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Regulating Labour in the Wake of Globalisation: New Challenges, New Institutions, edited by Brian BERCUSSON and Cynthia ESTLUND, Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Publishing, 2008, 281 pp., ISBN: 978-1-8411-3766-7.

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territoriales (Catlla) et européennes (Béthoux, Galland). La multiplication de ces espaces émergents ou redécouverts met à l'avant-scène la mobilisation de nouveaux acteurs (institutions européennes, entreprises multinationales, acteurs locaux et régionaux, etc.) et la complexité sous-jacente de leurs dynamiques relationnelles. La conclusion générale de cet ouvrage jette un regard historique sur le travail (Omnès).

En définitive, la recherche d'une jonction entre les transformations des relations au travail et des relations de travail constitue le principal intérêt de cet ouvrage. Soumis aux rationalisations, le rapport au travail est appréhendé en termes de dynamique des métiers en redéfinition. Quant aux relations de travail, les modèles de régulation laissent place à de nouveaux acteurs en relations professionnelles mais évoluent parfois plus difficilement. La diversité des situations investiguées, la dispersion des espaces de régulation, l'ambivalence des salariés et des acteurs ainsi que la percée de nouveaux univers professionnels contribuent incontestablement à l'enrichissement de la compréhension des transformations de

la société contemporaine tout en reflétant la complexité du débat. Pour y parvenir, les contributeurs agrémentent la tradition de la sociologie française du travail en recourant à d'autres disciplines liées à l'économie du travail ou à la politique et en explorant de nouveaux champs tels que la sociologie de la vente. Même s'il est difficile de dégager une cohérence d'ensemble de cette hétérogénéité du monde du travail, la plupart des auteurs de cet ouvrage appréhendent les salariés et les syndicats comme des acteurs individuels et collectifs qui disposent de marges de manœuvre face aux contraintes et règles imposées. En dépit de ce foisonnement d'applications concrètes d'éléments fondamentaux en relations professionnelles, certaines absences sont à déplorer, notamment, à de rares exceptions près, les comparaisons internationales. Il n'en demeure pas moins que cet ouvrage montre à quel point les nouvelles formes d'organisation du travail constituent un objet d'étude inépuisable pour la sociologie contemporaine.

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Regulating Labour in the Wake of Globalisation: New Challenges, New Institutions,

edited by Brian BERCUSSON and Cynthia ESTLUND, Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart Publishing, 2008, 281 pp., ISBN: 978-1-8411-3766-7.

As its name suggests, this publication addresses labour market and employment regulation in an era when the nation-state has diminished influence and long standing conceptions of institutional industrial relations may be less relevant. The book is a collection of 12 essays written by scholars who write from different perspectives. It has chapters exploring: how globalization has potential to render labour market operation more similar to the functioning

of other kinds of markets; the ways self-regulation may serve as an alternative to state-intervention; the industrial-age origins of the social contract and the concerns of those who originally sort to replace feudal notions of work with modern ideas about the performance of large scale capitalist market economies, employee management and worker rights; and, what can be done about contemporary threats to unions. The book mostly discusses its subject matter

in the European and North American contexts. Consequently much of its content is set against the backdrop of influences such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Union (EU) and a 20 to 30 year public policy trend of economic and financial deregulation. The concern of each chapter is either implied or stated to be less-skilled workers and job-seekers in Western countries. Authors often include consideration of emerging informal, part-time and casual sectors of the labour market.

Bercusson and Estlund's book is mostly superior to other publications addressing similar subject matter (or at least the ones I am familiar with). In its own way, each of its essays is excellent. Each also belongs in the volume; taking a strategic perspective on the same objective of analysis. In this sense, the book integrates its ideas around the theme that, without external intervention, labour markets in the modern era may be characterized as "rushing towards a rising bottom." Although I thought a little more explanation of this conception would have been helpful, I mostly understood it to be somewhat akin to an averaging effect whereby workers in poorer countries receive better wages and conditions at the expense of their richer Western counterparts.

The book has three key strengths. First, despite its authors generally being concerned about those who may experience labour market disadvantage, essays do not become bogged down with institutional affiliations. This gives the work an innovative and creative dimension; and makes it especially relevant to the first decade of the 21st century. For example; in chapters 10 and 11 there are thoughtful discussions of alternatives to unions. In these, the advocacy and representative functions of organized labour are dissected from orthodox ideas about structure. The result is a lively exploration of options for achieving employee voice. These

discussions are sensitive to contemporary influences such as demographic changes and technological advancement.

