear of sport on an athlete's body and mind, but also in regard to drug use and anti-doping initiatives, and the latter in terms of sexual harassment of women, the objectification of bodies, as well as aggressive coaching and management styles which include bullying.

The book readily achieves the goal of raising the profile of employment relations in sport. As a handbook, it is an excel-

lent primer and starting point for those interested in what are often very complex environments. One of the volume's main achievements is to clearly elucidate the key aspects that differentiate the work environments and realities of professional sports from more 'typical' workplaces. These include issues related to the monopolistic nature of sport labour markets, the history of reserve rights, the power of owners and the unique constraints on player mobility, the polarization of bargaining power among 'stars' versus new entrants, the complex web of rules introduced by the inclusion of player agents, regulatory and political issues related to sectoral and multi-level bargaining regimes and the role of additional local, national and international regulatory bodies.

The style of writing in each chapter is accessible to a broad audience. Indeed, some readers may find the contributions too 'light'. Chapters lean to the descriptive and many chapters are written largely as a sort of historical play by play of key events, including the role of famous sport personalities. Some chapters are almost overtly whimsical, such as that by Maynes, Mitchell, Schuwalow and Stewart, which advises the reader on the best sport to play professionally to ensure economic success. However, all in all, the volume is a robust *entrée* to the core issues.

After reading the book, I did wish for more—not precisely in terms of detail about the employment relations of sport, but rather about the import of this sub-field for the study of employment relations, labour studies and employment law as a whole. Some of the broader claims in the Introduction regarding import to union renewal, for instance, were not then borne out in the chapters or the overall volume simply because the analytical connections were not overtly made. The chapters were largely isolated from each other topically and produced conclusions centered on their main narratives. The book definitively

stakes its claim on the premise of professional sport as work and advocates for its elevation in the consciousness of the field. However, the chapters did not work to insert the issues of professional sport into a larger context.

In carving out this space, I feel that this volume could have gone further to claim kinship with other research that seeks to broaden the conceptual playing field of work (i.e., contributions to the social reproduction of labour, unpaid work, 'playbour' and emotional labour). Such an expanded contribution would be timely when situated in the broader cognitive-cultural capitalist context that seeks to invisibilize work, misclassify workers and employees as independent contractors, and fully colonize play, leisure and immaterial labour. As more of the human experience is exploited for profit, it is imperative for scholars of work to report on the processes of that capture. This volume provides evidence of the successful history of professional athletes and their allies in framing the efforts of their bodies and minds as work, and in capturing a fair share of the revenues that are earned through the marketing of their very bodies. In that history are struggles of the physical embodiment of work, health and safety, worker identity and class consciousness, precarious labour, equity and discrimination, labour and capital mobility, and international boundaries, marketing rights of the body and image, residual rights, career and employment security, and more. Following my reading of this volume, I was convinced that there is much to learn and integrate from the employment relations of professional sports, but it was not the volume per se that left that impression. That said, perhaps of the work of the volume was done in any case as I carry these new insights forward.

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