A second attractive feature of the book is the willingness of its authors to put a new spin on phenomena which are normally seen as matters about which we all agree. A good example of such iconoclasm is found in Chapter 4 where the origins and significance of the industrial revolution are discussed. Here a strong case is made that the industrial revolution is somewhat more complex than it is often perceived to be. Specifically, it is convincingly argued that the modern notion of the employment contract is not really a response to or consequence of widespread industrialization in the mid-1700s but rather came much later, perhaps as late as the early 20th century. From this premise theories are presented which challenge orthodoxy about the origins of labour law in various European countries. The upshot of this discussion is a compelling critique of the proposition that nations which rely heavily on common-law have an emphasis on market-mediated regulation and those which rely mostly on civil law emphasize state-intervention.

A third advantage of the book is its tight integration. Each chapter has something to say about labour market regulation and, mostly, good rationale is given or implied for inclusion of material. Overall, the volume paints a detailed portrait of the cutting edge of public policy research about labour market management. Another aspect of the book's tight integration is the sympathies of authors. Despite their disparate professional backgrounds, they appear concerned with protecting and enhancing the conditions, rights and living standards of potential victims of globalization.

One element of the book that I found disappointing is the way it uses language. Sometimes, I thought that explanations

were unduly complex and verbose. In this vein, I had a few problems with the style of some of the chapters. In certain cases it took me a while to appreciate the argument(s) and, in particular, understand how points were relevant to labour market regulation. However, ultimately I was convinced that each had something important to say about the primary object of analysis.

Another criticism I have of the book concerns the “rush towards a rising bottom” argument. On page four two statements are made which I found curious: “There is evidence of economic gains in those countries to which production is flowing...” and “There must be a better way of improving the living standards of the developing world without impoverishing the workers of the developed world.” The surrounding discussion raised my expectations that I might find a breakthrough about this

issue and I spent the rest of the book looking for this “better way.” My search was somewhat in vain. Although I gained insight about the subject matter and had some of my assumptions challenged, I did not believe that I got to the heart of “the better way.”

Bercusson and Estland’s is an important work. My criticisms of it mostly address matters of style. On the other hand, I have no hesitation in praising the book’s substance. If you want to develop a sophisticated appreciation of labour market management options in the modern world and, at the same time, receive a re-education about labour-market institutions, Bercusson and Estland’s new publication should not be ignored.

ANTHONY M. GOULD
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Théories des organisations : approches classiques, contemporaines et de l’avant-garde,

par Linda ROULEAU, Sainte-Foy : Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2007, 263 p., ISBN : 978-2-7605-1462-1.

Si vous désirez prendre du recul devant le foisonnement parfois déconcertant des idées qui pullulent dans les sciences qui étudient l’individu en organisation évoluant dans un environnement aux multiples facettes, rien de mieux que de parcourir un ouvrage qui classifie et décrit systématiquement les conceptions élaborées par les théoriciens sur le réel organisé. Le livre de Linda Rouleau vient répondre à un besoin pressant de clarification dans ce champ en traçant des contours clairs dans la mosaïque bigarrée des théories des organisations.

Parmi les nombreuses qualités qu’il faut souligner de cet ouvrage, mentionnons sa structure, explicite dès la lecture du sous-titre général (*approches classiques, contemporaines et de l’avant-garde*), qui annonce la subdivision de l’ouvrage en trois parties respectant

un ordre chronologique. Les chapitres suivent à peu de choses près le même ordre – exception faite de la deuxième partie, où les approches contemporaines sont clairement réparties selon leur origine disciplinaire (sociologie, économie, politique, anthropologie). Chaque chapitre décrit entre deux et quatre théories, types d’analyse ou points de vue théoriques, chacun formant une section agencée de la même façon. Le texte, accessible, est entièrement structuré en mode dissertation : entrée en matière (circonstances entourant l’apparition de l’approche théorique, ses origines, sa finalité, définition des concepts centraux), nœud (principaux auteurs et résumé de leur(s) œuvre(s) phare(s)), puis travaux réalisés dans leur foulée, ainsi que méthodes utilisées) et aboutissement (principales contributions